

## **Recent Publications in Local History: New Brunswick**

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engaging style and it provides a model for other state and provincial studies. It also implicitly conveys a warning to the scholar. State and provincial histories aimed at a general and a professional audience are extremely difficult books to write.

G.A. RAWLYK

### Recent Publications in Local History: New Brunswick\*

In recent years a whole series of important books dealing with the history of New Brunswick have been republished. Among the most valuable is William Francis Ganong's *Ste. Croix (Dochet) Island* (Saint John, New Brunswick Museum, 1979), a republication of the 1945 revised edition of a monograph first published in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for 1902-03*. Dr. Ganong describes the early history of French settlement in Acadia in great detail and includes long quotations from the sources. While most of this material comes from Champlain's account, which has been published elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> it is material which is not easily accessible to the general reader. Ganong also discusses Ste. Croix Island in the period after the departure of deMonts and Champlain as well as the part the island played in the boundary controversies of 1796-99, and concludes with a short section on its more recent history. A second useful publication of the New Brunswick Museum is a new edition of John Clarence Webster's *Acadia at the End of the Seventeenth Century* (Saint John, 1979). Originally published in 1934, the book consists chiefly of the letters, journals and memoirs of Joseph Robineau de Villebon, Commandant in Acadia 1690-1700. There is a useful chapter on source materials and biographical sketches of all the important figures mentioned in the text. The book contains information on the Acadian settlements on the Saint John river, descriptions of Fort Ste. Joseph and its construction, and details of the expeditions organized to raid New England settlements, many of which were planned by Governor Villebon from Fort Ste. Joseph. The journals also contain information about Indian-French relations and the role of the missionaries among the Indians. This is an invaluable book for anyone interested in Indian-white relations or Anglo-French rivalry in the late seventeenth century, since much of the material is not available elsewhere, at least not in English.

Another valuable reprint is Walter Bates, *Kingston and the Loyalists of the*

\* This review article is the first of a new series examining recent publications in local history. Each of the Atlantic Provinces will be dealt with in turn and the series will be a continuing one, although there may not be a similar article in every issue of the journal. Some of the more important books mentioned in these bibliographical essays may also be reviewed separately. — Editor's Note.

1 Samuel de Champlain, *Works*, ed. H.R. Biggar (6 vols., Toronto, The Champlain Society, 1922-36.)

"*Spring Fleet of 1783*" (Woodstock, Nonentity Press, 1980). Originally published in 1889, this little pamphlet contains the reminiscences of Sheriff Bates about the early days of the American Revolutionary War and the sufferings of the loyalists. It also describes the arrival of the loyalists in Saint John in the spring of 1783, the founding of Kingston and the building of the first Anglican church in the province. Bates never completed his history and the editor of the original edition, W.O. Raymond, added a short diary, which is also reproduced, kept by Sarah Frost describing the voyage of the loyalists from New York to Saint John and their landing in the "roughest land" she had ever seen. Although this short book lacks organization and cohesion, it does contain firsthand information about the arrival of the loyalists in New Brunswick.

Howard Temperley, ed., *Gubbins' New Brunswick Journals 1811 & 1813* (Fredericton, New Brunswick Heritage Publications, 1980) and John Mann, *Travels in North America* (Fredericton, St. Annes Point Press, 1975) deal with New Brunswick in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The Gubbins book is based on material discovered fairly recently by Professor Temperley, while the Mann book is a reprint of a very rare 1824 edition. Joseph Gubbins was one of the senior British officers serving in New Brunswick from 1810 to 1816, while John Mann was one of the immigrants brought out from Scotland by the New Brunswick government in 1816 in their first serious attempt to attract settlers. Very little escaped the attention of Col. Gubbins and his journals are not merely a description of his extensive travels throughout the colony but contain revealing comments about the economy, the timber trade, the failure of the leading loyalists to establish country estates, the Indians and their education, the difficulties of settlement and the character of the people and their vices. Unfortunately, Mann's comments are usually brief and the reader is often left with a number of unanswered questions. But both books have good introductions and the Gubbins book has very detailed footnotes. The two books complement each other very well in describing a period in the province's history about which very little has been written. Only Patrick Campbell's *Travels in the Inhabited Parts of North America* and Peter Fisher's *The First History of New Brunswick* contain as much useful material about the early years of the province's history, before the arrival of the professional traveller of the 1830s and 1840s.

