

Recently, new books, examining the period in Canadian history known as the Northwest Rebellion or *Resistance*, have emerged to provide different versions of what happened during that confusing event. This reprint of *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear* joins the growing body of research that is casting some doubt on accepted, one-sided versions of that history. And because Carter's introduction now accompanies the two Therasas' narratives, readers get more pieces of the puzzle between the covers of the same book. About the only thing that I as a reader wished had been included in an appendix, is a sample of one of the Therasas' statements to the press in which they announced they "had been subjected to no cruelties or indignities." It is a minor point, however, since it can be easily tracked down through Carter's footnotes. The 1999 edition of *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear* is enriched by Carter's clearly written introduction, making the 1885 edition a more complete story than it has been for more than a century.

### Related Reading

Carter, Sarah. *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997.

Carter, Sarah. *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990.

Fulford, Robert. "Big Bear, Frog Lake and My Aunt Theresa." *Saturday Night* (June 1976): 9-10.

Stonechild, Blair and Bill Waiser. *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion*. Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 1997.

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*Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I*, by L. James Dempsey. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1999. Pp. 123, photographs, tables.

In the 1990s, academics began to explore aboriginal veterans' experiences. The experiences of World War II Indian veterans has dominated the popular and academic treatment of aboriginal veterans. World War I Indian soldiers have received very little notice by popular writers, and even less from academics. L. James Dempsey is the only academic to examine World War I Canadian Indian soldiers' experiences; his new book *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I* is the first monograph to be published in Canada about twentieth-century Canadian aboriginal soldiers.

Dempsey aims to examine the reasons western Canadian Indians enlisted in World War I. Prairie Indians enlisted in the war because of the continued existence of a warrior ethic. His argument, however, does not stand up, primarily because Dempsey does not clearly articulate what exactly he means by warrior. The closest he comes to a definition is when he states that an experienced Indian warrior was "a brave, intelligent, and resourceful fighting man, one who attributed his success in war to the power of his spiritual protector" (4). It seems that Dempsey believes that to be a warrior meant going to battle. Dempsey does concede that many Indians enlisted in the war to escape the poverty of the reserves and because they possessed a strong loyalty to the British Crown. However, for Dempsey, the warrior ethic becomes a catch-all phrase. If a man enlists to see the world, he has an sense of adventure. His sense of adventure is due to his warrior ethic. If a man enlists because his friends have enlisted, this is also due to the existence of the warrior ethic.

Dempsey's warrior ethic is rooted in the image of the Indian of the 1800s and is connected to traditional culture. This image is highly romanticized. Associated with this image is the idea that to gain status as a man one had to aspire to be a warrior. Dempsey relies upon a source notably romanticized in its style and representation of Indians. He quotes from Dan Kennedy, an Assiniboin Chief who published numerous Indian legends in the Regina *Leader-Post* during the 1950s: "It is better for a man to be killed in battle, than die of old age or sickness." To be a warrior a man had to be spiritually gifted. In the pre-reserve era warriors used spirit helpers, dreams, visions, amulets, fasts, songs and other spiritual supports to facilitate their successes. Once on reserves men's warrior ethic "diminished in intensity" but their "propensity for war had been redirected into religious ceremonies..." (1). In Dempsey's interpretation, a man who participates in traditional ceremonies such as Sun Dances is expressing his warrior culture. Although Dempsey spends a considerable time discussing the continuance of the warrior ethic on prairie reserves, the evidence he provides does not conclusively show whether men who participated in ceremonies in the reserves era were expressing their warrior ethic or simply expressing their spirituality.

In his haste to connect the pre-reserve warrior ethic to the reserve period, Dempsey makes historically weak inferences. One example of this occurs when he describes how in the pre-reserve period, boys as part of the warrior ethic chose partners with whom they would travel and eventually accompany to war. These "selecting comrades," Dempsey claims, continued into the reserve period, as boys in residential schools chose partners with whom they would engage in games and other activities. Dempsey fails to explicitly link these two periods. Therefore, a conclusion that a continued pattern existed cannot be reached.

Dempsey makes several unsubstantiated claims. In one example, he states that in the pre-reserve era Cree names were "bestowed in the traditional way by an elder and often were warlike in nature, such as the Cree names Killed First, Man Who Shoots Straight, and Gives a Gun" (11). These names are no doubt reflective of Cree culture, but to claim that they are reflective of a warrior ethic is presumptuous. These particular names could just as likely be associated with hunting and not war. In another example, Dempsey states that during Sun Dances the old men would tell the younger men about their war exploits. This acted to keep the warrior ethic alive in the younger generation. Dempsey, however, does not cite the source of this information.

Dempsey's lack of historical analysis is also evident in his approach to the number of Indian enlistees in World War I. The Indian Department did not keep very good records of Indian soldiers, making it difficult to know the exact number of Indian enlistees. The Indian Department claims that between 3,500 to 4,000 Indians enlisted in the war. Dempsey states that this figure is incorrect. Unfortunately, considering Indian enlistment is central to his discussion, he does not venture to provide his own estimate. Instead, he simply states "an exact count will never be known" (viii). Strangely, in the conclusion he also claims that over 400 hundred western Canadian Indians fought in the war — how he arrived at this number he does not say.

The text format belies the book's actual length. The length of text, not including appendices, bibliography and the index, is eighty-four pages. If the footnotes were endnotes, as they are in most history books, the text of this book would be considerable shorter. In addition, there are several pages that are simply blank but are counted as pages. This editorial choice leaves the reader with an impression that the book is shallow.

