

***Canadian Folklore Perspectives*, Edited by Kenneth S. Goldstein, (St. John's: Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1978. 68 pp. \$4.00.)**

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Australian speech. It is certainly possible that it has occurred in Canada since it was brought here by the first settlers, and that its spread (if it is spreading) is completely unrelated to American influence.

The second positive feature of the book is perhaps its best quality. It is designed, as already mentioned, for use in schools, and the pedagogical method on which it is based is heavily inductive. In order to use this methodology as fully as possible, it is available in a school edition which incorporates a forty-eight-page Student Handbook of things to think about, examine, investigate. But its method is in fact inductive throughout. It combines its thorough and informed discussion of Canadian English, which is printed in a column of black type occupying about two-thirds of each page, with marginalia printed in red which variously comment on the text, illustrate it, or invite the reader to criticize, qualify or extend it. Thus at almost every point those sometimes dubious assertions which are taken over from the sources McConnell has drawn on are implicitly questioned — as they should be.

As a textbook for its primary audience, it is exemplary. No better work is possible at present (Well, one qualification: someone at Gage's should hang his head in shame at the mess made of the phonetic transcriptions in the book). With its attractive layout, its generous and well chosen illustrations, its inductive approach, it may help us to overcome the fundamental problem that there are not enough field-workers to do the work that has to be done. For university courses on the English language, the book is more than adequate, and again certainly the best that is available.

For folklorists, the book has many points of interest. Naturally it does not give as complete a picture of Canadian English as the Dictionaries do. But, as McConnell mentions in paraphrasing M.B. Emeneau's discussion of the Lunenburg Co. (N.S.) word *Belsnickels*, the folk heritage of Canadian English is revealed in

the language (p. 167); and the dialectologists and lexicographers whose work she draws on and extends therefore share folklorists' interest in folk speech, rural customs and regional cultures. This common interest is particularly clear in her discussion of "Folklore and Sayings" (pp. 135-8), but in fact it pervades much of the book. As a synoptic view of what is known about the linguistic reflections of the folk heritage of Anglophone Canada, the book is in every respect the best work available. In addition, just as a book to browse in, reflect on, and perhaps respond to, it is a delight.

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### **Canadian Folklore Perspectives**

*Edited by Kenneth S. Goldstein*  
*(St. John's: Department of Folklore,*  
*Memorial University of Newfoundland,*  
*1978. 68 pp. \$4.00.)*

Aside from the editor's two pages of introduction, this item is composed of four contributions that originated as presentations at a panel on "Folklore Research in Canada" at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society in Detroit, Michigan, November 3-6, 1977. The initial two papers are essentially regional surveys emanating from the country's two university departments of folklore: Neil V. Rosenberg reports out of Memorial University of Newfoundland on "Regionalism and Folklore in Atlantic Canada", and Elli Kõngäs Maranda writes out of Laval University on "French-Canadian Folklore Scholarship: An Overview." Both surveys concentrate on current developments and direct the reader to earlier writings for information on past accomplishments rela-

tive to their respective areas of coverage. The third paper in the book is Ban Seng Hoe's account of "Asian-Canadian Folklore Studies: An Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Approach", and the final work is Carole Henderson Carpenter's candid look at "Folklore and Government in Canada."

As inventory, this collection of papers constitutes a valuable and indispensable reference tool for anyone wishing to have a contemporary, synchronic view of folkloristic activities, concerns and trends in Canada. Goldstein correctly identifies these as regional, linguistic and ethnic in nature (p. 1). But there are minor irritations here and there. One question, for example, the lingering need to justify Canadian folkloristics by linking the field to that grandiose but heretofore unproductive "search for a Canadian identity" (p. iv), the over-sensitivity to and reaction against the old "folklore = poverty" equation (p. 15), the seeming ambivalence towards Quebec's on-going love affair with its *patrimoine* (pp. 33-34), needless efforts to "hypothesize that ethnic folklore is influenced both by community and social forces" (p. 39), and somewhat overly alarmist assessments of the government's recent emphasis on minority groups and their traditions (p. 64). Gradually we learn that the tendency in Canadian folklore research is still toward the descriptive rather than the analytic. Rosenberg's appeal for "similar data from all parts of Canada, to create studies that will transcend the limitations of regionalism" (p. 15) is right in vogue, however, and coincides with the recent appearance of such significant syntheses as Edith Fowke's ground-breaking anthology (*Folklore of Canada*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), the joint compilation by Edith Fowke and Carole Henderson Carpenter of *A Bibliography of Canadian Folklore in English, Preliminary Edition* (Downsview, Ontario: York University, 1976), Magnus Einarsson's pictorial *Everyman's Heritage: An Album of Canadian Folk Life* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1978), and Carole Henderson Car-

penter's soon-to-be-published doctoral dissertation, "Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and Their Role in Canadian Culture" (University of Pennsylvania, 1975).

