

Review Essays/Notes critiques

Historical Writing on Prince Edward Island since 1975

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TRANSFORMED Prince Edward Island historiography in the years since the last review article in *Acadiensis* devoted exclusively to the Island. New subjects have been explored, new writers have emerged, and both processes have been assisted by a new periodical combining scholarly values and popular appeal. Two of the most striking features have been the widespread local interest in Island history and the impact of this new consciousness on contemporary events. Recent books by Georges Arsenault on Island Acadians, J.M. Bumsted on the 18th century land question and T.K. Pratt on Island English have emerged to rank with the works of Andrew Hill Clark, D.C. Harvey, and Frank MacKinnon as the leading scholarly monographs on Island history. Altogether, the studies published since the mid 1970s represent the most concentrated and diverse flowering of Island historical writing to date.

The central figure in many developments, especially in the latter half of the 1970s, has been Harry Baglole. While working on a master's thesis at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, Baglole, an Islander with a degree in English literature from Acadia University, combined in 1973 with David Weale, formerly a high school classmate, the holder of a degree in history from Prince of Wales College, and then a graduate student at Queen's University, to give focus to public reaction against the officially-sponsored celebrations of the centennial of the Island's entry into Confederation, with their tasteless boosterism and exuberant promotion of tourism. Late in 1972 they had founded "the Brothers and Sisters of Cornelius Howatt", a patriotic society named for a die-hard anti-Confederate of the 1870s.¹ Like many other Islanders, they questioned the contemporary pandering to tourism and drew attention to the declining number of Island farmers and the accelerating take-over of agricultural land by non-farmers, particularly by non-residents.² Given the public interest and respect accorded this self-appointed group of community guardians, it is clear that they had touched upon matters which were serious concerns for a large portion of the population. Although the Brothers and Sisters honored their pledge to self-destruct at midnight on 31 December 1973, their impact continues to be felt as the 1980s draw to a close. Since the centennial, Island governments have had to

1 For an early report on the 30-strong Brothers and Sisters of Cornelius Howatt, see Lyndon Watkins, "Foes of Confederation: How PEI became 'Ottawa's ward' ", *The Globe and Mail*, 31 December 1972.

2 For a lucid exposition of the Brothers' and Sisters' ideology on the central institution in traditional Island society, see [Baglole and Weale], "Brief on the Family Farm", in Baglole and Weale, eds., *Cornelius Howatt: Superstar!* (n.p. [Summerside], 1974), pp. 206-17.

be more discreet in promoting tourism. The Brothers and Sisters, in conjunction with such groups as the National Farmers Union, were also sufficiently successful in raising public consciousness about the alienation of agricultural land that the Liberal government of Alexander B. Campbell, always watchful of trends in public opinion, changed its rhetoric dramatically, de-emphasizing the Development Plan, with its commitment to consolidation, and adopting the slogan "Small is Beautiful".

Both Baglole and Weale were leading propagandists of the Conservative party in the provincial elections of 1978 and 1979, which first shook and then overthrew the Liberal government which had been in office since 1966. A model of effective political writing, the Conservative campaign literature focused on the Brothers' and Sisters' misgivings about a changing Island society losing touch with its traditions, losing its distinctive identity, and losing its autonomy. In 1979 Weale became principal secretary to the new premier, J. Angus MacLean, a former Diefenbaker cabinet minister and a farmer with considerable affinity for the values and attitudes articulated by the Brothers and Sisters.³ Overall, whether the Conservatives, who remained in office until 1986, justified the expectations aroused by the campaigns of the late 1970s is a moot point. It is difficult to marshal concrete evidence of the "rural renaissance" which MacLean and his associates had advocated. Yet, whatever the verdict on the Conservatives' record in office, the Brothers and Sisters had certainly changed the terms of political debate in Prince Edward Island, and Island politicians would learn that they could only ignore this new, historically-informed populism at their own peril.

