

# Teaching History in Canadian High Schools: The Revival of an Endangered Subject, 1960-2010

## Speaking Notes

### Slide 1: Title

Thirty-five years ago a cocksure, brash 29-year-old Ontario high school history teacher at Aurora High School, north of Toronto, issued a long-forgotten manifesto, disguised as a teacher's guide, and issued in defence of a subject being crowded out of the curriculum. Concerned about the rise of the "New Social Studies" and troubled by the Canada Studies Foundation's promotion of an integrated social sciences curriculum, he saw the core subject of high school history as an endangered species. Armed with an M.A. in Canadian and American History and a "Type A Specialist" certificate, only five years into his career, he had the temerity to declare that, unless the teaching of the subject was revitalized and invigorated with current historiographic debates, it may become "the Latin of the '80s."<sup>1</sup> That Canadian high school history evangelist was me. Oh, how I've changed.

### Slide 2: Rediscovering Canadian History

High school Canadian history survived, much like a hardy perennial, but in doing so became barely recognizable, occupying a smaller and smaller patch of the garden. A "New Social Studies" curriculum displaced the self-standing subject and left high school history teachers in a quandary.<sup>2</sup> Since "the defeat of fascism and the triumph of American modernity," as OISE historian Ruth Sandwell has pointed out, teachers of Canadian history survey courses abandoned "a single unified narrative" in favour of "histories that are more complex, varied and contested."<sup>3</sup> Social history gradually became the new orthodoxy, even in high schools. Almost

every topic was now approached as a “potted plant” and viewed through the lens of the new “multiple identities” categories of analysis – class, race, gender, and ethnicity. Sliced into smaller units of study --- and in the absence of an integrating narrative-- the subject became far more complex, increasingly “skills-driven,” and, rather surprisingly, less appealing for high school students.

The spread of the “New Social Studies,” reinforced by the gradual demise of the grand narrative in university history courses, has exerted a tremendous impact over the past five decades on the teaching of high school history. This paper attempts to assess what really happened and its impact on the vitality of the subject in the schools. It will explain the mixed legacy of “romantic progressivism,” the “skills-mania” curriculum initiative, and the fragmentation of the history-centred social studies curriculum. It will examine the critical role of the “Canadian History Crisis” of the 1990s which generated national surveys and advocacy books, further accentuating the gap between high school practitioners and academe. While the focus here is on Canada outside Quebec, Jocelyn Letourneau has alerted us to a strikingly similar debate in Quebec about the future of history and memory in that society.<sup>4</sup> Building upon the work of Sam Wineburg (1991 and 2001), Peter Seixas (2000), and Penney Clark (2011),<sup>5</sup> the paper will also review recent initiatives to infuse “historical thinking” into the curriculum. It concludes with a look at the growing chasm separating academic research from popular interests reflected in schools, and the potential for *rapprochement* raised by Christopher Dummitt’s 2009 call in *Contesting Clio’s Craft* to “move beyond inclusion” in teaching history at both the university and high school levels.<sup>6</sup>

**Slide 3: Core Textbook Era - History is King**

History was once king of the social sciences in Canadian high schools. In Ontario, high school history experienced its zenith, according to the late Bob Davis, in the period 1960 to 1967, when the academic curriculum consisted of five consecutive years of study, “uncontaminated by geography, grassroots citizenship, or progressive education!”<sup>7</sup> In his strongly opinionated, passionate book, *Whatever Happened to High School History?*, he tracks the fortunes of the subject discipline from 1944 to 1990 through a content analysis of a series of history teacher magazines, from *The History News Letter (1944-64)* to *The History and Social Science Teacher (1974-1990)*. That analysis demonstrates how history “moved from the centre to the margin” of the curriculum, effectively, in Davis’s graphic description, “burying the political memory of youth” in Ontario.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Slide 4: Progressive Education and Alberta Social Studies**

History lost its primacy in the Canadian West much earlier than in Ontario. In Alberta, Social Credit governments, as Amy von Heyking has shown, exhibited a populist streak and showed a remarkable proclivity for “progressive” educational initiatives.<sup>9</sup> Beginning in 1934, the Alberta Department embraced citizenship education and introduced a new species, the social sciences, into the curriculum. A cadre of progressive educationists, led by Hubert C. Newland and Donald Dickie, favoured “social studies” and gradually succeeded in eliminating self-standing history courses in the province’s high schools. Some had imbibed progressive ideas about education in American graduate programs, others simply brought an elementary school focus on the student rather than the subject to their work. Alberta’s progressive reformers were highly critical of history as it was taught in schools and considered it largely irrelevant for children. They espoused a new philosophy of history, taught within the context of social studies. Whatever the intent, it resulted in the gradual abandonment of history, first in elementary levels,

then altogether in the high school curriculum.<sup>10</sup> That absence was particularly acute when it came to pan-Canadian history content of any kind.

