Professor Hamilton has inadvertently excluded the real starting point for the writing of history: a question or problem which must be perceived. If students compile, list and categorize data *ad infinitum* with no question in mind, how will they distinguish relevant from irrelevant? Only with some specific objectives can historical data take on meaning and that meaning must be tied to the answer to the question raised. If students were to follow Professor Hamilton's instructions they would learn the tools of the chronicler but not the historian. For this reason alone, *Local History in Atlantic Canada* should not be placed in students' hands. The saving graces of the book are the exercises found at the conclusion of each chapter but these would be of more value for a teacher who could adopt them to local circumstances, than to a student whose vision could easily be confined to the completion of a cataloging exercise.

Since Professor Hamilton intended his book as a resource for students of local history, he should have attended further to the pedagogical devices he suggested. No attention is paid to learning theory nor to the theorists of teaching history so there is no discernible hierarchy of historical skills developed throughout the text. The wealth of methodological information available would have provided a useful framework to organize the materials.[33] In the end *Local History in Atlantic Canada* is an admirable annotative bibliography but certainly not a useful focal point for a course in local history. For these reasons the Secondary History Subcommittee of New Brunswick recommended that the text be used only by teachers rather than for general use by students.

ROD CAMPBELL

## The Atlantic Provinces in Recent Studies in Canadian Historical Geography

During the past ten or fifteen years, there has been an upsurge of interest in the historical geography of Canada. This has been reflected in an increasing number of works devoted to that field. Among the most recent of these are: *Canada Before Confederation: A Study in Historical Geography* by R. Cole Harris and John Warkentin (New York, Oxford University Press, 1974),

33 See Edmund Short and George D. Marconnit, *Contemporary Thought on Public School Curriculum* (Dubuque, 1968) and B. S. Bloom et Al, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives Handbook I — The Cognitive Domain* (Chicago, 1956) and *Handbook II — The Affective Domain* (Chicago, 1964) for basic information on skill hierarchy.

and *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: a study of cultural transfer and adaptation* by John J. Mannion (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1974).

Notwithstanding Sir Charles Lucas's *Historical Geography of Canada*, the Harris and Warkentin volume is the first general historical geography of Canada to be written and, as such, will stand as a milestone in the development of the field in this country. To have written this work at this time required a great deal of boldness on the part of the authors who were not only faced with the task of bringing together the many smaller studies, both published and unpublished, which have been done in recent years but also with the task of bridging the many large gaps which remain to be filled in our knowledge of the historical geography of Canada. Besides making good use of their own considerable research, the authors have drawn extensively on the relatively small body of published material on the historical geography of Canada, on the work of many economic and social historians, and on a rapidly growing body of B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. theses on aspects of the early geography of Canada.

Lucas wrote history, not historical geography, although it is true that he did stress the no longer fashionable deterministic view of the influence of climate and landform on the course of events. Today's historical geographer, as Harris and Warkentin point out, is first of all a geographer with the same interests as other geographers. It is just that the questions he asks relate to the past. He, too, is concerned with the regions and landscapes of human life and in the enormous theme of man and the land, but he is more likely to examine the Irish settlements of eighteenth century Newfoundland or the trading patterns of the Indians of the western interior. The regions and landscapes he studies are human creations and to understand something of them is to understand something of their creators. It is his primary emphasis on the impact of man on the land and in the regions and landscapes of human life, which distinguishes the historical geographer from the historian who tends to relegate such matters to the periphery of his field.

The conception and general organization of the book is the work of both authors but six of the eight chapters are by Prof. Harris. The first chapter gives a brief overview of the discovery and exploration of Canada and stresses the importance of the cod fishery and fur trade, two activities which, in a geographical sense, are the antithesis of one another. The fisheries were confined to the banks and to a narrow belt of land along the shore, whereas the fur trade was a continental enterprise that led to the first European penetration of Canada. The fur trade brought Europeans and natives together as the fishery had not, it tended toward monopoly and the standardization of technology and culture over wide areas. It led to an extensive knowledge of inland areas, and the structure it created extended the full breadth of the northern part of the continent. In the end, as Harold Innis pointed out, it defined

the area which was to become Canada, an area of great diversity which has not always fitted so well together since the demise of the fur trade.