Of a piece with the changing political climate in the province has been a heightened self-awareness, linked to unprecedented public interest in Island history. In 1973 Baglole and Weale combined to write and publish *The Island and Confederation*, a somewhat romantic interpretation of Island history from the 1760s until entry into Confederation. It proved to be the most significant book on Island history published between the 1950s and the 1980s, and sold 3,000 copies before going out of print in 1979.⁴ At a popular level, over the past 15 years amateur historians, working in groups or as individuals, have produced approximately 75 community histories of Island towns, villages, and rural districts. More than the print media have been involved. Records of traditional Island music have been produced and have been rapidly sold out.⁵ But this

3 See the feature on Weale by Marian Bruce, "There's a P.E.I. nationalist in the premier's office", *Atlantic Insight*, May 1980, p. 20.

4 For critical commentary on *The Island and Confederation*, see Ian Ross Robertson, "Recent Island History", *Acadiensis*, IV, 2 (Spring 1975), pp. 115-6; review in *Canadian Historical Review*, LVI, 4 (December 1975), pp. 460-1.

5 Examples are John Cousins and Tommy Banks, *When Johnny Went Ploughing for Kearon* (1976, produced by Robert Allan Rankin for the Prince Edward Island Heritage Foundation, it

hunger for local history has been demonstrated most remarkably by the success of *The Island Magazine*, a semi-annual publication which appeared first in November 1976.⁶ Numbers One and Two sold more than 7,000 copies each. Several subsequent numbers sold between 3,500 and 4,000 copies upon appearance, and hundreds more with the publication of each successive issue. The total circulation for the 22 numbers which had appeared by 1 July 1988 was over 70,000, which translates into an average comfortably in excess of 3,000.

The magazine has won two citations for quality, one international and one national.⁷ It has published a wide variety of material, including contributions on genealogy, folklore, and archaeology, as well as articles and reviews on historical themes proper. Several articles have been based on oral history, such as Deborah Stewart's "The Island Meets the Auto" and Weale's "The Mud Diggers", a piece on a former means of restoring fertility to the Island soil.⁸ None the less, most of the articles are based upon the more conventional techniques of documentary research. Some are adaptations of material published previously elsewhere, but a much larger number, such as Bumsted's essays on Lord Selkirk, John MacDonald of Glenaladale, and the Society of Loyal Electors, Deborah Stewart's article on Robert Bruce Stewart, and Lewis R. Fischer's on the shipping industry in the 19th century, are genuinely new and important contributions to Island historiog-

went through two pressings) and The Caledonian Club, *Island Scotch* (1976, produced by Wayne E. MacKinnon), an album based on traditional Island Scottish music interspersed with readings by the Rev. Donald Campbell from Sir Andrew Macphail's memoir of traditional rural life on the Island, *The Master's Wife*.

- 6 An index of nos. 1-10 is in *The Island Magazine*, no. 10 (Fall-Winter 1981), pp. 33-7, but more recently G. Edward MacDonald has prepared a 38-page guide to nos. 1-20: "A Road Map to Island History: A Bibliographical Guide for 'The Island Magazine'" (n.d., but 1987). Privately circulated, and now in its second printing, it is available free of charge to researchers upon request.
- 7 In 1979 the American Association for State and Local History awarded the magazine a "certificate of commendation", and in 1986 the Canadian Historical Association gave it a "regional history certificate of merit".
- 8 See *The Island Magazine*, no. 5 (Fall-Winter 1978), pp. 9-14 and 22-30. Weale's article was reprinted, with minor changes and deletions, under the title "The Shell-Mud Diggers of Prince Edward Island", in D.H. Akenson, ed., *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, vol. II (Gananoque, Ont.: Langdale Press, 1980). Stewart's article began as a research paper for Weale's course on Island social history at the University of Prince Edward Island. Other articles in the magazine which originated in the same course are Carmella Arsenault, "Acadian Celebration of Mardi Gras", *The Island Magazine*, no. 4 (Spring-Summer 1978), pp. 29-32; Susan Hornby, "Memories of a Golden Land: The Harvest Excursions", *ibid.*, no. 7 (Fall-Winter 1979), pp. 12-8; Elinor Vass, "The Agricultural Societies of Prince Edward Island", *ibid.*, pp. 31-7; George Knox, "Island Fences", *ibid.*, no. 8 (1980), pp. 21-6. With the exception of the article by Vass, all of these are based on oral history, and may be said to exemplify the approach to social history as "the investigation of the past at the level of everyday life", as outlined by Weale in "Social History", in Baglole, ed., *Exploring Island History: A Guide to the Historical Resources of Prince Edward Island* (Belfast, P.E.I.: Ragweed Press, 1977), pp. 51-8.

raphy.⁹ In a category by themselves are the eight articles in Robert C. Tuck's series on Island communities, which focus on the province's architectural heritage, feature the author's own illustrations, and frequently include pointed comments from a preservationist perspective.