Fortunately Peter Fisher's *The First History of New Brunswick* (Woodstock, Nonentity Press, 1980) has also recently been reprinted. Originally published in 1825 as *Sketches of New Brunswick*, this reprint of the 1921 edition describes the province as it was in 1825. Using reminiscences collected from his family and other settlers, Fisher describes the various counties and the towns of Fredericton, Saint John and St. Andrews. Even more important are his comments about the state of agriculture and manufacturing in the province and the timber trade and its effects on settlement, the development of the province and the character of the people involved in the trade. There are also interesting

comments on the loyalists and their role in developing the province. Since the earlier editions of this book are very rare, it certainly merited republication.

Another book that merited reprinting is William T. Baird, *Seventy Years of New Brunswick Life* (Fredericton, Saint Annes Point Press, 1979), which was originally published in 1890. The author was the son of John Baird, an early schoolmaster, who came to New Brunswick in 1817 with a British regiment. John Baird taught school in Fredericton for many years before moving to the Tobique Settlement. His son William describes his family's life in Fredericton, their attempt to settle further up the river, and the Fredericton fire of 1825, as well as details of his own business and military career. Interspersed in the narrative are stories of riots, Indian-white relations, crime, the Aroostock War, smuggling, cholera epidemics, and confederation. This book is an excellent source for anyone working on New Brunswick history, primarily because the remarks are not those of the casual traveller, which are often superficial, but the reminiscences of a lifelong resident of the province. It is unfortunate that only 500 copies of the new edition of this book were printed because it deserves wider circulation.

Somewhat less valuable but still interesting is Walter Bates, *The Mysterious Stranger, Henry More Smith* (Woodstock, Nonentity Press, 1979). Originally published in 1817, this very popular book has gone through at least eleven editions. Walter Bates was the sheriff of Kings County in the early decades of the nineteenth century and he became so fascinated with one of the prisoners in his jail that he travelled widely to locate information so that he could tell the life story of that prisoner, Henry More Smith. Although a scoundrel and a thief, Smith fascinated many people because of his abilities as an escape artist and as the creator of a series of marionettes, who entertained visitors to the Kingston jail by putting on puppet shows. Bates also provides information about the workings of the courts, the difficulties of capturing and securing prisoners and the problems of communications and travel in the early nineteenth century, as well as information about many well known figures of the time.

In addition to the reprints of older sources there has been a great proliferation of books dealing with local history in recent years. While many of these books contain little new material and are based solely on secondary sources, a few are the result of detailed research into archival material, particularly land records. Two of the best of the local histories deal with the founding of new settlements, one Scottish, the other Irish. Duncan A. MacPhail, *New Kincardineshire* (Fredericton, privately printed, 1977) is subtitled "An Intimate History of the Early Years of a Scottish Settlement in New Brunswick" and describes the efforts of Capt. William Brown to form Scottish settlements in Victoria County in the 1870s. Brown was a dreamer who persuaded some 530 people to come out to New Brunswick from Scotland in 1873. Supported by the New Brunswick government, 374 of these people successfully settled in Victoria County where they were joined a year later by another 210 settlers. W.P.

Kilfoil, *Johnville: The Centennial Study of an Irish Settlement* (Fredericton, privately printed, 1962; reprinted 1978) is the story of an Irish settlement begun by the Emigrant Aid Society, founded in Saint John in 1860 through the efforts of Bishop John Sweeney of Saint John, who persuaded the provincial government to survey lands for an Irish settlement in Carleton County. While neither book unfortunately has footnotes or a proper bibliography, both are based on detailed research into archival material and newspapers, supplemented by the recollections of older inhabitants in the area. The material on the formation of the settlement is excellent in both books and the McPhail book contains useful information on how people lived in rural settlements in the late nineteenth century.

