

on interviews, of job prospects among young people growing up in the rapidly expanding community of Williams Lake between 1945 and 1975 reveals a gendered work experience similar to that found elsewhere in the industrialized world: young men had their pick of jobs in millwork, logging, truck-driving, and ranching and often abandoned school to earn money, while young women, even in the baby-boom generation, were confined primarily to work in part-time and service jobs.

The essays published here range too widely to enable one to draw hard conclusions about the history of rural life in British Columbia, other than to say that it is a fertile area for further study.

Indeed, most of the essays in this volume draw more upon the insights and methodologies developed in social and environmental history than upon approaches exclusive to rural history. Nevertheless, the findings are revealing, sometimes even surprising, especially with respect to the diversity of Native experiences and the relationship of people to the land. If subsequent research efforts "beyond the city limits" are as well executed as are those depicted in this sampling – the fact that many of the contributors are doctoral students or recent graduates bodes well – then the history of British Columbia and Canada will be the richer for it.

*Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada
from the Great War to the Age of Television*

Neil Sutherland

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997. 327 pp. Illus. \$21.95 paper.

By André Turmel
Université Laval

THE FIRST CHAPTER of *Growing Up* opens up with a quotation from novelist Gabrielle Roy:

The place to which you go back to listen to the wind you heard in your childhood – that is your homeland, which is also the place where you have a grave to tend. Though I choose to live in Québec partly because of the love for it which my mother passed on to me, now it is my turn to come to Manitoba to tend her grave. And to listen to the wind of my childhood." (3)

This quotation probably summarizes best the intentions and the project of the author as well as the tone of the book: to listen to the winds of childhood. Neil Sutherland's well known and recognized first book, *Children in English Canadian Society*, described the origins and development of the child-centered agenda of the reformers at the turn of the century, which explained the implementation of a set of social policies to cope with the problems confronting children in the context of industrialization and urbanization. *Growing Up* has an objective that differs considerably from the first:

it revolves around the story of the lives of children told from the children's point of view. This is what Sutherland means by 'listening to the winds of childhood': studying childhood from the children's point of view by giving them the possibility to speak.

The most interesting and stimulating aspect of the book is that children are here not studied from an adult-centered perspective or from the policies that adults think are in the child's best interests, but from their own point of view as far as the researcher can seize it in their discourse. This is not so common in the vast field of the socio-historical research on childhood. Neil Sutherland deserves public acknowledgment from the scholarly community for carrying on this project to its end. And the winds of childhood are blowing all through the book. They are emotionally charged memories. The fact that these memories could be either positive or negative appears to be less important than the phenomenon itself: children store memories of what they think are unique events and cherish them over the whole of their lives. These memories concern almost all aspects of children's lives except infancy for obvious reasons. Again what appears to be unique is the emotion that sustains and runs through these memories. The memories (and the book) are structured around certain classical themes of childhood's memories: family, friends and school.

There are children and their families, sometimes frontier families:

'We were like all primitive people and those in frontier places. learning almost everything by working with our parents. ... We learned by watching, helping, and doing. We found out that there is a skill in about everything

... even using a spade or a pitchfork'. (163) 'I really appreciated that cooperative spirit of doing something together. I really liked the family togetherness' (138)

Children and work:

'I was so happy I could have jumped for joy ... the ability to work and do a job well was what it took to be a man! ... I was now doing a man's job. I was now worth something'. 'fishing on my own during the summer holidays of 1936, when I was thirteen years old. I fished with an old boat of my father's, gillnetting on the stretch of river near our house ... I'm trying to think back on how I felt at the time. Part of the feeling was that I was now - A Man. It was pretty hard work but you had to prove that you were able to do something like that to be accepted by your peers, those who were a bit older than you'. (139) 'We used to see the other kids go by, and really hated our father for the way he kept us from ever playing with them'. (138)

Children and special occasions including Christmas and birthday rituals:

'Once I went out with Dad and on the way home we stopped at a restaurant. Dad bought me a glass of milk and a piece of raisin pie. It was the best I have ever eaten. I was never able to recapture the flavour of it'. (168) 'We went on the farm truck to Chilliwack and took the inter-urban to town. We shopped at the department store, and then went to a show with live entertainment between features. We

stayed overnight with some of Mom's relatives. On Sunday, we went to Stanley Park. My brother and I talked about the trip for years afterward'. (175)