Since 1976 the magazine has had four editors: Robert Allan Rankin (no. 1), Baglole (nos. 2-8, 16), Jim Hornby (nos. 9-15), and G. Edward MacDonald (nos. 17-).¹⁰ From the standpoint of the professional historian, and also in terms of sales, there is no doubt that the heyday of the magazine was its first several years. While Baglole was editor, although the emphasis varied from issue to issue, each number contained the results of significant original research not to be found in published form elsewhere. With the succession of folklorist Jim Hornby, there was a radical change in the content and style of the magazine. Some articles based on authoritative research continued to appear,¹¹ including the first of archaeologist David L. Keenlyside's two important articles concerning early aboriginal life on the Island,¹² but they were mixed in with light pieces, personal reminiscences, expressions of sentiment, and annotated documents. From the perspective of the historian there was too often a lack of research, context, and analysis.

Since Number 16, with the return of Baglole as editor for one issue and the appointment of historian Edward MacDonald, there has been a resumption of something approximating the earlier character of the magazine, and a renewed attention to design. Each number since the Fall-Winter issue of 1984 has included articles on natural history and genealogy, and Number 21 launched a section devoted to material history. Yet questionable editorial judgements have not entirely ceased with the changes of command in 1984-1985. Anyone who reads through the modest collection of papers relating to John MacEachern, a tenant farmer who emigrated from Scotland in 1830, must doubt the wisdom of publishing Weale's two-part article on him, which is coloured by considerable

9 See Bumsted, "Lord Selkirk of Prince Edward Island", *The Island Magazine*, no. 5 (Fall-Winter 1978), pp. 3-8; "Captain John MacDonald and the Island", *ibid.*, no. 6 (Spring-Summer 1979), pp. 15-20; "The Loyal Electors of Prince Edward Island", *ibid.*, no. 8 (1980), pp. 8-14; Stewart, "Robert Bruce Stewart and the Land Question", *ibid.*, no. 21 (Spring-Summer 1987), pp. 3-11; Fischer, "The Shipping Industry of Nineteenth Century Prince Edward Island", *ibid.*, no. 4 (Spring-Summer 1979), pp. 15-21.

10 Until early in 1987 the editorship of the magazine was a part-time position under first the P.E.I. Heritage Foundation and subsequently the body which absorbed it, the P.E.I. Museum and Heritage Foundation; then the Museum created a new position, curator of history, whose duties included editing the magazine, and appointed MacDonald to it.

11 See, for example, H.T. Holman, "The Belfast Riot", *The Island Magazine*, no. 14 (Fall-Winter 1983), pp. 3-7; Douglas O. Baldwin and Helen Gill, "The Island's First Bank", *ibid.*, pp. 8-13.

12 See David L. Keenlyside, "In Search of the Island's First People", *ibid.*, no. 13 (Spring-Summer 1983), pp. 3-7; "Ulus' and Spearpoints: Two New Archaeological Finds from Prince Edward Island", *ibid.*, no. 16 (Fall-Winter 1984), pp. 25-7.

romanticism and which ignores some evidence of an opportunistic character. Still more dubious is the inclusion of an article on a steamboat, based on a series of "if"s and blurring fact and fantasy.¹³ Indeed, if there is a general criticism to be made of *The Island Magazine*, it is the occasional, sometimes frequent, failure or disinclination to restrain authors' self-indulgence. One recent article by Weale to which this admonition does not apply is his refreshing essay on Lucy Maud Montgomery's ambivalent attitude towards the confining aspects of Island life. Ranking among the best pieces *The Island Magazine* has published, it captures a sense of frustration and impatience which must have parallels in islands everywhere, and it does not cater to Islanders' *amour propre*.¹⁴

