

À la recherche de La Petite-Rochelle: Memory and Identity in Restigouche

P. D. Clarke

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P.D. CLARKE

À la recherche de La Petite-Rochelle: Memory and Identity in Restigouche

WHEN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE Société historique Machault met the press in September 1993, it was to announce that the society had “undertaken its most challenging project to date”, that of locating the site of the long-lost French establishment of La Petite-Rochelle.¹ The Société was looking for proof, preferably remains, of a major settlement — including military post, Acadian village, Indian mission and pirates’ lair, comprising as well fortifications, powder-houses, stores, forges, barracks, 200 log houses, an arsenal and a hospital, the whole inhabited by 700 soldiers and seamen, some 1500 habitants and hundreds of Mi’gmaq. It was an investigation premised on two propositions: first, that La Petite-Rochelle had been situated in the basin of the Restigouche River, at the head of the Baie des Chaleurs; and secondly, that it had been extant at some point between the beginning of the 18th century and the end of the Seven Years’ War.

This was the latest evocation of a search that, for two centuries, had engrossed residents and visitors — historians, publicists, travel writers and technocrats of different cultures and intellectual traditions. La Petite-Rochelle is a generic term encompassing all or parts of whatever French establishment was present up to 1760, and, by inference, whatever grew out of it. With each successive period and audience, it has had a different purpose: mnemonic, commemorative, ideological, instrumental. To this day the search for La Petite-Rochelle still inspires inhabitants of Restigouche. The quest is predicated on the existence of multitudinous references in narrative and oral accounts and artefacts consistent with the presence of such an establishment. The questions to which the Société sought answers were posed in terms of an expression of the need for contemporary meaning and understanding. The story of this quest, and of all that led up to it, sheds light on the interaction of people and place, myth and history, memory and identity.

The case of La Petite-Rochelle is useful in illustrating the interaction of memory and identity precisely because the memory of La Petite-Rochelle has been activated within a given community (both social and communicational), a clearly delimited space and over the long term. This allows for the separation of indigenous and external influences, close observation and the consideration of the phenomenon through time. Above all, this study highlights the diverse social and memory actors

1 *The Tribune* (Campbellton), 29 September 1993; *Le Chaleur* (New Richmond), 19 septembre 1993. I would to thank the Société historique Machault for its generous sharing of archival materials and its good-humoured acceptance of its resident “anthropologist”. As well, I am indebted to one of the anonymous *Acadiensis* readers, whose insistence on context made this a better paper.

(ethnic, linguistic, social) and the underlying dynamics (historical, ideological, socio-economic) involved in the definition of history and the choice of what is to be memorialized and commemorated. As well, it lends itself to the application of theories of intertextuality and cultural reception, emphasizing components of the relationship between memory and identity such as the dialogical processes joining memory and history and popular (oral) and élite (literate) cultures. By illuminating a constituted community (and aggregates thereof) and the manner in which it is subsumed by the greater cultural and socio-political context, this study aims at providing insights into the means by which identity is fashioned by representations of the past.

Memory here is not conceived of as a manifestation of the individual psyche nor of any form of hegemony; rather, it is viewed in its social and paradigmatic incarnation, as an integral part of a process by which the lived experience of individuals and groups results in the objectification and interiorization of the past and of past-representations. This is a process posited on a dynamic connection between memory and identity, envisaged as inseparable and incorporated within a wide range of elements by which groups constitute themselves. They are apprehended here through a deliberately holistic approach, which seeks to apply concepts encompassing both the structuring reality of memory and identity and the cultural and discursive practices by which they are enunciated.²

The choice of La Petite-Rochelle is equally related to the subjective nature of this study, and notably to the author's participation in the writing of a chapter of the saga of La Petite-Rochelle.³ My involvement has been an opportunity to study an example of memory-at-work, in situ and in the guise of an anthropologist-historian.⁴ Observation of social interaction at individual and aggregate levels as well as attention to the symbolic properties of materials and to behaviour derived from them demonstrate how human activity can be interpreted as an instrument of cultural and social reproduction, regulation and agency. This has provided me with insight and access to sources needed to identify the competing forces and the sundry subjective, psychological and cultural elements involved in the elaboration of memory and identity. Part of this story, therefore, is my own, how my objectivist analysis of social discourse contributes to the evolution of La Petite-Rochelle as representation, and how it too underscores the limits of historiography.

There is a need to investigate the objective existence of La Petite-Rochelle, as separate from the discourse which has subsumed it. The goal is to draw attention to primary sources which, in the absence of pertinent archaeological data, are our chief authority for all that relates to La Petite-Rochelle. They allow us to deduce (and in

2 See Pierre Nora, dir., *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris, 1984-93) for the topic of memory and identity in historiography. And, for the "approche culturelle", articulated on the interdependence of the material and the symbolic, see Fernand Harvey, dir., *La région culturelle. Problématique interdisciplinaire* (Québec, 1994).

3 See Société historique Machault [P.D. Clarke], "À la recherche de La Petite-Rochelle", report submitted to Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec [MCCQ], 1994.

4 For "deconstructivist" cultural anthropology in the linguistic turn, see James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, 1986) and James A. Boon, *Other Tribes, Other Scribes: Symbolic Anthropology in the Comparative Study of Cultures, Histories, Religions, and Texts* (Cambridge, 1982).

certain instances, establish) facts regarding its configuration, population and duration — in a word, its morphogenesis. To these proofs I will apply my own structuring assumptions; the result will provide a base-line for interrogating notions respecting the links between oral and discursive traditions, history and other narratives, and individual and collective memories.

From the mid-16th century onwards, Tjigog, in the Restigouche basin, served as a point of summer aggregation for the Mi'gmaq of Listogtjeoag. Consequently, French missionaries were active there as of the early 1700s, and there are indications of the presence of a trading post under the governance of Nicolas Denys and his successors, but the mission was not permanent and the post never contained more than a handful of Europeans. Subsequently, Restigouche was granted and re-granted by royal decree but without effect insofar as settlement was concerned. A thorough reading of the archives and of colonial literature leads to the conclusion that no European establishment that could be considered to be La Petite-Rochelle existed in Restigouche prior to the 1750s. It is in the context of the Seven Years' War that we find the presence of a substantial European population, resulting from the historical conjuncture of the Deportation of the Acadians and military engagements in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

What little can be confirmed regarding any such establishment is drawn from documents relative to the Battle of the Restigouche (June-July 1760) and related events. The first of these is the presence of hundreds of Acadian refugees on the Gulf shore. The second is the construction of a French military post at the mouth of the Restigouche, likely early in 1759. Its small detachment was tasked to provide support to the Acadians and to intervene as required to prevent their surrender to British authorities.⁵ Subsequently, the King's Magazines were moved to Ristigouche, following the French withdrawal from the Miramichi and the migration of a number of refugees to the Baie des Chaleurs.⁶ As a result, 800 people wintered at the post in 1759-60.⁷ When the French relief fleet, despatched to re-supply besieged Canadians, sought shelter in the Restigouche basin in mid-May 1760, it reported finding "plus de mille cinq cents âmes Exténuées . . . et mourant de faim".⁸ There, they had established "un petit Camp en état de tenir Contre les Ennemis", one which grew daily with the arrival of further refugees and privateers preying on British merchant ships.⁹ After the Battle, the Acadians lingered there, most remaining until the end of 1761, when they were removed by force.¹⁰

5 See Bourdon to Choiseul, 11 octobre 1760, MG1, C11A, vol. 105, pt. 2, National Archives of Canada [NAC]; D'Angeac, "Relations depuis Notre départ de Royant, jusqu'au Jour de Nôtre Combat . . .", 5 août 1760, MG2, B4, vol. 98, NAC. Much of this evidence is in John Knox, *A Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America* (Toronto, 1914-16).

6 Pierre du Calvet, *The Case of Peter Du Calvet, Esq. of Montreal in the Province of Quebec* (London, 1784), pp. 2-3; see also Frye to Lawrence, 19 November 1759, MG1, C11A, vol. 87, NAC.

7 Bazagier, "État précis du monde de la dépendance de ce poste", 13 septembre 1760, MG1, C11A, vol. 105, pt. 2, NAC.

8 D'Angeac, "Relations"; Kanon, "Campagne d'Amérique", 25 septembre 1760, MG2, B4, vol. 98, NAC.

9 Giraudais, "Journal de la Campagne . . . Sur le Nre. le Machault", octobre 1760, MG2, B4, vol. 98, NAC; Byron to Colville, 14 July 1760, MG12, Adm. 1/482, NAC.

10 Bazagier, "État de la Situation du poste de Ristigouche . . .", décembre 1760, MG1, C11A, vol. 105, pt. 2, NAC; Grandmaison to Murray, 26 March 1761, MG12, WO34, vol. 1, NAC; *The Boston News-Letter*, 10 December 1761.

We know something of the location and configuration of the French establishment. On 2 July 1760, a British landing party disembarked at Pointe-à-la-Batterie (12 kilometres downstream from the post). In addition to setting fire to the “Carriages & wood work of the Battery”, it was reported that the force had “burnt . . . above a hundred and fifty houses with all the furniture”, a figure later revised upwards to “about two hundred houses”.¹¹ This, in all probability, was the Acadian village. As to the military post at Ristigouche, it was described as “a scattered parcel of Loghouses, in the midst of the woods, and no Clear Ground near it”, a site close to an Indian camp (later Mission Sainte-Anne).¹² The two main batteries, built after the arrival of the fleet, were *en barbette* — better than other defence works but barely more than trenches. And the goods removed by British forces following the capitulation contained little more than the cannon and stores which had been put on shore from French vessels.¹³

La Petite-Rochelle (inasmuch as it designated a French establishment) was thus short-lived, beginning and ending with the hostilities. It was hardly more than an outpost, of little strategic importance, inhabited mostly by Acadian refugees, primarily for the purpose of receiving French aid. All that contemporary documents permit us to deduce is that La Petite-Rochelle was extant during this period, that it included a settlement of 150 to 200 dwellings, inhabited by some 1500 people, on the intervalle in proximity to Pointe-à-la-Batterie and that it also included a small military post (likely at Pointe-à-Bourdeau), comprising some built structures and simple defence works, which was occupied for a time by Acadians following the destruction of their village.¹⁴

If narrative underlies the conditions of the production — indeed of the possibility — of the symbolic representation of collective identity, it does so in correlation to an economy of representation, figured within a specific spatio-temporal context. Literary and linguistic theories posit a link between narrative and memory. The study of narrative reveals the presence of allegorical structures derived from narrative functions, and historical discourse in particular lends itself to the construction of metaphorical meaning. In sufficient density, topically related texts generate a master-narrative, an interpretative paradigm informing an entire corpus. This in turn can give rise to an overarching narrative representation structuring the political and historical consciousness of the collective subject.¹⁵ The result, in this case, more than an historical reconstruction of La Petite-Rochelle, is a cultural allegory, creating the traditions needed to justify assumptions related to social, economic, cultural, ethnic and other imperatives. The end product is a discursive construction of an image of the inhabitants of Restigouche, that of their perception of themselves and of their purpose.

11 “A Journal of the Proceedings of [HMS] Fame . . . 16th of February 1760 . . . 31st Jan. 1761”, 2 July 1760, MG12, Adm. 51/3830, NAC; Byron to Admiralty, 11 July 1760, MG12, Adm. 1/1491, NAC; Byron to Colville, 14 July 1760.

12 Elliot to Amherst, 24 January 1761, MG11, CO5, vol. 61, pt. 2, NAC; D’Angeac, “Relations”.

13 Elliot to Amherst, 24 January 1761; McCartney to Admiralty, 11 December 1760, MG12, Adm. 1/2112, NAC.

14 Elliot to Amherst, 24 January 1761; Bazagier, “Situation”.

15 For narrative theory, see Hayden V. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987); Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca and London, 1983).

The question is to what degree and in what fashion historical and other genres of writing on La Petite-Rochelle created a discursive tradition from which was derived all subsequent writing on the subject. In addition, we need to explore the dialogical process with oral history, which informed commemoration, memorialization and popular forms of collective memory. The relationship between discursive and oral modes goes to the core of identity-making, revealing much about the role of history in the construction of cultural traditions and, of course, much about the autonomy of popular representations of the past. The documentary sources under scrutiny here are of two kinds, some contemporary to La Petite-Rochelle, most posterior to it: histories, travel accounts, tourist literature and other genres, in books, brochures and periodicals. These are indications of the materiality of La Petite-Rochelle and of its evolution as cultural meaning.

The narrative existence of La Petite-Rochelle owes its conception to writings related to military operations in Restigouche in 1758-61. The first written reference to La Petite-Rochelle per se was in an account of the Restigouche naval confrontation, published in 1760, in *The London Magazine*:

When our fleet appeared off the *Rustigushi* harbour, the enemy proceeded up the river, and anchored above two batteries, mounted on the North side of it. These being but indifferently served, were soon silenced; and the ships, after a short resistance, were all sunk or taken. Captain Byron then destroyed the town of *Petit Rochelle*, containing upwards of 200 houses; and also both of the batteries.¹⁶

This reference is the source of all that follows, given wide circulation by Robert Cooney, author of the first published history of the region, which he visited in 1827.¹⁷ He was the precursor to a succession of historian-travellers who consigned La Petite-Rochelle to history, thereby creating a narrative tradition and grist for bourgeois and popular fascination with the place and its inhabitants.

For these historians, La Petite-Rochelle, or at least a similar settlement, had existed long before the Battle. From them came the narrative of the French settlement in the Gulf and of the origins of La Petite-Rochelle, a model followed by historians and writers to this day. Cooney wrote:

It is plausible . . . that about . . . 1642 . . . Jean Jacques Enaud . . . had an establishment on *Baie des Vents Island*. . . . About . . . 1702, we find the French . . . established . . . along the Gulf Shore . . . we find them on the Miramichi, from . . . 1740 to 1757. During the latter year, they suffered very much from . . . interruption in their trade. . . . In . . . 1758, the . . . misery of these poor people being increased . . . more than Eight Hundred of them died. . . . [S]urviving inhabitants . . . fled to the *Baie des Chaleurs*. . . .¹⁸

16 *The London Magazine or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, 8 September 1760 [account from Byron to Admiralty, 11 July 1760] and Allen to Admiralty, 2 August 1760, MG12 Adm. 1/1442, NAC.

17 Robert Cooney, *A Compendious History of the Northern Part of the Province of New Brunswick, and of the District of Gaspé* (Halifax, 1832), pp. 212-13.

