
A Century of the *Canadian Historical Review*. Speaking to the Past, Present, and Future of Canadian History and Canada

Dimitry Anastakis

Trent University

Mary-Ellen Kelm

Simon Fraser University

Founded in 1920 as Canada's national history journal, the *Canadian Historical Review* (*CHR*) focuses on publishing articles and book reviews examining the history of Canada, including imperial, transnational, and comparative perspectives. Established in a period of cultural and intellectual nationalism that followed the First World War, the *CHR* played a key role in the development of Canadian history and the historical profession in Canada.¹ Indeed, the journal's founding reflected a newfound interest by Canadians and Canadian scholars in their own history, thus departing from a longstanding practice of seeing Canadian history as an element of British or imperial history. An article in the first volume of the journal by W.S. Wallace (1920), "The Growth of Canadian National Feeling," (p. 136) reflected this postwar nationalism. The scholars who founded the *CHR* included some of the leading Canadian academics of the day. As the Canadian historical profession has grown and become more diverse, journal editors and editorial board members have spanned the breadth and depth of the Canadian historical profession.

The journal's objectives remain today fundamentally what they were nearly a century ago: to publish high-quality, authoritative, and innovative articles based on original research and sound methodology, articles that reflect the best of the diversity within Canadian historical scholarship while at the same time speaking to a broad readership. Though once closely identified with the University of Toronto, where the journal was originally based, the *CHR* today encourages diverse perspectives by selecting co-editors located at other Canadian universities and by establishing an editorial board with

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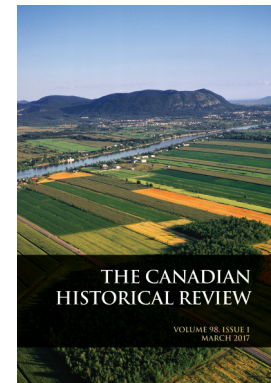
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Dimitry Anastakis is a Professor of History at Trent University. His work addresses the intersection of the state, business and politics, particularly in the post-1945 period in Canada. His most recent book is *Re-Creation, Fragmentation and Resilience: A Brief History of Canada since 1945* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2017). Email: danastakis@trentu.ca.

Mary-Ellen Kelm is a Professor of History at Simon Fraser University. Kelm is a historian of settler colonialism and medicine. She is currently examining the University-based health research conducted in Northwestern Ontario through the Sioux Lookout Project. Email: kelm@sfu.ca

representatives from five regions of the country (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, and British Columbia).² The *CHR* also has an advisory board that draws from Canadian academic and public historians as well as scholars in the United States and elsewhere. Along with geographic breadth, the focus of the journal has shifted from one that largely examined traditional political and economic history to a much more diverse range of topics that reflect both Canadian and international historiographical evolutions. It is no longer useful to separate articles into discrete fields of inquiry, as almost all bring together overlapping fields and approaches, often in innovative ways. While more than one-third of the articles might be classified as social history, they include works on deportation and immigration, Indigenous and environmental history, labour and youth, social justice activism, and the history of consumption and tourism. The trend toward blending fields is also evident in the more than 50 percent of recent *CHR* articles that might be classed, at least in large part, as political or state history – works that join legal and gender history (gun control and masculinity; women and nationality law), war and society (wartime income tax; media-military relations), institutions and social regulation (schooling and language; the implementation of daylight saving time; liquor licensing; the public status of charities), and ideas and political practice (constitutional thought and nationalism; Pierre Trudeau and organized labour; or socialism and the political organization of youth).

Methodological articles examine the use of oral history in Holocaust education, the digitization of primary sources, and the limits of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. While crossing field boundaries continues to stimulate new scholarship, crossing geographic ones has also been a noteworthy trend among the articles published in the journal. Explicitly transnational articles have now reached roughly 25 percent of our content. In addition, the *CHR* intermittently publishes a section entitled “A Life in History/La vie d’historien/ne,” a series of personal and professional historiographical reflections by some of the most senior and eminent members of Canada’s historical scholarly community. These contributions provide readers with insights into the historical profession and the craft of history, and also allow younger scholars to understand the biographical evolution of seasoned practitioners.

The journal publishes relatively few commissioned articles, so its character is shaped by the submissions received. Canadian historians choose the journal for publication often and the total volume of content has increased. The total pages in the quarterly journal increased significantly from volume 94 (2013) of approximately 650 total pages to approximately 900 total pages for volume 98 (2017). Nonetheless, the standards have remained high. The articles published have been judged suitable by knowledgeable peers for publication in a national, flagship journal. Prize juries agree, as *CHR* articles have received numerous awards in the last decade, including the Political History Prize for best article in the field, the Hilda Neatby Award for best article in Canadian women’s history, and the Prize for the Best Article in the History of Sexuality, among others. Indeed, in terms of subject matter, given its status as the leading national history journal that attracts fresh work from emerging scholars and solicits few articles, it is not surprising that the *CHR* continues to reflect and indeed drive the changing intellectual interests of the profession.