As these works suggest, the time is ripe for the onset of a new and important period in the development of Canadian folkloristics — one that will aim for theoretically relevant analyses and findings by using our assorted expertise with the regional, linguistic and/or ethnic aspects of Canada's folklore complex to formulate a distinctive series of contributions to the general understanding and appreciation of folkloric phenomena. In this regard, Elli Kögäs Maranda's brief section on "Folklore and Nationalism in Quebec" (pp. 32-33) should be expanded into a full-length monograph study, and similarly, Ban Seng Hoe's three pages on how folklore and community politics interact with one another (pp. 47-49) along with Carole Henderson Carpenter's hard-hitting foray into the world of folklore and government involvement both warrant further in-depth investigation. The resultant focus on various aspects of the contemporary folklore-and-politics syndrome in Canada would surely offer important insights into the operative, productive features that constitute this and related folkloric processes not only in Canada but also elsewhere.

Such a proposed series of works would not be complete, however, without some attention to the considerable impact of American folkloristics on Canadian folklore studies and research concerns. All contributors to the volume under review here, along with the reviewer himself, received their formal training in folklore (or in one case, sociology) in the United States; only two out of the whole number are native-born Canadians; and, as indicated earlier, each paper in the book was originally prepared for presentation before members of an American society in an American city. The "Symons Report" of 1975, in its special section devoted to "Folklore," drew attention to this situation and noted the lack of folklore courses and

programs at Canadian universities that, if extant, would conceivably serve to help foster a more markedly indigenous presence in the field of Canadian folklore studies.<sup>1</sup> In this connection, it is good to note the continuation of *Culture and Tradition* as a collaborative periodical publication headed by folklore students from both Laval and Memorial Universities. This kind of activity suggests that perhaps a truly Canadian "school" of folkloristics is in the embryonic stage of formulation. We should all hope that this is indeed so.

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<sup>1</sup>T. H. B. Symons, *To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies*, Vols. 1/2 (Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1975), pp. 83-85.

### **Voice of the Pioneer**

By Bill McNeil

Introduction by Harry Boyle

(Toronto: Macmillan, 1978, pp. 257,  
photographs. \$14.95)

Since Barry Broadfoot's *Ten Lost Years*, there have been a number of popular oral histories published in Canada. The style of these books runs from journalistic to academic, from anecdotal to documentary, but they all fill an obvious gap in the chronicling of Canadian history. The personal account, reminiscence, and historical legend add a non-élite perspective and a certain vitality to history, often lacking in orthodox historical documentation. Oral history not only contributes to our knowledge of past events, but makes these events more understandable and appreciable to the book-buying public.

*Voice of the Pioneer* is one such popular

oral history. Its format is close to that of the Broadfoot books and its publication was undoubtedly inspired by Broadfoot's success. The book is composed of seventy-five short oral accounts gleaned from interviews conducted by McNeil for his CBC Radio programme, "Voice of the Pioneer." His informants range from well-known Canadian personalities, such as Joey Smallwood, John Diefenbaker, "Cyclone" Taylor, and Charles Best, to unheralded old-timers who have, in some sense, been pioneers.

McNeil uses the term "pioneer" very loosely, as he himself admits. Anyone who has managed to live past the allotted three score and ten years and who is able to recall and recount stories from his youth is a "pioneer." Thus, the book includes not only those who truly did pioneer in some way, such as Group of Seven painter, A.Y. Jackson or prairie homesteader, Mrs. Carl Tellanius, but also those who simply had a good story to tell.

Not all of the accounts are life histories. The tales these pioneers tell include eye-witness accounts of historical events, such as the Halifax explosion and the 1892 St. John's fire; reminiscences concerning famous persons, such as Alexander Graham Bell and Norman Bethune; as well as descriptions of Canadian life at the turn of the century.

Unfortunately, this great variety in types of informants and types of stories is the book's greatest weakness. Instead of giving the reader a sense of what it meant to live in turn-of-the-century Canada or what it was like to be a pioneer, the book only succeeds in presenting a rather disorganized and confusing hodgepodge of autobiographical scraps. There is no direction, no overall plan, which ties together all these stories. McNeil's poorly defined sense of "pioneer" is largely to blame for this fault.

This lack of direction becomes quite frustrating. The reader is given only a sample of what it was like to be a pioneer on the prairies or to pioneer in early Canadian medicine. The reader gains only a fleeting