

propensity to be an ill-tempered braggart who mistreated her habitants. The book is attractively packaged with eighty photographs, drawings, and maps. Unfortunately, the black-and-white reproductions of Emily Carr's art lessen their impact and effectiveness. Brief reading lists are provided, as is a useful time line of the accomplishments of the women chronicled. Some weaknesses aside, *Her Story I* should inspire interest in the history of Canadian women and may be considered a worthwhile addition to children's libraries.

The positive response to Merritt's first volume prompted the publication of sixteen more short biographies of accomplished Canadian women in *Her Story II*. The author repeats her commitment to being sensitive to regional and racial issues by telling the stories of First Nation, black, and European women from all provinces and the Northwest Territories. Given Merritt's efforts to be as inclusive as possible, francophone Quebeckers are conspicuous by their complete absence. The women portrayed in this second volume are somewhat more obscure than those found in the first, but this in no way diminishes the significant but varied roles these women played in the development of Canadian society.

Most of the stories are quite inspiring and compelling reading. Merritt carefully describes the historical circumstances and societal expectations of women in lucid and absorbing detail. Some, such as midwife and healer Marie-Henriette Lejeune Ross, performed what were considered traditionally female roles. However, most of Merritt's characters flouted societal conventions. Eunice Williams, a Puritan captured by the Mohawks as a child, willingly remained a member of the First Nation as an adult. Dr. Maude Abbott became the world's authority on congenital heart disease but was declined a professorship at McGill University. Nuclear Physicist Harriet Brooks Pitcher died prematurely through her work on radioactivity with Marie Curie. Agnes Macphail was the first woman member of Parliament, but was ostracized by her fellow male members. Pitseolak, an Inuit, became one of Canada's best-known graphic artists despite never drawing a picture before the age of fifty-four.

Her Story II is free of some of the annoying mistakes of its predecessor. Merritt has once again produced a well-illustrated and informative book that allows children to read about women's lives that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

Kathryn Schade is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at the University of Western Ontario.

MINOR BIOGRAPHY

Martha Black: Gold Rush Pioneer. Carol Martin. Douglas and McIntyre, 1996. 96 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55054-245-1.

Martha Purdy, who later became Martha Black, was a wealthy woman from Chicago. Her husband built a chain of laundries and the Purdy family lived in style and comfort. They were part of Chicago's social elite. In the 1890s Martha

Purdy became bored with life in Chicago as, apparently, did her husband. Mr. Purdy sold his business and the couple decided to use their capital to seek opportunities in Canada's Yukon Territory. The Yukon was in the midst of its famous gold rush. The couple, with their two sons, proceeded west. The husband went off to tend to some business, read some material on the Canadian north and decided that Hawaii was more attractive. Martha Purdy disagreed, so she abandoned her husband and deposited her sons with her parents. With a couple of companions she then went north from Seattle to Skagway and proceeded via Dyea and the Chilkoot Pass into the interior of the Yukon. She finally settled in Dawson.

The trip through the Chilkoot Pass was clearly awful, but was successful. Life in Dawson was difficult, but Mrs. Purdy entered some successful business ventures and did well. She finally married George Black, a Conservative activist, who was appointed Commissioner of the Yukon. Hence, she became the first lady of her territory. In 1921 George was elected to the House of Commons for the territory. There he sat until 1935 when he was incapacitated by a mental illness of some sort and could not contest the 1935 election. So Martha stepped in and won the constituency. She held it until 1940 when her husband was well enough to run and he went back to the House of Commons.

The story of Martha Purdy/Black is of some interest, although key incidents (like why she left her first husband) are not really explained. The basic problem with the book is that Martha Black was neither particularly interesting nor really important. The result is a short biography that adds little to our understanding of Canada, with the exception that it underscores the extent to which the Yukon territory was for all intents and purposes an appendage of the United States.

The little biography is worth reading and many young readers will enjoy it. At the same time, it is a minor book written about a minor figure. It is certainly not worth \$8.95.

Donald Swainson, *Professor of History, Queen's University, is the author of Sir John A. Macdonald: The Man and the Politician (2nd ed., revised, Quarry Press, 1989).*

CANADIAN REFLECTIONS

Alexander Graham Bell. A. Roy Petrie. Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., 1983. 62 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-88902-209-7. **Herbert Richardson.** Paul Masterson. Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., 1992. 64 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-88909-339-5.

Imagination is the key to paradigm shift.

(Buckminster Fuller)

With our country being shredded by NAFTA shrapnel and globalization, undermined by various forms of separation and threatened disassociation from sea, to sea, to sea, one recalls the words of Thomas Jefferson, who bemoaned: