

1877, are dealt with in some detail but on this topic Carter does not bother to introduce the debates that have arisen among historians; instead she contrasts the governmental perspective at treaty time with that of Native oral traditions as projected back in time. However useful this perspective may be, the author does little to indicate how historians have dealt with these issues in the recent past, leaving the impression that all historians fall either into the "government" camp or that of the First Nations.

The strong suit of the book is that it covers a great deal of ground succinctly and summarizes current debates, but given its unbalanced coverage and moralistic tone, the non-specialist reader is still better off reading Gerald Friesen's *The Canadian Prairies*.

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Indian Fall: The Last Great Days of the Plains Cree and Blackfoot Confederacy, by D'Arcy Jenish. Toronto: Viking. 1999. Pp. 341.

The seed for the stories in *Indian Fall* was planted in the late 1950s, near a windy, tumbleweed town in southern Saskatchewan. It took root in an unlikely place: the fertile mind of a boy named D'Arcy Jenish, now a well-known Canadian journalist. The book begins on a day long ago, when Jenish remembers "standing amid tepee rings ... on the virgin prairie." The "circular patterns" in this image seem to inform every aspect of his book *Indian Fall*, which is about the history of the Plains Cree and Blackfoot Confederacy. The stories therein span almost a century, beginning before and ending not long after European settlement on this continent.

The image of the circle, which has been such a durable symbol for First Nation peoples, pervades the text of *Indian Fall*. While its shape represents all that is essential to native culture—inclusiveness, wholeness, balance and connectedness—its movement is also evoked in the narrative practices of First Nation storytellers. Anyone familiar with the plot structures of this form will know that the action in these multi-planar stories moves backwards and forwards in time. This feature of storytelling reflects the First Nation belief that past and present inform each other and that everything is connected. Of course, this makes *listening* to such stories very challenging indeed. So audiences are well-advised to know that the *form* of such a story has purpose and that that aspect of it is as important as its characters, setting and plot.

I draw attention to the form of native storytelling because Jenish seems to use it in *Indian Fall*. The stories about the four great plains chiefs, known as *Kísikowásân*, *Mistahi Maskwa*, *Astohkomi* and *Píhtokahânapíwiyin*, are circuitously ordered and interwoven with each other in the text in a manner that emulates the form of this tradition of First Nation storytelling.

Indian Fall opens with two maps illustrating the extent to which white settlement on the plains affected the lives of aboriginal tribes, before and after 1875. The introduction which follows, entitled *Dominion Over All*, tells us why Jenish

wrote this book about the Plains Cree and Blackfoot Confederacy in the first place. As a reader of Plains Cree ancestry, I was naturally curious about his motivations and interest. The subsequent stories that make up the bulk of this book are then divided into three major sections followed by an epilogue, a bibliography, captions for the photographs, and a useful index.

Part One, entitled "Buffalo Days," covers the pre-settlement period, the last great days of the Plains Cree and the Blackfoot Confederacy before the arrival of the white man. Jenish begins the first chapter with a story well-known to most Cree people from the Piapot First Nation and surrounding area: the story of the Cree boy named *Kîsikowâsân* who was captured by the Sioux and who eventually became known as Chief Piapot. Stories about the early years and development of the others (*Mistahi Maskwa*, *Astohkomi* and *Pîhtokahânapîwiyin*) are covered in this section.

Jenish does a particularly good job of telling the old stories—about how *Kîsikowâsân*, and *Astohkomi* (aka Crowfoot) got their names, for example. In fact, his prose is so vivid and so easy to read, his use of the present tense so convincing, you almost think he'd been there to witness what he describes firsthand. Of course he wasn't.

The sources for his information are well-known to scholars, and regrettably, most of them are non-native. Hence there are a few errors—the misspellings of native words and names—for example, perpetuated because they are copied from sources in which they were originally misspelled. This may not seem important to English readers, but it has become a sore point for bilingual native readers. It is now possible for English writers to check their spellings, and Jenish might have checked his Cree words, with the Cree Editing Council, the Cree Retention Committee, or the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. Cree readers of Indian Fall are bound to wonder why Jenish—who is clearly sympathetic to the native version of plains history—didn't go the extra mile because the misspellings undermine, slightly, his sincerity in presenting the Native version of this period in history.

Part One also includes the first ominous days when disease, and eventually alcohol, began to arrive on the plains. In 1837, *omikîwin* (Cree for "disease of the scabs") killed 10,000 people in the space of a few weeks.

Part Two, entitled "Freedom's End," begins with the theft of the Iron Stone also known as "Old Man Buffalo." The theft was perceived by the Cree and Blackfoot as a bad omen, forecasting war, pestilence and starvation due to the slaughter of the once plentiful buffalo herds. Soon enough, the Hudson's Bay Company staked its claim on Cree and Blackfoot lands and sold those lands to the government of Canada. In the meantime, the steady influx of settlers, merchants, surveyors and newspaper publishers continues. This is the period when treaty-signing became the only option for survival for the plains tribes who had once lived so freely in their own land, and the arrival of European settlers marks a drastic turn of events in the way the Cree and Blackfoot would live the rest of their lives. Already "utterly demoralized as a people ... [they] had an awful dread of the future" while disease spread and American whiskey traders proliferated during this period. It is also in this section that Jenish presents, clearly and successfully, the very confusing events that led the government of Canada to mistakenly believe the Cree and Blackfoot were partners with the Métis in the events leading up to the Northwest Rebellion.

