

Dictionnaire des écrits de l'Ontario français, 1613-1993 Edited
by Gaétan Gervais and Jean-Pierre Pichette

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benefit of dead ancestors (p. 95). This interpretation of Wendat history may not be acceptable to historians and archaeologists who hold a less ideological and more materialist interpretation of the human past. Whether or not you agree with Seeman about the importance of Wendat spirituality and the dead to their culture and history, *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead* offers a well-written, concise narrative of the relationship between the Wendat and French in early seventeenth-century Ontario, with rich insights into the lives of Jean de Brébeuf and his interaction with certain Wendat (e.g. Chiwantenhwa and

Tonnerawanont), all agents of history. The book leaves you with a desire to explore the published literature on seventeenth-century encounters of Aboriginals and Europeans, beginning with Seeman's list of suggested readings. It would be an excellent text for university and college courses on Aboriginal history in Ontario and would be a welcome addition to the library of any historian interested in early seventeenth-century North America.

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Dictionnaire des écrits de l'Ontario français, 1613-1993

Edited by Gaétan Gervais and Jean-Pierre Pichette

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In keeping with the celebrations surrounding Acadie's and Québec's 400th anniversaries, the 1610 passage of Étienne Brûlé in modern-day Ontario is also commemorated, by the publication of the *Dictionnaire des écrits de l'Ontario français (DÉOF)*. For the first time, all French-language writings produced in Ontario are indexed, from Samuel de Champlain's account of his 1613 passage up to numerous writings of 1993.

An undertaking of such scope is not without a political objective, in this case, that of promoting "*la nature et l'ampleur du patrimoine des écrits de la francophonie ontarienne*" (p. vii). Benedict Anderson believed that public memory is necessary to the consolidation of a nation and the *DÉOF* emerges as the pinnacle of the efforts undertaken by the Société historique

du Nouvel-Ontario, the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, and since the 1970s, a few publishing houses and periodicals. One might be surprised to find Lionel Groulx, Robert Rumilly or Pierre Trudeau amongst obvious Franco-Ontarian authors such as Patrice Desbiens, Germain Lemieux, Séraphin Marion, and Daniel Poliquin. If the first group did not consider itself Franco-Ontarian, the authors argue, their activity during their residence or their interests still contributed to the advancement of French culture in Ontario.

This monk's task of identifying, finding and summarizing 2,537 essays, histories, novels, songs, and voyageur accounts took almost thirty years to accomplish. In 1982, Université Laurentienne historian Gaétan Gervais and ethnologist Jean-

Pierre Pichette, along with a team of volunteer professors, assistants, and librarians, set out to develop an Ontarian equivalent to the *Dictionnaire des oeuvres littéraires du Québec*, which, in this case, would include writings from all disciplines. As it is often the case, funding dictated the time frame and limits of this endeavour. Although the Ontario Ministry of Civic Affairs and Culture awarded the group a \$250,000 grant in 1986 under the condition that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council contribute an equivalent sum, the latter never considered the proposal of a *DÉOF* worthy enough for it to match the funding. Giving up their efforts in 1992 and receiving the provincial grant independently, the group abandoned their original ambition to include articles, a thematic index, and analytical introductions. Gathering the remaining summaries then took 18 years, a period that could have lasted longer had writings to the present been included.

As Gervais has written elsewhere, the *DÉOF* argues that the 'Quebecization' of French Canadian nationalism in the 1960s caused Franco-Ontarian society to provincialize its identity. If "*l'Ontario français cesse alors d'être la partie ontarienne du Canada français pour devenir la partie française de l'Ontario*" (p. x), Gervais and Pichette nonetheless admit that it remains difficult "*de démêler la part respective de l'Ontario et du Québec chez un individu qui se dit "Canadien français de l'Ontario"*" (p. xvi). The Franco-Ontarian community did succumb to and engage itself in a redefinition in the 1960s and 1970s. However, this transformation from French Canadian to Franco-Ontarian was not linear. In contrast to Acadie, the majority of French Canadian settlers arrived in Eastern and Northern Ontario in the late nineteenth

and early twentieth centuries, well after the early foundations of Détroit (1701) and Penetanguishene (1828). From 75,000 in 1871, they became 200,000 in 1911 and to 600,000 today. French Ontario's memory is a product of the second half of the twentieth century and its historical trauma (Regulation 17) pales in comparison to the Acadian Deportation. It also differs from the Acadian population in its profound links with Québec: today, a full quarter of Franco-Ontarians were born in *la Belle province*, as were half of the authors in the *DÉOF*. The fact that Ontario acts as a borderland with the North American concentration of Francophones does not diminish French Ontario's existence in any way, but it does explain the latter's relative fragmentation in comparison with Acadie. The *DÉOF's* cover combines white, royal blue, and a bit of green, which makes the intertwining of French colonial colours and those of the adopted province appear as a fitting choice, whether it was conscious or not.

The *DÉOF* will become a reference for researchers and amateur historians interested in Ontario or French Canadian history. Finding historical texts without an author's name or having the luck that a title corresponds to one's interest will remain a challenge due to the absence of a thematic index. The exclusion of writings since 1993 is also unfortunate. Even so, patient researchers will find a wealth of writings on nationalism, religion, labour, exploration, identity, women, families, and politics in the *DÉOF*. With this product of highly dedicated scholars, the misconception that a Franco-Ontarian intellectual tradition has not existed is finally laid to rest.

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