

They (the Chinese) were the most friendliest people you ever wished to meet. When we were children going to school, the vicar once came to us and said, 'Oh, you shouldn't play with them. They will be mean to you.' I said, 'No way, they were so friendly.'

We were scared, I'm telling you, in case we got too involved with them (the Chinese). In our own family we were not allowed to use the word 'Chink' in referring to the Chinese. We must say 'China-man' or 'Chinese'. That sort of phraseology was not acceptable. But lots of people used it. (p. 76)

In hearing of the difficult lives of these miners, the reader comes away with the impression that he has truly experienced their deep suffering and trying social adjustments on Vancouver Island.

One difficulty with a book based mainly on oral history sources is to convey to the reader a context for the various events about which the speakers are talking. In *Boss Whistle*, unless he is familiar with British Columbia history in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the reader cannot place the events of the mining areas in context. What were labour relations like elsewhere in British Columbia at the time? What were the people's attitudes towards the miners' lot? How typical were the Dunsmuirs in their mode of operation?

This latter question is particularly relevant because the Dunsmuirs come off as the villains of the book. They are dead, however, and cannot give interviews. All the recorded observations are made by miners, whose only knowledge is what they saw in their daily work at the mines. We have no idea as to the difficulties, if any, the Dunsmuirs faced in getting and shipping coal. The reader goes away with a one-sided view of the mining experience. This is a problem facing all oral historians dealing with labour history; businessmen and managers, even if they are available, are generally loath to give interviews, fearing the critical use of their words will hurt their reputations. The individual labourer has no such fear and speaks with relative anonymity.

Boss Whistle poses the problem of how much background information and how balanced an interpretation a book based primarily on oral sources can provide. Without sufficient background from textual sources, taped quotes become unsubstantiated opinions and observations. It is the responsibility of an historian to provide sufficient evidence to permit a balanced view of an event or issue. With only one side of an argument the reader is left with only half the story.

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Loot: The Heritage of Plunder. RUSSELL CHAMBERLIN. New York: Facts on File, 1983. 248 p. ISBN 931-828-29-5 \$19.95.

Russell Chamberlin recites a long list of archives, galleries, libraries, and museums, as well as a good number of estates of the more affluent segments

of our society, that are filled with the cultural property of other civilizations. At the same time, he reminds his readers that the original homes of these records, paintings, sculptures, and other objects stand bare of the heritage they once harboured. The vacant sites are a poignant witness to the cultural plunder that uprooted these treasures and sent them to a seemingly endless exile.

Chamberlin is the latest of the many voices that have been trying to focus public attention on the phenomenon of cultural plunder. His deep interest in conservation, medieval history, and social justice made him a natural ally of old as well as newly emergent nations — both culturally exploited and impoverished — in their quest to establish or reestablish their national identities. While there is no ringing declaration in his book, Chamberlin implies, through the examples he cites, that national identity is closely linked to the cultural heritage of a society. There are overtones of Sir Arthur Doughty's famous dictum about the care of archives and the extent of civilization — although conservation takes a backseat to repatriation. The quotations are well chosen to support his mission. Citing Lord Montague of Beaulieu, Chamberlin asks: "Are Her Majesty's [Britannic] Government aware of the very deep feelings of the Ashanti people about the return of . . . sacrosanct objects — which are supposed to contain the soul of the whole people?" In a related context, that of Nigeria's efforts to repossess the treasures of the Kingdom of Benin, which are presently held in various European museums, Chamberlin quotes from an official African statement: "These antiquities are the only authentic objects which illustrate and illuminate the course of our development. This is vital to us as a people as it enables us to establish our identity, and hence restores our dignity in the community of nations."

While the domain of the archives is not given the same attention in the book as that of paintings, artifacts, and *objets d'art*, Chamberlin, in support of his thesis, has dedicated a chapter to the efforts of the people of Antigua to repatriate the Codrington Papers. Although Chamberlin does not note it, there is a parallel between the Codrington Papers and the records of the Hudson's Bay Company. Both were assembled and owned by major corporate enterprises with commercial and administrative involvements in Antigua/Barbuda and Canada, respectively. Each collection represents a unique record of each country. Both collections were assembled at the headquarters of the corporations in England. Reading about the efforts of Antiguans to gain custody of the papers evokes the feelings of Canadians about the HBC records. Canada was successful largely because the Bay demonstrated a responsible attitude; Antigua lost its heritage to a private collector because it could not raise enough cash to compete successfully at an auction. The cry of Antiguans for their "soul" is repeated by other emergent nations throughout the world.