### **Slide 5: The Progressive Assault on History as Core Subject**

History remained a core academic subject in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, and the Maritimes until it came under attack in the late 1960s. The challenge eventually arose as an outgrowth of the reform zeal unleashed by the Ontario Hall-Dennis Report. When it first appeared in June 1968, the Report, entitled *Living and Learning* and popularly named after its co-chairs, Emmett Hall and Lloyd Dennis, was greeted with lavish praise, mostly generated by the Toronto media. The Report gave official sanction to a brand of romantic educational progressivism inspired by John Dewey (1859-1952), the renowned American philosopher, psychologist, and education reformer. Its authors openly embraced core Deweyite principles: the child lies at the heart of “education for a democratic society,” learning comes naturally to every child, but schools as institutions “throttle the free flow of individual thought and action.”<sup>11</sup> Teaching the student, not the subject was their mantra and history was in their sight lines.<sup>12</sup>

### **Slide 6: Threat to Discipline – Dr. James Daly**

It was no accident that the most intense public opposition was voiced by professors of humanities and secondary school history teachers. Among the first to cast stones were those whom the Ontario educational establishment dismissed as the “carping academic critics.”<sup>13</sup> The second wave was spearheaded by McMaster University historian James W. Daly (1932-1983). His vocal opposition and impressive command of the English language made him almost impossible to ignore. Soon after the appearance of his pamphlet, *Education or Molasses?*, high school history teachers rallied to his cause. Among teachers and so-called “traditionalists” in

education, business, and local politics, Daly's little book crystallized the gathering forces of resistance against not only the Hall-Dennis version of "Edutopia," but what he lambasted as "the supine acceptance of fashionable piffle."<sup>14</sup>

### **Slide 7: Resistance on the Left**

A massive survey conducted in the spring and summer of 1969 by the Ontario Teachers' Federation polled 6,127 teachers and purported to demonstrate that most teachers supported the general philosophy espoused in the Report.<sup>15</sup> Yet many veteran Ontario history teachers felt threatened by the call for a fundamental change in methods and even potential allies, such as Toronto's George Martell of *This Magazine is About Schools*, found fault with the supposedly "liberalizing" education manifesto. To Martell and more radical progressives, the emphasis on "individualized" learning was seen as corporatist idea threatening to undermine the "sense of community" in public schools.<sup>16</sup>

### **Slide 8: Dr. James Daly's Impact on History Teachers**

History teachers were in the forefront of the resistance. Ontario's history and social studies teachers complained about the proposed curriculum's presentist bias and seeming acceptance of the assumption that "the present and the future are all that matters." After viewing the resulting Ontario History Guidelines, John Ricker, Chairman of History at Toronto's Faculty of Education, confirmed their worst fears, declaring the Hall-Dennis-inspired changes "an invitation for teachers to do their own thing."<sup>17</sup>

### **Slide 9: The Impact of Progressive Education**

The highly-publicized crusade failed to roll back Hall-Dennis-inspired 'romantic progressive' reform but the message eventually sunk in, even within the bowels of the Ontario

Department of Education. By January 1983, the bloom was off the Hall-Dennis rose and *The Globe and Mail* published a news feature by Judy Steed entitled “Crisis in the Schools.” West Toronto history teacher John Sheppard, President of the Ontario History and Social Science Teachers Association (OHASSTA), told Steed that teachers held the Hall-Dennis Report responsible for “destroying education in Ontario.” The popular media began to proclaim that the Hall-Dennis era was coming to an end. “Now, it’s the eighties,” Steed stated, “and it’s back to the basics with more structure.”<sup>18</sup> While the Hall-Dennis upheaval subsided, its effects lingered and marked the beginning of the gradual eclipse of history as a core component of the high school curriculum.