Baglole made other notable editorial contributions to Island historical writing in the 1970s, aside from his work on *The Island Magazine*. He compiled and edited *The Land Question: A Study Kit of Primary Documents* (Charlottetown, Department of Education, 1975) and *Exploring Island History: A Guide to the Historical Resources of Prince Edward Island* (Belfast, PEI, Ragweed Press, 1977). He prepared both in conjunction with designing the high school course on Island history for the provincial Department of Education. Although originally intended for secondary schools, the collection on the land question is suitable for university courses at any level. Unbound and published in the form of a jackdaw, it consists of two parts, one including documents with annotations (which are exceptionally helpful), and the other documents without annotations. Readers are assisted in the interpretation of both parts by an eight-page "guide" introducing the documents individually. Although the format is demanding of the reader, the collection constitutes an excellent introduction to the land question as a whole; its primary strength is the sense of immediacy it conveys.

In conception, *Exploring Island History* is a much more ambitious venture, consisting of over 30 chapters between four and 24 pages in length, written expressly for the volume by some two dozen authors.¹⁵ The 322-page collection

13 See Weale, "The Emigrant: Beginnings in Scotland", *ibid.*, no. 16 (Fall-Winter 1984), pp. 15-22; "The Emigrant, Part II: Life in the New Land", *ibid.*, no. 17 (Summer 1985), pp. 3-11; Boyde Beck, "Song for the *Heather Belle*", *ibid.*, pp. 12-4. For another side of John MacEachern, see Ian Ross Robertson, "Political Realignment in Pre-Confederation Prince Edward Island, 1863-1870", *Acadiensis*, XV, no. 1 (Autumn 1985), p. 43.

14 Weale, "'No Scope for Imagination': Another Side of *Anne of Green Gables*", *The Island Magazine*, no. 20 (Fall-Winter 1986), pp. 3-8. The contrast with Francis W.P. Bolger, "Lucy Maud's Island", *ibid.*, no. 2 (Spring-Summer 1977), pp. 4-10 is instructive. Weale's approach was anticipated by J.M. Bumsted in "'The Only Island There Is': The Writing of Prince Edward Island History", in Verner Smitheram *et al.*, eds., *The Garden Transformed: Prince Edward Island, 1945-1980* (Charlottetown, Ragweed Press, 1982), pp. 32-33; and particularly in Bumsted's "'Who's Afraid of Lucy Maud Montgomery?'" *The Atlantic Provinces Book Review*, XIII, no. 1 (February-March 1986), p. 1.

15 Following a disagreement with Baglole, late in 1976 the Department of Education published an unedited version of *Exploring Island History*, entitled *Readings in Island History*. Not all contributions appear in both volumes.

is obviously geared to high school courses in Island history, and in his introduction Baglole states explicitly that the articles are not so much intended to convey information as to stimulate students to undertake projects in local history involving further exploration of their themes. Despite this limitation in intent, several chapters (e.g., Louis Pellissier's "The Native People of Prince Edward Island") can be recommended to any interested person as useful introductions to their subject-matter. At least two make original and provocative contributions to Island historiography.¹⁶ Inevitably some, notably Marlene Clark's polemical "Women and the Island Heritage", which takes the editor to task for "tokenism" (p. 120), emphasize the need for further research. Probably the book's greatest utility for the professional historian is that it brings together much diverse information, particularly of a bibliographic nature. All chapters oriented to content, and some of those oriented to pedagogic practice and "how to" do something, include comprehensive annotated bibliographies.¹⁷ These commentaries, some of which are integrated into the texts of the chapters, are especially strong for printed materials, and to this extent the volume's subtitle ("A Guide to the Historical Resources of Prince Edward Island") is an accurate description of its function. Approached on its own terms, the book is an impressive achievement; preparing it was doubtless an excellent preparation for editing *The Island Magazine*.