Chamberlin echoes these cries, but his examples of plunder tend to focus on fine art. Why not the world of the archives? After all, according to Doughty, "archives are the most precious" of all national assets. They, too, have been confiscated, plundered, and often destroyed. The famous Alexandria library (archives) was assembled by successive Pharaohs through indiscriminate confiscation of records from Levantine temples and palaces. Napoleon, at the height of his meteoric rise, ordered the removal to Paris of all the principal

archives of Europe that were under his dominion, including the historical records of the Vatican, Venice, and Spain. Adolf Hitler, the master plunderer of Europe, had a morbid fascination with Hebraic manuscripts. While he killed millions of Jews and destroyed thousands of synagogues, he carefully collected and preserved Judaic records in his East Prussian salt mines. When the Soviet armies uncovered this loot in 1944, they promptly sent it to Leningrad for "safe-keeping." That was forty years ago. The libraries and archives of Berlin, Budapest, Prague, Paris, Vienna, and Warsaw are still waiting for the return of these manuscripts, even though their provenance is easily identifiable.

Inevitably, the dispossessed owners have raised a cry for repatriation of their property. Chamberlin joins the chorus of indignation and makes a plea for redress of injustice. In answer to Giovanni Belzoni's frank statement that "my purpose was to rob the Egyptians of their papyri" and Wallace Budge's claim that "archaeological treasures were safer in the keeping of a great museum than in the hands of ignorant 'natives,'" Chamberlin cites the late President Sadat's plea "that the mummies starkly exposed in countless museums should be given decent burial."

Sadat's plea, and the impassioned rhetoric of numerous other advocates of repatriation cited in the book, appear to have fallen on deaf ears. Or have they? Albeit slowly, cautiously, and reluctantly, some rehabilitation of alienated heritage property is taking place. The treasures of the Castle of Wawel, the Crown of St. Stephen, and the captured German records of the Second World War have already been repatriated. Recent removals of the archives of the PLO and the Government of Grenada are under public scrutiny and their restitution has been promised. UNESCO is lobbying for an international code of laws that would prevent future exploitation of cultural property and redress the wrongs of the past. Chamberlin notes the work of the UN's World Intellectual Property Organization and UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin. However, he overlooks an earlier effort by the League of Nations to address the same problem. In 1932, the League of Nations adopted a resolution of its International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation requesting the member states to "assist each other to regain objects removed from national collections or exported secretly. . . ." In comparison, the UNESCO resolution is more circumspect; in the words of Chamberlin, "the voice of the lawyers blurs what, to the layman, is the clear voice of justice."

Apart from the moralistic tone of the book, *Loot* contains fascinating accounts of clandestine adventures resulting in the removal from Greece of the "Elgin Marbles," the wholesale export from Egypt of archaeological objects (including the insidious smuggling of the bust of Queen Nefertiti), the "abduction" of the Stone of Scone, the odyssey of the Crown of St. Stephen, the exploitation of the Amerindian heritage, the looting of the "Gold of Ashanti," the "acquisitions" of Napoleon and Hitler, and the saga of the Codrington Papers. The accounts are well written and thoroughly documented.

The book, however, is not a comprehensive treatment of the subject of plunder of cultural heritage. The lootings that took place before 1800 are ignored: the Greek and Roman conquest of the Orient, Gothic and Frankish incursions into

Rome, Viking forays into coastal areas of Western and Mediterranean Europe, the Spanish conquest of Mexico and Peru, the Thirty Years' War, and, more recently, exploitation of East Asia by European powers. All these upheavals resulted in vast migrations of cultural property. No doubt Chamberlin is aware of these phenomena, but the sheer magnitude of them probably prevented their treatment in the book.

Archivists all over the world who are aware of and deplore the displacement of national collections from the regions where they were created will applaud Russell Chamberlin's message. Archivists understand and appreciate the importance of archival heritage in the development and sustenance of national identity. More than any other cultural property, the archives are the *collective memory of the nation*. Without this memory, a nation loses its identity and becomes but a place on the map, a Kingdom of Ashanti, to use Chamberlin's example, with no recorded past — in short, in the words of Lord Montague, a people with no soul.

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Canadian Women on the Move, 1867-1920. BETH LIGHT and JOY PARR, eds. Toronto: New Hogtown Press and The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1983. 300 p. ISBN 0-919940-18-8.

Canadian Women on the Move, 1867-1920 attempts to examine the life cycle of women from childhood through old age. The volume is a compilation of historical documents which have been selected to reflect the burdens and social expectations of women as defined by the prescriptions of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Canada. Editors Beth Light and Joy Parr have uncovered a substantial amount of rich, enlightening, and often obscure archival material in diaries, memoirs, letters, and unpublished essays. Their exhaustive supply of primary sources has been painstakingly gleaned from the records of various archives across Canada. Great care has been taken to include historical material that reflects a large cross-section of the female experience from all regions of the country.

The editors present the raw material to challenge the traditionally accepted account of women's experience. The selected excerpts point to the need of a more realistic and long overdue reconstruction of the past. Indeed, it is not difficult to understand the shift toward reclaiming a past which has for so long been neglected. Current interest in the actual experiences of women leads historians to look more to the letters, diaries, autobiographies, and oral testimony created by women themselves than to sources about women created by men. Chronicles of actual experiences are the mainstay of this volume. This approach challenges the conventional framework for interpreting the history of women that ignores the economic status and role of women both inside and outside the home. Unfortunately, the framework of the life cycle as put forth in this book does not go far enough in addressing the economic realities which