18 Cooney, *Compendious History*, pp. 30-5.

This was the paradigm disseminated and embellished by the works of successive writers such as Abraham Gesner and Reverend J.C. Herdman, author of “Sketches in Restigouche History”, whose story best illustrates this growing tradition:

Earnest efforts were made about [1691] to establish settlements . . . on . . . the Restigouche. In this . . . district they succeeding in founding . . . La Petite Rochelle, whose history therefore we may approximately date from the year 1700. In 1713 . . . emigration . . . was encouraged . . . and . . . we find that considerable additions were made to La Petite Rochelle, and two military stations formed. . . .¹⁹

It was not until 1906 that this narrative was appreciably modified, when Père Édouard-P. Chouinard, author of a history of the parish of Carleton, wrote an account of the origins of the Acadian refugees and of their trek to Restigouche. In this version, a group of 750 deportees, fleeing Les Mines and Île St.-Jean, reached the Baie des Chaleurs in December 1757. “Ils passèrent l’hiver à l’abri . . . [du] ‘Pain de sucre’ [Sugarloaf], au pied de laquelle s’élève aujourd’hui . . . Campbellton. Au printemps . . . la troupe entière traversa à Restigouche, où il y avait une garnison française à . . . Pointe à la Garde”.²⁰

These texts in their totality constituted the narrative paradigm that would order virtually every 20th-century account of Restigouche, from that of Alfred Pelland, “publiciste” of the Québec Ministère de la Colonisation, in an approved version of the history of the Gaspé, through to those of Père Pacifique, Antoine Bernard and Bona Arsenault, all popular historians of Acadia with a considerable following in the general public.²¹ In each case, the story of the settlement is chronicled and set in the larger context: the Deportation, Acadian resistance and the Battle.

Attendant to this was a debate over the location and configuration of La Petite-Rochelle. Bernard, Arsenault and others were of the opinion that the post and the Acadian village, “baptisé au nom de Petite-Rochelle”, were one and the same; the Acadian camp at Pointe-à-la-Garde had been but a temporary measure. Others, such as George MacBeath, maintained that the village, protected by a palisade, was indeed situated at Pointe-à-la-Garde.²² But it is Pacifique, a competent local historian, who gave what is likely the most exact version of events: “Au printemps de 1758, ces Acadiens . . . allèrent former un groupement . . . entre les deux pointes . . . à la Garde

19 Abraham Gesner, *New Brunswick; With Notes for Emigrants Comprehending the early history, an account of the Indians, settlement*. . . (London, 1847); J.C. Herdman, “Sketches in Restigouche History”, *The Daily Sun* (Saint John), 12 January 1883.

20 Édouard-P. Chouinard, *Histoire de la paroisse de Saint-Joseph de Carleton (Baie des Chaleurs), 1755-1906* (Rimouski, 1906), pp. 1-2.

21 Alfred Pelland, *Vastes champs offerts à la Colonisation et à l’Industrie. La Gaspésie. Esquisse historique* (Québec, 1914); Pacifique de Valigny R.P., “Ristigouche. Métropole des Micmacs. Théâtre du ‘Dernier effort de la France au Canada’. Trait d’union entre le Canada français et l’Acadie”, *Études historiques et géographiques* (Rimouski, 1942); Antoine Bernard, *La Gaspésie au soleil* (Montréal, 1925); *Histoire de la survivance acadienne, 1755-1935* (Montréal, 1935); Bona Arsenault, *Histoire des Acadiens* (Québec, 1966).

22 Bernard, *Gaspésie*, p. 143; *Histoire*, pp. 27-8; Arsenault, *L’Acadie des ancêtres avec la généalogie des premières familles acadiennes* ([1955] Québec, 1978), p. 302; George MacBeath, *The Story of the Restigouche. Covering the Indian, French, and English Periods* (Saint John, 1954), pp. 9-10.

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et à la Batterie. . . . Ils étaient là 1500 personnes, dans 200 maisons”. As for the post, it had been “décoré du nom de . . . Petite-Rochelle, confondu à tort avec le village acadien de Pointe-à-la-Batterie”.²³

Next to origins, came resistance and its sequels, a tradition inaugurated by Émile Lauvrière and Abbé Henri-R. Casgrain²⁴ — the latter in his lionization of Beausoleil Broussard, the mythical Acadian resistance fighter — but given popular resonance by Bernard, Arsenault and Robert Rumilly. Bernard stressed “l’attachement et la fidélité que les Acadiens ont pour la France . . . au-dessus de toute croyance”; Rumilly, contrasting defiance to submission, emphasized the resolve of the Acadians who, “Les résistants, les indomptables . . . se désolidarisent de leurs compatriotes soumis . . . pour se grouper autour du lieutenant Bourdon”. As for Beausoleil, Bernard’s panegyrics were bettered only by the tone of the story into which Arsenault added his “chef de la résistance acadienne”.²⁵

The Battle, La Petite-Rochelle and the Acadians are featured in all these histories, in some cases prominently, always for the purpose of edification, in stark contrast to the works of national historians and to more recent regional studies. The latest synthesis of the history of Gaspésie does little more than reproduce Pacifique’s account of La Petite-Rochelle, and a recent revisionist version of Acadia’s history depicts French officers at Ristigouche as “profiteurs de guerre amoraux”, Acadian heroes as “rois-nègres”.²⁶ While contemporary scholarly and popular historiography has reserved an unimportant place for La Petite-Rochelle, it still lives on in the form of “historical and technical papers” — narratives of the Battle and ancillary studies of material culture — commissioned by Parks Canada for the Battle of the Ristigouche National Historic Site.²⁷

All these histories underline the Acadian origins of the refugees, an actualizing process for the present-day inhabitants of Restigouche for whom genealogy is an important component of collective memory. They accent their plight as well, an emotional evocation of filial sentiment. They accent, too, dissension among the Acadian refugees, torn between accommodation and resistance, and, by inference, the present-day tensions which mark Canadian federalism and relations between the

23 Pacifique, *Chroniques des plus anciennes églises de l’Acadie. Bathurst, Pabos, Ristigouche, Rivière Saint-Jean, Memramcook* (Montréal, 1944), pp. 26, 28; see also Pacifique, “Ristigouche”, pp. 135-6, nn. 27, 28.

24 Émile Lauvrière, *La tragédie d’un peuple. Histoire du peuple acadien de ses origines à nos jours* (Paris, 1922); Henri-R. Casgrain, *Un pèlerinage au pays d’Évangéline* (Québec, 1887).

25 Bernard, *Gaspésie*, pp. 147-8; *Histoire*, pp. 24-6; Robert Rumilly, *Histoire des Acadiens* (Montréal, 1955), II, pp. 561-73; Arsenault, *Histoire*, pp. 189-91.

26 Jules Bélanger, Marc Desjardins and Yves Frenette, *Histoire de la Gaspésie* (Montréal et Québec, 1981), p. 135; Régis Brun, *De Grand-Pré à Kouchibouguac. L’histoire d’un peuple exploité. Essai* (Moncton, 1982), pp. 36-7.

27 Among them: Judith Beattie and Bernard Pothier, “The Battle of the Restigouche”, Paul McNally, “Table Glass from the Wreck of the *Machault*”, and K.J. Barton, “The Western European Coarse Earthenwares from the Wreck of the *Machault*”, in *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History*, No. 16 (Ottawa, 1977), pp. 5-34, 35-44, 45-72; Walter Zacharchuk and Peter J.A. Waddell, *The Excavation of the Machault: An 18th-century French Frigate* (Ottawa, 1984); Douglas Bryce, *Weaponry from the Machault: An 18th-century French Frigate* (Ottawa, 1984); Catherine Sullivan, *Legacy of the Machault: A Collection of 18th-century Artifacts* (Ottawa, 1986).

provincial state and the periphery. And they accent, finally, the evolution of La Petite-Rochelle as built structure, a process of spatially localizing history. In all these fashions, these histories add to the weight of regional history and traditions, further validated by their presence in print. It is from these works that Restigouche social and memory actors and cultural- and meaning-producers draw their chronology of events relating to La Petite-Rochelle.

Romantic tourism, next to historical inquiry, was the primary agent in the (re)creation of the memory of La Petite-Rochelle. Recent research has emphasized the central role of tourism in the modern imagination, particularly in its reification in place and in culture.²⁸ Romantic tourism is categorized as a quest for secularized divine-like experiences, expressed, in the Anglo-Saxon world, by a penchant for natural beauty (the landscape, the picturesque, the sublime) and for reverie, melancholy and nostalgia. It is an imagination informed by primitivism and nationalism, given vent in the second half of the 19th century through infatuation with the preindustrial era.

Restigouche contained the necessary ingredients: spectacular nature and the vicarious experience of suffering and death, present together in the remains of war. This was the backdrop to the main object of romantic tourism — nostalgic pleasure in the contemplation of vestiges of the past and in the search for quaint and simple people. Hence the ultimate experience of reliving history — imagination reinforced and emotion evoked by the association of landscape, history and people. La Petite-Rochelle was the draw, and authors crafted the requisite physical and dramatic elements, first for the individualistic high adventure of bourgeois travel and then for mass tourism. It would remain an attraction for nearly a century, a noteworthy achievement considering the distance from major centres and the general absence of commemorative signs and functions.

Early visitors to Restigouche built its reputation for picturesqueness. Charles Lanman found “dreamy alpine land . . . one of the most splendid and fascinating panoramic prospects . . . on the continent”, ample reward for his “pilgrimage”. Lieutenant-Governor Arthur Hamilton Gordon likewise observed: “Fine mountains . . . a majestic river . . . cattle peacefully reposed in the shade of noble forest trees”.²⁹ But it was Abbé Ferland who, in his account of his visit to the region in 1836, created the necessary narrative paradigm. Based on the counterpoise of nature and war, it was a model to which could be grafted any number of stereotypes:

Les rayons argentés de la lune se jouent sur les eaux . . . sur les coteaux
voisins descendent une lumière plus pâle. . . Ce demi-jour . . . laisse errer

28 For romantic tourism and the theoretical elements of this form of consumerism, see Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1989). For examples, see A.J.B. Johnston, “Preserving History: The Commemoration of 18th Century Louisbourg, 1895-1940”, *Acadiensis*, XII, 2 (Spring 1983), pp. 53-80 and Karen Dubinsky, “‘The Pleasure is Exquisite but Violent’: The Imaginary Geography of Niagara Falls in the Nineteenth Century”, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 29, 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 64-88.

29 Charles Lanman, *Adventures in the Wilds of the United States and British American Provinces* (Philadelphia, 1856); Arthur H. Gordon, *Wilderness Journeys in New Brunswick in 1862-3* (Saint John, 1864), pp. 33-4.

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un vague mystérieux . . . un calme solennel règne. . . Et ces lieux si beaux, si paisibles, où l'homme n'a dû se livrer qu'aux . . . amusements. . . . L'imagination reporte fortement vers ces scènes . . . Les vaisseaux . . . se croisant . . . leurs longs pavillons qui . . . portent un défi . . . ces troupes sauvages, grotesquement . . . habillées ; ces caps arides, surmontés du drapeau blanc . . . des pièces d'artillerie . . . pour vomir le feu et la mort ; ces nuages de fumée roulant . . . les craquements des mâts . . . le bruit . . . du canon, les cris. . . .³⁰

Crucial to the narrative coherence of La Petite-Rochelle was the hunt for vestiges, or better yet, descendants. The story of the Acadians, incarnate in the tragic quest of Evangeline, a cultural icon in the United States, provided a point of reference, one which would soon become ubiquitous in Nova Scotia.³¹ A writer for *Harper's Magazine* was among the first to locate the home of the bard's imaginary people: "It was at the mouth of the Restigouche . . . that . . . Enaud planted his little colony of Acadians in 1638, and laid the foundations . . . of Petite Rochelle . . . a plenitude of prosperity. . . . But calamity came at last. . . . The colony was dispersed. . . . Forests vegetate . . . where . . . 60,000 head of horned cattle grazed". Here, "Penman" "stood upon the . . . shrine where all the early hopes . . . lie buried — the scene of their . . . quiet pastoral life . . . and their final dispersion. . . . He traced their footprints . . . and gazed . . . upon the memorials". At Pointe-à-Bourdeau, "site of the ancient town of Petite Rochelle and its fortifications", he "lingers with a melancholy interest". "Here and there a solitary tree rattles its decaying limbs . . . over the bank where dismembered wrecks lie . . . the same trees that spread their leafy branches over the Acadian children".³²

When the Intercolonial Railway reached Matapédia in 1876, a host of travel writers soon followed, headed-up by well-known chroniclers such as James M. LeMoine and N.H.E. Faucher de Saint-Maurice. The former exclaimed: "What a rich harvest here for the antiquarian, the historian or the novelist. Conflicts on land and sea . . . scarcely a bay, a cape, or headland without a trace, a souvenir, of the deadly feud". And the latter, remarking that it was the site of one of the "derniers épisodes du . . . drame . . . de la Nouvelle France", recommended it to whomsoever "tient à l'histoire de son pays".³³ Guide-books with references to La Petite-Rochelle became commonplace. From M.F. Sweetser's *Handbook for New England travellers to eastern Canada*: "3 M above . . . is *Point au Bourdo* . . . site of La Petite Rochelle. . . . Fragments of the French vessels, old artillery, camp equipments, and shells have been found in great

30 J.-B.-A. Ferland, "Journal d'un voyage sur les côtes de la Gaspésie", *Les Soirées canadiennes* (octobre 1861), pp. 431-2, 434.

31 For Evangeline as tourism phenomenon, in two periods, see Graeme Wynn, "'Images of the Acadian Valley': The Photographs of Amos Lawson Hardy", *Acadiensis*, XV, 1 (Autumn 1985), pp. 59-83 and Ian McKay, "History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964", *Acadiensis*, XXII, 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 102-38.

32 Charles Hallock, "The Restigouche", *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, XXXVI (1868), pp. 424-5, 429-30, 432.