#### **Slide 10: The Canada Studies Foundation and Civic Education**

The rise of “social history” in the universities was accompanied by a high school mutation, known as the “new social studies.” The emerging trend gained ground throughout the 1970s, aided and abetted by a new Canada Studies Foundation. Although founded in response to A.B. Hodgetts’s 1968 study, *What Culture? What Heritage?*<sup>19</sup>, it evolved into a ‘trojan horse’ for multidisciplinary social science and further eroded the “traditional” Canadian history curriculum. In concluding their work with the Canada Studies Foundation, A.B. Hodgetts and Paul Gallagher were intent on carrying the process one step further. Their summary report, *Teaching Canada for the ‘80s*, called for a common multidisciplinary framework for studies of Canada spanning the full range of school years. Their proposed Canada Studies curriculum was “pan-Canadian “ in its perspectives and culminated in senior high school students studying public issues in Canada and the world.<sup>20</sup>

**Slide 11: The Canadian Studies Movement**

The Canada Studies movement, however well intended, challenged the primacy of history as an academic discipline. History and social studies departments began offering “new social studies” courses in “Canadian Studies” or in self-standing courses such as civics, law, economics, and sociology. With the spread of the credit system after 1969, students enjoyed more choice and gravitated to courses with a more contemporary focus.<sup>21</sup> High school history teachers found it ironic that a project aimed at promoting “national understanding” actually contributed to the further erosion of history, an intellectual discipline well suited to promoting such understanding. Secondary school history departments became increasingly cannibalized, as enrolments in pure history courses declined in favour of the new offerings. By 1994, history educators like Peter Seixas were accurate in describing history as “a subject adrift” in an “integrated curriculum.”<sup>22</sup>

**Slide 12: The “Skills-Mania”**

The changes besetting high school history were really part of a broader movement to introduce “information age” skills into the curriculum. Veteran history teacher Bob Davis, a co-founder of *This Magazine is About Schools*, dubbed the phenomenon the “skills-mania.”<sup>23</sup> It “crept in slowly”, in his words, in the 1970s, and “arrived full blast in the 1980s.” Provincial ministries of education and schools, publisher Rob Greenaway of Prentice-Hall Canada, were demanding new types of textbooks and learning materials. In an interview, published in the Summer of 1988, he went so far as to declare the 1980s “the decade of skills.”<sup>24</sup> History teaching was not immune to the advance of skills-mania. Teaching skills gradually came to supplant history itself, further separating school history from the academy. Curriculum planners

and writers became “skills-obsessed” and driven by the overwhelming pressure to establish “learning outcomes,” to teach “information-age” skills, and to prepare students for standardized performance testing. Leading corporations and business groups embraced the Conference Board of Canada’s focus on promoting “employability skills.”<sup>25</sup> Even liberal and left progressive educators were drawn to “critical thinking skills,” which they saw as an opportunity to “teach students a critical view of society without having to preach to them.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Slide 13: The Historians Respond**

A close analysis of the Ontario school curricula and textbooks in the 1980s demonstrated that Canadian history in high school had suffered a ‘double whammy.’ The dissolution of the national narrative was signalled by Michael Bliss in his controversial Donald Creighton Centennial Lecture, entitled “Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada” and delivered on the eve of the 1991 federal referendum. According to Bliss, historians had dedicated themselves to exploring the “limited identities” of region, class, gender and ethnicity and were, therefore, party to the gradual fragmenting of any collective sense of national community.<sup>27</sup>

### **Slide 14: The Endangered Core Textbook**

The Ontario high school history curriculum did gradually come to reflect that “limited identities” outlook. After the introduction of a new History and Contemporary Studies curriculum in 1987-88, Canadian history came to be taught in Grade 9 or 10 under the rubric “Life in Contemporary Canada” and again in Grade 13/OAC level within a North American comparative history framework. In both cases, the units of study reflected a “limited identities” perspective heavily weighted to regional, social class, and gender issues. Conspicuous by their absence from the



senior history curriculum were units focusing explicitly on the national question and specifically on the Conquest, Quebec-Canada relations, or the ongoing constitutional crisis.<sup>28</sup> The most popular textbooks, including my own *Canada: A North American Nation* (1989) sought, for the most part, to heighten student awareness of our “limited identities” and the social experiences of life in regional or local communities.<sup>29</sup>

### **Slide 15: J.L. Granatstein’s Salvo**

Another outspoken member of the so-called Toronto school of historians, J.L. Granatstein, put it bluntly. Historians of the 1970s and 1980s, he charged, had spent most of their time researching and teaching students about pork-packing, Marxist labour organizers, prisons and insane asylums, parish politics, and what he derisively described as “the history of housemaid’s knee in Belleville in the 1890s.” “Really,” he added, “Who cares?”<sup>30</sup>

