

RECOMMENDED READING ON WOMEN IN CANADIAN HISTORY

compiled by Penni Mitchell

Expanded list from *Herizons*, Spring 2015 issue, *Women Who Changed Canada*.



Canadian Women: A History, by Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchinson and Naomi Black

Encyclopedic in tone and scope, this mammoth book details women's history in Canada like no other. Geared to women's studies students, this comprehensive tome is written by leading feminist historians. Not only does it touch upon female nation builders, it provides corollary statistics on divorce, maternal death, employment rates and more. If you can't find a new edition, used editions can be bought online for a pittance.



Inspiring Women, Coteau Books, by Mona Holmlund and Gail Youngberg

If you want the 'light' version of

Canadian Women: A History, this book is a bargain. Filled with beautiful photos and bite-sized profiles and stories, this magnificent book can be read in snippets and is guaranteed to inspire readers, with its stories of First Nations female heroines, New France entrepreneurs and modern-day astronauts. Long-time Saskatoon Women's Calendar Collective members created these moving accounts.



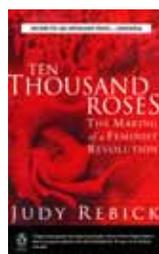
100 Canadian Heroines, Dundurn Press, by Merna Forster

Historian Merna Forster is the force behind the political movement to get women back on Canada's money. She also wrote two books (100 Canadian Heroines and 100 More Canadian Heroines) of biographies of women from Canada's forgotten past. Read about Shanawdithit, the last surviving woman of the Beothuk First Nation in Newfoundland



Feminism à la Québécoise, Feminist History Society, by Micheline Dumont

Quebec feminism is much more than English feminism in a different language; in fact, feminism is a French word, first embraced by English-speaking feminists 1896. The influence of the Catholic Church as a force against women's equality, as well as that of politicians and media owners, is outlined in this readable, well-translated book, published in English by the Feminist History Society. A comprehensive history lesson in a breezy style, this book is also full of photos and timelines.



Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution, Penguin, by Judy Rebick

One of Canada's best-known feminists, Judy Rebick interviewed dozens of women involved in the feminist movement from the 1960s through to the 1990s and told their stories in their own words. You might not know that poet and author Dionne Brand participated in a protest of the Miss Black Ontario pageant in the 1970s, or that the women who organized the Abortion Caravan in 1970 shut down Parliament for the first time in its 100-year history--but as a card-carrying feminist in Canada, don't you want to find out more?



Justice Bertha Wilson: One Woman's Difference, UBC Press, edited by Kim Brooks

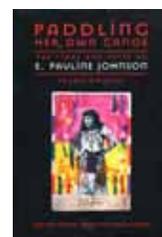
If you want to know what substantive equality is, or how Canada's first female Supreme Court Justice influenced the law in Canada, check out this book. If you want to learn about what made Bertha Wilson tick, or how her legacy touched

upon the recognition of battered woman syndrome in court, or the striking down of Canada's law on abortion, read on.



Harriet Tubman: Freedom Seeker, Freedom Leader, Dundurn, by Rosemary Sadlier

We know she was a conductor on the Underground Railway, but did you know that this freedom-fighting abolitionist was a supporter of women's suffrage and a spy? Harriet Tubman also had a sense of humour One of the most inspiring women to influence history, Tubman gets my vote as top hero.



Paddling Her Own Canoe: The Times and Texts of E. Pauline Johnson Takahionwake, Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson

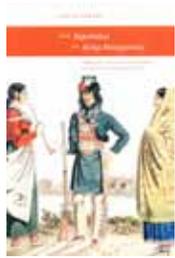
Imagine a time when poets in Canada earned a living publishing and performing their works onstage. Pauline Johnson, a leading poet at the turn of the 20th century, was a half-Mohawk performer who argued for a more tolerant nationality and challenged white Canada's presumptions of colonialism. A detailed account of the influence of an early artist who "observed the lines between insider and outsider" in both settler and native communities.



Until Our Hearts Are on the Ground: Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth edited by D. Memme Lavell-Harvard and Jeannette Corbiere Lavell

If you aren't familiar with the roles of women in traditional First Nations societies, this book is a good place to start. It introduces readers to the fact that, while European gender relations were hierarchical, many early Aboriginal societies embraced a balanced view. The imposition of patriarchal relations upon First Nations peoples was a

powerful weapon of colonization. The practice of Aboriginal women embracing the notion of “power mothering” is an indisputable act of colonial resistance.