Acadia, the colony centered on the Bay of Fundy, and Canada, the colony along the lower St. Lawrence, began as fur-trading ventures. Both lay along the edge of the boreal forest near the northern limit of agricultural land an neither reached any size during the century and a half the land was French. Only about 10,000 immigrants came to Canada, and no more than 500 to Acadia. Most of them were *engages* (indentured servants) and discharged soldiers. There were also about 1,000 prisoners and as many women who were shipped out to marry. At most only 500 immigrants, came out on their own. Contrary to popular belief, Harris shows that only one-fifth of the immigrants were Normans. Indeed, they came from all the provinces of France but mainly from the west. More than half were from south of the Loire. Again, contrary to the commonly held belief, Harris states that there is no evidence that Canadians and Acadians were from different parts of France. In a non-urban age, just over half the settlers came from towns or cities and even those from the countryside were as likely as not to have been artisans rather than farmers or farm-labourers. Perhaps this helps to explain the remarkable fact that one in every four Canadians was a townsman at the time of the conquest in 1759, making Canada one of the most "urbanized" places in the world of that day.

The colony on the St. Lawrence, with most of a continent for its hinterland, was, of course, the more successful. Acadia was a maritime *cul de sac* with relatively little agricultural or trade potential. In both colonies, settlers from one of the most favored regions of the globe had to adjust to the harsh realities and limitations of the Canadian environment. Housing had to be adapted to meet the requirements of the severe winter, crops selected for the short summer and safe planting and harvest times had to be discovered.

In the Bay of Fundy, the unique cultural landscape created along the discontinuous tidal marshes came to an end in the 1750s with the expulsion of the Acadians. In the St. Lawrence, the French imprint on the countryside remains intact to this day. Much of this is a reflection of the seigneurial system, a scheme for encouraging the orderly settlement of the colony. Land was granted in long thin lots with a common ratio of 1:10 with the short side along a river. Later tiers of long-lots faced roads back from but paralleling the river. There were no villages in the seigneurial system although the use of the long-lot resulted in the close spacing of houses in rows along the rivers or roads, giving the appearance of a continuous village. In this setting, the colonists apparently achieved the balance between independence and gregariousness which they sought. Until late in the eighteenth century, house styles reflected their European origins. The characteristic steep roofs were not intended for shedding snow but harked back to thatched roofs which had to be steeply pitched to be water tight. Similarly, thick walls were associated

with the method of construction, especially when stone and mortar were dumped between plank frames, rather than being designed for the long cold winters. Here, as elsewhere in the New World, the rough, unkempt appearance of the fields told of a region where land was abundant and labour was relatively scarce. The French preference for wheat was strong even in areas where another grain would have been more appropriate. It was frequently observed that three-quarters of the land in crops was in wheat, and that in a given year about half the cleared land was arable. Immediately after clearing, land was often in wheat for many years in succession. Later a degenerate form of convertible husbandry (several years of cereals followed by pasture or by untended fallow) or wheat-pasture-wheat became the common rotations, the pasture often no more than a field of weeds. Almost all farms had a kitchen garden with the common French vegetables, herbs, tobacco, and a few apple trees. Most of the cleared land not planted in any given year was in meadow or pasture, or in the process of reverting to bush. According to Harris, "most habitants lived well enough. In coming to a colony where land was abundant and the charges for it were low, it was not too difficult, at least by the second generation, to achieve a higher living standard than that of most French peasants. The habitants were not forced into the interminable round of work that many French peasants undertook merely to stay alive or that many New Englanders followed out of compulsion of the Puritan ethic."

During the century following the conquest, the French-Canadian population increased by more than ten times. The birth rate ranged from a remarkable 55 per thousand to just under 50. The death rate reached a high of 45 during epidemic years but it was generally below 30, and by the middle of the nineteenth century had dropped to under 25. This meant that the population doubled approximately every twenty-six years. In spite of a significant annual drain to New England after 1820, there were some 850,000 French Canadians in Quebec in 1861. Immediately after the conquest, there were not more than 500 English-speaking residents in Canada. However, with the coming of the loyalists and others from the United States and, especially after 1815, with a flood of migrants from the British Isles their numbers grew rapidly and by 1861, 22 per cent of the total population in Lower Canada — 260,000 people — were other than French Canadians. "Here were two quite different populations: the one French speaking and Catholic, enclosed in the close knit of the rural community and acutely aware of its minority position within the British Empire and North America; the other English speaking and predominantly Protestant, a rich, powerful, and substantially urban minority in Quebec, but a closely connected part of the British Empire and of the mainstream of nineteenth-century North American settlement." The two cultures co-existed but they did not merge.