Another blow to the subject was the virtual abandonment of the teaching of history in favour of “the sociology of current social problems.” Much of Bob Davis’ *Whatever Happened to High School History?* focuses on the spread and debilitating effects of what he termed “sociology-across-the-curriculum.” Davis had little use for J.L. Granatstein’s defence of the History Canon because it championed the achievements of “white, bourgeois males” and excluded women, people of colour, aboriginals, recent immigrants, labour, and youth. Yet he did concur with Geoff Milburn, long-time editor of *The History and Social Science Teacher*, who remained steadfast that “sociology and skills” were the “crucial causes of history’s decline.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Slide 16: The Canadian History Tests**

The smouldering debate over the state of Canadian history erupted as a major public policy issue in the 1990s. Michael Bliss's intervention fanned the flames of public concern stoked by the unsettling findings of Keith Spicer and his 1991 *Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future*, an earlier storm warning about public disillusionment with politics and the established political order.<sup>32</sup>

The Dominion Institute, founded by Rudyard Griffiths and small group of recent university graduates in 1997, began producing national surveys raising serious questions about the state of public knowledge about past politics, wars, and civics.<sup>33</sup> Amid these rumblings, historian Jack Granatstein produced his controversial best seller, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (1998) reinforcing the message and identifying the alleged perpetrators, most notably the "new" social historians, ministries of education, faculties of education, and curriculum writers.<sup>34</sup>

### **Slide 17: Revival of Canadian History – Historica**

Saving Canadian history emerged as a *cause celebre*. The Historica Foundation, co-founded in October 1999 by Charles Bronfman and BCE's Lynton R. (Red) Wilson, emerged to fund greatly expanded resource programs, including the Heritage Minutes, Heritage Fairs, and the Canadian Encyclopedia Online. Responding to the public mood, CBC-TV and Radio Canada poured millions into Mark Starowitz's epic (2000-2001) *Canada: A Peoples' History* series.<sup>35</sup> In its first season, the CBC-TV series attracted an average audience of 1.2 million on the English network and some 360,000 on Radio-Canada, reaching a mass audience. It was widely shown in high school classrooms, but academic historians' reviews, according to John Herd Thompson, "ranged from unenthusiastic to unfriendly."<sup>36</sup>

Over the first decade of the century, Canadian history education might have qualified as a boutique growth industry. With generous funding from federal Liberal governments, the Ontario government, and the corporate sector, three different organizations entered the field: the Historica Foundation, the Dominion Institute, and Canada's National History Society (CNHS), based in Winnipeg and publishers of *The Beaver*, now *Canada's History*. The McGill Centre for the Study of Canada, headed by Dr. Desmond Morton, was an influential catalyst. A Governor General's Award for Teaching Excellence, founded in 1996 and sponsored by CNHS, recognized a dozen or so exemplary teachers each year. Each of the three national history advocacy groups offered its own programs to ensure that "more history was taught better" in the schools. From 1998 to 2003, a Canadian history consortium, led by Historica and later the Association for Canadian Studies, sponsored a Biennial National History Teaching Conference and, from 2001 to 2003, a Montreal-based national Summer Institute for Teaching Excellence in Canadian History.<sup>37</sup> All this activity managed to energize Canadian history enthusiasts, but it ran foursquare into provincial secondary school systems where the subject discipline continued to occupy a diminishing place with limited course offerings.

### **Slide 18: Historical Thinking Competencies**

The initial wave of Canadian history initiatives was gradually superseded by a new movement championing "historical thinking", spearheaded by Peter Seixas and Penney Clark at UBC. Backed by Seixas's UBC Centre for Historical Consciousness and heavily influenced by the work of Sam Wineburg, a new model for teaching "historical thinking" was actively promoted, leading eventually to Benchmarks of Historical Thinking.<sup>38</sup>

### **Slide 19: Historical Thinking Competencies**

By then Canadian history advocates had discovered the World Wide Web and its enormous potential for engaging students in the study of historical issues and problems. One of the first such projects was a website, designed by John Lutz of the University of Victoria with Ruth Sandwell and carrying the improbable title “Who Killed William Robinson?” It attracted immediate attention, and was adopted in university and senior high school classes alike.

### **Slide 20: Teaching Historical Thinking**

Yet the Website also revealed a skills-deficit among students enrolled in history courses. “Students repeatedly identified the site as interesting and engaging,” Sandwell reported, “but were at the same time frustrated and annoyed by the demands placed upon them ... to engage with the material.”<sup>39</sup> That was not just an astute observation on historical competencies of students, but a telling commentary on the prevailing teaching methodologies from high school to university.