33 James M. LeMoine, *Chronicles of the St. Lawrence* (Montréal, Québec and Rouses Point, N.Y., 1878), pp. v-vi; N.H.E. Faucher, *Promenades dans le golfe Saint-Laurent*, II . . . *Nouveau-Brunswick — la Baie des Chaleurs — la Gaspésie* ([1879-1880], Québec, 1881), pp. 136, 139.

numbers". And from T. H. McAlpine's home-grown *Guide*: "La Petite Rochelle . . . above Campbellton . . . is now the hunting ground of . . . curio seekers. . . . [F]urther down . . . remains of . . . French fortifications may be seen".³⁴

Following the Great War, organized travel was still ordered by the imperatives of romantic association and historical curiosity. The need for travel guides grew considerably with the extension of roads and highways. A revised edition of Margaret G. MacWhirter's *Treasure Trove* (1919) was especially popular. The New Brunswick Tourist Association soon followed, in 1928, with its own advice for visitors to Restigouche, written by noted New Brunswick local historian and heritage activist, J. Clarence Webster. In *An Historical Guide to New Brunswick*, the Battle is briefly related, accompanied by a "Historical map of Restigouche" marking the site of La Petite-Rochelle and providing sightseeing suggestions.³⁵ The Québec Bureau provincial du Tourisme followed suit, in 1930, with its rendering of Restigouche's beauties and historic sites, given a prominent place in the enumeration of the Gaspé's "endroits historiques". The Battle is given short shrift; more important are the "résultat des . . . combats" — "des reliques de toutes sortes" and traces of treasure hunters digging for "d'immenses trésors".³⁶

American visitors to the Gaspé responded as always by literary effusions directed at the region's natural attractions and history. In Olive W. Smith's *Gaspé the Romantique* (1938) there coalesce all the elements of the Restigouche romance: landscape, history, tales, relics, people. Or as with John M. Clarke's *The Gaspé* (1937), a quest for "deeper purpose": "the more ancient history of the coastside, its memories . . . locked away in the rocks" [original emphasis]. Here, the Battle is "registered on the countryside by . . . Pointe Bourdeau, Pointe Batterie and Pointe-à-la-Garde; as well as by great pyramids of solid cannon shot dug from the soil". This gave impetus to a new appreciation of the past, inscribed in landscape, underlining the spatial framework of history and the continuity of loci.³⁷

Following the Second World War, a burgeoning middle class fuelled the need for travel books, such as Blodwen Davies' *History and Romance*, supported by the Secretary to the Québec Premier and the General Superintendent of Parks; it showed how La Petite-Rochelle had become a staple, if not of the Gaspé tourist circuit, certainly of its tourist literature. A pedestrian description of the Battle gives way to a fanciful account of "Evangeline's People": "Off the road . . . is Pointe à Bourdeau, the focus of a large settlement of French Canadians who came here . . . in the seventeenth-fifties and formed . . . New Rochelle. For three miles along the shore, in true French Canadian fashion, the steep-gabled cottages stood while colonists laid out their fields in ribbon strips running back into the hills".³⁸

34 M.F. Sweetser, *The Maritime Provinces: A Handbook for Travellers* ([1875], Boston and New York, 1890), p. 69; T.H. McAlpine, *McAlpine's Illustrated Tourists' and Travellers' Guide* (Saint John, 1897), p. 302.

35 M.G. MacWhirter, *Treasure Trove in Gaspé and The Baie des Chaleurs* ([1881], New Richmond, 1975); J. Clarence Webster, *An Historical Guide to New Brunswick* (revised edition, Fredericton, 1947), p. 99.

36 *La Gaspésie Histoire, légendes, ressources, beautés* (Québec, 1930), p. 229.

37 Olive W. Smith, *Gaspé the Romantique* (New York, 1938); John M. Clarke, *The Gaspé. Including an Account of L'Île Percée the Finial of the St. Lawrence* (New Haven, 1937), pp. xxi-xxiv, 23.

38 Blodwen Davies, *Gaspé Land of History and Romance* (Toronto, 1949), pp. 222-3.

Historical tourism and metonymical history, set in Old Acadia, cannot be disassociated from tales based on historical events modified for the purpose of rhetorical and dramatic effect — a conflation of history and fiction, an unproblematic and binding narrative, in which past and present, object and subject commingle. Here, the recuperative, domesticating function of myth is essential: the use of the structural features of traditional forms of oral narrative allows readers to relive history, in turn helping to incorporate narrative into popular representations of the past. Two narrative traditions exist, one Anglo-American, the other French Canadian, each with its own archetypes: heroism and martyrdom for the former; resistance and revenge for the latter. Intercultural reading highlights common and specific themes and treatments.

The sources of the fictionalized narrative of La Petite-Rochelle are in part historical. Two texts here are genetic: one, an eyewitness account from an Englishman held prisoner on a French vessel in the Restigouche; the other, Longfellow's poem, attendant upon the putative Acadian origins of the region's people. The story of Beausoleil is likewise derived from recorded historical events. Others, such as tales of buried treasure and phantom vessels are clearly legendary, of unknown origin, related to the Battle but also identifiable as universal folk-tale types. Linked to textual sources are oral accounts (or reports of same) which confirm the persistence of tales at the intersection of written and oral traditions.

The English prisoner's account of his and his fellows' escape is as follows:

... mad with fear ... we knocked down a large bulkhead. ... We hoisted a sail upon the raft ... determined to ... get to the English ships before night; but, happy for us, a young fellow who could swim ... set off, and arrived safe at the Repulse ... a full league distant ... immediately nine boats were manned, and bravely passed the battery. ... Capt. Wood ... brought me safe to his ship.³⁹

Gesner referred to this event, stating that two sailors swam to British vessels, "immediately went to the guns of their countrymen, and ... fought bravely". So did Lanman, for whom a sole sailor "made his escape at night ... swam ... sixteen miles ... marked out the ... position of the enemy, and the victory immediately followed". For MacWhirter, "the tale continues": apprised of the French defences, British soldiers "led by a Micmac squaw marched across county to La Petite Rochelle ... and upon the village from the rear descended".⁴⁰

The point here is that it is plausible that a local oral tradition was active. In a note dated "Jan. 1855", James Robb, then collecting manuscripts for a history of New Brunswick, wrote: "Mr. R. Ferguson of Athol House ... called & spoke of the destruction of the French squadron". ... [A] Nova Scotian who had been prisoner ... escaped by swimming & informed English ... of retreat of French — English landed at Pt. La Garde, & by a detour ... reach French Battery at head of tide. ... Ferguson had heard this from Nova Scotian himself".⁴¹ Herdman, decades later, recounted a

39 "Extract of the letter from a gentleman on board the Fame man of war, in the river Richtigouch . . .", in *The Annual Register, or A View of the History, Politics, and Literature, for the year 1760* (London, 1781), pp. 134-7; see also Byron to Admiralty, 11 July 1760.

40 Gesner, *New Brunswick*, p. 45, n. Lanman, *Adventures*, II, p. 50; MacWhirter, *Treasure Trove*, p. 94.

41 From Dr. Robb's papers held by W.O. Raymond, in William F. Ganong, *Materials for a History of the Province of New Brunswick* (Saint John, 1897), p. 20.

similar story, but in this version Byron “had employed a Dutch pilot . . . and . . . the late R. Ferguson . . . fell in with this very man during a visit . . . to Nova Scotia. . . . [H]is family tells me that Mr. F. brought back . . . the following. . . . [I]n the harbor . . . were two English prisoners . . . one of them leaped overboard . . . but . . . the tide turned. . . . The next night, the other prisoner . . . took . . . a piece of the hatchway. . . . He . . . reached the British ships”.⁴²

Evangeline came next, again in *Harper's*: “Penman asked the history of the deciding conflict which . . . caused the destruction of Petite Rochelle”; Aleck Ferguson, “walking library for the . . . settlement”, set to answer his query. His story is that of an “Acadian lass”, Marie Parent of La Petite-Rochelle, who, aided by her Indian allies, battles Wolfe’s men, falling in love with one of them. While Byron’s squadron engaged the French batteries, Marie is persuaded to release the seaman from gaol. Abandoned by her lover, who swims to the British vessels, she serves a gun until killed, “a musket-ball through her beautiful brain”.⁴³

Herdman, again “on the authority of the old Dutch pilot”, gave his own spin to this encounter: “at Battery Point stood . . . a high, perpendicular rock. Behind . . . 16 French soldiers were posted. . . . [A]fter 15 of them had been shot . . . the sole surviving hero . . . fired with unimpaired activity, cleverly . . . defying British bullets”. “Legends of buried treasures”, too, “are not wanting, and frequent excavations have been made”:

A Mission Indian gave me . . . an account . . . of an attempt . . . to recover buried gold. He showed me the very spot . . . and assured me that the French after burying money there had killed one of their number . . . so that he might . . . keep eternal guard. Of course, only at 12 o’clock and on certain nights can the money be filched. Of course too . . . a headless body rose . . . and they fled for their life.⁴⁴

The persistence of these stories is indicated by Smith’s 1938 travel book, buttressed by references to local traditions: “An old story is told accounting for the fall of Petite Rochelle”. This time, it is the daughter of a French officer who is smitten by the English prisoner, and it is together that they slip away to reveal the plans of the French defences; again an engagement ensues, again a Mi’gmaq “squaw” at the lead. Again, as well, “many tales have come down to us of buried treasure . . . and many . . . treasure seekers have busily combed this locality. . . . As a child I heard one of the old natives recount how his grandfather with three other men went at midnight on such an adventure”.⁴⁵

The French-language corpus of tales, linked to the founding narrative of exile and martyrdom, features Casgrain’s account of the exploits of Beausoleil who, having lost wife and children on the forced march to Restigouche, “se mit . . . à soulever les tribus sauvages, et à les accompagner dans leurs sanglantes expéditions”. He, too, plays the role of “lone gunner”, demanding “le privilège de servir un des canons . . . sur la

42 Herdman, “Sketches”, *Daily Sun*, 13 January 1883.

43 Hallock, “The Restigouche”, pp. 434-6.

44 Herdman, “Sketches”, *Daily Sun*, 13 January 1883.

45 Smith, *Gaspé*, pp. 36-8.

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pointe à la Batterie. . . . Les artilleurs se firent tuer . . . et . . . Brassard, qui s'était battu comme un lion, pointait le dernier canon . . . quand il fut coupé en deux par un boulet".⁴⁶

In 1928 came stories from Auguste Galibois who had motored around the Gaspé in the company of his informer, Capitaine Ben. The Battle and La Petite-Rochelle fall within the purview of the "terre promise", where the descendants of the exiles of 1760 found refuge. The author invites us to enter "une de ses blanches maisons qui bordent la route" where we meet "le type de la jeune Acadienne": "Elle est rieuse, enjouée . . . parle . . . sur un ton musical. . . . Elle a . . . l'âge d'Évangéline, et si elle n'est pas mariée de ce matin, pour sûr elle est fiancée".⁴⁷ A legend of just revenge follows a description of the naval combat: Captain Byron, for lack of French foe, "expulse du village micmac de la Nouvelle-Rochelle les femmes et les enfants". From the harbour of La Petite-Rochelle set sail a "vaisseau fantôme":

C'est en rétribution de cet acte . . . que . . . le grand navigateur, condamné . . . à courir toutes les mers sur un vaisseau fantôme, revient ici tous les sept ans. . . . Pendant que le vent fait rage . . . le sombre capitaine, immobile à la proue de son navire . . . revoit ici les lieux témoins de son atrocité! Lui dont . . . la sombre corvette semble chargée des ossements des destructeurs de la Petite-Rochelle. . . .⁴⁸

Although largely derivative of literary works, some tales were informed by local traditions and oral accounts which have since been subsumed by narrative, as more recent ethnological inquiry shows. This is indicative of the presence of a dialogical relationship between oral and written traditions, a form of carnivalization — defined in this case as the wilful confusion and commingling of popular arts and literary culture as a means of revitalizing and redirecting bourgeois sensibilities. In this, popular conceptions of the past are activated and reactivated in text in attempts to relate to the reputed values of pre-modern society. Although in some cases it is likely that the attribution of sources was a literary device, the existence of local informers can be inferred from these tales; indeed, it is possible that over generations storytellers conserved eyewitness accounts of the Battle.

Beyond their adaptation to variable ends in relation to economies of use, material objects transformed and transposed by humans have qualities and functions figured within imaginary, ritual and symbolic practices. It is precisely their value as figured documents of culture which makes of remains and artefacts the most effective underpinnings of memory.⁴⁹ They register on social discourse in two manners: as relics, through material reality, seen, handled and saved; and as narrative, through discursive practices. Together, they create effective conditions for the reification and

46 Casgrain, *Pèlerinage*, pp. 38-40.

47 Auguste Galibois, *La Gaspésie pittoresque et légendaire ou Les terreurs du capitaine Asselin* (Beauceville, 1928), pp. 50-2.

48 Galibois, *Gaspésie pittoresque*, pp. 64-5. For the phantom vessel, see Catherine Jolicoeur, *Le vaisseau fantôme. Légende étiologique* (Québec, 1970).

49 For the symbolic properties of material objects, see Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983) and James W. Fernandez, *Persuasions and Performances: The Play of Tropes in Culture* (Bloomington, 1986).

interiorization of the past. Thus, archaeology is the ultimate source of commemoration, conveying the memory of La Petite-Rochelle from narrative and spatial abstraction to emotional reality.

Early writers demonstrated that locals and visitors alike were intrigued by La Petite-Rochelle and that scavenging and oral tradition had preserved it in memory, a process of which narrative became a part. As in “history”, Cooney wrote the basic narrative plot for “archaeology”, embellished by ever less plausible accounts. Designating “*Point au Bourdo*, the scite [sic] of . . . *Petit Rochelle*”, Cooney wrote: “Here . . . walls, foundations . . . and other memorials of an . . . extensive settlement, are visible. Here also, have gun barrels . . . guns, gun locks, bayonets, &c. been . . . discovered . . . [c]hina . . . a . . . silver fork, and . . . table spoon”. Referring to Officer’s Creek, “it may be inferred”, he wrote, “from some fashionable articles found about the ruins of a house . . . that it was once the residence of a person of some distinction. Near this are . . . launch ways, which must have been used by the French”. Likewise, he remarked upon vestiges found at Pointe-à-la-Batterie: “a large copper stew pan, of French constitution . . . a bottle of molasses . . . duelling pistols, a . . . regulation sword, and a small case of wine”.⁵⁰

Gesner observed: “At the site of Petite Rochelle . . . warlike instruments, have been found; and among the ruins . . . china, silver forks and spoons The walls, cellars, and foundations of houses may still be traced”. James F.W. Johnston remarked on “the remains of French defences . . . on many of the points”. So did Lanman, who also saw “iron balls . . . incased in . . . trees” and, in the “possession of the older inhabitants”, “French cannon and swords, pistols, cutlasses . . . buttons, spurs, gun barrels, bayonets, iron pans and spoons”.⁵¹ The *Canadian Illustrated News* reported on discoveries made at Pointe-à-la-Mission: “breastworks and diggings . . . quantities of bones . . . gun barrels, gunlocks, cannon balls . . . silver and copper coins”. Skeletons, too, one with a “silver gorget”, were “turned up by . . . labourers”. And at Pointe-à-Bordeau, where “on a merely partial . . . examination” were “counted cellars, chimneys and foundations of upwards of thirty . . . houses of La Petite-Rochelle . . . trenches and raised earthworks were visible”.⁵² MacWhirter, on the account of “A man well known to the writer”, described how “on the site of the village . . . he turned up . . . the foundation of . . . a blacksmith’s forge . . . muskets . . . balls . . . knives, bolts, and buckles”. There existed too “indisputable evidences of the houses [of] the original inhabitants”. The popular Charles G.D. Roberts in his *Guide-Book* (1891) commented on “relics . . . yet from time to time unearthed”; and Smith in *Gaspé the Romantique* noted “remains of old fortifications and other relics”.⁵³

Wrecks and their remaining stores, too, were visible at low water. Cooney reported that at Pointe-à-la-Batterie “at the edge of the channel . . . are the remains of two French vessels”. Another was off Pointe-à-Bordeau; yet another was in the channel

50 Cooney, *Compendious History*, pp. 214, 218-19.

51 Gesner, *New Brunswick*, p. 46; James F.W. Johnston, *Notes on North America. Agricultural, Economical, and Social* (Boston and Edinburgh, 1851), I, pp. 408-9; Lanman, *Adventures*, II, pp. 49-50.

