arouses curiosity. Alone and shabby, she is obviously "other" to a middle-class, mainstream "us." Plastic windows mean that "neighbours couldn't see in. Long Nellie couldn't see out"—an effect both physical and symbolic. When Jeremy finds a stray cat he gives it to Nellie for he intuits that neither fit within middle-class constraints. The gift results in an opportunity for Jeremy to nurture Nellie with a fire, warm socks, and tea. He decides to bring glass to replace the plastic, an action symbolic of the fact that he and Nellie now "see" each other as real human beings.

Though it's pleasant to see a male child nurturing an older female, it's perhaps unfortunate that the stereotype of "us" improving life for "them" gets reinforced. A nice reversal of the social work theme would be to see Nellie helping the materially better-off boy. Perhaps the fact that she has demystified otherness for him is enough.

Like Nellie, Finster in *Finster Frets* is an eccentric adult, an old man who playfully and ridiculously explodes old men stereotypes. He not only has a sense of humour and a witty vocabulary, but also a spry wife who is devoted to him. No sitting in rocking chairs for this couple. When Finster awakes to find a pair of birds nesting in his hair, man and wife rocket through the countryside in their night clothes, their horse running flat out ahead of the wagon. Although this fails to dislodge the birds, Finster's wife, Holly Berry, has other ingenious ideas. When they too fail, Finster himself solves the problem. He reappraises the combined talents of himself and Holly Berry and realizes that he need never fret again. These are old people whom children would be delighted to encounter either in the pages of a book or in their neighbourhood, for, like children, Finster and Holly Berry have a well-honed sense of the ridiculous.

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THE CANADIANS: TOM LONGBOAT

The Canadians: Tom Longboat, Bruce Kidd, Ed. Cathleen Hoskins, Fitzhenry & Whiteside,1992. 80 pp., ISBN 0-88902-680-7.

An athlete who competed with distinction on the international stage, Tom Longboat was little understood at home. He was also a Native Canadian, and as such was popularly viewed through the biases of his contemporaries. Bruce Kidd tries to place Longboat's life into a more balanced cultural perspective for the juvenile reader. Kidd is a former Commonwealth and Olympic long distance runner who was named by the Council of Fire of the Iroquois Confederacy as an "Honorary Warrior and Runner of Messages." He currently teaches physical education at the University of Toronto. The author's life experiences focus his approach to Longboat's life story, with principal emphasis being placed on

athletics and native experiences within the general framework of Canadian social culture. Unfortunately, these issues overshadow other aspects of the story and do not allow the reader to develop any specific empathy for Longboat.

The book's opening chapter outlines the historic place of native people in sport. Kidd explains how Aboriginals were originally perceived as having an unfair physical advantage (due to their "savage" nature) and, as such, were considered unworthy of open competition with Europeans. This historical perspective raises a number of thought-provoking questions for the reader. In telling the history of American Indian participation in sport, Kidd asks his audience to be aware of the culture in which Longboat was competing, and thus with subtlety addresses current attitudes about racism in sport and society.

The principal portion of the book consists of a chronological description of Longboat's life and career. Kidd presents a portrait of his subject as a man who has worked for the greater part of his career within white society, but who remained excluded due to the prevalent racism of the period. Longboat's place in society is contextualized when popular reaction to his ethnicity is seen to vary with his performance. When Tom is successful, European Canadians were only too eager to embrace him as a fellow Canadian; when he lost, he was dismissed as a failed native. People were all too willing to negatively stereotype Longboat. In the latter part of the runner's life, a popular myth spread that Longboat had become a panhandling alcoholic; people were willing to believe this negative stereotype, rather than to consider the more mundane truth that Longboat lived out his life in quiet dignity.

Kidd lets the technical details about the mechanics of racing and training detract from Longboat's life story. While the accounts of the races are exciting, within such a concise work they are included at the expense of characterization. The reader is told about a great runner, rather than coming to know a man called Tom Longboat. A positive feature is that the reader is presented with black-and-white photographs on every two pages, making historical contextualization quite easy. When dealing with social issues, Kidd's style is direct and easy to follow; questions are posed, examples illustrated, and conclusions briefly stated. Adolescents are exposed to attitudes which existed at the turn of the century, but are still relevant in their own lives.

Tom Longboat's biography forces people both to marvel at his athletic abilities and to confront the selective exclusion which faces so many marginalized groups. Longboat, a world-class athlete and Olympian, was considered little better than a child. He was given a cash grant of $500.00 by the City of Toronto on the stipulation that it go towards his education. While this may have been to preserve Longboat's amateur status, the implication was that Longboat required the benefits of "civilization." One should ask whether a mature white man would have had conditions placed upon his awards.

Kidd has written an interesting book which presents the reader with a vivid

description of amateur and professional athletics at the turn of the century. This work will appeal to those adolescents who enjoy sports, but is unlikely to hold the attention of those whose interests lie in other directions.

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A PIONEER SUCCESS STORY

A Pioneer Story: The Daily Life of a Canadian Family in 1840. Barbara Greenwood. Illus. Heather Collins. Kids Can Press, 1994. 240 pages, $16.95, $24.95 paper, cloth. ISBN 1-55074-128-4, 1-55074-237-X.

Imparting historical knowledge to children ages six to thirteen can be a difficult task. As a museum education officer, I am often asked for suggestions. "How do I make history *interesting* for my grade sevens?" wrote one teacher desperately. "Where can I find *good* material about pioneer schools for my son's grade two project?" a mother implored. My answer? "Turn to Barbara Greenwood's *A Pioneer Story: The Daily Life of a Canadian Family in 1840.*"

Greenwood takes a fictional pioneer family of nine through a year in which they experience almost every aspect of frontier social and economic development. A veteran children's author, Greenwood's plots engage the reader and her stories ring true. I developed such an affection for the Robertson family that I felt teary-eyed when they moved triumphantly from their log cabin into their new house.

The challenge of historical fiction lies in accurate representation. Greenwood does not explain how she researched the book, apart from a few brief sentences on the "acknowledgements" page. At times, the Robertsons seem too good to be true. For example, young Willy's deep friendship with Nekeet, his native counterpart, lies beyond the experience of pioneers I have studied. However, the formation of this unlikely (but possible) fictional friendship allows Greenwood to document the influence that first nation people had on white pioneer life, information that is important for today's scholars.

A non-fiction section counterbalances each short story. For instance, the tale, "The pedlar's visit," precedes a detailed look at pedlars and cobblers. Added to this are the fun, easy-to-do projects that stimulate children to imitate pioneer activities such as candle-making. A glossary and index provide useful information at the end of the book. Greenwood could have encouraged children to step beyond the pages of fiction by suggesting ideas for further research in communities, libraries, archives and museums.

Heather Collins' pencil drawings, neat and personable in style, evenly match Greenwood's writing. Occasionally, one wonders how closely some of these drawings resemble archival documents. For example, the handful of men shown