

**Nancy SCHMITZ, *Irish for a Day: Saint Patrick's Day Celebrations in Québec City 1765-1990* (Québec, Carraig Books, 1991, xii(+)) 295 p., photos, illustrations, bibliography, indexes, \$19.95)**

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Nancy SCHMITZ, *Irish for a Day: Saint Patrick's Day Celebrations in Québec City 1765-1990* (Québec, Carraig Books, 1991, xii(+) 295 p., photos, illustrations, bibliography, indexes, \$19.95)

Saint Patrick's Day celebrations in North America have been a source of amazement in Ireland since the media started reporting them; tales of green beer were dismissed as fiction until some enterprising publicans copied the practice, and anyone seen wearing bright green clothing is still immediately identified as a U.S. visitor. Canadians are somehow felt to be more restrained, but this book makes it clear that for those Canadians in Québec who feel themselves to be Irish, St. Patrick's Day has had at least as much importance as for New Yorkers, as ethnicity is articulated around a point in time, rather than in space.

As English speakers in French-speaking Québec, the Irish were a minority within a minority, but as Catholics they had religion in common with their French-speaking neighbours. Nancy Schmitz painstakingly demonstrates their negotiation of ethnic identity, from a negative to a positive midway status between English and French, noting that while they did not maintain the Irish language, they quickly became proficient in French. As Québec City grew, Irish immigrants constituted themselves into an urban community.

At first the Saint Patrick's Day celebrations were confined to men, with boys but not girls participating in the 1848 parade, for instance. This reflects the day's importance as the cultural and religious dimension of a political and economic progress. The insignia used were associated with an Ireland of the past, but clearly their real importance was in their engagement with a constantly shifting, French-Canadian present. My sense in reading this book was that unlike Irish communities in, say, Boston, Québec did not continue to be topped up by new immigration from Ireland throughout the twentieth century, so that the "Irishness" represented for the later period has very little to do with present-day Ireland. One paragraph, describing the 1935 *Matinée*, will give a flavour of the book and a sense of the eclectic nature of the celebrations:

The 1935 *matinée* brought together what was practically the entire population of the Irish schools at that time, in a full and ambitious programme. The first number was an Opening Greeting by the Saint Patrick's High School Cadet Band, under the direction of Brother Gerald and band instructor F. Unwins. This was followed by an overture, "Memories of Erin", by Professor Léonce Crépault on the organ. The first variety number featured the "Tiny Tots" in "The Runaway Fairy", the story of a runaway, played by Nora McDermott, who was rescued by gnomes and restored to fairyland. The groups were made up of Lantern Fairies, Sunshine Fairies, Shadows, Gnomes, and the act included a Russian Dance solo by Constance Lecouvie, a Soldiers number, a song by Arline Baribeau, a solo dance by Nora McDermott, another group, The Forests and a solo song by Ruth Ledden (p. 148).

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Celebrations in recent years have been less elaborate, but still belong clearly to North America and not to Ireland.

Nancy Schmitz has spent ten years on what is obviously a labour of love, a phrase she uses to describe the commitment over many years of the people who organised annual dinners, soirées, parades, religious services and other celebrations, in Québec City and neighbouring communities. Packed with group photographs and proper names, newspaper ads, menus and song sheets, at first glance this looks like the kind of book that will tell the reader dishearteningly more than she wants to know. With her meticulous attention to detail however, Schmitz has produced a work that is at once a rich local history, an absorbing study of popular culture, and a valuable document for our understanding of voluntary ethnicity.

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Brian SWANN (ed.), *On the Translation of Native American Literatures* (Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992, 478 p., (hardcover) ISBN 1-56098-074-5)

This is a remarkable collection of 23 essays on the translation of Native American literatures by distinguished scholars in English, anthropology, folklore, and linguistics. The editor has gathered together a wide range of truly inspiring essays which illuminate the joys and frustrations of translating native literature.

The presentation is in three parts: the first part presents general essays, the second and third parts present specific works on the native literatures of North, Central and South America. Brian Swann's own introduction, recounting the gradual recognition of Native American literature, flows nicely into the essay by Arnold Krupat which begins with a re-examination of nineteenth century translations of native songs and chants. Krupat goes on to summarize the development of contemporary approaches to academic translations represented by scholars such as Jerome Rothenberg, Dell Hymes, Dennis Tedlock, Anthony Mattina, Don Bahr and Leanne Hinton. He presents actual translations by each of these researchers, making his presentation one of the clearest, most useful summaries of developments in this field. Each essay is also followed by an extensive list of references for those who are interested in pursuing topics further.