52 *Canadian Illustrated News*, 19 August 1882.

53 MacWhirter, *Treasure Trove*, pp. 95-6; Charles G.D. Roberts, *The Canadian Guide-Book. The Tourist’s and Sportsman’s Guide to Eastern Canada and Newfoundland* (New York, 1891), p. 125; Smith, *Gaspé*, p. 37.

opposite Point Pleasant; and at Pointe-à-la-Mission rested “the remains of . . . the *Bienfaisant*, and the *Marquis de Marloze*”. Gesner reported on the “remains of two French vessels . . . several pieces of cannon . . . partially buried in the sand”; and Lanman noted “Seven skeletons of . . . vessels”.⁵⁴ The scavenging of wrecks was common: Cooney wrote of vessels “from which handgrenades, small bomb shells . . . have been . . . taken”; from still others, “oaken timbers . . . cutlasses”; and from the *Bienfaisant*, “a set of rudder irons lately recovered, which were used . . . in the re-equipment of . . . a vessel”. Robb noted: “The hull of a vessel of about 700 tons . . . near Mission Pt. . . . was explored this year . . . Found balls, staves, bombs, copper & grindstone crank”. In another, “silver forks — spoons — swords — bombs”. Herdman concurred, adding that “Divers other articles . . . are kept as relics by parties in the neighborhood”.⁵⁵ The mantelpiece over the drawing-room fireplace in a residence at Point Pleasant, for example, was made of a piece of one of the timbers of the *Malauze*.⁵⁶ By the 1880s, it was reported that the remains of the *Malauze* had been “gradually carried away by relic hunters”, and that the wreck of the *Bienfaisant*, once “singularly . . . impressive to see”, was visible only at neap-tide. McAlpine (1897) and Smith (1938) referred to wrecks then “in the bed of the river”, “sunk in the mud and sand”.⁵⁷

French guns were especially important finds. Referring to Pointe-à-la-Batterie, Cooney wrote: “A few years ago, several large pieces of ordnance . . . were . . . converted to various culinary purposes”. At Officer’s Creek: “Several . . . cannon have also been found . . . one of them . . . Mr. Busteed has lately inserted in . . . fire place. Mr. Man . . . has also an elegant parlour stove, made from a carronade”. According to Herdman, a local had shipped a number of cannon to Québec City where “They were . . . converted into stoves”. Some, however, were saved this fate. Gesner remarked: “Near one of the ancient batteries, a gun was recovered . . . by Mr. Robert Ferguson . . . and is now mounted near the residence of that gentleman”. Robb reported on “two guns at Athol House . . . one of which was got from vessel”; Johnston, on “several large guns”.⁵⁸ There they did “service in the way of firing salutes”, their echoes reverberating “grandly in the Canadian valleys”.⁵⁹

The existence of local informers and antiquarians is indicative of the presence of La Petite-Rochelle in local memory; the Busteed family in particular preserved and conveyed the collective inheritance. LeMoine stated: “Mr. Busteed’s house . . . contains several . . . substantial mementoes of the strife”, which were “shown to us”. MacWhirter: “The old house . . . is a veritable museum . . . of the French period. . . . The genial proprietor is delighted to point out these relics and the places of interest about his historic home”. Davies also “stopped at the Bustead [sic] Home . . . full of

54 Cooney, *Compendious History*, pp. 214-15, 217-18; Gesner, *New Brunswick*, p. 46; Lanman, *Adventures*, II, p. 49.

55 Cooney, *Compendious History*, pp. 215, 217-18; Robb, in Ganong, *Materials*, p. 20; Herdman, “Sketches”, *Daily Sun*, 13 January 1883.

56 *Canadian Illustrated News*, 19 August 1882.

57 *Canadian Illustrated News*, 19 August 1882; McAlpine, *Guide*, p. 302; Smith, *Gaspé*, p. 36.

58 Cooney, *Compendious History*, pp. 214, 219; Herdman, “Sketches”, 12 January 1883; Gesner, *New Brunswick*, p. 46; Robb, in Ganong, *Materials*, p. 16; Johnston, *Notes*, I, p. 409.

59 Hallock, “The Restigouche”, p. 430; Gordon, *Wilderness Journeys*, p. 34.

. . . old weapons . . . and pieces of oak from . . . men-of-war". And again, Busted "never seems to weary . . . of pointing out . . . places of interest".⁶⁰ Generations apart, these travellers visited the same property and were received by folk who showed the same mementoes and recounted the same stories — indications that there existed a local oral tradition correlative to an archaeological heritage. Inhabitants preserved artefacts and the stories that gave them meaning; "Older inhabitants", "relic hunters" and generic acquaintances allude to the general appeal of La Petite-Rochelle. LeMoine and MacWhirter, for example, took away pieces of oak "cut from the timbers of the vessel sunk by the fiery admiral", a "prized trophy" which the former intended to "convert into a walking stick".⁶¹ Still today, relic-seekers scour shores and river bottom, and rumours of hidden treasure persist.

Travel writers were story-tellers, and their widely-read accounts were myth deduced from archaeology. The result was the narrative tradition needed to inform the popular memory of La Petite-Rochelle and to revitalize its written pendant. Examples of this contrivance are legion. Herdman, for instance: "Judging from . . . remains . . . la Petite Rochelle . . . takes its place as a military settlement. Traces . . . of agricultural work are few. . . . [A]t Bordon Point, the remains of an officer . . . was unearthed . . . conjectured to be . . . Bordon. . . . Out of . . . channels . . . chains and cannon balls . . . have been taken . . . probing . . . has demonstrated the existence of a further supply". MacWhirter was no less ingenious: "The Fort . . . was situated upon the property owned by . . . Busted. . . . Indications point to the gate, as the probable point from which the garrison trained their guns upon the enemy"; ". . . along the highway are the remains of the fortifications"; nearby was "the forgotten burial ground of the Acadian village"; and, next to an ancient well, there was an "Evangeline Willow"!⁶² More recent historical discourse is of like temper. Ganong designated Pointe-à-Bourdeau as the site of La Petite-Rochelle with the laconic phrase: "The site . . . is well known locally . . . and many relics of French occupation have been found here". And, Pacifique, normally circumspect, stated that "À Ristigouche il y avait une caserne, des magasins, un hôpital . . . le tout environné de palissades".⁶³ Equally disingenuous works bearing the imprimatur of the New Brunswick Museum and Parks Canada demonstrate the durability of this syllogism.⁶⁴

Images possess an ideological dimension beyond their inherent qualities and characteristics; reflecting the milieus in which they are created, received and conserved, they convey and incarnate values addressed to conscious needs and to

60 LeMoine, *Chronicles*, p. 153; MacWhirter, *Treasure Trove*, p. 95; Davies, *Gaspé*, pp. 32-3.

61 LeMoine, *Chronicles*, p. 153; MacWhirter, *Treasure Trove*, p. 96.

62 Herdman, "Sketches", *Daily Sun*, 12 January 1883; MacWhirter, *Treasure Trove*, pp. 94-6.

63 Ganong, *Materials*, pp. 19-20; Ganong, "A Monograph of Historic Sites in the Province of New Brunswick", Royal Society of Canada, *Proceedings and Transactions*, 2nd series, vol. 5 (1899), sec. 2, p. 302; Pacifique, "Ristigouche", pp. 129-30.

64 MacBeath, *Story*, p. 9; Judith Beattie and Bernard Pothier, "The Battle of the Restigouche, 22 June-8 July 1760", unpublished report (Ottawa n.d.), p. 62. The first described the post as including "an arsenal, blacksmith shop, stores, and a hospital . . . a palisade . . . a series of gun emplacements"; the second referred to "magazines for fish and stores, a hospital, and various other buildings". Compare with cautious conclusions in Gustave Lanctôt, "Le dernier effort de la France au Canada", Société royale du Canada, *Mémoires*, 3e série, vol. 12 (1918), sec. 1, pp. 41-54.

collective subconsciousness.⁶⁵ Iconographic and cartographic representations of Restigouche have contributed greatly to the propagation of the memory of La Petite-Rochelle. In this case, two types of representation exist, motivated by divergent purposes: utilitarian (or illustrative), as in the case of maps; and ideological (or dramatic), as in imaginative figurative representations aimed at satisfying collective needs based on ideal visions (in which instance verisimilitude is secondary). In both instances, in their objectification as mass-produced commemorative iconography, their permeability (effectiveness as regards the expression of common values and preoccupations) is high. For amateur archaeologists and historians, maps are convincing proof of La Petite-Rochelle's existence; and for the public, images related to the site are a powerful source of attachment to traditions.

This is especially true of two maps dating from 1760 and containing references to establishments on land: the first, an illustration of French military feats in Restigouche; the second, a Royal Navy sketch of the Restigouche basin.⁶⁶ The former refers to a "Camp de Cadies" at Pointe-à-Bourdeau; the latter refers to a "Camp consisting of 1000 regulars, Canadians and Savages" situated on both banks of the river, as well as an establishment at Pointe-à-la-Batterie: "The enemy's first Camp consisting of about five hundred, burnt by the English". These have been reproduced in scientific and in popular works, newspapers and periodicals, heritage development proposals, briefs and administrative texts.⁶⁷ Ganong's "Historical Map of Restigouche", marking the "Site of Petit Rochelle" and reproduced in many local histories, was nearly as popular. The same is true for hydrographic survey and "location maps" (of "historically significant sites") prepared by Parks Canada, used by locals searching for remains and as proof of the existence of La Petite-Rochelle. The credibility accorded maps may be garnered from local press coverage of the Société historique Machault project. The lead article features a photograph of the society's board of directors; it is captioned: "Members . . . check over maps as they begin their search for . . . La Petite Rochelle".⁶⁸

Early images of La Petite-Rochelle and related built and natural elements are equally prevalent. Popular iconography of relics and of La Petite-Rochelle appears in sketches and engravings in 19th-century mass periodicals. The *Canadian Illustrated News* is a case in point: one illustration represents the purported site of "La Petite

65 For image-response theory, see David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1989) and W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago, 1986).

66 Sieur Reboul, "Plan de la rivière de Restigouche . . . avec les divers Combats de la frég[ate] le Machault", Cartographic Division [CD], SH, cahier 125-6-1D, ph/210-Restigouche-1760, NAC; Allen, "A Draft of the upper part of Chaleur Bay, called Restigouche, in the Gulph of St. Lawrence . . .", CD, H3/1102-1760, NAC.

67 See among others Beattie and Pothier, "Battle of the Restigouche"; C.H. Little, ed., *The Battle of the Restigouche. The last naval engagement between France and Britain for the possession of Canada* (Halifax, 1962); René Goblot, "L'archéologie sous-marine. Opération Restigouche", *Revue d'histoire de la Gaspésie*, VIII, 4 (octobre-décembre 1970), pp. 192-210; Goblot, "The Hunt for Cultural Treasure in Restigouche", *Canadian Geographical Journal*, LXXIX, 5 (November 1979), pp. 174-80; *The Tribune*, 1 October 1969, 27 April 1994.

68 *The Tribune*, 29 September 1993.

Rochelle, from Campbellton”; another, the Sugarloaf, as seen from La Petite-Rochelle; still another, the Restigouche, again from the perspective of an imaginary La Petite-Rochelle.⁶⁹ Like maps, these images have been reproduced in scientific and popular literature and in government documents.⁷⁰ Wash-drawings, coloured etchings, engravings, drawings and photographs of Byron, of the *Machault*, *Bienfaisant* and *Malauze*, of Busteed and Athol Houses, etc. have been featured in monographs, books, brochures, articles, post cards and calendars. But all images of artefacts and remains of the Conquest period, save W.F. Ganong’s drawings of figures stamped in the guns at Athol House, are contemporary to Parks Canada’s underwater excavations. Its publications contain spectacular photographs of these activities and many illustrations of artefacts and pieces. Featured in numerous popular publications and local exhibitions, these are eagerly studied by local history buffs.⁷¹

The cumulative weight of all these texts (configured as a master-narrative), stories, artefacts and images, impossible to quantify, has nonetheless had its effect on cultural consumers. This is especially true of images and material objects related to La Petite-Rochelle. As in the past, the contemporary significance of these “souvenirs” of La Petite-Rochelle is that they keep it alive in community memory. It is noteworthy, however, that despite the many references to artefacts and remains of La Petite-Rochelle proper, some purported to have been seen by locals and visitors, none have been definitively recorded. The various objects in the Battle of the Restigouche National Historic Site inventory, the Bordeaux (Busteed) House Collection and in private hands (partially inventoried) were all recovered from the holds of the *Malauze* and the *Machault*, none from a putative La Petite-Rochelle, by definition a land site. The only possible exceptions are the extant cannon, one or more of which may have come from post or batteries. More striking still, no illustrations of La Petite-Rochelle proper, imagined or real, have been found. Especially notable is the absence of even an icon of La Petite-Rochelle (with the possible exception of a generic frigate on Société historique Machault letterhead and Parks Canada documents); the image of La Petite-Rochelle remains truly imaginative, like memory itself.

Memory, history and archaeology all offer paths to the past, but each among them lacks significance when applied in isolation, and each suffers respectively from an inherent weakness: the fragility of oral remembrance, the weightlessness of print and the intrinsic lack of meaning of material objects. La Petite-Rochelle, by making them mutually-informing, provided the critical memorial function of linking the symbolic and material universes. Texts, images and artefacts reified La Petite-Rochelle, domesticated and disseminated its memory and bore incontrovertible witness to it. From this came a narrative which, by reactivating in dialogical fashion elite and popular representations of the past, conflated recollections and vestigial forms of

69 *Canadian Illustrated News*, 5 August 1882, p. 89, 19 August 1882, p. 120.

70 *The Tribune*, 29 September 1993; Beattie and Pothier, “Battle of the Restigouche”; Société historique Machault [SHM], “À la recherche de La Petite-Rochelle”.

