

cal citation. It is the place "where every prospect pleases but only man is vile" (305).

The editors are to be congratulated on the meticulous job they have done. Their work is impressive in its annotation, handling of the text, and the thorough and complete Introduction. I do have one small quibble from the perspective of the researcher. The editors decided to leave Dawson's numerous spelling mistakes, grammatical slips, and other such quirks unchanged and unnoted. This makes sense, but it is difficult for the researcher to be absolutely sure that every mistake he runs across is really Dawson's. Typographical errors have been known to occur. Still, there would have been no easy way around the problem. As a whole, the work is of such a high standard that it could serve as a model to others engaged in similar ventures.

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*They Call Me Father: Memoirs of Father Nicolas Coccola*, edited by Margaret Whitehead. Recollections of the Pioneers of British Columbia, Vol. 7. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988. Pp. 231. \$29.95 cloth.

By editing the memoirs of Father Nicolas Coccola on the 1880s to 1930s, Margaret Whitehead has presented students of British Columbia history with a valuable primary source. This priest of the Roman Catholic Oblate order laboured briefly in the Fraser Valley, Kamloops, Nicola, Okanagan, and CPR construction camps; then for eighteen years in the Kootenays; and, after that, for over thirty in the northern interior. As Whitehead's preface indicates, Coccola's memoirs were not written to defend or burnish his own image. He composed them at the request of his superior. For this reason, she argues, they throw "more light on Indian/white relations than the exceptional lives of the 'great men' of mission history." Coccola's memoirs shed light, too, on other neglected areas of British Columbia history such as the multicultural population of frontier communities and the territory outside coastal urban industrial development. His work and his recollections were limited by the missionary's paternalism toward native peoples. But, as Whitehead comments, "Indians always have determined their religious future. . . . while some native peoples have bitter memories of some missionaries and certain aspects of their schooling, they have affectionate and grateful memories of others." They called Coccola "Father."

Whitehead provides a fairly comprehensive introduction for this historical document. She outlines Coccola's biography from his youth in Corsica to his retirement in Smithers and then discusses some of the major themes and issues in his memoirs. Interpretations follow her previous research on the Oblate Cariboo mission and interviews for the Sound Heritage Series. She tells how the Oblate order, established in France in the early 1800s, had, by the 1840s, sent missionaries to central Canada, the Red River country, and the Oregon territory. She explains traditional Roman Catholic practices in her text or in references. She notes the interdenominational rivalry and the intradenominational rivalry of missionaries on the Pacific slope in the late nineteenth century. Also explored is the Indian response to missionary work, including conflict over lands and resources — such as Coccola's position regarding Kootenay lands and mines and the Fort George Indian reserve. As regards Indian residential schools, such as those Coccola founded at St. Eugene's and Lejac, standard interpretations are synthesized. Whitehead breaks new ground, however, by posing questions about the role of religion and religious leaders like Coccola in the history of railway and resource industry labour.

Coccola's memoirs raise more questions about the historical interpretations on British Columbia. First, why did Coccola's superior, Bishop Bunoz of Prince Rupert, not authorize publication of his memoirs in the 1930s? Economics and the politics of the bicultural Oblate administration in Canada played their parts. Bunoz was also reluctant to publish documents which did not directly promote Bishop Paul Durieu as a saintly man and the founder of the Oblate mission system in British Columbia. Was Bunoz pleased that Coccola referred to Alberta's Father Lacombe as a mentor and to American Jesuit missions as models? Did he like allusions to conflicts between Oblates and problems with Indian missions?

Like Coccola's 1930s superiors, some historians will be troubled by the contradiction between the assimilationist goals of Oblate missions and the field Oblate practice of syncretism or allowance of native and Catholic traditions together. In Coccola's recollections natives accepted Roman Catholic ceremonies as complementary to their own, persisting in traditions such as Kutenai feasts "in plain air" at the Catholic Christmas gathering at St. Eugene's. Coccola's use of English-language residential schools as centres for tribal catechesis in native languages fits neither the missionary nor the secular version of residential school history.

Perhaps there are other troubling aspects of Coccola's memoirs for scholars. Those who apply the label "Jansenist" to early Oblate missionaries may be disconcerted by Coccola's frequent distribution of the eucharist to native

communities and his emphasis on devotional practices such as Christmas crib scenes.

Of even greater concern to religious or secular historians of British Columbia would be the possible use of Coccola's memoirs to reconstruct a day in the life of an ordinary Oblate priest in the field. When we do try to reconstruct one, we find that priest working on a roof or on a farm, or healing the sick, or travelling by horseback as often as we see him actually evangelizing. And when Coccola did evangelize he often ministered to immigrants such as Ukrainians, attempting to give them services in their own language, a practice discouraged by the Roman Catholic hierarchy of the 1930s; or he preached to Kutenai along the border or in the United States. The Kutenai might be seeking a change from Jesuit Rocky Mountain missions or continuing their freedom to move as they wished in their own territory.

The most intriguing question raised by the memoirs of Coccola is their omission of Leon Fouquet, his predecessor in the Kootenays, and A.-G. Morice, his predecessor at Stuart's Lake. As their contemporary and as a member of the Oblate provincial council, Coccola had "the goods" on both. Yet on Fouquet he says little directly and on Morice almost nothing. He does not tell us that Fouquet left British Columbia for Alberta owing to disputes with Bishop Durieu in 1887 and did not return until after Durieu's death in 1899. On Morice, the self-advertised great Catholic missionary of New Caledonia, Coccola provides damning condemnation of neglect of duties from translation of prayers through repair of churches. Nor had Morice provided English-language schools as the Carrier requested. It was Coccola who brought the nuns who would do the major work of Catholic mission schools and hospitals.

The comparison of the genial, semi-retired Coccola writing his memoirs from his post as chaplain for the hospital in Smithers while receiving regular visits from natives and settlers, and the exiled savant Morice publishing his histories himself from his house in Winnipeg with only the occasional caller from British Columbia, is one Bishop Bunozy did not want explored. It is one historians have not yet been able to explore. Margaret Whitehead's edition of these recollections provides a basis for comparison of the ordinary and the exceptional pioneer Oblate missionary.