

example, the following excerpt is followed by a rhetorical question.

[June 12, 1833] In the evening the Lewis [family], Mrs. & Miss and all the little ones came; they stayed to tea.... While they were here Miss Holmes played [the piano] and George and Sarah sang, then we went out of doors and played Prison Bars, but before we were done they had to leave.

The question is boldfaced: "But what about toys — didn't she like to play with them?" Then comes a chatty answer that begins, "Of course the Hallen children like toys!" Then come drawings of a toyshop *circa* 1836 and a Victorian toy called a "cosmorama."

As an historian, Parry is a co-discoverer, almost a peer rather than an authoritative adult. She begins her introduction to the book by admitting that she too keeps a diary, "and it's very private!" She uses informal diction (contractions, expression like "a lot of") and can even make up a word, as when she refers to Eleanora's large, rambunctious family as "zooeey." Parry records history by presenting herself as an ordinary individual (rather than a learned historian) attempting to reconstruct the past from clues left by another ordinary individual. Parry has written the story of how Caroline Parry befriended a long-dead child and learned a great deal about history. *Eleanora's Diary* is a celebration of that child's brief life. It is also Caroline Parry's public diary of discovery.

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LIVELY HISTORIC FICTION

Yesterday's Children. Joyce Barkhouse. Illus. Kevin Sollows and Cheri Killam. Lancelot Press, 1992. 92 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-88999-522-2.

Yesterday's Children is a collection of twelve fast-paced stories set in historic Atlantic Canada. The book, which is an Our Choice selection by the Canadian Children's Book Centre, features the adventures of children and young adults from a variety of backgrounds. Sylvia Creighton, a slave, outwits the privateers who attack her master's home in "Heroine of Lunenburg." Madrine Bourge, in "Secret Mission," warns neighbouring Micmacs of an upcoming raid. In "Strange Encounter," a Beothuk boy comes in contact with Norsemen in Newfoundland. Two young German pioneers, searching for food, venture into an evil place in "The Apples of Hufeisen Bucht."

Some of the stories end with a short note on interesting aspects of pioneer life. A few stories have endings that may leave mature readers confused about the fictional/non-fictional existence of the characters. (Was there really a girl whose cow supplied milk to the Seymour Street survivors of the Halifax Explosion? Was there really a slave in Lunenburg who outsmarted the privateers?) Such questions, however, will not interfere with a child's enjoyment of these stories. Even children who are normally bored by history will be interested in this lively book.

Susan Merritt is the author of *Her Story: Women from Canada's Past*, *Her Story II: Women from Canada's Past*, and *The Stone Orchard*.