71 Among the many, see Goblot, “Archéologie sous-marine”; Goblot, “Hunt for Cultural Treasure”; McNally, “Table Glass”; Barton, “Earthenwares”; Zacharchuk and Waddel, *Excavation*; Bryce, *Weaponry*; Sullivan, *Legacy*; Little, *Battle*; MacWhirter, *Treasure Trove*; MacBeath, *Story*; *The Tribune*, 17 August 1967, 17, 30 July 1969.

memory, thereby conferring meaning, context and temporality. From this was derived a constructed reality — a new cultural significance to be figured within new symbolic practices and social relations.

Two objects are central here: memory as a derivative of oral traditions and surviving rituals, and narrative as the principal contemporary agent of memory. Given the epistemological obstacles to linking memory and identity to the socio-cultural praxis, it is difficult to define popular memory and notions of the past let alone determine the relationship between popular history and identity-measures on the one hand and national history and commemoration on the other. Nevertheless, two postulates underline this analysis. First, historical narrative has won out over oral traditions as the primary arbiter of the past's usefulness to the present. Secondly, by altering the common comprehension of the past, post-modernity has transformed memory and collective identity: for the majority, functioning within the confines of the dominant aesthetic principles of mass culture, genealogy and place, assumed as nostalgia, have been configured as resistance to the pressures of (post)industrial capitalism, its state and its processes of rationalization.

Central to our study of memory as social discourse is the concept of memory as being of several levels, interconnected but distinct: personal, community and social (alternatively, cultural, collective and national). The first and second are orally transmitted, collectively expressed in communal customs and signifying practices restricted to local space and locally-defined groups; the third is a "mediated ordering of the past", a national or political community expressed as chronological narrative (temporal order, causality, rhetoric), law and national commemoration. Of essence here is the dialectic between these categories of memory, premised on the interaction and overlap of oral and literate cultures and on the dominance of social memory articulated on social stratification and level of education. The consequence has been the "reorientation of historical sensitivity" from oral and local to written and national; from stories linked to place and events related to an open repetitive time frame, to chronological narrative; and from the vectors of popular culture (tales, songs, rituals) to those of élite culture.⁷²

In Restigouche, community memory still informs popular representations of the past; it has survived an incredible density of texts, in part because of enduring and evolving oral traditions. Written history has not entirely subsumed the private spheres of life from which are derived memories of the past as lived experience, and individual and community memories of customs, practices, tales and traditions have not been effaced. It is for this reason that the social discourse having relevance to La Petite-Rochelle requires investigation, particularly in respect to the meaning-producing agents active in its elaboration as cultural significance. Social discourse is defined here as the entire system of discursive circulation in any given synchronic social context, and therefore a struggle for semantic hegemony. What we are dealing with here is the discursive and memorial circulation of forms of past-appropriation — composites of images, phrases, syntagms and ideas from school books, media, film,

72 Daniel Woolf, "Memory and Historical Culture in Early Modern England", *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, II (1991), pp. 283-308. For these memories, see Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, 1989).

song, literature, stories, etc.⁷³ It is in this “roman mémoriel”, inked by innumerable hands, that the past is revisited and memory and identity are inscribed.

Memory is actuated in commemoration, a hermeneutical process by which images of the past are repositioned in presentist terms in order to consolidate larger cultural conceptions by localizing them in time and space, thus revealing to contemporaries the meaning of collective values derived from the past. In this manner memory is no different than history: both colonize the past through refiguration, whether schematic and chronological as in the latter case, or with unconscious insistence on flux and simultaneity, as in the former. And both paths to the past are closely tied to power and to resulting inequalities, in that each is linked to a particular social group. Commemoration, therefore, is an historically specific phenomenon, a substantive principle of modernity, itself a correlate of the temporalization of the human condition.

To the degree to which personal and community memories can at all be reconstituted, the living, oral memory of La Petite-Rochelle, can be dated to Ganong’s end-of-century call for protection for the guns of Athol House, where “they lie in neglect”. Mounted upon a “stone foundation with an inscription”, they would “form a most appropriate monument”.⁷⁴ In 1924 the Ristigouche naval confrontation was declared of national historical importance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada: a commemorative cairn was erected and the cannon put on display in Memorial Park in Campbellton.⁷⁵ More important yet was the raising of the *Malauze* (1936-1939), organized and supervised by Père Pacifique. Newspaper accounts of the salvage operations record the excavation of human remains, sections of the keel, cabins, masts and decks, cannon and cargo, all of which “have drawn the attention of many local and visiting people to the scene”.⁷⁶ Partly restored, the *Malauze* was put on exhibit on the Mi’gmaq reserve at Ristigouche (Listuguj) where for years it incited “beaucoup d’intérêt parmi les touristes”.⁷⁷

The state- and church-sponsored commemoration of Restigouche’s place in Canadian history marked the passage of La Petite-Rochelle not just from informal to formal remembrance, but from its existence as an expression of outside infatuation, a spatial embodiment of bourgeois values, to that of a growing local historical consciousness. Here, paradoxically, was set in motion the struggle between community memory and social memory which would drag La Petite-Rochelle from its literary and mimetic moorings and set it firmly on a communal foundation. It was a shift whose root cause Ganong, ever attuned to things commemorative, would have had little difficulty comprehending; and it was a perception with which colleagues and the general public

73 For social discourse, see Régine Robin, *Le roman mémoriel: de l’histoire à l’écriture du hors-lieu* (Longueuil, 1989).

74 Ganong, *Materials*, pp. 20-1; see pp. 14-15 for description of cannon.

75 For the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada [HSMBC], see C.J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada’s National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montréal and Kingston, 1990).

76 For the 1937-1939 operations, see *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph*, 5 December 1936, *Campbellton Graphic*, 28 October 1937, 8 September, 27 October 1938, 27 April, 28 September, 12 October 1939. Also “Marquis de Malauze”, *Bulletin of the Restigouche Museum* (November 1936).

77 *Petit guide historique de la Mission Sainte-Anne en la réserve des Micmacs de Ristigouche*, P.Q. (Ristigouche, n.d.).

alike could concur: "Of the different phases of the study of History, the one that appeals to the most men is the archaeological. Especially is this true for local history . . . and the vividness and pleasure are so much the greater when one can stand upon the exact spot where the events occurred and feel himself surrounded by the very witnesses. . . ." ⁷⁸

All these events brought the historical significance of the Battle — and of the region — to the attention of the local population and demonstrated the power of attraction of a major relic of the French régime. Pacifique's continuing solicitation of support for the raising of more wrecks could only have enhanced the public's interest in La Petite-Rochelle;⁷⁹ so, too, the artefacts on display at the Mission Sainte-Anne and in private collections; likewise the growing tourist traffic. Two centuries of exploring land and marine sites surely played a role in defining and maintaining La Petite-Rochelle in popular memory, regardless of the fact that La Petite-Rochelle, whatever the narrative record, was (and remains) properly immanent. What is certain, however, is that growing public pressure to reclaim historical "resources" neatly coincided with Parks Canada's underwater excavations (1969-72) in the Restigouche, the recovery of numerous artefacts and pieces of the *Machault* and consequent research in history and material culture and design work on the Battle of the Restigouche National Historic Site [BRNHS], the land for which was purchased in 1975.

The Parks Canada proposal energized and gave voice to individuals and groups active as agents of collective memory and identity: local politicians and historical, heritage, community and social organizations. Public consultations on the BRNHS development proposal, which took place in March 1982, were a forum for the expression of angst about community memory, identity and development.⁸⁰ The significant point here was the divergence between Parks Canada and local stakeholders. Especially contentious were the themes of the proposed interpretation programme, which were articulated on contradictory interpretations of Parks Canada's objectives and of the criteria governing them. Contentious, too, was public infatuation with contemporary forms of mass communication — to wit museological facilities capable of handling mass aggregations and contingent sociability, and of providing, through contextualization, the meaning and significance of objects.

The development proposal, in its initial public version, was well-received; it raised hopes for the showcasing of regional heritage and for a "dynamic" exhibition style. Parks Canada's objectives, "consistent with the regional context", were to: "commemorate the . . . naval confrontation and interpret the themes associated with it", "preserve and display . . . pieces and artifacts . . . best representing the chosen themes" and "contribute to the enhancement of national and regional heritage values".⁸¹ As for the diffusion of accessible meaning, a "typical visit" to the BRNHS was described as follows:

78 Ganong, "A Monograph of Historic Sites in the Province of New Brunswick", pp. 213-14.

79 See Alain Franck, *Historique et sauvetage du navire Le Marquis de Malauze* (Rimouski, 1985) for public reaction to the raising, restoration and exhibition of the *Malauze*.

80 *L'Aviron* (Campbellton), 10 février, 10, 17 mars 1982.

81 See Parks Canada, *The Battle of the Restigouche National Historic Park [BRNHP] Development Proposal* (Ottawa, 1982), pp. 11-12. Other pertinent documents are *La bataille de la Restigouche — Thèmes et objectifs; Concept d'interprétation — La bataille de la Restigouche; Programme de réalisation, centre d'interprétation — PHN La bataille de la Restigouche* (Québec, 1980, 1981, 1982).

As . . . visitors move beyond the lobby . . . they . . . find themselves . . . aboard . . . ships . . . as new members of the crew. . . . [They] enter the captain's cabin. . . . After paying their respects . . . visitors enter . . . the between-decks . . . where they are brought face to face with the harsh realities. . . . The area is dark and cramped. . . . [A]rtifacts, costumed models and . . . sound track . . . sharpen the illusion. Across from the exhibit . . . the real thing! A section of the *Machault* . . . bales, crates and casks are piled about. . . . Authentic pieces . . . conjure up these dank, dark places. . . . In quest of light . . . visitors emerge onto the main deck, where . . . through the magic of audio-visual [they] relive the Ristigouche naval confrontation. . . .⁸²

In reality, Parks Canada's goals greatly exceeded the limits of the region. While it was hoped that the Restigouche naval confrontation would gain greater public visibility, the National Historic Site was designed to mark other points. The site management plan, especially, made this plain: "The archeological resources recovered from the . . . *Machault*", should increase our "knowledge of the French Regime, and . . . intercontinental communications", "provide . . . information about the daily life of seamen" and "constitute a valuable point of reference for material culture research".⁸³

Public interveners, Parks Canada admitted, had a different purpose: they "called for a theme with 'local flavour'". The Société historique Machault brief — endorsed by local municipalities, school boards, parents' associations, community and business groups — made this clear: "The theme 'The Acadians' should be added to . . . the centre's permanent exhibit" and "presented in such a way as to show the violence perpetrated against . . . the ancestors of most of the present inhabitants of . . . Restigouche"⁸⁴ [translation]. Other stakeholders made the same point. The Galerie Restigouche (regional exhibition centre, Campbellton) requested "that Parks Canada . . . acknowledge . . . that Acadians and Indians formed a community in this location"; "it is . . . important to explain . . . the social context . . . so that visitors are able to appreciate the harsh living conditions" [translation].⁸⁵ As the municipality of Pointe-à-la-Croix remarked: "There is talk of navigation, the navy and maritime commerce, but what about the inhabitants. . . ?" [translation] Parks Canada, citing financial constraints, argued that it would "contribute to the enhancement of the general heritage of the region by concentrating . . . on . . . the *Machault*" and that its projects "tend to generate concrete spin-offs . . . by encouraging *community initiative*"⁸⁶ [original emphasis].

The Société and its allies urged that the site be enlarged to accommodate "The Acadians", "ce thème essentiel à la valorisation du patrimoine national et *régional*" [original emphasis]. Their objective, enunciated in the form of a series of

82 *BRNHP Development Proposal*, pp. 12-14.

83 *BRNHP Development Proposal*, p. 15; Parks Canada, *Battle of the Ristigouche National Historic Park. Management Plan* (Ottawa, 1984), p. 12.

84 " . . . Le mémoire de la Société historique Machault à Parcs Canada sur le projet de mise en valeur du parc historique national de La bataille de la Ristigouche" (1982). Translation from Parks Canada, *The Battle of the Ristigouche National Historic Park. Report on the Public Consultation Program* (Ottawa, 1982).

85 For these briefs, see *BRNHP Public Consultation*, pp. 13-14.

86 *BRNHP Public Consultation*, pp. 8, 18-19.

recommendations, amounted to giving the National Historic Site a setting, that of La Petite-Rochelle: (1) “Que des fouilles archéologiques complètes du site des fortifications appelées . . . ‘Petite-Rochelle’ soient entreprises”; (2) “Que les limites géographiques du Parc . . . soient agrandies pour incorporer tout le site des fortifications et des habitations”; (3) “Que les vestiges (dont plusieurs sont encore visibles) soient mis en valeur et . . . qu’on procède à leur reconstitution”. They also demanded that Parks Canada carry out excavations “pour identifier le site . . . du village acadien”, “berceau de la population gaspésienne d’origine acadienne”.⁸⁷ The call for field work and rebuilding as well as assertions regarding extant remains and the origins of the region’s population demonstrate the degree to which these social actors and meaning-producers had incorporated La Petite-Rochelle into their memory. The BRNHS was viewed as a fortuitous opportunity to promote an indigenous conception of history, that is to say an existing narrative, which was relevant to local concerns.

The consultants who prepared the socio-economic report for Parks Canada observed this disparity in approaches. They called for “des efforts de coordination et de coopération” in order to win over the local population. They also addressed the interpretation scheme, stating that it was important that “le Centre réponde à l’intérêt croissant pour l’histoire acadienne”. It was important, too, that it have an “orientation maritime” and that an effort be made “pour reconstruire les conditions de vie de la période”. The National Historic Site, said the consultants, had a solid base of support, but enthusiasm would fade if the expositions were not “dynamiques”; success depended upon the active participation of local groups and individuals.⁸⁸ The Galerie Restigouche concurred, stressing the need for a “musée vivant” [original emphasis], through the regular renewal of themes.⁸⁹

The changes wrought in Restigouche by modernity — new material, social and mental structures — affected popular attitudes to the past. As shown by the reaction to various development proposals, heritage was couched in terms of socio-economic development — memory and identity conceived of as contributions to the material well-being of local communities. Many people, Parks Canada recognized, believed that the site would result in “social and economic spin-offs” and that “this initiative would . . . attract tourists”.⁹⁰ Demands included: the restoration of the *Malauze*, the development of regional historic sites (Bordeaux House, La Petite-Rochelle and batteries, Acadian village, Kempt Road) and the creation of historic parks along both shores of the Restigouche. The Association interprovinciale des municipalités, for example, representing Restigouche towns and villages, proposed that the project encompass the entire “zone de la Bataille” and that the interpretation centre be incorporated into a “circuit touristique”, to include visits to the *Malauze* and to the “fortifications appelées ‘Poste des Réserves’” as well as the building of operational replicas of vessels involved in the Battle.⁹¹

87 “Mémoire de la Société historique Machault”.