Children and school:

'Some kids couldn't attend school regularly; they had to stay at home for work'. 'I did not attend school during threshing time'. (144) 'Getting the strap was to us the same as going to the gallows. You didn't just get the strap, you were sentenced to it.' (210) 'I cannot afford all the designer clothes that are worn by my fellow classmates. We shop at Value Village and those clothes are used and sometimes stained and ripped, and that makes me feel like dirt.' (264)

Children, foster home and domestic work:

About a 'foster sister' in a home: 'She had an awful life, with real chores, hard work, My father never spoke to her and wouldn't even look at her.' (135)

The author also introduces the concept of culture of childhood, which is something delicate to use because of the high polyvalence of the notion in the social sciences. He gets around the difficulty by avoiding giving a conceptual and abstract definition and rather gives a strong empirical description of it:

Most of the institutions in which children spent their lives ... had as their principal goal the socializing of the young ... At the same time, however, children had to learn to be children and to become members of both the

almost timeless world of childhood and their own brief generation within it. At its simplest level, this meant learning to *do* certain things." (223)

How do children become children? How is a little human being constructed into a western and Canadian child? The author proposes to visualize the culture of childhood as a series of concentric circles with the child's family at the center and the community as the outer ring. A child's entry into this culture happens when he first establishes a relationship with another child or group of children. Thus the key role played by siblings, friends, peers and neighbors in that culture: the importance of play and game, of best or special friend, of youth organizations (scouts, sports etc.). Finally this culture has much to do with the ways children experienced their childhood, how they positioned themselves in their family, school, and neighborhood.

Sutherland's purpose is not the single and exhaustive description of the culture of childhood from the point of view of children. He rather tries to outline and put into light the schema and repeated scripts of children's daily life: recurrent events and routines. Two characteristics of these scripts must be emphasized: first, children live mostly in situations that are highly structured; second, people share those scripts, they can't be individual. Scripts are usually situational – family life, school, neighborhood activity, etc. – within which personal scripts can take place: the way that a certain child behaves with siblings or walks from home to school, etc. This means that people remember with reasonable accuracy the scripts of their childhood. But how?

This leads me to the methodological question raised by this book. This perspective of the child, developed and analyzed in the book, does not come directly from children's discourse, but rather from memories and historical recollections of adults talking about their own childhood. The data come from over 200 interviews carried through the Canadian Childhood History Project at UBC, a certain number of autobiographies, and other related material. The question that I want to raise is: what is the status of these historical recollections in a context where we know from an epistemological point of view that adult memories are not an objective description of the reality of their childhood but a social construction.

The problem that arises from this 'perspective of the child' is precisely that it is a historical reconstruction from an adult point of view and standpoint. How can we put forward that an adult whose childhood happened in 1930 and is interviewed in 1990 – sixty years later – about his childhood experience could discursively express

the 'perspective of the child'? Is the problem mainly a question of accuracy of memory? What is then the status of childhood memory in the constitution of selfhood, specially in late adulthood? From an epistemological standpoint, is it possible to reach a child's perspective once one is firmly anchored in adulthood? In accordance with G.H. Mead, I shall raise the question that a historical reconstruction is always an account of the past from some person's present. What does that mean from an analytical point of view?

I am not sure that I have the answer to these questions. I think that they ought to be risen because those problems need further thinking. The preceding remarks do not diminish in any way the remarkable qualities of Sutherland's book. It is on the contrary a tribute to the tough questions raised by this research and the very creative way that the author stands up to them. Above all, the winds of childhood are blowing all through the book and this in itself is worth reading this monumental work.

Environmental Management on North America's Borders

Richard Kiy and John D. Wirth, editors

College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1998.
306 pp. US\$19.95 paper.

By Larry Pynn, *Vancouver Sun*

WHEN A TOILET FLUSHES, when a slick of oil oozes from a ship's hull, or when a dark cloud wafts from an industrial smokestack, it happens with little sense of geographic direction. Pollutants unleashed into the environment

are known to travel far afield, breaching international borders and ultimately taxing the resolution of more than one nation to clean them up.

With that thinking in mind, *Environmental Management on North America's Borders* is a collection of ten