
BOOK NOTES/CRITIQUES BRÈVES

Smith, Mackay L. *The Jews of Montreal and Their Judaisms: A Voyage of Discovery*. Montreal: Aaron Communications, 1997. 213 pp.

This is an account of the “voyage of discovery” taken by Mr. Smith, a non-Jewish Montrealer, in order to understand his fellow Montrealers who defined themselves, or were defined by others, as Jews. On his voyage, we see evidence of prodigious amounts of research as well as interviews with dozens of informants. The material is presented succinctly, with numerous references for those who wish to take their own voyage of discovery a bit farther. There are a few inaccuracies, in which the author did not sufficiently assimilate the information with which he was presented. One example is his statement that Jews were allowed to settle in Upper Canada in 1803 (p. 16). There was no time when Jews—as such—were forbidden to live in Upper Canada. A second example is his statement that the Talmud is made of Mishna and Tosefta, rather than Mishna and Gemara (p. 51). For the most part, however, the material is fairly accurate and may well serve those readers who desire to embark on their own voyage of discovery of Jews and Judaism in Montreal and Canada as a starting point.

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Ravvin, Norman, ed. *Not Quite Mainstream: Canadian Jewish Short Stories*. Calgary: Red Deer Press, 2001. 246 pp.

Not Quite Mainstream is a fine well-selected collection of short stories that gives the reader a broad perspective on the adaptation of Jewish immigrants to life in Canada. While this experience might seem similar to that of American-Jewish

immigrants, it is, in fact, different. One reason, of course, is that Canada was (and is) a part of the British Commonwealth; another is the strong French influence. Still, Canadian Jews are much the same as Americans, uprooted from their lives in the European ghettos. Every immigrant in both countries needed to find a way to adapt to life in the New World, to put down roots, and to coexist with those who had arrived previously. These stories tell us about the Jewish adaptation to Canada, and even more so, about Canada's adoption of its new Jewish community and citizens.

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