The English introduced several new crops, including the potato but the Habitants were slow to change. Wheat and untended meadow or pasture con-

tinued to be dominant and so they were hard hit when wheat rusts and the hessian fly ravaged crops in the 1830s. For most of the rural population, the failure of their principal food crop was an unmitigated disaster which must be taken into consideration in discussing the political problems of the 1830s.

Unlike Quebec, where there was only a trickle of immigration during the first century and a half of settlement, Southern Ontario was settled rapidly by several hundred thousand moving in the midst of the technological, social, and ideological upheaval of the early and middle nineteenth century. The Loyalists arrived first but were soon followed by restless land-seekers from Pennsylvania, New York and New England. Then, and in larger numbers, came immigrants from the British Isles, all displaced in one way or another by agricultural, industrial, or demographic change. Land was laid out in townships before settlement took place. These were usually nine by twelve miles or ten miles square. The townships themselves were divided into lots in three principal manners and "each of which was to impart its own geometry to the landscape, affecting the layout of roads, the shape of fields, the location of woodlots and, to a substantial degree, the location of farmsteads." Ontario farmsteads were generally more dispersed than those of Quebec and this tended to hinder certain types of social interaction. So, too, did the greater variety of religious and national backgrounds of the settlers. In their first clearings, the settlers planted potatoes, vegetables and wheat. Three acres could support a family of four. Cattle, hogs, and sheep browsed in the woods most of the year and in the dead of winter they scavanged on branches in the farmer's yard. Within three to five years of settling, probably three small fields would be fenced and the farmer could begin the wheat-fallow-wheat farm which was the most common agricultural system in early Ontario. One field was in wheat, one in fallow and the other in vegetables for the family. This type of farming relied on the British and American wheat markets. But as time went on, and transportation improved and more diversified markets became available, wheat-fallow-wheat was replaced by more sophisticated mixed farming.

Improved transportation in Southern Ontario was also one of the several important factors which led to a concentration of manufacturing in the Toronto-Hamilton-Grand River belt, a process which was apparent by the 1850s and which has been "snowballing" ever since.

The tendency of large centres to grow larger and for small ones to remain small or even to disappear is one of the most striking characteristics of urban systems. The early pattern established in Southern Ontario by John Graves Simcoe shortly after his arrival in 1792 can still be seen today. London was to be the site of the capital of Upper Canada but this was soon changed to Toronto, which already had the advantages of an excellent harbour and fine agricultural land. Yonge Street was cut to Lake Simcoe and Dundas Street to Grand River. Other towns, each with its garrison and intended as the foci of

agricultural settlements, were strung along the American frontier. Of these, Kingston was the most important and, for many years, its large volume of trade enabled it to remain the largest town in the province. By the middle of the century, however, as more and more trade was being diverted towards the south shore of Lake Ontario and the improved canals of New York state, Toronto moved ahead of Kingston and has never looked back since. As the capital, Toronto was able to attract a surprising number of retail and service activities as well as become the financial centre of Upper Canada.

The structure of the cities of the 1850s were less differentiated than today. There were sharves and warehouse areas, central business districts and fashionable residential streets but these areas were neither as large. homogenous nor sharply defined as they were to become later in the century. The lower middle class might live only a block from the most fashionable and it was not uncommon for the factory owner to live near his factory which was likely to be located within the central business district. Before the coming of modern transportation, most of the well off tended to live near the centre of town where they could enjoy the benefits and conveniences of urban life while the poor were relegated to the less desirable areas along the periphery.

Quebec City and Montreal, although much older, were essentially the same in structure as their Ontario counterparts. Each had its central business district and each had its poor suburbs. But a striking difference was that the city centres were predominantly English while the suburbs were largely French.

The chapters on Quebec and, especially, Ontario are the best in the book. No doubt this is partly a reflection of the greater amount of research that has been done in those two provinces — although even here many gaps remain to be filled. The Atlantic provinces, which have surprisingly little in common, are lumped together in a single chapter which is somewhat less satisfactory. However, it was undoubtedly the most difficult to write because, apart from Andrew Clark's work on Prince Edward Island and Acadia (the latter ends in 1763) relatively little has been done on the geography of this area. The reason for this is not hard to find: until recently maritime universities almost totally ignored geography as a discipline. In recent decades when every university in Canada outside the Maritimes (including the Memorial University of Newfoundland) had well established geography departments, only the Université de Moncton offered geography and even here it was given a combined department of history and geography. It was not until 1972, that the first geography department in the Maritimes was established at Mount Allison University. Until the larger universities in the region assume their responsibilities, it will continue to be necessary for those writing on this part of the country to seek out the occasional thesis from the University of Toronto or from United States universities such as Clark which, from time to time have had students working in the Maritimes.

