

*Place and Practice in Canadian Nursing History*. Edited by Jayne Elliott, Meryn Stuart and Cynthia Toman. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008. x + 221 p., ill., bibl., notes, index. ISBN 978-0-7748-1-5574 \$85 hc, 978-0-7748-1-5581 \$29.95 pb.)

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In *Place and Practice in Canadian Nursing History*, Jayne Elliott, Meryn Stuart and Cynthia Toman have edited a collection of essays drawn from the first Hannah Conference on Canadian Nursing History. Associated Medical Services, which has been a leader in supporting the history of health and medicine in Canada, funded this major conference in Ottawa in 2005. The essays in this book provide the latest research by some of the best Canadian scholars in the history of nursing and health care. They explore such themes as identity, representation, and nursing practice in Canada from the late 1800s to the 1970s. They investigate such key questions as: who is a nurse, what constitutes nursing work, and how does place shape its meaning?

Following a good introductory essay by the editors, the volume presents impressive coverage of nursing history both in terms of geography and types of practice. It offers nine chapters that approach the history of Canadian nursing by looking beyond the story of nurses and their interactions with doctors in hospitals. It examines a range of nursing work in diverse settings and communities. In separate chapters, Cynthia Toman and Meryn Stuart explore the history of Canadian nurses in the military who worked abroad during World War I. Kristin Burnett investigates the nursing, midwifery, and health care work provided by Aboriginal women to white settlers in the West. Myra Rutherford analyzes white nurses who worked with Inuit and First Nations in the Arctic. In their chapters, Marion McKay and Linda Quiney investigate Red Cross and visiting nursing in Manitoba. The volume also includes studies of remote nursing in Quebec by Joanne Daigle and outpost nursing in Ontario by Jayne Elliott. Finally, Anne-Marie Arseneault examines the history of francophone nurse education in New Brunswick.

One of the strengths of this collection is the attention that many of the authors pay to individual lives. Overall, there are few well-known Canadian nurses and this volume goes a long way to rectifying that situation. The biographical information helps readers come to know ordinary people, the subjects of social history, as unique individuals. Several scholars draw on letters, interviews, memoirs, and autobiographies that provide insight into the consciousness of those who did nursing work in Canada and Canadian nurses who worked abroad. The authors are careful to discuss the limitations, as well as strengths, of their primary source

material. Their efforts pay off with fresh evidence of the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions of health care providers across time and place.

Complex issues of representation and identity are illuminated in several of the essays. For instance, Cynthia Toman's study of Canadian nurses in the Mediterranean Theatre of World War I presents a complex and contradictory image of the women as both "imperials" and "colonials." Canadian nurses viewed themselves and were treated as part of the effort to support British forces in the Gallipoli campaign in Turkey. They were part of the British empire, yet they were not from Britain nor British-trained and thus the British perceived Canadian nurses as their inferiors.

Furthermore, by highlighting the importance of differences among Canadian nurses this collection opens up new avenues for exploration. For example, Myra Rutherford's fascinating chapter on white nurses in the Canadian North identifies three types of personalities among the nurses who practiced there during the 1950s and 1960s. Instead of discussing outpost nurses as a monolithic group, she characterizes them as cleansers, caregivers, and adventurers. The cleanser type, the most interventionist type of nurse, focused on improving the hygiene of Aboriginal bodies with a kind of missionary zeal. The caregiver type was more self reflexive about her role in the North, more aware of structural constraints on reforming health conditions, and less critical of Aboriginal health culture. The adventurer type welcomed the opportunity to learn about healing from Aboriginal people and through living in the North. Rutherford illustrates these types with biographical information about the lives of three women who took different approaches to nursing.

Another interesting chapter on nurse identity is Jane Elliott's study of the Swedish immigrant Louise de Kiriline who worked as an outpost nurse for the Ontario Division of the Canadian Red Cross Society. De Kiriline is best known as the nurse for the famous Dionne quintuplets who were born in 1934. However, in the 1920s she worked as a Red Cross Nurse in rural Ontario. She graduated in 1914 from the Red Cross nursing school in Stockholm and then worked in a Danish prisoner-of-war camp and later in Russia. Upon returning to Sweden, she was too restless to remain after all she had seen of the legacy of World War I and so she left for Canada. She was drawn to outpost nursing because of the opportunities for professional independence and autonomy. Yet, she was not the typical young, single, Canadian-born nurse. As an immigrant from a well-connected family and a widow in her thirties, she sought respectability and financial security. She also relished the opportunity to build egalitarian relationships with doctors in small communities where her authority mattered.

In sum, the essays in this collection demonstrate that nurses were central characters in the history of health care in Canada and abroad. Nurses did not merely supplement the work of physicians in hospitals but played an important role in many settings. Furthermore, these essays highlight why place matters and present nurses as a heterogeneous group. Finally, this volume demonstrates that nurses and nursing have been key components in the development of Canada itself.

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### **Humanities and Social Sciences / Sciences humaines et sociales**

*Parole d'historiens. Anthologie des réflexions sur l'histoire du Québec.* Choix de textes et présentation par Éric Bédard et Julien Goyette. (Montréal : Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2006. 481 p., ill., notes, ann., bibl. ISBN 978-2-7606-2009-4 34,95 \$)

Cette anthologie regroupant quarante-huit textes d'historiens qui, de la Nouvelle-France à nos jours, ont proposé des réflexions sur l'écriture de l'histoire au Québec est le fruit d'un patient travail de sélection effectué par Éric Bédard, professeur à la Télé-université de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, et Julien Goyette, professeur au Département de sciences humaines de l'Université du Québec à Rimouski. Destiné « aux collégiens, aux étudiants universitaires, aux épistémologues et autres théoriciens intéressés par les enjeux de mémoire » (p.11), ce recueil de morceaux choisis vise à faire ressortir la richesse des questionnements critiques soulevés par les historiens sur leur activité de connaissance. Les questions qui y sont abordées pourraient être rangées dans trois grandes catégories. Les premières s'intéressent aux transformations, à travers le temps, de l'écriture de l'histoire (objets de la recherche considérés comme légitimes, choix des méthodes ou des appareils démonstratifs, etc.). Les secondes se penchent sur la valeur de l'histoire comme savoir (l'histoire est-elle une science exacte ? Quelle est la place des valeurs dans l'interprétation ? Qu'en est-il de l'objectivité ?). Enfin, les dernières et les plus nombreuses portent sur les fonctions sociales de l'histoire, ce que les présentateurs nomment « les rapports que l'homme entretient avec lui-même et avec le temps » (p.10), notamment quant au sens à conférer au passé du Québec. Après une présentation générale utile et éclairante, les textes choisis sont regroupés en quatre grandes parties qui tiennent davantage compte de la chronologie que des genres ou des thématiques. Ils ne sont précédés d'aucune introduction, les auteurs du