The *CHR* is a bilingual publication, and although it publishes predominantly in English, more than one-sixth of the journal's pieces are in French. Steps have been taken since the mid-1990s to make the journal more attractive to Francophone authors: abstracts and keywords are published, and all forms and guides made available, in both languages; the *CHR* editorial assistant is functionally bilingual; and a significant proportion of the editorial and advisory boards are bilingual as well. The editors of the journal consistently make efforts to ensure outreach to academic conferences attended by Francophone scholars, and to encourage submissions in both languages. These steps reinforce the *CHR*'s role as a connecting link between English-Canadian and French-Canadian scholarship, an objective articulated by the founding editors in 1920. The *CHR* already publishes more articles on Québec history than on any other region (with the exception of nationally focused articles); indeed, it has become the pre-eminent venue for scholars who publish elsewhere in French to reach an Anglophone audience. In both 2012 and 2013, the *CHR* Prize for the best article in the journal was awarded to works on Québec history.

In every aspect of the journal, the editors and editorial board encourage scholarly dialogue. Special features, including "Historical Perspectives" and the "*CHR* Forum," bring together several scholars to reflect and to write on important themes. Recently, the "Historical Perspectives" feature has asked scholars to consider such prescient and wide-ranging subjects as: the First World War, Confederation and biography, confederation and teaching, and Indigenous historical perspectives. The latest "Historical Perspectives" will, over the course of several issues, reflect on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) as historians, Commission researchers, and witnesses consider its impacts on how Canadian history is understood and written. The feature "*CHR* Forum" brings attention to broad themes of historical practice such as sexuality and childhood (volume 98, 2017), high modernism (volume 97, 2016), databases and digitization (volume 94, 2013), gender and memory (volume 87, 2006), historical research infrastructure and teaching (volume 91, 2010), public history and museum practice (volume 86, 2005), liberalism and family history (volume 84, 2003). The *CHR*'s "Research Note," another special feature, encourages scholars to share archival sources or emergent ideas in a more informal format; recent examples include a consideration of Louis Riel's defence of culture at the Collège de Montréal (volume 97, 2016), and the participation of Francophones in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (1914–1919) (volume 96, 2015).

The *CHR*'s commitment to scholarly exchange extends to the review process. Though the editors have commissioned some pieces through the Historical Perspectives feature (which are also peer reviewed), the vast majority of articles published in the journal are unsolicited. During the rigorous review process (in most years, less than half of manuscript articles received are sent out to review), at least two outside referees, along with one editorial board reviewer, are instructed to advise authors on how to make their submission even more useful and accessible to specialists in other subfields, a task also undertaken by the editors.

Some of the recent features in the journal, such as the Historical Perspectives, have utilized an open access initiative launched by the journal to make available to readers

journal content on current and newsworthy topics, including, articles on Cold War spying, as well as material experiencing renewed interest, such as the bibliography of *CHR* articles on the First World War, first published in March 2014. The *CHR* is committed to providing occasional open access to non-subscribers to a narrow range of articles and features that we feel are important for as many readers as possible to access. For instance, we intend to allow as much access as possible to our ongoing Historical Perspectives feature that examines the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, given its stature and importance as a national issue.

The substantial Book Reviews section and “Recent Publications Relating to Canada” continue to familiarize *CHR* readers with the growing number and range of publications in Canadian history. Recent review editors have increased the number and timeliness of reviews; solicited a number of comparative reviews and review essays; enhanced the guidelines for reviewers; expanded the list of potential reviewers, including adding those not affiliated with a university; and reached out more systematically to French-language publishers.

Such efforts are paralleled by those of the editors and editorial board. The editors, in consultation with the editorial board, recently revised the reviewer guides and styles guides in both French and English and new instructions for second-round reviewers were also recently instituted to ensure greater transparency and consistency in the evaluation of articles. Membership in the advisory board, launched in late 2009, is continually being renewed to ensure expertise in the widest range of fields, and a listserv has been created to increase interaction between board members. Advisory board members offer their expertise to *CHR* as reviewers and suggest potential assessors as requested by the editors. They also may contribute book reviews or suggest reviewers as requested by the book review editor, and act as a sounding board and form of “outreach” for *CHR* by promoting its work within their departments and beyond.

We have also seen and continue to encourage a marked increase in the use of visual images in our articles, where appropriate. Discussions are ongoing with a number of potential authors about publishing supplementary materials in various formats on our website at the same time that their articles appear in the journal, and we have endeavoured to launch a new feature, “*CHR* Salon,” which will provide readers with more full-colour and fold-out visual history essays and items.