### **Slide 21: The History Education Network**

Such discoveries gave rise to an expanded website series known as *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History* and the latest venture in history education networking, The History Education Network/Histoire et Education en Réseau (THEN/HiER). Like its predecessors, THEN/HiER aspires to lofty goals. The new network, Joel Schlesinger proclaimed in the March 2010 issue of *Teaching Canada’s History*, is to build a community from elementary schools to universities, attempting to bridge “the disconnect between the ivory towers of academia and the classroom.”<sup>40</sup>

### **Slide 22: Benchmarks of Historical Thinking**

Another similar initiative, *The Virtual Historian*, developed by Stéphane Levesque, initially at the Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario, offered a web-based interactive program encouraging students to take on the role of detectives tackling historical cases, such as the October Crisis, the Dieppe Raid, and the Halifax Explosion.<sup>41</sup>

### **Slide 23: The Canadian History Report Card**

How much of all of this feverish activity is actually penetrating the secondary school system? The Dominion Institute did conduct a national study of the Canadian high school history curriculum during the 2008-09 school year. *The Canadian History Report Card*, commissioned by the Institute and written by Toronto history teacher J.D. M. Stewart, provided a detailed analysis of the official curriculum in each province and territory.<sup>42</sup> It assessed the curriculum requirements, course content, and skills emphasis, focusing on both core and optional courses. The methodology included an evaluation of the extent to which the provincial history curricula addressed ten specific themes: Aboriginal Canadians, Canada and the world stage, constitutional history, economic history (labour rights /class), the First World War, French-English relations, Gender issues, Immigration and the immigrant experience, political leaders, and the Second World War. Among the skills assessed were use of primary documents, research, writing informed responses, critical thinking, and development of historical thinking. Each of the political jurisdictions was then graded and ranked on an inter-provincial report card.<sup>43</sup>

### **Slide 24: Report Card – Nova Scotia**

Although the Canadian History Report Card assuredly reflected the known biases of its sponsor, The Dominion Institute, the results were quite revealing. Quebec ranked first with a B+,

scoring 42 out of 50 points (84%), largely on the strength of requiring two full years of Quebec-Canada historical study before Grade 11 graduation. Only four provinces require students to take a Canadian history course before graduating, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia, and they were not only singled out, but fared better than the others. Many of the courses were found to be superficial in their treatment, most notably that of Manitoba. The provinces that made history a priority, Quebec, Manitoba, NS, and BC did best on teaching skills, including the skills of the historian. Newfoundland and PEI ranked at the bottom, along with Nunavut and North West Territories, scoring failing grades. In each case, relatively little history was taught and so there was much less emphasis on developing historical skills or thinking.<sup>44</sup>

#### **Slide 25: Nova Scotia Curriculum Assessment**

After more than a decade of commissioning surveys, the Dominion Institute could legitimately claim to have dramatically raised public awareness of the so-called “national malaise about our past.” Judging from the Report Card, however, Stewart and the Institute expressed disappointment over the progress. “Provincial ministries of education, “ the Institute claimed, “ must be held responsible for what they ask –or do not ask – their teachers to teach their students. It is clear from this curriculum analysis that high school students in Canada are not required to learn enough about their country’s past. “ Critics of the Dominion Institute may quibble about its focus on the mastery of discrete facts, but that recent curriculum analysis demonstrates that the subject continues to be marginalized in today’s high schools.<sup>45</sup>

**Slide 26: Re-Opening the Debate**

The public debate over the place of history in the curriculum has now come almost full circle. A young, rather pedantic, but restless Trent University professor of Canadian history has recently created quite a fuss. It all started back in May of 2007, in London, England, of all places. That recently-minted Assistant Professor, **Christopher Dummitt**, got together with a small group of others at the University of London and began asking a few troubling questions.<sup>46</sup> Where were the new syntheses to replace the all-but discredited “noble dream” narrative of Canada’s history? Now that the “new social history” and “inclusiveness” reigned triumphant, what came next? And, while professing a new openness, how had academic historians come to be talking in a largely inaccessible language and mostly to themselves?

**Slide 27: History and Multiple Identities**

In a thought-provoking 2009 article, “After Inclusiveness: The Future of Canadian History,” he proclaimed the “History Wars” over and declared that “inclusive history” encompassing class, gender, and ethnicity had become the new orthodoxy.” A bottom-up, inclusive, “Peoples” history of Canada,” he pointed out, “is now the standard version of Canadian history in the universities.” Dummitt and his band of allies identified a major disconnect, plainly visible to high school teachers. On prime-time television, in theatres, on magazine stands, and even in bookstores, history enjoyed new-found popularity. Yet historians continued to produce mostly detailed, dry monographs and seemed intent upon fighting the same old battles. And perhaps more ironically, while the focus was on “inclusion,” history was increasingly being written in a fashion which excluded the public.<sup>47</sup>

