

MARRIAGE OF MINDS: ISABEL AND OSCAR SKELTON REINVENTING CANADA

Oscar Skelton (1878–1941) was a prominent early-twentieth-century scholar who became a civil servant and political adviser to prime ministers Mackenzie King and R.B. Bennett. He wrote a number of important books and one, *Socialism: A Critical Analysis*, was highly praised by Vladimir Lenin. His wife, Isabel Skelton (1877–1956), wrote extensively about literature and history; she was the first historian to treat women from Canada's past individually in their own right rather than as a generalized category. Both husband and wife promoted the idea that Canada was an independent nation no longer in need of Britain's tutelage.

Terry Crowley has written a unique double biography that examines the lives of Isabel and Oscar, their works, and their careers. He shows how both individuals in their own way influenced the development of Canada as a nation-state. Crowley questions why, when both Isabel and Oscar wrote influential works, Oscar's career blossomed, while Isabel remained virtually unrecognized. He concludes that despite her literary accomplishments, Isabel was enmeshed in domestic and family duties, while Oscar's rise to prominence was facilitated by male scholarly and publishing networks as well as the support that women provided to men's careers. This book traces the lives of two people who rejected British colonialism and hailed a new nation on the world's stage, examining the intersections of gender, nationality, and literary expression at a significant juncture in Canada's history.

(Studies in Gender and History)

TERRY CROWLEY is a professor of history at the University of Guelph. Among his previous books, *Agnes Macphail and the Politics of Equality* won the W.C. Good Writing Award of the Rural Learning Association.

STUDIES IN GENDER AND HISTORY

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At the meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva, August–September 1928. From the left, Oscar Skelton, Philippe Roy, Raoul Dandurand, W.L.M. King, Charles Dunning, and W.A. Riddell.



Isabel and Sheila Skelton attired for the coronation of George VI in 1937. Isabel was particularly fond of the jade necklace Oscar had brought from Europe.

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Terry Crowley

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*For D.C. Masters, T.W.L. McDermott, Claude Thibault,
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