Although in the past, the Atlantic Provinces have frequently been studied primarily in a context of their relationship to other parts of North America, there has recently been a growing awareness of how interesting the region is in its own right — especially because so much of the 18th and 19th century, obliterated or non-existent elsewhere, remains intact here.

Geographically, it is a complex area without the unifying physical features of the St. Lawrence or the Prairies. Yet, in spite of the great variety of people settled here, and despite the relative isolation of one community from another, a stronger feeling of cultural unity has probably developed in the Maritimes and Newfoundland than in any other part of Canada. Granted, the bond between Newfoundland and the Maritimes is not yet as strong as among the Maritime provinces themselves but one wonders if any long time residents of these provinces by the sea would agree with Prof. Warkentin's centralist view that "if there is any unity, it is a unity of mutual problems arising from the attempt to wrest from modest resources a standard of living roughly

Prof. Warkentin detects an elusive duality in the Atlantic Provinces. On the one hand there was a parochialism engendered by a number of small communities exploiting narrow hinterlands but on the other there was an outward looking quality which resulted from easy access to the outside world, thanks to the hundreds of ships which sailed from every point along the coastline. Accessibility was also an important factor in the exploitation of natural resources. In the best merchantilist tradition, and whether it concerned the Newfoundland fishery, Prince Edward Island land or New Brunswick timber, resource policy was designed to benefit the mother country. Conservation was almost an unknown word.

Because of their proximity to Europe, and cheap passages on the return haul of the timber ships, the Atlantic provinces were often the reluctant choice of the poorer emigrants. It was also ease of travel *from* these provinces to areas of greater promise in Canada and the United States, that enabled many of the migrants, or their children or grandchildren to move on. Yet, in spite of this, the population of the Atlantic region rose from 100,000 in 1800 to 900,000 in 1871. With the conspicuous exception of shipbuilding and some small scale manufacturing, most of the labour force was engaged in primary activities: agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining. At the time of confederation future prospects looked bright and there were those like New Brunswick's Sir Leonard Tilley who believed that the western territories would become more populous than Canada and that the Maritimes with their coal, iron and water power would become the manufacturing centre of the dominion. Warkentin does not mention that it fell to Tilley, the Minister of Finance in Macdonald's second administration, to inaugurate the National Policy which did so much to destroy his dream of the Maritimes' future.

Prof. Warkentin's chapter on the Western Interior is written with a surer touch. This is the region of his youth and of much of his research. Thanks to

better and more available archival material, it is probably an easier area to work on than the maritimes, and certainly it has produced a much larger and generally superior body of scholarly work. This chapter, necessarily, is largely devoted to the fur trade which is clearly sketched on the broad canvas of the western interior. The first faltering steps in the establishment of agriculture are described and the author concludes with a discussion of the Métis economy and an interesting digression on the scientists' perception of the west in the 1850s.

The infant province of British Columbia receives the least space in the book but, with Prof. Harris now turning his talents to a study of that province, we can look forward to more good things from beyond the Rockies.

Before *Canada Before Confederation* goes into a well deserved second printing, it is to be hoped that some careful editorial work will be done. A quick overview spotted the following errors and there are undoubtedly more. De Mont's first establishment was in 1604, not 1605, and Port Royal was founded in 1605 not 1606. Henday returned to the Bay in 1735, not 1755, and Mackenzie reached the Pacific in 1793 not 1792. Dorchester is in New Brunswick, not Nova Scotia, and it is doubtful if Sir Leonard Tilley spoke in the House of Commons in 1789 as he is said to have done on page 227. A Latin American gremlin must have been responsible for the second "o" in British Colombia at the head of chapter 7. On page 244, the date has been omitted from the map.

The illustrations were carefully chosen and are well integrated with the text. Each chapter is followed with a very useful bibliography.

This is an exciting book which will be welcomed by everyone with an interest in the historical geography of Canada. It has its gaps, as the authors freely admit. Let us hope that others will be inspired to fill them before many more years pass.