Dempsey's footnoting in places is questionable. In some instances his footnotes divert the reader's attention. He informs the reader that at the outbreak of World



War I Indians enlisted even though fifty years had passed since they last fought. The author asserts that this demonstrates a strong traditional culture still existed. His lengthy footnote consists of several quotes from Indian agents decrying the lack of progress on the reserves and attributing this to the Indians' cultural traits: "Owing to tribal custom, the progress is slow"; "The old people have not accepted progressive ideas and old pagan ways are followed"; and "There are too many of the older and what one might call stagnationist element in this band for them to make rapid movement" (16). The statements do not substantiate Dempsey's claim that a strong traditional culture existed at the outbreak of the War. All that these statements show is that the Indian agents attributed the lack of progress to Indian cultural traits; these comments do not indicate the strength of the culture. They do, however, act to stir up an emotional response and sidetrack the reader from Dempsey's claim.

It is not uncommon for authors to cite their previous works, but Dempsey does not do so in a forthright manner. On page 46, he states that elders would have encouraged their sons to support the British Crown. In the footnote Dempsey cites Michael L. Tate's article "From Scout to Doughboy"; in that piece, Tate refers to an article previously written by Dempsey. Since this is the only reference to Tate's work, it does not add breadth to the research but simply another entry to Dempsey's bibliography.

There are redeeming features to the book. Dempsey's discussion on Indian deserters is strong. He states Indians did not desert out of cowardice but because they were either lonely or because they misunderstood army regulations. He provides several examples to substantiate his claim. Some Indian men left the army to help with family farms; these men were subsequently arrested for desertion. Other men deserted because they had become separated from friends with whom they had enlisted. The army recognized that some Indians may not have fully understood what was expected of them. In February 1917, the army made a special provision for any Indian who deserted. They would be allowed back into the army, albeit in the labour battalions, without facing disciplinary action.

Although this section is well done, Dempsey does not score a direct hit. One of the desertions he describes may not be a case of misunderstanding. Dempsey outlines the case of a man from the Birtle Agency in Manitoba who enlisted in April 1916 and then deserted in July of the same year. He was sighted shortly afterwards back on his reserve where he had married the Chief's daughter. He lied to the reserve's school principal, saying that he had been discharged due to poor health. Dempsey does not provide any additional information that would suggest that this man did not understand army regulations. The fact this man lied suggests that he may have understood something about army regulations. It could have been that he tried to hide the fact that he deserted out of fear. Granted, this is speculation. There is a significant gap in the information about this particular case to question Dempsey's claim.

Another strength is found in his use of photographs and appendices. Most of the photographs show either men in their army units or boys in cadets units. A few of the photographs do stand out from the others. One is of two Blood women and a local minister; one of the women, Sikski Mountain Horse, lost her son, Albert Mountain Horse, earlier in the war. Another photograph is a candid shot of three Blood men at Albert Mountain Horse's funeral. All the photographs, but these ones in particular, provide a stark image of Indians during World War I. One noticeable shortcoming of the photograph section is that all but one photograph are of Alberta Indians, the only exception being a photograph of a group from the File Hills Agency in Saskatchewan. There are no photographs of Indians from Manitoba.

Dempsey also includes four appendices containing pertinent information. In the

first appendix is a list of Indians who enlisted in the war. Though the list is not complete, the information is significant. The list, by agency, contains names of Indians who enlisted, where and when they enlisted, their rank, their unit, where they served, whether they were deserters, wounded or killed, and when they were discharged. The other appendices include tables detailing the land acquired from reserves utilized by the Soldier Settlement Board; the amount of Indian contributions to the Patriotic Fund by band and agency; and the amount of payments made by Indian soldiers. The latter table is somewhat confusing because it does not indicate what exactly these soldiers were paying for. Nevertheless, the appendices add to the overall information presented in the book.

Dempsey's book opens the door to twentieth-century Canadian aboriginal military history. Dempsey's argument, however, is unconvincing, his referencing questionable, and his treatment of the topic superficial. As a result, the door to this field of study is left wide open and ready for serious academic treatment.

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*Cree: Language of the Plains/nēhiyawēwin: paskwāwi-pikiskwēwin*, Jean Okimāsis and Solomon Ratt. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1999. Pp. 136.

*Cree: Language of the Plains* is a useful Cree language resource, ideal for student and reference use. The book is a reprint of previous editions which were published by the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. The book has been useful for hundreds of students of the Cree language, and undoubtedly will continue to be in its new, attractive format. The text is structured in a clear and cohesive manner. Throughout the book there are useful charts which will help the readers seeking to improve their fluency in Cree. Furthermore, the book is written in an accessible style which allows many people to read it and use it.

This book is the culmination of years of classroom use and represents an important milestone in the development of Cree as a written language. A great deal of time has been put into the collection of the words and examples, involving help from Darren Okemaysim and Doreen Oakes. Given the dialectal diversity of the Cree language and the challenge of putting the language in print, the book is indeed impressive in its results. The movement from spoken language to written language is indeed difficult given the reticence of some. However, the book provides a template for instructors working in other dialects to develop materials.

Nouns and verbs of the Cree language are treated thoroughly. The book includes useful chapters on nouns (chapter 4) and verbs (chapters 9, 12, 13, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26). However, a chart listing all of the inflections for transitive verbs would have been extremely useful for easy reference. Such sections are essential for students learning to speak Cree and those who wish to develop their fluency. Also, more stems could have been provided to help acquaint students to compounding, a pervasive phenomenon in Cree: in conversations the construction of sentences is often realized through the imaginative compounding of stems.

Context is important in language acquisition. The accompanying workbook is useful in that it helps students to learn in a contextual manner. However, there could have been more words in the vocabulary list in the text (p. 118-136), such as "internet"