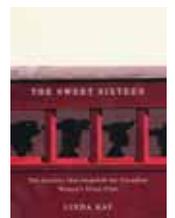
The Importance of Being Monogamous, Athabaska University Press, Sarah Carter

This is an incredible book and no, it's not really about monogamy. Rather, it describes, in detail, the unravelling of the respected roles of First Nations women within their communities that came about with the imposition of Euro-Canadian Christian marriage. You'll learn about non-monogamy among Plains people, First Nations women who lived as men and the steady decline of female autonomy at the hands of colonizing laws and practices.



A Brief History of Women in Quebec, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, by Denyse Baillargeon

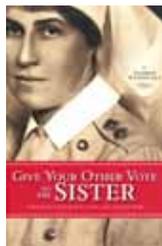
If you aren't familiar with the evolution of the feminist movement in Quebec, this book provides a very readable overview, from the arrival of the filles du roi in the 17th century, to the influence of Fernande Saint-Martin, Doris Anderson's counterpart at Châtelaine during the rise of feminism and during Quebec's Quiet Revolution. Originally published in French.



The Sweet Sixteen, McGill Queens University Press, by Linda Kay

Female journalists were among the leaders among the crew of feminists who fought for birth control, the vote, minimum wage laws and divorce reform

100 years ago. They also formed the Canadian Women's Press Club, a front for women's rights activism, but also a professional association for women writers, who were banned from all-male press clubs. Sixteen of them took a train to the St. Louis World Fair in 1904, hence the name of this informative, inspiring and charming book.



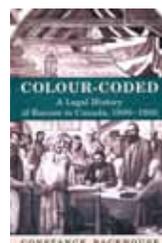
Give Your Other Vote to the Sister, University of Calgary Press, by Debbie Marshall

The title of this First World War-era book is named for the election slogan used by Alberta's Roberta Adams, who, in 1917, was one of the first two women elected to a legislature in Canada. Elected at the same time as Louise McKinney, McAdams was elected by enlisted servicemen and women to represent them. This book is much, much more than a biography of McAdams. It is an enthralling account of the lives of women who worked and volunteered for duty during the First World War overseas. A riveting tale of women's heroism.



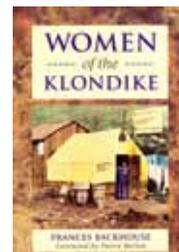
Queen of the Hurricanes, Feminist History Society, by Crystal Sissons

Fast-forward to the next world war. Elsie MacGill was not only the first female aeronautical engineer in Canada and she wasn't only the first woman anywhere to design an airplane. She was hired to oversee the manufacture of the Hawker Hurricane fighter planes at Canadian Car and Foundry during the Second World War, and was a comic hero to boot. She later sat on the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, and this book, published by Second Story Press, is a thorough tale about a remarkable trailblazer.



Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada 1900-1950, The Osgoode Society, by Constance Backhouse

One of Canada's most eminent historians details the country's history from a point of view that's rarely told. Canada's founders, early merchants and even religious orders held slaves. The presumed superiority of white colonists' legal system comes under scrutiny by Backhouse, a strong feminist and champion of the underdog. With its detailed legal accounts of Canada's treatment of Asian-Canadians, Aboriginal people and others, *Colour-Coded* is an engrossing read for anyone interested in racial discrimination and its place in Canada's history.



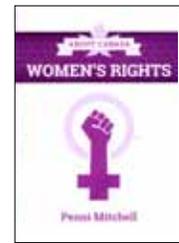
Women of the Klondike, Whitecap Books, by Frances Backhouse

Women who flocked to the Klondike region in Canada's north broke gender barriers in many ways. They ran brothels in the open, owning some of the community's most valued property for a time. Women also owned hotels, sawmills, cigar stores and other operations in a fast-growing, fast-paced environment. There is even evidence that the first gold find that led to the Gold Rush involved an Aboriginal woman, Katie Carmack. Read about the thrill-seeking women drawn to this short-lived, but fascinating, era.



Beyond Bylines: Media Workers and Women's Rights in Canada, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Barbara M. Freeman

This book's essays touch upon topics ranging from early female journalists who used newspapers as a forum to argue for women's rights to Aboriginal filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin's modern vision of Aboriginal womanhood. In between is a compelling chapter detailing the 1970 Abortion Caravan and media coverage of abortion protests during the women's liberation public protest era. Solid writing women's search for an equal and fair voice in Canada's media.



About Canada: Women's Rights, Fernwood, by Penni Mitchell

This forthcoming book introduces readers to key historical events in the struggle for women's equality in Canada. It touches upon historic gender roles in First Nations societies, moves on to the first women's rights groups, then explores women's activism during the 20th century. *About Canada: Women's Rights* introduces readers to more than 100 women who changed Canada through their efforts to end discrimination, change laws and fight for social justice. *Publication date: July 2015.*