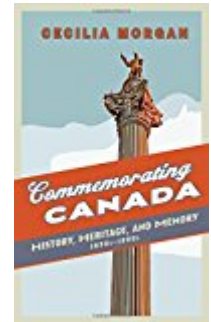


Cecilia Louise Morgan. *Commemorating Canada: History, Heritage, and Memory, 1850s-1990s.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2016. x + 207 pp. \$26.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-4426-1061-3.



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In anticipation of the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017, Cecilia Morgan offers a timely survey of commemoration in Canada. This volume contributes to the University of Toronto Press's Themes in Canadian History series, which aims to provide concise surveys for undergraduate classes that can provide the background and context to situate specialized readings or textbooks. In keeping with the constraints of this series, Morgan provides a concentrated analysis of the relationship between history and commemoration in Canada to highlight how constructions of race, class, and gender shaped efforts to create celebratory narratives of Canada's past.

In addressing the challenge of condensing over two hundred years of Canadian commemorations into fewer than two hundred pages of text, Morgan divides her study into eight chapters. After the introduction, the following two chapters offer a chronological exploration of the foundations of commemorative practices in Canada. The book's second chapter covers the 1750s to the 1870s, to reveal how Canadian statesmen invoked

historical narratives to reinforce their claims in boundary disputes, while regional historic societies collected artifacts and curated museums to assert the presence of British colonies in North America. The book's third chapter examines the 1870s to the 1920s to study the construction of monuments and the organization of commemorative pageants. The subject of these memorials and pageants focused most often on military victories, celebrating heroes such as Sir Isaac Brock or James Wolfe, to reinforce values of British martial masculinity as defining themes in Canada's historical narratives. These chapters demonstrate how local or regional efforts created a sense of shared heritage, building on the foundation of a common British imperial past.

The next four chapters of the volume explore prominent themes in Canadian commemoration. These thematic chapters explore the most prominent and popular forms of public commemoration, then contrast these with less celebrated episodes of Canada's history. The first of these chapters contrasts the proliferation of cenotaphs

honoring the dead of the First World War with the complicated narratives surrounding markers dedicated to the Northwest Rebellion or the Vietnam War. The following chapter explores the deliberations within state agencies, such as the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, to illuminate the considerations that decided whether one site, such as Fortress Louisbourg, received a federal designation and funding, while another site, such as Fort Whoop-Up, did not. These deliberations also determined which figures were chosen to commemorate Canada's social or political history, such as the abolition movement. Another chapter examines the role of tourism and reveals how the desire to attract visitors from other parts of Canada, and the world, shaped a kind of cultural nostalgia presented through souvenirs or interpretive tours. Successive history textbooks are surveyed in the final chapter to reveal the prevailing narratives that shaped Canadian students' conception of their national story. Through these thematic studies, Morgan highlights dominant and subordinate narratives of Canadian history to demonstrate how struggles over the representation of race, class, and gender have shaped the physical and cultural landscapes of Canadian commemoration.

Morgan covers a broad geographic, chronologic, and thematic scope, yet prevailing trends in Canadian commemorative practices are visible throughout the volume. War and militarism, personified in the commemoration of soldiers or statesmen, loomed large in Canadian pageants, parks, and monuments designated before 1945. Morgan's thematic chapters demonstrate the persistence of these tropes and the postwar struggle to revise British imperial narratives to better reflect the complexity and diversity of Canadian history. By highlighting the struggles between local, regional, and national interests, Morgan effectively demonstrates the importance of place as force that shaped Canadian commemoration. Not only did local considerations influence commemorative projects; Morgan argues that hegemonic com-

memorative practices often intended to rationalize the presence of British settlers in North America, while effacing or subordinating the presence of other populations.

While illuminating the entanglements of race, class, and gender in Canadian commemorative practices, Morgan draws on a strong base of sources concentrated primarily around Southern Ontario and Quebec. The commemorations of Sir Isaac Brock or the Haudenosaunee/Six Nations during the War of 1812, the settlement of African Canadians around Niagara, the sagas of Laura Secord or Madeleine de Verchères, for example, are examined from different angles through the various chapters of the volume. The commemoration of Canada's westward expansion, certainly an important chapter in the nation's history, receives little attention beyond the commemoration of the Northwest Rebellion and a brief discussion of Saskatchewan town names such as Hirsch or Esterhazy. The provincially funded Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village in Tofield, Alberta, provides a noteworthy contrast to open-air living history sites such as Fortress Louisbourg or Upper Canada Village, discussed throughout the volume. Annual festivals such as the Calgary Stampede or Edmonton's Klondike Days receive no mention, despite the prominent tensions inherent to these commemorations of Canada's frontier past.[1] The chapter on tourism could certainly benefit from a discussion of tourism in Western Canada, particularly British Columbia, where tourism boards touted the province's history of resource extraction, such as successive gold rushes, rather than the battlefields of 1812, which became prominent landmarks in Southern Ontario.[2] Ontario and Quebec offer a rich source of evidence for a longitudinal study of commemoration in Canada, but the manner in which other regions of Canada grapple with their own histories, and their place in a national narrative, offers an important avenue for further study.

Notes

[1]. See, for example, Max Foran, ed., *Icon, Brand, Myth: The Calgary Stampede* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2008).

[2]. See, for example, Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

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