Two other well written and well researched local histories are Margaret M. Hunter, *Pioneer Settlers of Bay Chaleur* (Bathurst, privately printed, 1978), and Grace Aiton, *The Story of Sussex and Vicinity* (Sussex, Kings County Historical Society, 1967; reprinted 1979 [?]). The Aiton book, which unfortunately has neither footnotes nor a bibliography, is particularly strong in its description of the early settlement of the Sussex area, while the Hunter book, which is well documented, contains brief histories of many small communities in the Bay Chaleur region, some more complete than others. The best sections of the Hunter book are those dealing with farming, fishing and lumbering, which are based primarily on the recollection of older inhabitants of the area.

An interesting little book which also merits attention, although it is not strictly a local history, is Gary Hughes, *Miscou and Lameque and Their State of Bondage 1849-1861* (Saint John, New Brunswick Museum, 1979). Hughes describes the arrival of representatives of Charles Robin and Company from the Isle of Jersey to set up operations in Gaspé and the Bay Chaleur area of New Brunswick, the settlement patterns in the area which were associated with the establishment and expansion of this firm, and the truck or barter system which kept the local inhabitants in bondage to the company. He also examines Moses Perley's *Report of the Sea and River Fisheries in New Brunswick*, which recommended that the activities of the Jersey merchants be restricted and local families assisted in expanding their activities, recommendations which the government ignored. Hughes concludes that the area in the mid-nineteenth century resembled a feudal state and that the people were exploited for the sole benefit of the Robin Company. Regardless of whether one agrees with all of Hughes' conclusions, this brief study of the truck system, which was so common in the lumber as well as the fishing industry, will be useful to anyone working on studies of the economic, political and social development of the province.

Geneological research is also booming at present. While most geneological studies are simply lists of names of interest only to the families included, occasionally geneology is combined with local history. One of the best examples is W.D. Hamilton, *Old North Esk on the Miramichi* (Fredericton, privately printed, 1979), a very detailed historical, geographical and geneological study of

the civil parish of North Esk in Northumberland County. It is the result of over twenty years of research and the first sixty-eight pages contain an excellent short history of the region based on a wide variety of primary and secondary sources. This book differs from the usual geneological works in that, instead of concentrating on a few families and their descendants, the author lists all the original settlers in the parish and their children with as much information as possible on every family. The book is particularly useful for anyone doing studies of out-migration from New Brunswick in the nineteenth century, since Professor Hamilton devotes a short section of the introductory part of the book to the exodus from North Esk of many of the original settlers or their children and then, in describing the various families, gives additional information on those who immigrated to various parts of the United States. Doreen Menzies Arbuckle, *The Northwest Miramichi* (Ottawa, privately printed, 1979) is a somewhat similar book. The first two hundred pages trace the history of the region and contain bits and pieces about almost everything from the first settlement of the province to fairly recent times. There are chapters on the Indians, the economic development of the area, schools, churches, communications, and lumbering. The author used a wide variety of sources, including documents from archives, newspapers, and information from local inhabitants. The second half of the book is for geneologists and is a study of four families. Although not as detailed as Professor Hamilton's book, *The Northwest Miramichi* is still of considerable use.

A number of church histories have also appeared recently. Although many of these are of interest only to those who live in the immediate vicinity, some attempt to do more than list the prominent individuals in the community who were active in promoting the church. Roger Holdsworth's *Faith of Our Fathers* (Fredericton, privately printed, 1979) describes briefly the 184 centennial churches in the province of New Brunswick, that is those churches that in 1967 received a plaque stating that christians had worshipped in that building for 100 or more years. It is unfortunate that this book is so short but it contains interesting tidbits of information about churches and gives a brief history of religious activity in the region from the time of Champlain to the present, concluding with some comments on the future of religion in the province. A list of the churches is included with the dates of their construction when available. D.F. Hoddinott's *From Whence We Came* (Chatham, privately printed, 1979) is the history of St. James and St. John's United Church in Newcastle, N.B. Although the author did not include footnotes and the bibliography is not very useful, this is a well researched book which covers the whole early religious history of the Miramichi region in some detail, from the early efforts of the Presbyterians and Anglicans, through the rise of Methodism to the difficulties leading up to church union. This book along with my own recently published history of the Anglican Church in the Parish of Chatham provides considerable information on various aspects of the religious history of the Miramichi region,