Baglole has been involved in additional creative ventures linked to Island history. Notably, in partnership with dramatist Ron Irving, he co-authored a successful play, *The Chappell Diary*, based on primary documents concerning conditions of early settlement on the Island following the British Conquest.¹⁸ Subsequently he and Irving were among the leaders in establishing the Island Community theatre (renamed Theatre Prince Edward Island in 1987). While producing the collection of readings on Island history he founded Ragweed Press, which has become a significant force in Island cultural life. Ragweed has acquired a well-deserved reputation for the quality and professionalism of its work, and in 1980 published a strikingly beautiful book of Island folk art, *My Island Pictures: The Story of Prince Edward Island*, based on scenes from Island

16 See Leonard Cusack, "The Island Government and the Great Depression", in Baglole, ed., *Exploring Island History*, pp. 137-46; Gary Webster, "Cooperation, Co-operatives and Credit Unions: Their Place in Island History", in *ibid.*, pp. 175-94.

17 An outstanding example of a "how to" article is Janet Dale, "The Genealogical Sherlock on Prince Edward Island", in *ibid.*, pp. 197-208.

18 See Baglole and Irving, *The Chappell Diary: A Play of Early Prince Edward Island* (Belfast, PEI: Ragweed Press, 1977). Its first major production was in Charlottetown in the summer of 1974; it was revived in the autumn of 1987 to tour Island schools. The published script is accompanied by a brief introduction by Baglole commenting on the historical background and sources for the play, and "Notes on the Production" by Irving. Concerning the diarist who inspired the play, see J.M. Bumsted, "Benjamin Chappell", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. VI (Toronto, 1987), pp. 130-2.

history by artist and retired farmer A.L. Morrison.¹⁹ In the following year Baglole turned the publishing house over to his partner, Libby Oughton, who has maintained its commitment to Island authors and subjects; among Ragweed's authors was poet Milton Acorn, and in 1985 it published a grade six social studies text concerning Prince Edward Island written by a professional historian.²⁰ Its most recent historical publication is a collection of essays by several authors on aspects of the history of Charlottetown.²¹ Beyond involvement in drama and launching Ragweed, Baglole's related activities have included writing poetry on such themes as change and continuity in the Island countryside.²² With his range of interests and achievements, he was the appropriate choice as founding director of the Institute of Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island in 1986. Its mandate is to encourage research and publication concerning the Island and to provide a connection between the university and the community. In 1987-1988 the Institute organized a series of public meetings on the issue of a "fixed link" with the mainland, and in 1988 it inaugurated a series of "short monographs" concerning the Island's culture and environment, with publication of a 57-page booklet by Weale on Lebanese immigration to the Island over the past century.²³

Of most interest to readers of this journal among Baglole's activities are his articles on William Cooper and Walter Patterson in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. IX (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 155-8 and vol. IV (1979), pp. 605-11. Both are significant original contributions to Island historiography, although foreshadowed in the first half of *The Island and Confederation*. In the latter work Baglole argued for recognition of Cooper's importance as leader of the militant tenant-rights "Escheat" movement of the

19 Morrison's book inspired an excellent ten-minute film by Ramona MacDonald, entitled "God's Island" (National Film Board, 1980).

20 See Acorn, *Captain Neal MacDougal & the Naked Goddess* (1982); Douglas O. Baldwin, *Abegweit: Land of the Red Soil*. This book has also been published in French by Ragweed: *Abegweit: une île sans pareille* (Charlottetown, 1986). Concerning Baldwin's book, see Paul Robinson, "A Textbook Education", *New Maritimes*, V, no. 1 (September 1986), pp. 4-6. Although Ragweed Press gives its date of foundation as 1973 (with publication of *The Island and Confederation*), the name was first imprinted on books in 1977. As well as remaining faithful to Ragweed's original purposes, Oughton has broadened its scope and encouraged feminist writing in particular.

21 Douglas Baldwin and Thomas Spira, eds., *Gaslights, Epidemics and Vagabond Cows: Charlottetown in the Victorian Era* (1988).

