

Canadians. It includes numerous (perhaps too many) quotes from interviews, which begin each chapter. An index is notably lacking, making it difficult to use the book for future reference purposes. There is a problem of faulty listing of some references (dates, place of publication). Chapter headings are brief (some too brief) and to the point, but they don't necessarily inform the reader what each chapter actually contains (for example, a lengthy and useful description of Ukrainian-Canadian voluntary associations is submerged in Chapter 14: Nationalism).

In conclusion, *All of Baba's Children* has many weaknesses. But it also has its strengths, not the least of which are its popularization and rather unique interpretation of ethnic history, its thought-provoking commentary on changing attitudes toward ethnic identity, and its systematic de-mystification of ethnic history and multi-culturalism.

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**Charcoal's World**, by Hugh A. Dempsey. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978, 178 pp., illustrated, maps. Cloth, \$10.95.

In the mid-1890s two spectacular murders of N.W.M.P. sergeants by Indians upset the generally peaceful, if not entirely tension-free, relationship between the police and the native population. The motives for the killing of Sergeant C. C. Colebrook by Almighty Voice and Sergeant W. B. Wilde by the Blood known as Charcoal seemed inexplicable to the Mounted Police at the time and have continued to elude historians ever since. Of the two incidents the Almighty Voice affair has received far more attention, probably because it has seemed a more dramatic symbol of the extinction of native culture by the steamroller of European immigration. Hugh Dempsey, in his best work to date, explores the lesser-known tragedy of Charcoal and does a fine job of re-creating the world as Charcoal saw it. In describing Charcoal's journey to the scaffold he provides a more accurate metaphor for the demise of native culture than Almighty Voice's defiant extinction by artillery.

Romantics and purveyors of the myth of the noble savage will doubtless continue to favour Almighty Voice. The manner of his death prevented a trial which might have provided the basis for research into his character and motivation. The evidence taken at Charcoal's trial precludes his portrayal as a one-dimensional symbol of native resistance. Dempsey makes full use of this material and many other sources to draw a complex and very human portrait of his protagonist.

Charcoal emerges with his full share of human weaknesses. He and his brothers had gained a measure of notoriety among the Bloods early in life through their reckless exploits against the Cree in which they persisted even when a peace agreement was in effect between the two peoples. When the arrival of the Mounted Police brought an end to inter-tribal warfare, the family seems to have been noted among the Bloods mainly for its laziness.

Charcoal's energies were channelled into religious activities. Among other things, he belonged to the Horn Society, the most powerful religious group among the Bloods. He owned a number of sacred objects, including a Bear Knife which was believed to endow its owner with the ferocity of the grizzly.

These prized possessions and Charcoal's religious status in the tribe were threatened when he discovered that his first wife, Pretty Wolverine Woman, was having an affair with her cousin, Medicine Pipe Stem. Infidelity alone would not have been a serious matter but intercourse with a cousin was considered incest and was regarded by the Bloods with extreme distaste. Although warned by Charcoal to cease, the lovers persisted. Catching them in the act, Charcoal shot Medicine Pipe Stem neatly through the eye, killing him instantly. Charcoal knew the penalty for murder and considered himself a dead man from this point on. It only remained to arrange an appropriate warrior's death. That meant killing an individual of high status — a chief perhaps, or a Mounted Police officer — so that the victim's spirit could precede Charcoal's and announce his coming, ensuring his standing in the shadow world of the dead. Once this was accomplished Charcoal could kill his unfaithful wife and die with dignity himself.

For more than a month Charcoal eluded a massive police man-hunt while he pursued his quest. During this time he made unsuccessful attempts to kill Chief Red Crow of the Bloods, Indian Agent James Wilson, Corporal William Armer of the Mounted Police and Farm Instructor Edward McNeil, although he wounded the latter. Success came at last when he was nearly captured by a patrol after revealing his location by raping a young Piegan woman. The leader of the patrol, Sergeant Wilde, tried to arrest Charcoal who shot and killed him. This proved to be the high point of Charcoal's success. The police had already rounded up Charcoal's brothers and their families, twenty-six people in all, when they were discovered to have aided the fugitive. After the murder of Wilde the police pressured the family into active cooperation. If they agreed to help the police, all would be released and no charges would be laid for aiding and abetting. Furthermore, Charcoal's nephew Crane Chief, awaiting trial on a charge of cattle killing, would also be set free. The family agreed to this shabby bargain and overpowered Charcoal a few days later when he again sought assistance.

In contrast to the treatment of the Indian actors in the drama, Dempsey examines the character and motivation of only one of Charcoal's opponents, the officer in charge of the manhunt, Superintendent Sam Steele. The portrayal is less than successful. Dempsey's Steele emerges as a cardboard imperialist interested only in personal gain and the advancement of his career. This is fair enough as far as Steele personally is concerned but since he is the only European given more than a passing mention in the book he comes to embody White society. This is misleading because Steele was no more typical of the N.W.M.P. than Charcoal was of the Bloods. Steele performed well any task that required abundant quantities of energy, physical courage and, to a degree, organizational ability, but he had the least subtle mind of any Mounted Police officer of his generation. The police recognized his shortcomings and never promoted him beyond the rank of superintendent. The British Army, less discerning, made him a general. Dempsey talks of "Steele's Law" in the book but I can see no evidence of violation of the law or departure from normal procedure. Steele did not have enough imagination for that; he went by the book and the book did not cover situations like this one.

This is a minor criticism. The essential story is Charcoal's, not Steele's, and it is told very well indeed. Charcoal's end came not in a direct confrontation with the forces of White society. Instead, his failure to adapt to that society made him a menace to his own people who accordingly played a major role in his destruction. All the participants in the event were diminished by it. Those who prefer spotless heroes, red or white, will be disappointed by this book. Those who prefer an adult version of western Canadian history will find it fascinating, if depressing.

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