

A CANADIAN TEACHER IN SOUTH AFRICA

A Canadian Girl In South Africa: A Teacher's Experience in the South African War, 1899–1902.

By E. Maud Graham. Edited and with an introduction by Michael Dawson, Catherine Gidney, and Susanne M. Klaussen.

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E. Maud Graham's *A Canadian Girl in South Africa*, first published in 1905 by William Briggs in Toronto, has been republished with annotations and an introduction by Michael Dawson, Catherine Gidney, and Susanne M. Klausen. Graham was one of three hundred teachers from Canada, Britain, New Zealand, and Australia sent to teach in the concentration camps set up by the British government during the South African War. Graham spent two years in South Africa, arriving in 1902 immediately after the war, rather than during the conflict (as the slightly misleading subtitle implies).

Beginning with her preparations in Canada, Graham recounts her voyage first to London, where she and the other Canadian teachers were feted by Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Frederick Roberts, and Agnes Baden-Powell, and then on to South Africa. Arriving in Cape Town just as peace had been declared, Graham was posted to Norval's Point concentration camp and later to schools in Fauresmith and Kroonstad. In addition to recounting her experiences in those three locations, Graham offers descriptions of Johannesburg and Pretoria, where she attended a teacher's convention. She also reflects upon labour and race relations; repatriation and compensation; government relief works; and agriculture and education in South Africa. Graham then narrates her journey back to Canada, again via London. Intended for a public audience, the book originated as a series of newspaper articles for the *Montreal Daily Witness*, which Graham wrote while she lived in South Africa.

In its focus on the postwar reconstruction, this firsthand account provides a useful, if partial, view of a society recovering from a devastating war, as well as a window into a middle-class Edwardian way of life that emphasized sporting, culture, and travel. It furthermore offers a firsthand perspective on changes taking place at the turn of the century in the roles that women could assume in the world – it is remarkable, but not altogether unique, that a young, single, white, educated woman could travel across the world to assume a professional position.

The introduction by Dawson, Gidney, and Klausen provides a brief overview of the South African War, the history of European settlement in South Africa, and a short biography of Graham and her wider family history, all of which provides useful context for the memoir. It also situates Graham's work in the broader scholarship on empire, gender, race, the British world, and Anglo-Canadian nationalism and identity. Graham was selected to take part in this scheme, which had the overt goal of promoting imperial unity and supporting British rule in South Africa, and it is therefore unsurprising that she describes the concentration camps in largely positive terms. She argues that they were necessary to

win the war and that internment offered prisoners access to better medical facilities and food than they would have otherwise obtained. Graham's account thus provides a sharp contrast to that of Emily Hobhouse, whose 1900 revelations about conditions in the camps led to an uproar and an official investigation. As the editors state in the introduction, it may be that conditions in the camps had improved by the time Graham arrived. But it is evident that Graham's opinions about the camps were informed by her worldview and her firm belief in a civilising imperial mission.

Graham's class orientation, national loyalties, and racial prejudices also shape the narrative. She comments on the ignorance and dirtiness of the poorest of the camp residents, and her discussion of 'bywoners', or landless 'poor whites', follows the eugenic thinking of the time that associated dark skin with racial mixing and inferiority. African people appear only rarely in her writings, and when they do, they occupy servile roles. At the same time, Graham admits that her experiences challenged her preconceptions about South Africa and she is at times critical of the colonial government, such as in its policy of dismissing experienced teachers who had supported the Boer republics.

The edition is itself very well presented and features an index, maps, photographs from museum collections and Graham's own personal photo albums, as well as detailed footnotes explaining names, locations, and obscure phrases. These resources, along with the introduction and the vivid descriptive tone of Graham's own prose, ensure that the edition is very accessible to non-specialists, including undergraduates. This book would be particularly useful for teaching Canadian and imperial history, as it provides an engaging case study of Canadian involvement in transnational and imperial networks in the early twentieth century. In terms of South African history and the South African War, this book could be taught alongside other primary sources, such as the writings of Hobhouse, as well as other texts that reflect the Afrikaner and African experiences of the conflict. While clearly not representative, Graham's writings nonetheless offer fertile ground for discussions about, among other topics, the complexities of the imperial project, the changing role of women in this period, and the legacies of the South African War.

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BIRDERS AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN AFRICA

Birders of Africa: History of a Network.

By Nancy J. Jacobs.

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Nancy J. Jacobs's *Birders of Africa: History of a Network*, which is published in the Yale Agrarian Studies Series, is a major study that sets the social history of ornithology in Africa in a global framework. In it, Jacobs attends to both African and European vernacular ways