88 Econosult Inc., *Recherche d’information socio-économique — Bataille de la Ristigouche — Rapport final* (Montréal, 1980), pp. 39-40, 67-8.

89 *L’Aviron*, 31 mars 1982.

90 *BRNHP Report on the Public Consultation*, p. 10.

91 *L’Aviron*, 17, 31 mars 1982.

Overall development of the region's tourism potential was considered paramount. The Société historique Machault (and, before it, its predecessor the "Comité historique") adopted a number of resolutions in this regard, including the reconstitution of the *Machault* and "expositions vivantes" for on-board visits — "Quelques habitations indiennes . . . et acadiennes pourraient compléter le tout".⁹² Participants at the Parks Canada hearings concurred on the need for the site to remain open year-round and noted the requirement for extensive publicity and co-operation with existing "museum-type institutions" for "a fuller and more complete stay for visitors to our region" [translation], notably through the sharing of unused artefacts.⁹³ The existence of "attitudes négatives" was noted, especially fear of the effect of publicly financed competition on the region's cultural institutions and on the city of Campbellton's plans for a maritime museum and chartered boat-tours of the Battle site.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, interveners were convinced of the economic benefits that would accrue from the *Machault*'s cargo: the Campbellton Merchants' Association, for instance, wanted to exhibit artefacts in "information centres at the entrance to our region".⁹⁵

The memory of La Petite-Rochelle was revived by the National Historic Site project and by local designs for economic development. Following the public hearings, the Société historique Machault met with owners of sites purported to contain remains of La Petite-Rochelle and lobbied the Ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec to undertake relevant field work.⁹⁶ Excited by the possibility that the site might be located and the settlement rebuilt, locals were eager to provide assistance. A certain monsieur Poirier, for example, was reported in the press to have discovered building foundations near the river's edge: "Il se demandait s'il ne s'agissait pas de maisons de la Petite Rochelle".⁹⁷ No one wanted to be left out. The municipality of Pointe-à-la-Garde complained that Parks Canada's development project was incomplete, as the village, "site important dans cette tranche d'histoire, avait été omis". In 1760, declared the mayor, "il y avait un village d'environ 1500 habitants . . . à Pointe à la Garde . . . le théâtre de la bataille"; "il reste des vestiges de l'époque . . . comme des fortifications". He called upon Parks Canada to create an historic park there and to exhibit "des pièces archéologiques trouvées sur le site".⁹⁸

Although memorial initiatives in the Gaspé are largely contingent upon historico-recreational endeavours (impelled by the conception of culture as a product), local plans for La Petite-Rochelle received little support from the government of Québec. Informants recall that provincial authorities balked at the cost of surveying sites.⁹⁹ And repeated demands for the creation of an historic park at Pointe-à-la-Batterie were brushed aside despite strong endorsement from Québec Ministry of Tourism officials, who reported: "La mise en valeur de ce capital culturel et de cet apport touristique

92 *L'Aviron*, 20 mai, 14 octobre, 4 novembre, 21 janvier 1981.

93 *BRNHP Public Consultation*, pp. 16-17; *L'Aviron*, 31 mars 1982.

94 Econosult, *Recherche socio-économique*, pp. 64-6.

95 *BRNHP Public Consultation*, pp. 7, 15. See also *L'Aviron*, 21 octobre 1981.

96 *L'Aviron*, 6 octobre 1982.

97 *L'Aviron*, 3 novembre 1982.

98 *L'Aviron*, 16 novembre 1983.

99 Interview with M. Goudreau, president SHM; *The Tribune*, 29 September 1993.

s'imposait . . . surtout devant l'exemple de nos voisins du Sud qui ont créé des attractions majeures à partir . . . de sites fort banals en comparaison", and the "valeur culturelle considérable des . . . artefacts . . . encore récupérables, à la tonne". In the end, functionaries could do little more than highlight the locals' dissatisfaction: New Brunswick, they warned, was poised to capture the lion's share of spin-offs from the National Historic Site.¹⁰⁰ At the 1988 Conférence socio-économique the same project was submitted for approval. The stated objectives for this "strategically positioned" site on the Gaspé tourist itinerary were purely economic: "1) Prolongation du temps d'arrêt des touristes. . . 2) Création d'emplois. . . 3) Ajouter un élément au circuit patrimonial". It was a request designed to hit on a sensitive nerve: "Seul le gouvernement du Canada a mis en valeur des vestiges de la Bataille".¹⁰¹ But, once again, Québec refused to budge.

These initiatives suffered from a double impairment: first, the need for co-operation between the governments of New Brunswick and Québec for a project which, in any integrated form, would have straddled both provinces; and secondly, the fact that Restigouche, in the context of both Québec's administrative regions and New Brunswick's rural development strategy, figured low on a long list of priorities identified by bureaucrats, elected officials and interest groups. The population was comparatively small, and the bulk of public funding for tourism infrastructures was already allocated to two major heritage developments in the Baie des Chaleurs — the Village historique acadien, in Caraquet, and Forillon National Park, in the town of Gaspé.

Because La Petite-Rochelle is a virtual reality, it is as much a memory of space as of object. La Petite-Rochelle as locus may be apprehended from the perspective of "imaginative geographies", posited on the nature of built and physical environments as historically specific manifestation of systems of power. Geographical signs (buildings and spaces), like other non-verbal objects, are material culture whose symbolic properties may be read (like texts) as enunciators of meaning.¹⁰² Thus the La Petite-Rochelle imagined by present-day inhabitants of Restigouche may be understood as a component of a system of signifying elements, expressing contemporary preoccupations, as, for example, a signifier of unchanging Sameness — a rejection of the homogenizing Otherness of modernity. More than the discovery of forgotten places, imaginative geographical reconstruction is the process of localizing and spatially anchoring collective memory in a commemorative space.¹⁰³ The absence of La Petite-Rochelle makes its memory especially dear.

The concerns of social and memory actors in Restigouche were not based solely on

100 "Mémoire", J.-P. Dubé to P.-H. Ouellet, Ministère du Tourisme, de la Chasse et de la Pêche du Québec, re. the Battle of the Restigouche National Historic Site [BRNHS], 30 avril 1982, Archives SHM.

101 "Parc Historique de la Pointe à la Batterie", *Document de travail Colloque de zone de la MRC d'Avignon. Conférence socio-économique . . . Gaspésie . . .* (1988), no pagination.

102 On geography as social and cultural construct, see Kay Anderson and Fay Gale, eds., *Inventing Places: Studies in Cultural Geography* (Melbourne and New York, 1992) and James Duncan and David Ley, eds., *Place/Culture/Representation* (London, 1993).

103 Maurice Halbwachs, *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre Sainte. Étude de mémoire collective* ([1941], Paris, 1971).

present-day sensibilities respecting changing cultural representations and modes of socio-economic development. Their *énoncés* were linked to community memory and to a struggle for regional identity. Crucial here is the disruption of local traditions and oral culture derived from modes of resource-appropriation and related social organizations of production correlative to lived space (as opposed to imagined). Purveyors of regional memory and identity in Restigouche were convinced of the localized nature of identity and culture. In a brief to the Québec government, regional organizations complained of the prevailing “*désintéressement pour la culture*”, the result, they believed, of “*structures régionales trop vastes . . . du manque . . . de concertation entre les . . . paliers d’intervention nationaux [i.e. Québec], régionaux et locaux*”. They especially blamed the contrived nature of the provincial government’s administrative regions. The solution was to “*réduire les structures à une échelle plus humaine en tenant compte de la région d’appartenance*”. Local cultural priorities were led by “*L’identité régionale*”, enhanced by “*la découverte et la mise en valeur du patrimoine local et régional*”.¹⁰⁴

There are indications of the continued presence of La Petite-Rochelle in local public and popular commemoration in the denomination of geographical features, as well as public and private places and organizations — physical elements: Pointe-à-la-Batterie, Pointe-à-la-Garde, Pointe-à-Bordeau; civic entities: Malauze (N.B.), Pointe-à-la-Garde (Qué.); roadways: D’Anjac (Atholville, N.B.), La Petite-Rochelle (Pointe-à-la-Croix), Larochelle (Campbellton); public entities: HLM (public housing) La Petite-Rochelle and Bienfaisant (Pointe-à-la-Croix), La Giraudais road stop (Route 132, Qué.); private entities: La Petite-Rochelle chapter of the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick, Club de motoneige Malauze (N.B.), etc. English names given to sites by British authorities in honour of the naval triumph have fallen out of favour, to be replaced by French names of local origin — an attempt to snatch victory from defeat. This has significance as regards identity, in Restigouche and elsewhere,¹⁰⁵ as does the objection of the Comité historique to the choice of the name “Avignon” for the newly-created Municipalité régionale de comté (1980); pointing to its efforts to promote regional heritage, it suggested “Machault” in honour of the “rôle important” that this vessel had played “dans ce point tournant de l’histoire”.¹⁰⁶

The meaning is manifest: in Québec, reference to Restigouche and identification with Old Acadia is a semantic strategy designed to impart a cohesive regional identity, distinct from that of the province as a whole. The emphasis placed on La Petite-Rochelle and on the Acadian roots of much of the population of Restigouche is integral to this cultivated sense of similitude between past and present. Yet this is part and parcel of a larger process engendered by Québec’s accession to modernity — the state-sponsored levelling of traditional, localized, hence heterogeneous, popular

104 Pointe-à-la-Croix, SHM, Comité culturel provisoire inter-municipal, “Mémoire présenté dans le cadre de la consultation sur l’avenir culturel du Québec . . .” [1982], Archives SHM.

105 Fame Point = Pointe-à-la-Batterie; Byron = P.-à-la-Garde; Repulse = P.-à-la-Croix; Scarborough = P. d’Escuminac; Barrington = P. de Miguasha. For comparison, see Alan Gordon, “Contested Terrain: The Politics of Public Memory in Montréal, 1891-1930”, Ph.D. thesis, Queen’s University, 1997.

106 *L’Aviron*, 17 décembre 1980.

identities.¹⁰⁷ Québec Restigouche activists were promoters of a regionalism which, while contradicting the unitary discourse of Québécois nationalism, in effect accommodated the consolidation of the provincial state. It also acted as a challenge to the federal government's strategy aiming at fostering pan-Canadianism and at countering Québécois nationalism through the promotion of Canadian "national" heritage. In New Brunswick, these goals had little resonance: federal memory-making initiatives were not charged with the same negative connotation (witness the widespread support for the "Odyssée acadienne", Parks Canada's commemoration of the Acadian Renaissance), the contradiction between Acadian spatial reality and political jurisdiction — in effect, between Acadian nationalism and the "Loyalist" state — was not of the same order.

Community memory is not homogeneous, of course, but as in the case of indigenous traditions "even when . . . accounts vary, they all point to the importance of land and family as anchor points for memory . . . given the sustained pressures industrial capitalism and bureaucratic administration place . . . on land and on . . . institutions associated with kinship".¹⁰⁸ This concept provides further understanding as to why La Petite-Rochelle, albeit a representation largely derived from social memory and written discourse, has acquired such an important place in popular conceptions of the past. Oral tradition challenges notions of two elements central to historiographical accounts: time and context, understood in logico-deductive terms. Place is more than location, clearly demarcated; it is "mapped on landscape" in an ordering reminiscent of calendrical time. Events, too, are anchored to place — locations in space used in order to "speak about events over time" rather than as a "discrete, apparently bounded incident" ordered in narrative. This helps explain why the population of Restigouche has put such emphasis on La Petite-Rochelle as place, as evidenced by attempts to identify the site and to retrieve and preserve remains.

Two assumptions here are paramount. First, oral traditions (structured by subjectivist narrative) differ fundamentally from the written (generally positivistic); indeed, most importantly (from the structuralist perspective), oral narrative has no pretence to reflectivity: it may be characterized as statements about culture, a way of saying the world in symbolic fashion. Secondly, recent memories of the personal (experience, recollections) and community (customs, practices, traditions) kinds and their link to contemporary events are crucial to the development of attitudes, behaviours and identities. People judge events and episodes in their own lives and in those of kin and community, and they inform others, via socialization and social discourse, of the proper attitude to have regarding the past; this, in turn, affects attitudes to the present and to the future. Thus memory as a collective expression is an active, living reaction to the past, open to exogenous influences. In this manner, attitudes and memories of the mass are maintained, as personal memory is

107 For this phenomenon, see P.D. Clarke, "Sur l'identité et la conscience historique des jeunes Gaspésiens", in Bogumil Jewsiewicki et Jocelyn Létourneau, dirs., *Les jeunes à l'ère de la mondialisation. Quête identitaire et conscience historique* (Québec, 1998), pp. 71-125. See also Clermont Dugas, *Les régions périphériques. Défi au développement du Québec* (Sainte-Foy, 1983).

108 Julie Cruikshank, "Oral Tradition and Oral History: Reviewing some Issues", *Canadian Historical Review*, LXXV, 3 (September 1994), pp. 403-18. For the interpretation of oral traditions, see Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, 1985).

transformed into community memory, and memory for one generation becomes history for its successors.

The struggle to maintain the basis of regional memory, manifest in the reactions to the Parks Canada proposal, must not be ascribed to popular will alone. Mediated by social and discursive hierarchies, these responses are articulated on the propensity of individuals to participate in representing and commemorating the past; they are articulated, too, on the degree to which individuals participate in the parallel universes of discursive and oral traditions. The folklorization and singularization of Québec's regions, through ethnographic inventories and historical narratives, have had an important effect on the evolution of Gaspesian memory and identity.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, it is difficult to exaggerate the effect of scholarly studies on the rise of typified regionalism which, in the context of the destruction of traditional identificatory signs, has become the prevailing process of symbolic production. These are indications of a process of the homogenization of polysemic, indigenous, localized popular cultures. The point here is the effect of this phenomenon on the socialization and memory-selection of those who have promoted and continue to promote a renewed and activating vision of Restigouche's past.

People now wish to participate in the construction of collective memory, especially members of the educated, politically-aware local élite, and they are not content to accept the views of historians if these are not consistent with well-entrenched representations of their real and imagined collectivities. These individuals (consistent with their active participation in the evolution of collective identity, through social and political activism and contributions to local history, heritage preservation and socio-economic development), by allying professional and amateur, national and local histories, fit community memory into social memory. This allows the entire community to be informed by historical narrative and to have passive access to social memory outside the institutional setting. Likewise, it offsets the impact on community memory of mass media, schooling, social programmes and the general marginalization of the periphery. From this dialogical process comes a new memory of the past, and hence a transformed, dynamic hold on the present.