In 2007, all *CHR* articles from 1920 and all issues of the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada*, its predecessor, were digitized and made them available to *CHR* subscribers around the world. Readership of these materials has been growing, and we are very happy to have been able to extend the reach of this important scholarship through digitization. The *CHR* is published by the University of Toronto Press (UTP) and benefits from the full range of professional services offered at UTP: online peer review, rigorous copyediting, typesetting, rich XML tagging, high-quality production, distribution (online and in print), marketing, indexing and licensing, circulation management, and financial oversight.

The *CHR* has a diverse readership that includes a wide number of students and academics, and we are always looking for ways to broaden and expand our readership. To do this, we promote the journal using a combination of traditional and digital marketing strategies to connect with readers in a variety of ways. For example, readers can register to our *CHR* opt-in news list, which provides regular table of contents alerts, links to the articles, calls for papers, news from the field, and descriptions of special issues and sections. Sample articles are made available to online readers, and we also offer a free trial of *CHR Online* (www.utpjournals.press/loi/chr) to individuals and institutions. We send out notifications of our newly published issues to a variety of online listservs used by academics and students in the various fields in which the journal publishes. We regularly invite and work closely with authors to collaborate with us in the promotion of their articles, particularly through social media and press releases, as well as invite them to write guest posts for the UTP Journals blog. This includes our aforementioned initiative to ensure broad dissemination by providing open access to articles of high relevance to the public, such as Historical Perspectives articles on the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to promote these featured articles heavily through social media with topical hashtags to help increase online discoverability and reach a wider audience.

CHR Online (www.utpjournals.press/loi/chr) offers a complete description of the journal, information for authors and reviewers, and all online material. All *CHR* articles are structured using XML, and each article is assigned a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) that is deposited with Crossref to enable both forward and backward reference linking. *CHR Online* has all the features that readers now expect in an online resource. These include

1. Full searching (full text, Boolean, relevancy ranking, and persistent keyword searching);
2. Quick searching (single field, single button, automatic recognition of ISSN and DOI);
3. Advanced searching (citation text, publication, subjects, or content types);
4. Search results (summaries, dimensional navigation, abstracts, citation or tabular results, search within results, filter selected items);
5. Parent list navigation;
6. Publication metadata;
7. Table of Contents alerting;
8. Forward and backward reference linking; and
9. Link exports, and more.

We also offer authors the opportunity to include supplementary files, such as supplementary video or audio files, in the online version of their articles.

In addition to a strong online presence, the *CHR* continues to be available in print format and we continue to promote *CHR* using a variety of traditional practices, including direct mail campaigns, print advertisements, physical presence at history conferences, such as the Canadian Historical Association and the American Historical Association annual meetings, and a presence at library conferences, including the

Ontario Library Association Super Conference, the Association of College & Research Libraries Conference, and the Charleston Library Conference.

The *CHR* is also included in University of Toronto Press group marketing initiatives. For example, in June and July 2017, the University of Toronto Press, the *CHR*'s publisher, ran a Celebrate Canada 150 promotion that included free-to-read Canadian content from an array of highly respected scholarly journals. This was another opportunity to highlight and promote the *CHR*'s contribution to the history of Canada and its rich and authoritative content. The *CHR* was prominently featured in all visuals used on UTP Journals social media for this promotion, including a picture of UTP's Canada 150 prize pack. Through these various activities, the *CHR* has developed a broad and diverse audience. In 2016, the *CHR*'s readership reached one million full-text article downloads, and the *CHR* is currently read in 75 countries.

The *CHR* continues to be a respected journal with a global reputation. The *CHR*'s rich content and its comprehensive archive is an invaluable resource for any scholar interested in not only examining the past but also in supporting original research of current Canadian issues. The 2019 volume will be the journal's 100th, and as the *CHR* moves into its second century as Canada's leading historical journal, it remains a central actor in promoting and building the Canadian historical profession and contributing immensely to the study and practice of Canadian history. The journal's task becomes even more important as Canadians continue to grapple with and attempt to engage in the process of reconciliation with the country's Indigenous peoples. In this way, despite a century of scholarship, debate, and pivotal contributions to understanding Canada's past, the *Canadian Historical Review*'s work has only just begun.

Notes

1. The *CHR* was originally launched as a continuation of the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada*, founded in 1897 by George M. Wrong, considered by many to be one of the first Canadian historians. The Canadian Historical Association was founded in the post-war period as well and its journal, now 95 years old, publishes the best papers presented at its annual meeting.
2. The University of Toronto Press publishes the *CHR*.

Reference

Wallace, W.S. (1920, June). The growth of Canadian national feeling. *Canadian Historical Review*, 1(2), 136–165.