

Varieties of Canadians

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Storytellers' Rendezvous: Canadian Stories to Tell to Children, compiled by Irene Aubrey, Lorrie Andersen, and Louise McDiarmid. Canadian Library Association, Ottawa, 1979. 110 pp. \$15.00. ISBN 0-88802-132-1.

My first reading of this collection left me puzzled. There was something missing and I couldn't put my finger on it. Then I realized that none of the stories I had heard as a child were in the collection. Of the 55 stories and anecdotes, 27 are from the Inuit and North American Indian cultures. Of the 28 remaining, five are French Canadian and eight are from three ethnic origins - Ukrainian, Yiddish, and Trinidadian. There are also twelve poems (six by Dennis Lee).

I had heard, as a teenager, one of the anecdotes - "Killed by a Bear", but otherwise I felt I was not part of the culture represented in the collection. I was raised on the folk tales of England and the verse of Robert Service. Am I not a Canadian? I suppose the compilers felt the English fairy tales were well enough known to be omitted, and that less well-known stories of the native peoples and minority ethnic groups needed to be presented. I have no quarrel with that intention, if it is spelled out. The book brings us a good variety of stories, but it begs the question: "What is a Canadian?" The reviewer for the *Canadian Library Journal* (37: 1, Feb. 1980) seems to be comfortable with the selection: "The stories are culled from the best in our tradition". *In Review* (13: 6, Dec. 1979) found the selection "wide enough to reflect the many faces of the Canadian mosaic". I am, perhaps, an exception, although the reviewer for *Emergency Librarian* (7: 4-5, Mar.-June 1980) had the impression that the selection reflected a "very personal choice".

Two of the five "modern" stories I had seen before, but in the form of picture books; they do not survive well without the pictures. The blue illustrations for Rita Barber's *Last Summer's Blueberries*, for instance, were the strongest part of that simple story. *A Salmon for Simon*, by Betty Waterton, was written with pictures in mind: "He sat on a rock and fished. He sat on a dock and fished . . . He saw red and purple starfish sticking to the rocks. He saw small green crabs scuttling among the seaweed." The compilers say they tested their stories with children. Did they tell *A Salmon for Simon* or *Last*

Summer's Blueberries without the pictures?

Nevertheless, storytellers of many and varied styles and tastes will find things they can use in this collection of stories for telling. With each story, the editors give telling time and age suitability suggestions. The names of authors and retellers of tales however are given only on the contents pages.

The three compilers are experienced children's librarians and obviously had a good time searching for and selecting the stories, and they have provided a bibliography of sources. They have also made indexes for authors, title and subjects.

Although the book was not designed for children it could be given to them without a qualm, as it has good-sized print well placed on the page, a colourful firm card cover, and seventeen full page illustrations by Bo Kim Louie for accent.

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The Year of the Child Remembered

BARBARA J. GRAHAM

Hooray for Today, Fran Newman and Claudette Boulanger. North Winds Press, a division of Scholastic TAB, c1979. Unpaged (c. 50 pp.) \$8.95 hardcover. ISBN 0-590-07623-X.

Sunflakes & Snowshine; a Canadian Child's Year, Fran Newman and Claudette Boulanger. North Winds Press, a division of Scholastic TAB, c1977, c1979. Unpaged (c. 49 pp.) \$7.95 hardcover. ISBN 0-590-07622-1.

Special Years come and go, as do the books published to represent them. A few of perennial interest remain; such is the case with *Sunflakes & Snowshine*, published in a revised and expanded version in 1979, and its companion volume, *Hooray for Today*, - both Scholastic's contributions to the International Year of the Child. Two