Theories in social psychology attempt to explicate the phenomenon by which individuals and groups are able to modify the behaviour and ideas of the mass. The concept of "groupes nomiques" is particularly useful in comprehending how small active minorities, rooted in categorical norms from which are derived self-confidence and action strategies, can exert enormous influence on the generally unmotivated and unstructured majority.¹¹⁰ Opinion leaders in Restigouche (propagators of local history and heritage-consciousness especially) are at most a coterie; but with support from local politicians and by adroitly placing history in the nexus of cultural and economic

109 See Clarke, "Sur l'identité et la conscience historique des jeunes Gaspésiens"; Serge Courville, "De l'écart entre les faits de croissance et les représentations collectives: l'exemple du Québec", in Gérard Bouchard, dir., *La construction d'une culture. Le Québec et l'Amérique française* (Québec, 1993), pp. 75-92.

110 Among the theoretical and clinical studies on the question of influence, see Serge Moscovici, *Social Influence and Social Change* (London and New York, 1976) and Ralph B. Taylor, *Human Territorial Functioning. An Empirical, Evolutionary Perspective on Individual and Small Group Territorial Cognitions, Behaviors and Consequences* (Cambridge, 1988).

development, they are the driving force behind the resurgence of local and community memories. In this regard, collective identity and memory as a function of the mobilization and mediation of public opinion are hardly more democratic now than when left to the designs of bourgeois historians alone.

The creation of the Société historique Machault in October 1981 was the outcome of a year-long effort by a "Comité provisoire", animated by a community organizer.¹¹¹ The Comité had been working to prepare public opinion and to mobilize crucial public support, leading people to infer from the Parks Canada consultants' report that "Il appert déjà que ce centre pourrait être axé à 50% sur les besoins locaux et régionaux et à 50% sur le potentiel touristique". They were making deductions too, from statements attributed to Parks Canada: "Il semble donc qu'en définitive, un front commun . . . puisse accélérer [la] réalisation d'un centre . . . mettant . . . en valeur le patrimoine et la richesse historique de la région".¹¹² These interventions were, of course, rhetorical, as in: "Si la population le désire vraiment, le comité . . . ira de l'avant avec ses projets".¹¹³ In reality, the Société sought no justification, as shown by its brief to Parks Canada, voiced by the omniscient speaker: "L'intérêt de la population . . . pour les événements de 1760 remonte au lendemain . . . a été ravivé en 1939 . . . et est devenu presque une obsession depuis la fin des années 1960. . . . C'est au printemps de 1980 que les citoyens 'impatients' . . . décidaient de mettre tout en oeuvre". Parks Canada's excavations had "éveillé dans le coeur de la population . . . une histoire vraie qui lui appartient et qu'elle veut garder chez-elle".¹¹⁴

Whatever the exactitude of theories of mediation and circulation of social relations through signifying practices (in particular in respect to their application to memorial and commemorative practices and symbols), systems of signifying elements cannot be incorporated into a direct correspondence of signifier to signified, in this case active to passive, literate to non-literate. It is clear that the general population of Restigouche was endowed with all the autonomy of the bourgeois subject: terms and objects configured as metaphors of collective identity by leading social actors and meaning-producing agents were received in a manner independent of their intentions.¹¹⁵ Indeed, the success of local petit-bourgeois figures in shaping and reshaping community memory was necessarily predicated on the non-contentious nature of La Petite-Rochelle. The plurality of local actors at work here drew on, and were kept in check by, the strengths and constraints of the popular elements of community memory, closely articulated on the ascendancy of mass culture and the regimen of liberal democracy. Celebration is a case in point. The Comité intermunicipal des festivités du 225ième — bringing together many of the region's towns and villages, and other interest groups — was instrumental in organizing the very successful festivities celebrating the 225th anniversary of the Battle, which coincided with the inauguration of the Battle of the Restigouche National Historic Site (July 1985). The tenth

111 *L'Aviron*, 1 juillet, 4 novembre 1981.

112 *L'Aviron*, 17 décembre 1980.

113 *L'Aviron*, 26 novembre 1980.

114 "Mémoire de la Société historique Machault"; *L'Aviron*, 6 octobre 1982.

115 For theories of literary reception, see Stanley E. Fish, *Is there a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, 1980) and Jane P. Tompkins, ed., *Reader Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore, 1980).

anniversary celebrations, on the other hand, were a flop: community organizations manifested little interest, the public even less — the historic site had lost its sheen.

Local sensitivities respecting history were not consistent with the aims of national history as represented by Parks Canada and competing provincial bureaucrats. The causes of this resistance to the reconfiguration of local collective memory and identity are many and, in the end, related to socio-economic concerns. But the explanation is also related to the cultural system in place, a matrix of beliefs, values and symbols through which people apprehend and signify their world, a concept posited by cultural anthropology and notably notions of thick description, local knowledge and symbolic meaning.¹¹⁶ Squeezed between competing scenarios, national (social) memory on the one hand, family stories and genealogy, mementos and souvenirs, visual representations, popular history and culture on the other, individuals construct their own representations of the past, in narrative or imagery, as constituted memory or counter-memory.¹¹⁷

Only through rigorous ethnographic inquiry, based on oral interviews and domestic economy studies, could we infer the presence of an indigenous, popular collective memory of La Petite-Rochelle. Its presence was not discerned by early studies of oral traditions in Gaspésie and Acadie¹¹⁸ except indirectly. Two legends in the Baie des Chaleurs are linked to the Battle: the first, that of Beausoleil; the second, popular in origin, that of the vaisseau fantôme, the following version of which was transcribed over a century ago: “Ce feu a commencé . . . après le *dérangement* . . . c’est quelque étincelle de l’incendie de nos maisons qui a allumé ce feu-là. . . . Le bâtiment qui brûle du feu de la Baie . . . est un des bâtiments des Anglais” [original emphasis]. A more recently recorded version is nominally related to Restigouche: “Le bateau-en-feu se montre à Oak Bay et passe au-dessus d’un groupe d’hommes en train de déterrer un canon que les Français avaient enfoui”. A popular 1970 account of the Parks Canada excavations noted: “un habitant de la région affirmait avoir vu un vaisseau fantôme . . . en feu de la poupe à la proue . . . le spectre en technicolor [du] Machault”. It also refers to a French fort whose site remains unknown: “C’est là, dit-on, que devrait se trouver le trésor de la flotte”.¹¹⁹ However, oral history interviews with elderly people in Restigouche, carried out in 1981, yielded contrary results; investigators were told that no indigenous tales existed: “On ne connaît ni conte ni légende dans la région immédiate”.¹²⁰ Tales recorded in the 19th century have today no echo in popular representations, and germane written accounts are informed by history.

So what of the bulk of the population, passively participating in meaning-construction? The locals, noted the Parks Canada consultants, showed interest in the Battle, were enthusiastic about the interpretation centre and had avidly followed the archaeological fieldwork.¹²¹ According to informers, the underwater excavations did

116 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York, 1973).

117 Robin, *Roman mémoriel*, p. 57.

118 Carmen Roy, *La littérature orale en Gaspésie* ([1955], Montréal, 1981); Roy, *Contes populaires gaspésien* (Montréal, 1952).

119 [Jean-Charles Taché], *Corpus des faits ethnographiques québécois Gaspésie* (Québec, 1981), pp. 390-1; Jolicoeur, *Vaisseau fantôme*, p. 89; Goblot, “Archéologie sous-marine”, p. 195.

120 SHM, “Projet Été-Canada” [report], 1981. See “Rapport d’entrevues”.

121 Econosult, *Recherche socio-économique*, p. 61.

indeed excite curiosity; locals were especially impressed by well-preserved major pieces and the presence of luxury articles such as china porcelain. One observer wrote: “les milliers de visiteurs . . . se sont émus devant des objets parfaitement bien conservés . . . des assiettes de terre cuite . . . des chaussures toutes neuves . . . des boucles de métal”.¹²² The many local people present at the “diggings”, particularly those who were hired as on-site helpers, have since become a continuous source of reminiscence. More than 100 people were present at the 1980 projection of Parks Canada films of the excavations, which the Société historique Machault hoped would serve to highlight the region’s “grande richesse historique” and the “possibilités que ceci représente . . . surtout du côté touristique”. As for the Parks Canada hearings, they were attended by 167 individuals and 18 organizations.¹²³

Data from a 1981 survey, sponsored by the Comité historique and its allies, shed light on popular views of local heritage and history. Interrogated in respect to the project, 96 per cent of the respondents indicated that “il est important de conserver dans notre région les documents et objets de notre histoire”. As to the projected interpretation centre, again, 96 per cent “trouvent nécessaire la création”; 57 per cent stated that its priority should be to “faire connaître l’histoire régionale” (first out of four choices), closely followed by job creation (55 per cent).¹²⁴ Support for the BRNHS, noted the press, was largely based on the belief that, in addition to enriching people’s “connaissances en histoire régionale” and developing their “appartenance culturelle”, it would create employment opportunities, notably through the exploitation of dormant heritage resources, most often associated with handicrafts and tourism.¹²⁵ Comments gathered by interviewers show the importance of these two objectives. A small number of respondents appealed to “culture”: “Je crois . . . qu’un centre . . . est . . . quasi indispensable. . . . Il se manifeste un grand besoin . . . quant à la promotion et à la sauvegarde de ce que nous sommes”. But the great majority accented the practical: “Le centre pourrait offrir de l’emploi”; “le centre aiderait . . . les artisans à se valoriser”.

Recommendations regarding the programming of the future interpretation centre, stemming from the survey, show the importance of satisfying local needs: “on ne peut se limiter aux expositions permanentes. Une *animation culturelle* active est un gage de réussite” [original emphasis]. Certain “conditions matérielles” would be required, including a library, storage space for archives, a multipurpose hall, suitable landscaping. . . . According to a detailed calendar, in summer the centre would

122 Raymonde Litalien, “Le Machault, bateau corsaire du XVIIIe”, *Culture vivante*, 24 (mars 1972), pp. 11-16. For the interest resulting from these endeavours, see Goblot, “Archéologie sous-marine” and “Hunt for Cultural Treasure”; Litalien, “Le Machault de Bayonne, frégate corsaire échouée au Canada en 1760”, *Bulletin de la Société des Sciences, Lettres et Arts de Bayonne*, 133 (1977), pp. 199-218; Charles Méthé, “De Ristigouche. La Conquête revue”, *Continuité*, 25 (automne 1984), p. 39; Ronald Deschênes, “Restigouche: la fin des espoirs”, *Mémoire*, 2-3 (été-automne 1985), pp. 22-3; *The Tribune*, 30 July 1969.

123 *L’Aviron*, 3 décembre 1980, 31 mars 1982; *BRNHP Public Consultation*.

124 SHM, “Projet Été-Canada”. See in particular “Rapport du 1er sondage”, “Commentaires de la population”, “Programmation du centre”, “Annexes”.

125 *L’Aviron*, 5 août 1981. See also Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montréal and Kingston, 1994) for handicrafts, tourism and identity.

concentrate on its commemorative functions, on fund-raising and the showcasing of regional music, theatre, folk-dancing, etc; in the off-season, it would serve as a venue for expositions, conferences, and courses in art, navigation, natural history, alternative energies.¹²⁶ Noteworthy here is the fact that public interest was almost exclusively centred on the practical aspects of the development of heritage and leisure resources. The widespread contemporary bourgeois phenomenon of nostalgia, and its gratification through museums, historic sites, ancestor-hunting and antiques, is noticeably absent from popular concerns with commemoration.¹²⁷

In this case, community memory may be viewed as resistance to industrial capitalism and to its effect on the processes of production-appropriation and derivative social relations. This is a concept of culture which has received greater visibility with recent studies positing “specific ways culture both takes from and gives to social relations shape, form, and meaning”, and notably the construction, as a function of social relations and specific material circumstances, of a social rapport to time.¹²⁸ Local resistance to the established order, manifest in reactions to public economic development initiatives and to the hegemony of state and modern culture over locally-generated collective representations, was especially strong in the early 1980s. Under the banner of the “Ralliement populaire”, locals, emulating popular rural coalitions (Urgence rurale, Solidarité rurale, Opérations-Dignité), blockaded highways and marched on government buildings to protest against high levels of unemployment and the lack of local input into regional economic development decision-making. At the same time, Listuguj Mi’gmaq clashed with the Sûreté du Québec over control of the indigenous salmon fishery. Noteworthy is the concurrence of these events and the Parks Canada proposal, and the equation drawn between the expression of particularisms and regional socio-economic development. The local press, for example, reported that the MP for Bonaventure “appuie à 100% la population . . . dans ses démarches pour le Centre d’Interprétation historique . . . et pour . . . un moulin de sciage”.¹²⁹

This regionalist representation may also be characterized as an unconscious reaction to contemporary events, namely the closure and attempted closure of a number of small villages in the context of the regional development programmes implemented by the Bureau de l’aménagement de l’est du Québec and the Fonds de développement économique rural in New Brunswick aiming at rationalizing the agro-forestry subsistence economy.¹³⁰ This relocation process, begun here in 1974, reached crisis proportions in 1979-82 because of growing public opposition and tensions created by divisive rules regarding the granting of “primes de départ”. Dislocation, exodus and renewed hardship, exacerbated by changes in the region’s socio-economic regime, nurtured a need to find solace in past experience of re-establishment. The

126 SHM, “Projet Été-Canada”. See “Programmation du centre”.

127 See David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985).

128 See Gerald M. Sider, *Culture and Class in Anthropology and History: A Newfoundland Illustration* (Cambridge and Paris, 1986).

129 *L’Aviron*, 11 mars 1981.

130 For these programmes, see Pauline Côté, *L’idéologie du BAEQ et les relocalisés de l’Est du Québec* (Sainte-Foy, 1981) and R.R. Krueger and John Koegler, *Regional Development in Northeastern New Brunswick* (Toronto, 1975).

concomitant rebirth of Acadian nationalism, correlative to Acadians' encounter with modernity,¹³¹ inaugurated by Louis Robichaud's *Chances égales*, likewise evoked a need to rekindle memories of a reassuring past.

The concept of repressed memory can also be helpful in explaining popular expressions of interest in La Petite-Rochelle. Repressed memory is defined as original experience, collectively received as trauma, transformed into "deep memory" (a process of unconscious exclusion) in the collective psyche; this memory then remains sublimated until the re-creation of relevant historical conditions triggers psychical dispositions similar to those attendant to the original experience, causing it to once again become living collective memory.¹³² The collective psyche is linked to La Petite-Rochelle through the past as experience and the present as experience re-lived: that of La Petite-Rochelle and that of modernity, the most disruptive element of which was forced relocation. The patent parallel is between deportation and relocation, between the imagined plight of the refugees of La Petite-Rochelle and that of their expropriated descendants.