**Slide 28: Whither History in the Schools?**

High school history curricula sought to provide students with a broad narrative, yet historians persisted in eschewing what Dummitt termed the “Big Story.” Since the triumph of American modernity and the liberal order, academics had grown to distrust the so-called grand narrative (the “noble dream”) and relished tearing down its monuments and legacies. Among Canadian academic historians, it has become fashionable to scoff at general histories and their supposed superficiality. Fewer and fewer scholars have followed Desmond Morton, Margaret Conrad, and Gerald Friesen in attempting a larger synthesis,<sup>48</sup> preferring to demonstrate their mastery of critical analysis and to sample topics from the pastiche of post-modernism. The field needs “architects as well as wreckers” to participate in the larger debate over the role and purpose of history education.

Teaching was borne out of a storytelling tradition, but Dummitt saw historians having abandoned that very tradition. Adopting the multiple identities approach with its categories of analysis, in his view, had led to the “tearing up of the past” into “small categories.” In place of the national narrative, we now were left with often “anonymous social analysis.” Academic historians had deviated from the kind of history being written by popular scholarly writers like Margaret MacMillan, author of the international bestseller, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (2007). They had forgotten that that history’s appeal often lay in telling “good stories” about “fascinating people.” While academic history claimed to be more open, its style of writing and become “more aloof and analytically preoccupied.” Today’s historians had gone overboard on social scientific research, seemingly “dissecting every little species and pinning them to the wall.”<sup>49</sup> Instead of simply rendering visible and categorizing the species, he quipped that what



we needed was a “catch and release” strategy to rejuvenate the disciplinary field and recapture our students.

### **Slide 29: The Outlook**

Where are we heading? After three unrelieved decades of the “new social history,” the echoes across the canyon are registering in academe. Most high school history teachers and new initiates (i.e. history undergraduates) have been longing for more accessible, readable books and articles that capture the “Big Story,” address some of the recently neglected themes, and truly engage the audience. It is high time for Canadian history that satisfies what Dummitt aptly calls “the town as well as the gown.”<sup>50</sup> Somewhere the veterans of the Canadian high school history wars must be smiling. It is becoming fashionable again to stand up for the subject discipline as part of the essential core of a liberal education. Some are openly musing about the critical issues raised in Bob Davis’s *Whatever Happened to High School History?* Emboldened by Dummitt and a new generation of historians, they are openly discussing whether the old “master narrative” was actually better than “no narrative at all.”<sup>51</sup> Many secondary school practitioners, and a growing number of their university confreres, cling to the hope that the convergence of forces produces a more accessible history education, fully engaging high school students and better equipping them with the ‘core knowledge’ to help shape Canada’s future.

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### **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Paul W. Bennett, *Rediscovering Canadian History: A Teacher’s Guide for the ‘80s* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1980), pp. 2-3 and 29-30. Originally published as a Teacher’s Guide by the York County Board of Education, Division of Planning and Development (Aurora: YCBE, September 1979).

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Seixas, "A Discipline Adrift in an 'Integrated Curriculum': History in British Columbia Schools," *Canadian Journal of Education*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1994). See also Geoffrey Milburn, *Teaching History in Canada* (Scarborough: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972) for a number of earlier critiques.

<sup>3</sup> Ruth Sandwell, "School History Versus the Historians," *International Journal of Social Education*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2005), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Jocelyn Letourneau, *A History for the Future: Rewriting Memory and History in Quebec* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), pp. 3-29.

<sup>5</sup> The pioneering works on teaching historical thinking are Sam Wineburg, "On the Reading of Historical Texts: Notes on the Breach between School and the Academy," *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (1991), pp. 495-519; and Peter Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Weinburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History: National and International Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 2000). For new insights, see Penney Clark, "Introduction," and Clark and Peter Seixas, "Obsolete Icons and the Teaching of History," in Penney Clark, ed., *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011)

<sup>6</sup> See *Contesting Clio's Craft: New Directions in Canadian History*, edited by Christopher Dummitt and Michael Dawson. London: UK: Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of London, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Bob Davis, *Whatever Happened to High School History? Burying the Political Memory of Youth, Ontario: 1945-1995* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1995), pp. 33-34.

<sup>8</sup> Davis, *Whatever Happened to High School History?*, pp. 82-163, and 210-212.

<sup>9</sup> See Amy von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History & Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905 to 1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), pp. 5-6.

