

and that the Liberals' support increased in Ontario. Obviously not everyone was seduced by the loyalty cry. The weakest section of this otherwise excellent book is the author's contention that the leaders of the anti-Jesuit movement were involved because they believed that this was another area in which their social and moral reforming zeal was needed. The fact that some of the fifty-three identified leaders had earlier been engaged in reform activities, or would be involved in the future, is not sufficient proof that the ERA was a manifestation of a reforming impulse. At best, more research on this topic is needed.

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GEORGINA BINNIE-CLARK. — *Wheat and Women*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979. Reprint edition with introduction by Susan Jackel. Pp. xxxvii, 313.

Wheat and Women is an autobiographical account of the life of a woman farmer in western Canada in the years 1905-8, which was first published in 1914. In the introduction Susan Jackel gives a fuller account of Binnie-Clark's life than has hitherto been available but despite diligent research by Jackel there are still many blanks. Some of Jackel's information comes from Binnie-Clark's earlier book, *A Summer of the Canadian Prairie*, which is difficult to use for this purpose because of its fictive style. It is clear that Georgina and her sister came in 1905 to visit their brother on his homestead at Lipton, Saskatchewan. They found that he had accomplished little. Georgina was appalled by his failure amidst the success of his neighbours and her pride was hurt by the contempt which the established farmers had for him and other "ne'er do-well" Englishmen like him. Determined to prove that she could succeed where her brother had failed and because she loved the country, she bought a farm with its standing crop near Fort Qu'Appelle, despite her brother's warning that she would be "the laughing stock of the country, if you could do it, which you can't" (p. xxvi). *Wheat and Women* begins in 1905 and at harvest time narrates Binnie-Clark's farming experiences to the Fall of 1908, at which point there was promise, although not certainty, that her venture was going to succeed.

Binnie-Clark describes and comments upon farming methods, type of seed used (and how it was cleaned), machinery available and purchased, prices for the crop, the cost of everything from a shovel to lumber for a veranda, even a balance sheet for the year 1906. This wealth of detail may prove a little monotonous for the average reader but should be a valuable source to the historian of agriculture or a social historian looking for information about western farm life at the turn of the century. The book is an even more important source as an account by an exceptionally perceptive person of the trials and tribulations of a woman farmer. Of course, she faced the same hardships as male farmers: crops lost to frost and hail, wild oats, broken machinery, scarcity of labour and prairie fire. But because she was a woman her experiences were different. She sees as a primary cause of the extreme difficulties of her first three years the fact that as a woman she was not entitled to a homestead. Therefore, she began with a heavy debt. Without that she would have had capital to progress more quickly and farm more

wisely. She could, for example, have avoided the problems she had with wild oats if she could have afforded to leave her largest field fallow the first year. Homesteads for women became an important issue for her, so she was heartened to discover during a visit to Winnipeg that other women had already taken up this cause. She doubts its success, however, because women were constantly running up against the male view that women can't farm. Good labour was a problem for all western farmers who did not have large families of working age but for a woman there was the additional factor of male pride. When she offered advice to one green hand who had ploughed a furrow which meandered like an English stream, he replied, "Boys Alive! I guess I know more about ploughing than any woman." (p. 220) Not only her own inexperience, but the fact that she had to do the woman's work and her inability physically to do some of the men's work, made her more dependent on hired labour. She seems to have resented the indoor work particularly when it involved cleaning up after men. "No one can make it clear", she writes, "the labour and energy which women distribute looking after the personal needs of men who never give a thought to the work they are creating but will spend hours meditating on the work they can evade" (p. 227). However, some of her problems, as she herself admits, were the result of her own personality. She acted impulsively, was too fiercely independent, and was easily annoyed by unfamiliar customs which she saw as crude. She found it difficult to get along with hired help, even those whose work was close to satisfactory and her pride made it difficult to admit fault or accept neighbourly assistance. She does acknowledge gratefully the help she received. For example, during her first bitterly cold winter when she had exhausted herself cutting firewood from a bush lot in 40 degree below zero weather, a neighbour hauled it in and cut it, "bucking as much in five minutes as [she] could get through in an hour" (p. 197).

In contrast to the hard realities of running a farm in a harsh land, Binnie-Clark reveals her love of the country in almost lyrical passages praising nature and the healthful outdoor life. Despite her criticism of the country's institutions, banks, railways and grain companies, and her dissatisfaction with the homestead law, she believed in the future of Canada. "Whichever way one tests her values Canada is rock bottom. If she can hit hard, she strikes to urge and wounds to heal. True daughter of a new day, she had the energy and will power of health and strength and self-knowledge" (p. 312). One purpose of her book was to encourage other women to follow in her footsteps, with their eyes open to the strenuous task they faced; she concludes that "never has the opening for women on the land in Canada been so easy or so full of promise as just now" (p. 312).

The book was well worth reprinting. It is a rich source of many aspects of social history, and it is an entertaining narrative despite the wealth of detail. Its accessibility will be appreciated by both specialists and non-specialists in the field of women's studies.

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