

***The Bread Ovens of Quebec.* By Lise Boily (Blanchette) and Jean-François Blanchette. (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1979. Pp. 119, illustrations, photographs, list of informants, bibliography. \$8.95)**

Gerald L. Pocius

Volume 2, Number 1-2, 1980

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1081035ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1081035ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Association Canadienne d'Ethnologie et de Folklore

ISSN

1481-5974 (print)

1708-0401 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Pocius, G. L. (1980). Review of [*The Bread Ovens of Quebec.* By Lise Boily (Blanchette) and Jean-François Blanchette. (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1979. Pp. 119, illustrations, photographs, list of informants, bibliography. \$8.95)]. *Ethnologies*, 2(1-2), 71-72.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1081035ar>

of the strategies of pro-sealing rhetoric Lamson draws on poems or songs composed usually in an emotional response to specific events or the controversy as a whole, broadly distinguishing between "amateur" and "professional" writers. The outstanding characteristic of counter-protest literature is its highly emotional, reactionary message and delivery (in contrast to governmental counter-protest which often relies on cold facts and figures).

What is the value of examining the "rhetoric of (sealing) counter-protest"? As Cynthia Lamson rightly concludes, expressive forms of counter-protest "provide an index to the beliefs and values held by a particular group (p. 87)." It helps to identify characteristics which make Newfoundlanders what they are. Indeed, Lamson has pointed to a task for a Newfoundland scholar, which would be to examine the whole phenomenon of "provincialism" in the Newfoundland context; to assess how Newfoundlanders see themselves, and how they perceive others (e.g. Mainlanders) see them. This "exoteric-esoteric" factor, as defined by the late William Hugh Jansen, would be a choice interdisciplinary theme for Newfoundland studies at a time when cultural self-discovery is attaining new heights in the province. That Newfoundlanders are proud of their heritage despite attacks by outsiders is the core of the message to be read in "*Bloody Decks and a Bumper Crop*".

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The Bread Ovens of Quebec

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Jean-François Blanchette.

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The entire range of small outbuilding forms — bake ovens, privies, ice houses, root cellars, boat houses — has long been neglected in serious North American vernacular architecture research. Many of these types are believed too simple (and therefore somehow non-cultural) to be worthy of study. With this area of material culture research long neglected, the appearance of Lise Boily and Jean-François Blanchette's work, *The Bread Ovens of Quebec*, is especially important.

Containing over a hundred photographs and drawings, and obviously aimed at the general public, this book, however, does not merely function as a source of visual information. Rather, it places the outdoor bake oven of Quebec in both its historical and contemporary contexts, using field research and archival sources. The work consists of four major sections concerned with a general history of the ovens themselves in the province, a description of the construction of an actual oven near the Rivière à Mars, the various types of bread baked in the oven and their preparation, and finally the oral traditions surrounding these buildings.

The Blanchettes' book gives an excellent picture of the wide range of bread ovens found in Quebec, as well as the many techniques and materials used in construction. Their field research appears quite extensive, although I doubt that any field worker is capable of asking only "neutral questions" as the authors maintain they did (p. 5). The chapter devoted to the actual construction of a bread oven in 1971 by Louis-Joseph Simard is especially valuable for it is uncommon to obtain such a detailed description of the construction of a specific structure, let

alone to be there during the actual process. Often this information can be obtained only through oral interviews long after the building has been completed, supplemented at times by observations of details of construction technology during the demolition of a structure. The photographs of Mr. Simard's building of an oven are especially detailed and therefore valuable.

My objections to the book are minor. In the introduction the reader is referred to theorists who have dealt with the relationship of material culture to other aspects of culture (p. 3). The authors mentioned are archaeologists, and while I personally consider their writings important, I feel that the novice in material folk culture studies could benefit more from consulting recent writings by folklorists, of more direct relevance to studies like the Blanchettes'. Not mentioned in the bibliography, but most obvious are Michael Owen Jones' *The Hand Made Object and Its Maker*, and Henry Glassie's *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia*.

In discussing a marked increase in the number of ovens constructed in the 1950's, the authors mention that their informants explained this was due to the increasing costs of farm machinery and fertilizers at the time (p. 35). By baking bread in outdoor ovens, money could be saved for other purposes. While this may be a manifest reason for such an increase in local residents' minds, the saving of money is obviously a constant concern among farmers, and more fundamental cultural shifts may have contributed to this building increase.

Finally, the authors might have attempted to analytically comment on the oral traditions surrounding the ovens, instead of primarily listing them. This is probably the weakest section of the book, although the general interest reader would have little time, no doubt, for a structural or metaphorical study of oral genre themes.

The Bread Ovens of Quebec is an important book for many reasons. As a popular work aimed at the general public, it demonstrates the importance of mater-

ial culture research within the study of traditional cultures. This work is an exemplary study for Canadian architecture scholars on what is often considered a minor building form, demonstrating the complexities and importance of such forms. Finally, the Blanchettes' book provides the vernacular architecture scholar generally with a fine study of one of the many outbuilding types that are still poorly understood in part because of a romantic over-attachment to other forms like the barn. Before we can understand the entire outbuilding complex, more studies like the Blanchettes' are needed.

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**Everyman's Heritage: An Album of
Canadian Folk Life / Notre patrimoine:
Images du peuple canadien**

By Magnús Einarsson

(Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, National Museum of Man, 1978. Pp. 201, photographs, \$8.50 paper, \$12.50 cloth.)

This publication of the National Museum of Man would have been better called by its French sub-title, *Images du peuple canadien*, for it presents, in 177 black and white photographs, a panoramic view of Canadian life in a variety of geographic locations from the earliest days of settlement to the present. Unfortunately, the book has the general appearance of a discount coffee-table book, and as such is not likely to appeal to popular taste, in spite of the fact that many of the photographs are of ethnographic interest and some are of definite artistic merit.

This volume, however, claims to have significance far beyond the mere presentation of a series of photographs. As stated in the Introduction (page 12), it is intended