

Mythical Mufferaw: More Adventures of Joe Mufferaw, and His Friends Fast Eagle, Broadaxe the Moose, Barrum the Frog, and Bucky the Beaver. By Bernie BEDORE. Illus. by Allen Lutes (Kingston, Ont.: Quarry Press, 1994. Pp. 91.)

Witches, Ghosts & Loups-Garous: Scary Tales from Canada's Ottawa Valley. By Joan FINNIGAN. (Kingston, Ont.: Quany Press, 1994. Pp. 83.)

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appear in the book. A glance at bibliographic entries for other books of oral texts reveals that a standard method of acknowledging both oral narrators and their editors is lacking. A convention is needed, one which credits both and establishes whose name should appear first in a citation.

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For several decades, the two storytellers Bernie Bedore and Joan Finnigan have worked enthusiastically in classrooms and popular media to promote tales from the Ottawa Valley. Their latest publications join a string of books intended for children or, as implied by Bedore himself (p. 88) and by the subtitle of Finnigan's book, for tourists. Notwithstanding the cataloguing information which classifies them as tales and legends, their literary origin means these small works neither capture nor are likely to influence the actual traditions of the region. Indeed, any impact will probably be felt only in other popularizations of local lore — as certainly happened with Bedore's earlier work (Connor 1986: 8-11). These two new publications should therefore be viewed, like their antecedents, as separate from scholarly concerns and evaluated on their own merits as examples of the storyteller's art.

Apart from their different subject matter, these two books contrast in ways both folkloristic and stylistic. As Joan Finnigan notes, only three stories in *Witches, Ghosts & Loups-Garous* are entirely her own creations; the rest have come originally from interviews and Ottawa newspapers of the 1930s. Her tales appear, therefore, to have sprung directly from oral tradition. Describing

supernatural encounters, the tales nonetheless adhere to historical facts — especially in place and personal names — to lend an appropriate air of verisimilitude. Where Finnigan deftly “retells” tales from her informants (pp. 7-8), Bernie Bedore invents stories inspired by historical fact (p. 89). His *Mythical Mufferaw* builds on his own corpus devoted exclusively to embellishing the legend of a real French-Canadian lumberjack-strongman, Joseph Montferrand, who lived from 1802 to 1864. Bedore explains how he came to develop the “mythical character of Joe Mufferaw” (pp. 88-91), a Bunyanesque figure, though he notes correctly that the Montferrand legend itself had been active since the 19th century. In the present collection, however, the author’s new stories have less to do with the Mufferaw character than with his giant animal friends (all of them Bedore’s creations).

Finnigan’s collection serves more sophisticated fare for an older audience. A large part of its appeal lies in the author’s narrative flair; her tales will entertain readers, though clearly they need to be read aloud for full effect. Bedore’s stories too are meant to be told, but his efforts to sustain both a corporate theme and a pan-Canadian perspective sometimes overwhelm plot and character. The team of giant animals, called collectively “Troubleshooters Incorporated,” do good deeds from coast to coast to coast — with government assistance. Mimicking recent trends in American television programming for children in this way may engage young audiences in these stories, but such an approach leaves them better suited for animation than for the spoken word.

Reference Cited

- Connor, Jennifer J. 1986. The Legend of Joseph Montferrand and Its Scientific Context in the 1880s. *Canadian Folklore canadien* 8: 7-20.

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