

Brief Notices / Notices brèves

Mike PARKER, *Guides of the North Woods: Hunting and Fishing Tales from Nova Scotia, 1860-1960* (Halifax, Nimbus, 1990, 240 p.). Mike PARKER, *Woodchips & Beans: Life in the Early Lumber Woods of Nova Scotia* (Halifax, Nimbus, 1992, 238 p.)

Mike Parker, himself a native Nova Scotian and the son of a trapper and guide, has produced in these volumes two collections of oral history which may well be invaluable to students of life in rural Nova Scotia. Each work is extensively illustrated with photographs. The earlier work, *Guides of the North Woods*, covers the century from 1860 to 1960 and consists mainly of anecdotes related by surviving guides or by their descendants. The book begins with a history of hunting and freshwater fishing in the province, and a description of the tourist hunting industry, patronized largely by wealthy Americans, which for many years depended upon professional guides. Recollections by or about each guide are introduced with informative biographical details. The second chapter, "Camps and Lodges," gives a fascinating look into the activities of the tourist lodges, while the third, "Tales of the North Woods," provides details of the daily lives of the guides themselves. The book concludes with a history of the professional association to which the guides belonged, and a final chapter on the athletes and athletic competitions of the group. A number of documents are included, together with lists of names and sources.

Woodchips & Beans, which covers the years from the early 1920s to the late 1940s, has at least one informant from every county in the province. As a result, the information for the shorter period is in some ways more comprehensive than that found in *Guides of the North Woods*, with a much larger portion of the book being given over to the informants' actual recollections, and much less to historical introduction and analysis. Since the informants include members of mill owning families, as well as other workers, such as sawyers, mill hands, river drivers, and cooks, the picture of life in the lumber woods is well rounded. Brief biographical details for each informant are provided.

These two works present excellent portraits of ways of life which were once essential to the economy of Nova Scotia, but which have completely disappeared from it, remaining only in the recollections of a fast diminishing number of former workers. We should be grateful to Mike Parker for his efforts in preserving these recollections.

Philippe-Joseph Aubert DE GASPÉ, *Yellow-Wolf & Other Tales of the Saint Lawrence*, trans. and annotated by Jane Brierly (Montreal, Véhicule Press, 1990, 159 p.). Shannon RYAN and Larry Small, *Haulin' Rope & Gaff: Songs and Poetry in the History of the Newfoundland Seal Fishery* (St. John's, Breakwater Books, 1978, 176 p.). Marion ROBERTSON, *The Chestnut Pipe: Folklore of Shelburne County* (Halifax, Nimbus, 1991, 271 p.)

De Gaspé's work was first published in French under the title *Divers* in 1893, but the individual tales seem to have been written between about 1860 and the author's death in his eighties in 1871. The collection has finally been translated into English by Jane Brierly as *Yellow-Wolf & Other Tales of the Saint Lawrence*. It is clear from the translator's notes that De Gaspé, who was the last *seigneur* of Saint-Jean Port-Joli, intended in these tales to preserve remnants of oral history and legend as he himself had learned them during his long life. However, De Gaspé adopted a literary style in his retelling of the tales, and while this tends to make them attractive to read, obviously their authenticity cannot be assumed either as a whole or in detail. The value of the collection, therefore, lies chiefly in its presentation of a sympathetic mid-nineteenth century view of oral history, and of Indian legend and history in particular.

Haulin' Rope & Gaff, which is still available from Breakwater, provides a brief historical introduction to the Newfoundland seal fishery, followed by a comprehensive collection of songs and verse associated with the fishery from 1833 onwards, complete with music where it is available. Given the recent demise of the seal fishery, the historical value of preserving this particular folk tradition is obvious. The collection certainly fulfills its intentions in this regard.

In *The Chestnut Pipe*, Marion Robertson presents an extensive anthology of folklore from an area of Nova Scotia where Helen Creighton had previously done some collecting. While there is naturally some overlapping of information, *The Chestnut Pipe* provides a great deal of new material, much of it very detailed. The work is divided into sections—"Supernatural Tales," "Home Remedies," "Weather Lore," "Bird Lore," and

so on, concluding with a "Glossary." Indeed, the collection as a whole is especially useful as a source of the distinctive dialect terms and expressions of the South Shore region of the province. Unfortunately, while informants are listed in the "Credits," the sources of individual pieces of information are rarely identified. But this is a relatively minor detraction from an otherwise interesting and useful work.

Jan PETERSON, *The Albernis: 1860-1922* (Lantzville, BC, Oolichan Books, 1992, 352 p.). Africville Genealogy Society, *The Spirit of Africville* (Halifax, Formac Publishing, 1992, 124 p.)

In 1860 the Alberni Valley in the centre of Vancouver Island was inhabited chiefly by members of two Nootka tribes, the Opetchesaht and the Tseshaht. In *The Albernis*, Jan Peterson gives a brief account of these people, and also of the early history of white exploration and settlement in the area, but three-quarters of the book is devoted to the three decades following 1890, when the greatest number of white settlers arrived, and the modern communities were established. Given the nature of the available records, this bias is not unexpected, and the larger part of the book contains a great deal of detailed cultural, political, economic, and biographical information relating to the development of Alberni itself, Port Alberni, and the surrounding district. The book is thoroughly documented, and well illustrated with photographs and maps. However, there is little if any attempt at analysis, so the work's chief value is as a source of factual details.

Africville, a small black community at the northern end of Halifax peninsula, was bulldozed by the city of Halifax in the interests of urban development in the late 1960s, and its residents relocated. The action was taken against the wishes of the majority of the residents, and remains controversial today. *The Spirit of Africville*, which is both a celebration and a historical examination, consists of chapters by different writers, and includes evocative reminiscences, a history of Africville itself, a detailed account of events in the 1960s, an analysis of the episode and its consequences provided by several former residents and others concerned in the relocation, and a brief history of black settlement in Nova Scotia. There are many photographs from the 1960s and earlier, including a number taken during the actual eviction and relocation. While not all the contributors are themselves members of the black community, they are all sympathetic to its interests, so that the overall conclusion of the book, that the destruction of Africville was a racist act, is not surprising. However, this conclusion is only too well supported by the evidence and documentation provided.

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