much of which comes from church records many of which have never been used before.<sup>2</sup> Also useful is Aubrey M. Tizzard's *Methodism a Flame* (Dorchester, privately printed, 1979), a history of the Methodist church in the Shepody Bay area. Although little attempt is made to put this material into any larger context, the details of the establishment of Methodism in the area, the career of William Black, and the short histories of the various churches in the region are informative.

Robert Cunningham and John B. Prince's *Tamped Clay and Saltmarsh Hay* (Fredericton, Brunswick Press, 1978) is a different sort of history book. It is virtually an encyclopedia of New Brunswick artifacts with detailed descriptions of how they were produced. A well organized, informative book, with excellent illustrations, it has something of interest for local historians, collectors and anyone interested in New Brunswick's past. Although it may contain minor errors, it will undoubtedly prove to be a valuable reference book for years to come.

A number of recent books, although they do not deal directly with New Brunswick history, should also be of interest to local historians. While the major emphasis of E.H. Burrows, *Captain Owen of the African Survey 1774-1857* (Rotterdam, Holland, A.A. Balkema, 1979) is on the career of Capt. Owen as a marine surveyor, there are also sections which deal with Canada and the Maritime Provinces. The early chapters examine Owen's family and their long connection with Campobello Island, which began in 1767 when Capt. Owen's father acquired the island as a grant from the Nova Scotia government. The book contains a particularly valuable study of David Owen, Capt. Owen's cousin, who left Cambridge University in 1779 to spend the next forty years on Campobello Island living like a lord on an English manor, fighting with his tenants and defying the governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the United States while he carried on illegal trade. There is also an interesting section dealing with Capt. Owen's involvement in the military survey of the Great Lakes in 1815-1817, but perhaps the most useful chapters for New Brunswick historians are the last two which describe Owen's years of retirement from 1835 until 1852 on Campobello Island where he also ruled like a feudal lord, pacing his landlocked deck while he pursued his almost mystical interest in theology. Owen was called out of retirement in 1842 and for the next five years he was involved in the survey of the Bay of Fundy and the rivers in the area, including the Saint John. The lack of technical material in this biography of one of the greatest of all British marine surveyors may disappoint some people since it contains no details of the actual mechanics of hydrographical surveying and very little information about the difficulties faced by Owen and his men in their survey work. But the research, which took the author to three continents, is thorough and the material he used is well documented, although much remains

2 W.A. Spray, *David's Kingdom: A History of the Anglican Church in the Parish of Chatham, New Brunswick* (Chatham, St. Paul's Church Corporation, 1979).

unsaid about Owen and his career and there is certainly room for a more complete biography.

Another book which should be of considerable interest to New Brunswickers is Donald McKay's *The Lumberjacks* (Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978). While the books described above were not designed to be bestsellers, this book certainly was. Profusely illustrated, this very attractive book is a pleasure to read with its reminiscences of men who lumbered in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. The most important research for this book was apparently the interviews carried out by the author and for the rest he relies on well known and well used sources. As a result, much of the material is not new. However, it has been collected and presented in a very enjoyable way and the book can be seen as a sort of "everything you ever wanted to know about lumberjacks". The author is concerned less with the economics of the timber industry and its effects on the development of the country and more with the actual mechanics of lumbering and the men who did the work. The different tasks of the lumbermen and the changing technology of the industry are discussed in detail and are made more interesting by the use of comments from the men who were involved. Written by a journalist, it is easier to read than many professional histories and it covers the whole sphere of lumbering from descriptions of sawyers and teamsters and their work to disasters like the Miramichi Fire and the Great Mississauga Fire. *The Lumberjacks* is the type of book that makes many professional historians green with envy. They will criticize it and find minor weaknesses pointing out everything that should have been included, but while they are doing that the general reader will be buying the book and enjoying it.

W.A. SPRAY