<sup>10</sup> On the triumph of Alberta social studies, see Von Heyking, pp. 53, 61-71, 108-10, 114, 128-9, 131-33, 140-2, and 149-50. See also von Heyking, "Selling Progressive Education to Albertans," *Historical Studies in Education*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2 (Spring and Fall, 1998), pp. 67-84.

<sup>11</sup> *Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, June 1968), pp. 9 and 21; and John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Free Press, 1966), pp. 6, 8, 20, and 114.

<sup>12</sup> See R. D. Gidney, *From Hope to Harris: The Shaping of Ontario's Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 66, and 69-86. On the illusory appeal of the Report, see Brian Crittenden, "Slogans – handle with care," in Crittenden, ed., *Means & Ends in Education: Comments on Living and Learning* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1969), pp. 25-42.

<sup>13</sup> Eric W. Ricker, "Teachers, Trustees and Policy: The Politics of Education in Ontario, 1945-1975," Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 1981, pp. 487-488.

<sup>14</sup> James Daly, *Education or Molasses? A Critical Look at the Hall-Dennis Report* (Ancaster, ON: Cromlech Press, McMaster University, 1969), esp. pp. 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> OISE Library, Ontario Teachers Federation, "Survey of Teachers' Professional Opinions, 1969" (Vertical file: Hall-Dennis Report); and the executive summary in "Focus on the Hall-Dennis Report," *Orbit* (December, 1969)

<sup>16</sup> See George Martell, ed., *The Politics of the Public School* (Halifax: Formac Publishing, 1974), Introduction, and articles from *This Magazine is About Schools*.

<sup>17</sup> Daly, *Education or Molasses?*, p. 64; Crittenden, "Slogans – Handle with Care," p. 38; and John Ricker, "Reaction to the Ontario Ministry of Education Guidelines: History, Intermediate Division, *Canadian Journal of History and Social Science*, Vol. IX (Fall, 1973), p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Judy Steed, "Crisis in the Schools," *The Globe and Mail*, 15 January 1983, p. 10. Professor John Trueman provided his pithy assessment in a Personal Interview, 16 September 2010. See also Robert Neilsen, "A Report Card on Ontario's School System," *The Toronto Star*, 1 June 1974, pp. A1 and A4.

<sup>19</sup> A.B. Hodgetts, *What Culture? What Heritage? A Study of Civic Education in Canada* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1968). See also Richard M. Alway, "The Future of Canadian History in the High School," in E.H. Humphries, ed., *Focus on Canadian Studies* (Toronto: OISE, 1969), pp. 41-43.

<sup>20</sup> A.B. Hodgetts and Paul Gallagher, *Teaching Canada for the 80s* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1978). Much of the impetus for the "new social studies" came from Edwin Fenton's influential books, *Teaching the New Social Studies in Secondary Schools: An Inductive Approach* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966) and *The New Social Studies* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967).

<sup>21</sup> See W.G. Fleming, *Education: Ontario's Preoccupation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 209-210, and 221. See also Warren Gerard, "Let Teachers, Pupils Select Subjects, Hall-Dennis Report Suggests," *The Globe and Mail*, 13 June 1968.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Seixas, "A Discipline Adrift in an 'Integrated Curriculum': History in British Columbia Schools," *Canadian Journal of Education*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1994).

<sup>23</sup> Bob Davis, *Skills Mania: Snake Oil in Our Schools?* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000), pp. 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Rob Greenaway, "The Publisher's Perspective," Interviewed by Paul W. Bennett, *The History and Social Science Teacher*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Summer 1988), pp. 200-206.

<sup>25</sup> Ontario Premier's Council, *People and Skills in the New Global Economy* (Toronto: Government of Ontario, 1990), p. 85.

<sup>26</sup> Davis, *Skills Mania*, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Bliss, "Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 26 (Winter 1991-92), pp. 5-17.

<sup>28</sup> Paul W. Bennett, "Saving History from Endangerment: The New Ontario High School History Curriculum," *Canadian Historical Association Newsletter*, Vol. 15 (Autumn, 1989), pp. 5 and 10.

<sup>29</sup> Paul W. Bennett, Cornelius Jaenen, Nick Brune, and Alan Skeoch, *Canada: A North American Nation* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1989); and Second Edition with Cecilia Morgan (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 73.

<sup>31</sup> See Davis, *Whatever Happened to High School History?*, pp. 18-19 and 97; and Davis, *Skills Mania*, p.70 and 71.