Precariousness, material and mental, is likewise important. The uprooting of communities, allied to the absence (relative) of the usual social framework (social services and means of production) in any given context operates changes in individual and collective memories in the form of the repression of reality.¹³³ This severs individuals and families from the sources of community life — the sharing of material and symbolic goods and images, including collective memories. In Restigouche, precariousness — underdevelopment, unemployment and dashed hopes — have long dominated.¹³⁴ Herein lies the utility of the Freudian model for those "for whom the past is not a problem of working back but of 'working through'". For the *relocalisés* the problem is of the same order: how to deal with the past from the point of view of memory passing into history.¹³⁵

The phenomenon of cultural resistance raises the matter of the relatively unimportant place La Petite-Rochelle holds in collective representations in New Brunswick. This may be ascribed to the consubstantial nature of nationalism and regionalism in Acadie, articulated on a coincidence of identity and territory, a fact largely correlative to the strength of popular representations and regulation.¹³⁶ Especially important in this regard is the incorporation of value systems into spatial

131 For modern Acadie, see Greg Allain, Isabelle McKee-Allain and J. Yvon Thériault, "La société acadienne: lectures et conjectures", in Jean Daigle, dir., *L'Acadie des Maritimes* (Moncton, 1993), pp. 341-84 and André Leclerc, Hubert Cyr and Denis Duval, *L'Acadie à l'heure des choix. L'avenir politique et économique de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick* (Moncton, 1996).

132 Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* ([1939] New York, 1967).

133 Teresa Christina Carreteiro, "La quête de l'historicité", *Cahiers de recherche sociologique*, 22 (1994), pp. 49-57.

134 See Bruno Jean and Danielle Lafontaine, dirs., *Région, régionalisme et développement régional. Le cas de l'Est du Québec* (Rimouski, 1984) and Donald J. Savoie and Maurice Beaudin, *La lutte pour le développement. Le cas du Nord-est* (Sainte-Foy et Moncton, 1988).

135 See Patrick H. Hutton, "Sigmund Freud and Maurice Halbwachs: The Problem of Memory in Historical Psychology", *Historical Reflections/Réflexions historiques*, XIX, 1 (1993), pp. 1-16.

136 For the relationship between identity and territory in Acadie, see P.D. Clarke, "'Sur l'empire', ou récit et mémoire en Acadie", in Jocelyn Létourneau, dir., *La question identitaire au Canada francophone. Récits, parcours, enjeux, hors-lieux* (Québec, 1994), pp. 3-44, and "Régions et

relations, counterbalancing the effect of bourgeois objectification (in this case, of historical artefacts), the latter being defined as the effect of new “artefacts” (normally consumer goods) on the processes which link people to place.¹³⁷ Québécois nationalism, on the other hand, is incompatible with the manifestation of autonomous indigenous identities. The widespread linkage between heritage and history and socio-economic development in Gaspésie is indicative of a regional identity which is not derived from lived space and an assumed national (i.e. Gaspeian) community. Inevitably, La Petite-Rochelle feeds into the underlying tensions between Québécois and Acadian nationalisms, divided over the propriety of federal cultural interventions and holding contrary visions of francophones’ place in Canada, indeed, of the legitimacy of Canadian democracy itself.¹³⁸

This divergence in identificatory strategies is manifest in the actions of the Société historique Machault and its counterpart (and offshoot) in New Brunswick, the Société historique du comté de Restigouche, by far the more popular and energetic (in terms of members, finances, activities, etc.) of the two. The latter’s energies, no longer needed in preserving “acadianité”, are now focused on the usual stuff of amateur historical societies everywhere: prominent local individuals, families and institutions, the “Good Ol’ Days” and genealogy. The Société historique Machault, on the other hand, is more inclined to social activism than to properly historical endeavours. Finally, note the situation of the anglophone population of Restigouche, whose heritage initiatives, generally weak, now consist of little more than attempts at organizing an exhibit devoted to Athol House. For the small English-language élite which, in the early 1980s, still held sway in Campbellton and for whom business was the core activity, identity was not paramount. In a brief on the BRNHS project, the anglophone mayor of Campbellton reminded people that snow-removal, policing and other public services were more important than culture.¹³⁹

The anxieties which animated 19th-century historians and travellers still shape contemporary attitudes in Restigouche, save that historicity is now characterized not by progress but by entropy, and that, currently, collective efforts are directed at saving communities from implosion. In a society marked not just by fragmentation and individuation but by a growing discrepancy between representation and reality, it now appears that commemoration, as a mnemonic, has outgrown its usefulness in stabilizing and vivifying collective memory. Post-modernity (the pre-eminence of the subject and mass media) makes the public more inclined to seek the security of memorialization within the matrix of globalizing popular culture. The continuing construction and interpretation of La Petite-Rochelle responds therefore to a need to negotiate the rhythm of change.

Local success in promoting the development of regional heritage resources spurred

régionalismes en Acadie: culture/espace/appartenance”, forthcoming in *Recherches sociographiques*.

137 See Gerald L. Pocius, *A Place to Belong. Community Order and Everyday Space in Calvert, Newfoundland* (Montréal and Kingston and Athens, Ga., 1991).

138 Much has been written respecting the evolution of Québécois memories and identities. See Daniel Jacques, *Les humanités passagères. Considérations philosophiques sur la culture politique québécoise* (Montréal, 1991) and Jacques Mathieu et Jacques Lacoursière, *Les mémoires québécoises* (Québec, 1991).

139 *L’Aviron*, 13 mai 1981.

on memory- and meaning-producing actors. In 1983, the Société historique Machault undertook the restoration of the historic Maison Young and its relocation to the Québec-New Brunswick border, where it now serves as a tourist information bureau; later, in 1986, it sponsored an inventory of the Bordeaux (Busteed) House collection of historical artefacts.¹⁴⁰ A period of relative inactivity followed until 1993 and the return of the community organizer who had been seconded to the Société at its inception. Soon after (with funds from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec), the Société ordered preliminary documentary research on La Petite-Rochelle. "We have to look at sites that would be interesting for [archaeologists]", stated the president, "over the years there have been reports of farmers finding . . . muskets, swords, cannon balls, etc. . . . [N]ow, it is hoped that something more substantial, such as remains of a building, can be located".¹⁴¹

This time the Société sought professional assistance, which came with academic discourse and method (the author's in this case). The research objectives were described thus: "a) la reconstitution de l'histoire, au regard du contexte historique général et événementiel, de La Petite-Rochelle . . . b) la réalisation d'une étude documentaire, étayée de recherches . . . sur le terrain . . . dans le but d'identifier le ou les lieux de La Petite-Rochelle; c) l'élaboration d'un protocole pour la protection et la mise en valeur du ou des sites identifiés".¹⁴² The project research, although goal-oriented, was defined in professional terms: contextualization and verification were paramount, and suitably relativistic conclusions were to be logically deduced from data. And although it stated that "Il est peu probable . . . que [des] fouilles permettent de découvrir des vestiges d'une importance telle qu'il faille envisager la mise en valeur du site", La Petite-Rochelle, it concluded, had museological potential, on the basis of the contextualization of events and the exhibition of artefacts, notably through their incorporation into the permanent exhibit at the BRNHS.

The Société was not put off by circumscribed discourse; nor apparently was the public by pedantic speeches. The Société reported that the research "a fait la lumière sur l'existence d'un peuplement important qui fut le tremplin du peuplement . . . de la Baie des Chaleurs" and "a permis de localiser des sites à haut potentiel archéologique". The project had "connu un grand succès dans la région" including numerous items in regional media, public activities attended by over 200 people and the sale of 300 copies of an abridged version of the project report.¹⁴³ The Société continues to follow up on the first phase of the project, proposing site surveys and a complete inventory of privately-held artefacts. But attempts to secure funding have been unsuccessful: the Quebec government is anxious to avoid further commitments; and Parks Canada intends to allocate new resources to themes identified by recent historiographical tendencies, emphasizing natives, women, workers, etc.¹⁴⁴

This brings to mind the radical contingency of the memory of La Petite-Rochelle. The 1924 designation of the site of Battle of the Restigouche (implicitly linked to La

140 See William Busteed, *Bordeaux House Collection* (Pointe-à-la-Croix, 1986).

141 *The Tribune*, 29 September 1993; *Le Chaleur*, 19 septembre, 7 novembre 1993.

142 SHM [P.D. Clarke], "À la recherche de La Petite-Rochelle".

143 Goudreau, to MCCQ, 29 avril 1994; "Rapport des activités 1993-1994", Archives SHM. See also *The Tribune*, 24 November 1993, 27 April 1994.

144 Parks Canada, "Révision du plan du réseau des lieux historiques nationaux, 1992-1994" (1994.)

Petite-Rochelle), one of numerous similar initiatives undertaken by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in that period, was as much a measure of the powerful political connections of New Brunswick's representative, J.C. Webster, as of the site's inherent historical importance. And this recognition paled in comparison to the attention lavished over the years on sites such as the Port-Royal Habitation and Fortress Louisbourg, reborn as living museums, a trend which continues to this day. When the Restigouche site was finally initiated, once again it was but one among many projects, all part of an enlargement of the historic parks system, implemented for the purpose of regional economic expansion; it was a development which took place with little regard for the opinion of historians or for the regional perspective, which were sacrificed in an attempt to achieve a "chimerical national perspective".¹⁴⁵

The second aspect of this contingency, especially significant, is the very fact that the National Historic Site does not commemorate La Petite-Rochelle. Nor, for that matter, does anything else. In the final analysis, it is memorialized in mind alone, a fact which says as much about the region's place in the greater body politic as it does about its past. La Petite-Rochelle's strong and enduring presence in print and tradition has had little effect in bringing it to objectification. This is so for the very reason that it is an authentic *regional* memory, one which, because it aspires towards more than a purely local intelligibility, stands in opposition to constituted, and therefore hegemonic, memories, those of Québec (and its accredited regions, such as Gaspésie) and of Acadie, for reasons which we have seen. In the end, save for its creators, it ingratiates itself to no one: not only has it not served as the foundation for a more potent, and ubiquitous, constructed tradition, it does not even "speak modern".¹⁴⁶

But not all hope has been lost: Restigouche Mi'gmaq have successfully garnered development funds for Fort Listuguj, the latest evocation of La Petite-Rochelle and, to date, its only objectification. Based on the living history concept, it takes direct aim at the new public of museological establishments, providing a kinaesthetic and psychic experience designed to compensate for cultural fragmentation and the dissolution of shared references. The fort development plan is instructive in this regard: "En franchissant la palissade, le visiteur met . . . les pieds dans une époque riche en émotions et dans un lieu témoin d'événements marquants". "La Bataille . . . aura bientôt lieu et le fort fourmille d'activités". Complaints regarding the neglect of regional heritage will be put right: wigwams, long-houses, chapel, barracks, trading post and more form the stage on which Mi'gmaq, Acadians, Recollets and French and English forces will act out their respective roles.¹⁴⁷ Song and dance, story-telling, handicrafts and foods will cater to visitors' needs. The irony is manifest: Listuguj Mi'gmaq have become the keepers of La Petite-Rochelle. It is an appropriation responding more to a development opportunity

145 For the HSMBC and the BRNHS, see Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, especially chaps. 3 and 9.

146 See Lyle Dick, "The Seven Oaks Incident and the Construction of a Historical Tradition, 1816-1970", *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, II (1991), pp 91-113; Keith Walden, "Speaking Modern: Language, Culture and Hegemony in Grocery Window Displays, 1887-1920", *Canadian Historical Review*, LXX, 3 (September 1989), pp. 285-310.

147 For Fort Listuguj, see *The Tribune*, 16 October 1996; "Fort Listuguj. Re-live Micmac & Acadian History" [tourist brochure] (1997). See also P.D. Clarke, "'Land of East Wind': mise en forme d'une mémoire mi'gmaq", forthcoming in *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, for the relationship between memory, identity and tourism development in the case of Restigouche Mi'gmaq.

than to any will to commemorate what is, in essence, white man's history; but it has largely fulfilled the wishes neglected by Parks Canada through its reliance on static exhibits and the emphasis placed on universal themes.

Grasping the structuring reality of local culture is essential to the comprehension of the memory of La Petite-Rochelle. This includes the following themes: the demographic evolution of Restigouche which is marked by out-migration, the consolidation of small towns and the minoritization of the English-language population; the passage from a rural subsistence economy to one characterized by consumerism and dependency on state transfers; the destruction of popular social structure and regulation and the undermining of popular culture and meaning-producing regimes, both correlative to the imposition of modernity; and the rending of local spatial reality through a shift to virtual space, linked to imagined political communities and to a continental/information economy. Essential, too, is the weight of two centuries of intellectual construct, that is to say a memory — comprising texts, rites, codes and images; consisting of analysis, souvenirs, myth and ideology; striving, alternately, to remember, to critique, to reconstitute and to forget.

But there still remains the question of the contemporary meaning of La Petite-Rochelle, the answer to which cannot be inferred from the sole observation that the memory of the place is based more on discursive tradition than on empirical research. This would obviate the symbolic and psycho-social aspects of people's struggle to create their own memory, a phenomenon that demands sociological and anthropological inquiry. Memory, like identity, is constantly evolving, being reconfigured to meet ever-changing needs for new sense and meaning. Representations of La Petite-Rochelle likewise change, as a function of the evolution of narrative forms and of the objectives of commemoration and memorialization. Although there is a clear difference between historiographical and oral representations of La Petite-Rochelle, as between official and popular memorialization of the same, they exist in a dialogical relationship. Despite the fact that much of the popular, living, activating memory of the past is derived from written sources, the people of Restigouche still insist on their right to preserve what they deem should be neither forgotten nor trivialized.

In general, historical sensibility has given way to historiographical discourse, which insists on neglecting the local and communitarian. But in this case, subjectivity and local interests are still the chief factors in the representation of the past. Witness the most recent local heritage initiative, one which, in the absence of La Petite-Rochelle, aims at creating a replica of an early lumber camp; once again, history and community development are juxtaposed. Its sponsors, "témoins d'un exode . . . de la population", point to "l'absence d'une attraction touristique majeure pouvant générer des . . . emplois", consequent to the fact that "le secteur historique . . . n'a jamais vraiment fait de percée". They intend, therefore, to showcase "l'histoire de ces hommes et de ces femmes qui ont 'trimé dur' . . . pour bâtir nos communautés".¹⁴⁸ The substance that locals seek in the past has not changed: devotion to ancestors and community survival dominate representations of the past and the recuperation of collective memory. La Petite-Rochelle, ever speaking to dispossession, still signifies defiance.

148 "Sur les plateaux de la Ristigouche. Projet d'un camp de bûcherons pour mettre en valeur l'histoire des 'bûcheux' du début du siècle", SHM, *Bulletin*, I, 2 (automne 1996), p. 8.