

MINI-REVIEWS

The time traveller book of New France. Morris Wernick. Durkin Hayes, 1990. 32 pp., \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88627-263-6.

This addition to the "Time Traveller" series aims to make the early history of Canada accessible to elementary school children with a densely-illustrated format and brief textual explanations. History is seen through a broad range of fictional characters and settings typical of the period. The format is certainly attractive to children, but the history imparted is somewhat bland and oversimplified: though we hear about the fierceness of the Iroquois, for instance, we are not told about their savage treatment by Jacques Cartier. And one might want to encourage more awareness, even among elementary school children, of Quebec's current place in confederation than that given in the closing summary here.

Mary-Ann Stouck is an associate professor of English at Simon Fraser University where she teaches Medieval and Children's Literature. She has published articles on Middle English literature.

Grandma and the pirates. Phoebe Gilman. Illus. author. North Winds Press, 1990. 28 pp., \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-590-73220-X.

Feisty Melissa and her noodle-cooking Grandma escape the clutches of the savage pirates when they finally stop trying to escape and instead trick the pirates to leave the ship – which the girl and the old woman then quietly sail away. It's a nice twist in a bouncy adventure tale full of fun and the sort of humour five-year-olds love (Oliver the parrot must be seasick: he looks a little green).

Phoebe Gilman not only knows a good story, she knows how to write it well and draw it superbly. The plot is put forward in simple, concise language but there are numerous embellishments, like the rhyme of the pirates as they catch the scent of noodle pudding and the chant (a great skipping song) describing the contents of Grandma's cupboard. The light, lively tone of the text is matched by the humour of the drawings. Fierce pirates sleep curled up with teddy bears and, when awake,