<sup>32</sup> See Keith Spicer, Chairman's Report, *Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1991), p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> The first Canadian History Quiz, conducted in May 1997 for the Dominion Institute by Angus Reid Group, released June 28, 1997. For the headline news coverage and editorials, see *The Toronto Star*, 1 July 1997; *The*

*Calgary Herald*, 28 June 1997; *The Edmonton Journal*, 2 July 1997; and *The Ottawa Citizen*, 2 July 1997. See also Rudyard Griffiths, *Who We Are: A Citizen's Manifesto* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2009), pp. ix–xii.

<sup>34</sup> Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?*, pp. 3-17; and 19-50. For the best known critiques, see A.B. McKillop, "Who Killed Canadian History? A View from the Trenches," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 80, No. 2 (1999), pp. 269-99; and Tim J. Stanley, "Why I Killed Canadian History: Conditions for an Ant-Racist History in Canada," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, Vol. 33, No. 65 (2000), pp. 79-103.

<sup>35</sup> Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Revised Edition, 2007), pp. xiv, and 167-8.

<sup>36</sup> Gene Allen, "The Professionals and the Public: Responses to *Canada: A People's History*," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, Vol. 34 (November 2001), pp. 381-91; and John Herd Thompson, "Saving Floods of Useless Ink: Academic Historians and Cinematic History," *Academic Matters: The Journal of Higher Education* (November 7, 2008) [http://www.academicmatters.ca/current\\_issue.article.gk?catalog\\_item\\_id=1194&category=featured\\_articles](http://www.academicmatters.ca/current_issue.article.gk?catalog_item_id=1194&category=featured_articles)

<sup>37</sup> On the three national Canadian History organizations and their competing programs, see *The National Post*, 7 November 2009. One such Historica-funded program is profiled in Walter Baslyk, "History Comes Alive at Montreal Summer Teachers' Institute," *LCC Lion* (Winter/Spring 2002), pp. 10-11.

<sup>38</sup> See University of British Columbia, *Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness*, Dr. Peter Seixas, Director, <http://www.cshc.ubc.ca/> and *Benchmarks of Historical Thinking*, <http://historybenchmarks.ca/> (02/04/2011)

<sup>39</sup> Sandwell, "School History Versus the Historians," pp. 11-12.

<sup>40</sup> See Heritage Canada and University of Victoria, *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History*, <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/en/about.php>; and Joel Schlesinger, "Making Connections: THEN/HiER removing barriers between ivory tower and classrooms," *Teaching Canada's History/ Special Issue* (March 2010), p. 12.

<sup>41</sup> See *The Virtual Historian* Web site at <http://virtualhistorian.ca>; and Bob Klanac, "Popular Program Making Game of History," *Western News*, 19 October 2006, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> The Dominion Institute, *The Canadian History Report Card*, A Curriculum Analysis of High Schools in Canada, June 2009 (Toronto: Dominion Institute, 2009), pp. 2-3.

<sup>43</sup> "Methodology," *The Canadian History Report Card*, pp. 3-5

<sup>44</sup> "Analysis and Rankings," *The Canadian History Report Card*, pp. 5-6 and 9-21. See also Marc Chalifoux and J.D. M. Stewart, "Canada is failing history," *The Globe and Mail*, 17 June 2009, p. A15; and Editorial, "Failing the Grade," *The Chronicle Herald* (Halifax), 22 June 2009, A9.

<sup>45</sup> "Overview," *The Canadian History Report Card*, p. 2; and Peter Seixas, Kadriye Ercikan, and David Northrup, "History and the Past: Towards a Measure of 'Everyman's Epistemology'," Unpublished Paper, Canadian Historical Association Conference, Vancouver, BC, 2 June 2008, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Dummitt and Dawson, eds., *Contesting Clío's Craft: New Directions and Debates in Canadian History*, vii.

<sup>47</sup> Dummitt, "After Inclusiveness: The Future of Canadian History," in Dummitt and Dawson, pp. 98-103.

<sup>48</sup> See Sandwell, "To the History Undergraduates," Unpublished Paper, THEN/HiER Symposium, Calgary, 28 April 2011, p. 6. Queen's University historian Ian McKay's 2000 exploration in *The Canadian Historical Review* of "The Liberal Order Framework," Vol. 81 (2000), pp. 617-45, stands out as another exception.

<sup>49</sup> Dummitt, "After Inclusiveness," pp. 119-20

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<sup>50</sup> Dummitt, "After Inclusiveness," p. 122. For a prime example of telling the "Big Story" well and in engaging fashion, see Margaret MacMillan, *The Uses and Abuses of History* ( Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2008).

<sup>51</sup> Davis, *Skills Mania*, pp. 10-11, and 72-73. On history's central place in liberal education , see Emberley and Newell, *Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada* (1994).