Part Three, entitled "A New World Rises," describes the unfortunate outcome of that alleged *Indian* role in the rebellion which culminated in the hanging of eight Indian men and many more Métis. As Edgar Dewdney said, "The executions, [were] to convince the Red Man that the White Man now governs." Despite valiant, albeit desperate, efforts to accept that fact and adopt the white man's ways, and despite the fact that some relations with government officials were good, the influence of the Cree and Blackfoot chiefs during this period began to wane. Accelerating that decline was disease, the advance of the railway, and the rapid influx of white homesteaders. As new settlements sprung to life, the rights of natives were not even acknowledged. Ceremonies were outlawed and Indian agents took over every aspect of the "Red man's" life. White doctors arrived, coal mines were dug and churches converted "pagans" by the thousands.

Part Three also covers the trials of *Mistahi Maskwa* and *Pih̄tokah̄n̄apiwiyin* for their "role" in Riel's rebellion — trials characterized by a lack of evidence and inept, bigoted crown witnesses. Yet the "evidence" resulted in the imprisonment of both chiefs. In the end, the vision *Mistahi Maskwa* had "of hordes of white men arriving in this country and pushing the Indians out" came true.

Indian Fall is the story about four plains chiefs whose characters were tested by an other that was in direct opposition to everything they and their peoples stood for. They fought valiantly to preserve what they could of their communities, their pride and their dignity, and they led their peoples through a time of crisis and disaster, from freedom to subservience.

Indian Fall is a welcome addition to the books about this period in plains history. It will be of particular interest to readers who are new to the sometimes confusing events that took place then but will be of less interest to scholars who know this in greater detail. In fact, a number of titles listed in the bibliography Jenish includes at the end of his book have already dealt with the period in much greater detail and with lots of footnotes (sorely missing in Jenish's book). There are also books out now about this period which rely more heavily on native sources. Hence, while I wouldn't hesitate to recommend *Indian Fall*, I also recommend that readers peruse Jenish's bibliography. Two recent books that stand out are: *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the Northwest Rebellion*, by Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser (1997), and a 1999 reprint of the 1885 edition of *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear*, with a new and very insightful introduction by Sarah Carter.

The Circle closes. *Indian Fall* begins with the story about *Kisikowâsân*, who became known as Chief Piapot, and whose last words Jenish borrows for the title of the epilogue: "And I Will Be Gone." Spoken by Piapot just before he died, they were words that did indeed prove prophetic not only for the Cree and Blackfoot leaders honoured by Jenish in this book, but also for their entire way of life.

When I finished *Indian Fall*, I remembered Jenish saying that he had "learned precious little about the Native peoples" who had inhabited southern Saskatchewan where he grew up. His book then seemed to me to be a very sincere gesture to share the stories he eventually learned about the Cree and Blackfoot Confederacy as an adult and as a journalist. *Indian Fall* honours those four great plains chiefs whose names Jenish didn't know that day so long ago when he stood "amid tepee rings."

The final image in the book is a poignant one. It is the image of the circle which, after Chief Piapot's death, was placed around his grave in the same way that Chief Piapot's people had once placed circles of stone around the places where their lodges stood.

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Manitoba Medicine: A Brief History, by Ian Carr and Robert E. Beamish. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1999.

This remarkable book cogently describes the developments in medicine in Manitoba, associating them with the doctors who brought them about. The back cover of the book says it about as well as could be done. "Beginning with an account of medicine in the early days of the Red River Settlement, it follows the struggles at the end of the nineteenth century to establish the first medical school and major hospital in western Canada. It also chronicles the battle for public health, the development of health insurance and medicare after World War II, and medicine's role in fighting the 1950 flood and the polio epidemic of the 1950s." But there is much more. I want to enlarge on some of these things, tell how the book is organized, offer some criticism, and finally, give some reasons why it should be read, and by whom.

The authors are themselves medical men of some repute. Ian Carr is a professor of pathology at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba, where he also teaches the history of medicine. Robert E. Beamish is professor emeritus at the University of Manitoba and a distinguished cardiologist, who has the Order of Canada, was President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba (1960) and President of the Manitoba Medical Association (1970).

The book is organized historically, until after World War II, and thereafter by topic; little biographies of a page or two in length, interspersed here and there, help to enliven the book. Following the Introduction, "Hippocrates on the Red," which deals with early history, there are eight chapters ending with "Medicine After the Second World War." These are followed by chapters on medical education, the rise of specialties, and developments in organized medicine. There are many photographs of people and places that considerably add to the enjoyment of the book. Two appendices are worth looking at: "Population and Disease Statistics" and "Officials of Manitoba Medical Institutions." The authors include a select bibliography of 14 pages, and a select list of Manitoba medical biographies, from which they have drawn.

Progress in medical care from the 18th century on was slow until rather recently. The authors point out that most of the ailments treated by Thomas Hutchins at York Factory, around 1770, would be familiar to doctors today: "fractures, amputations, abscesses, tertiary syphilis, pleurisy, pneumonia, tuberculosis, rheumatism, scurvy [rare today], freezing, diarrhoea, and epidemics of fevers" (page 11). But the treatment would be vastly different. Nevertheless, Hutchins advocated exercise to treat depression and knew the value of vegetables (sorrel, dandelion, pigweed,