John Mannion's study of *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada* is another welcome addition to Canadian historical geography. Unlike *Canada Before Confederation*, with its broad sweep, Mannion's book is a micro-investigation of three small pockets of rural Irish settlements in Peterborough, Ontario, in the Miramichi, N. B., and in the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland. Mannion, whose roots are firmly fixed in Ireland, "attempts to assess the extent to which aspects of Irish material folk tradition and settlement morphology were retained, were modified, or were lost in a rural setting in the new world." To this end he has drawn on archival material, census data, and other sources, but the bulk of his study is based on field inquiry, consisting of both personal interview and on observation of the cultural landscape. Approximately one hundred full interviews were conducted in three settlements and at least as many more persons were called on for verification. Photographs of pertinent items were taken and some of the excellent sketches in the book are based on these.

For the most part, crossing the Atlantic resulted in a rapid loss of cultural traits, and, although the rate of attrition was greatest in Peterborough and least in the Avalon, the patterns of transfer and discard were strikingly similar in all three areas. For example, individual farm out-buildings and the lay-out of the farmstead were everywhere the least transferred of the trait clusters examined, with traditional Irish settlement patters and associated open fields being only slightly more transferable. Irish peasant culture was already undergoing rapid change before it crossed the Atlantic but nothing like the change the Irish immigrant had to make, almost simultaneously, when he crossed the ocean. According to Mannion, the overriding factor in the demise or survival of homeland traditions in the New World was the structure of the economy in the area settled. Cultural traits which tended to impede economic progress were soon discarded, and the differing degrees of agricultural commercialization in the three study areas goes a long way towards explaining the differences in the rates of transfer and survival among them. Abundant land led to a shift from intensive to extensive farming and the discarding of Old World field systems and technology. Labour was relatively expensive and such labour-intensive European practices as building with stone, sod or mud were rarely transferred to wooded regions of North America. The high cost of labour was also a powerful incentive to mechanize, especially as farms increased in size. For instance, once the area cultivated in Peterborough exceeded the acreage of the homeland farm, some traditional tools and techniques were discarded. Where farms were small, and especially where subsistence or near-subsistence arable agriculture existed, as in the Avalon, traditional technologies remained. In fact, Mannion maintains that there are few areas in the New World where technological stability is as evident as in the Avalon and there are even several instances where the Avalon-Irish actually reverted to an agricultural technology that was anachronous in the homeland before the migrations.

The trait complex least affected by economic conditions was the farm house whose interior lay-out and furnishings (as opposed to external arrangement of the farmstead), were the most uniformly transferable of Irish trait complexes to all study areas. Houses were almost identical in Peterborough and the Miramichi and differed only slightly in the Avalon. Outbuildings were still less influenced by them than field systems or farm technology.

*Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada* grew out of a doctoral dissertation and it still bears that form. The areas chosen for study are small and few stones were left unturned during Prof. Mannion's intensive field investigations. His approach is frequently quantitative and his conclusions solidly based on an impressive body of detailed evidence. For the general reader, *Canada Before Confederation* provides a good frame of reference for *Irish Settlements.* At the same time, *Irish Settlements* provides a good example of

the type of studies needed if the gaps in *Canada Before Confederation* are to be filled.

For those outside geography, both books provide good examples of the geographer's central concern with the man-land relationship. They show how different ethnic groups perceive the landscape and how they modify it according to their own cultural mould. Unlike their determinist colleagues of a generation or two ago, today's geographer sees man as an active force modifying his environment within the broad limits imposed by nature. Man-made landscapes, then, are reflections of his heritage which the geographer attempts to interpret. "Reading" the landscape is an important part of the geographer's *métier* and the developing this skill kelps to enable him to add his own particular insight into our knowledge of man.

ERIC ROSS

## English Local History: Some Current Approaches Appraised

If the objects of English local historical studies are generally small in scale, the scope of the subject is vast. At the last count it embraces nothing less than the whole motley development of local society. At the same time, and despite a highly respectable genealogy of unremitting scholarship, it is still a comparatively young academic discipline. The first — and indeed only — chair in Local History in England, that at Leicester, was not created until 1963. Its first incumbent, the late Professor H. P. R. Finberg had been head of the department in question since 1951, having himself succeeded to the three-year-old mantle of the founder, W. G. Hoskins. Apart from the labours of these two remarkable scholars and a handful of more recent workers, a growing number of whom are attached to departments concerned with regional studies in other universities, the present academic study of English local history, owes much to the efforts of those who have specialized in related fields — in economic or social history, or in historical geography, or archaeology. While many of these latter scholars have written their history on a local scale, they would not necessarily describe themselves as essentially local historians. This highly selective review of the subject over the last decade or so should therefore do more than merely define the rough limits of the academic local historian's domain. It must also take notice of some of the influential writings of these other scholars, and indicate, however subjectively, their general relevance for the local historian.