22 Examples will be found in Baglole and Weale, eds., *Cornelius Howatt: Superstar!*, pp. 84, 218, 223.

23 David Weale, *A Stream out of Lebanon: An Introduction to the Coming of Syrian/Lebanese Emigrants to Prince Edward Island* (Charlottetown, Institute of Island Studies, 1988). Part of this work was published previously in *The Island Magazine*, no. 18 (Fall-Winter 1985), pp. 11-16 under the title "Going to the Country: Lebanese Peddlers on Prince Edward Island".

1830s and early 1840s which preceded the Reform party of George Coles and Edward Whelan. His *DCB* article portrays Cooper convincingly as “an enigmatic figure — a visionary, an adventurer, and a pre-Marxist advocate of an ideology to support and justify the cause of an oppressed class, yet a man with evident weaknesses and inconsistencies” (p. 158). An effective popular agitator who believed that “a degree of public excitement” (p. 156) was necessary to extract reforms, Cooper led his forces to an overwhelming electoral victory in 1838. But the Escheat majority in the House of Assembly was able to accomplish virtually nothing in terms of improving the position of the tenantry, and the Escheators lost the election of 1842. To this extent, Cooper may be regarded as a failure, a fact which Baglole concedes in his warts-and-all portrait. By the mid 1840s Cooper had been reduced to the role of a minor figure on the fringe of Island politics. Yet, as Baglole argues, ambiguous as Cooper’s actual behaviour may have been, he deserves a secure place in Island history for preparing the way for the Reform party, and for popularizing the cause of land reform. Baglole’s *DCB* article is the first published account to establish this place for him and to analyze his ideology and his record in depth. As well as filling an important gap in Island historiography, it has done so in a way which is likely to stand up well as the period of Cooper’s prominence becomes better known to historians.²⁴

The subject of Baglole’s other *DCB* article is Walter Patterson, the Island’s first British governor. Unlike “William Cooper”, which extends the argument advanced in *The Island and Confederation*, the Patterson sketch represents a virtual about-face. In his overwhelmingly sympathetic chapter on Patterson, subtitled “The Father of the Island”, Baglole focused almost exclusively on the positive side of his regime: the creation of a separate colonial government for the Island and his success in obtaining for it the financial support of the imperial government. Whatever the explanation for this interpretation — perhaps an outgrowth of a search for an early exemplar of Island patriotism — the article in volume IV of the *DCB* is a strong corrective. In it, Baglole demonstrates conclusively Patterson’s passion for personal aggrandizement and his incapacity even in self-seeking. The net result of this lucid and persuasive article is to reinforce the impression of Patterson which emerges from the work of such

24 Baglole has subsequently published a somewhat popularized account of Cooper’s life, including additional personal information; see “William Cooper of Sailor’s Hope”, *The Island Magazine*, no. 7 (Fall-Winter 1979), pp. 3-11. For a poetic interpretation of Cooper, see Milton Acorn’s poem “William Cooper” in his *The Island Means Minago: Poems from Prince Edward Island* (Toronto, 1975), pp. 29-30. In partnership with musician Cedric Smith, Acorn wrote a brilliant, fanciful play, “The Road to Charlottetown”, in which Cooper is a major figure. In 1977 and 1978 it enjoyed extended runs in Charlottetown and Toronto. Several poems from *The Island Means Minago*, which won the Governor General’s Literary Award for poetry in 1975, were incorporated into the play. In 1984 the Cooper Institute, “a secondary agent of social change”, was established in Prince Edward Island as a non-profit corporation. Revived by Baglole, Cooper continues to inspire, despite his inconsistent personal record.

earlier writers as Frank MacKinnon. The Patterson in this piece is more familiar to readers of Island history than the Patterson of *The Island and Confederation*.

Robert Critchlow Tuck is a member of *The Island Magazine's* editorial group who has provided continuity. An Anglican clergyman and cartoonist as well as a writer, he has served on the board since Number Two; indeed he also drew most of the original illustrations for Number One. The major themes of his writing are the architectural heritage of the Island and the history of the Harris family from Wales which immigrated to the Island in 1856, of which he represents the fourth generation. Tuck's series on Island communities, which he resumed in 1984 after a hiatus of four years, combines sound research, popular appeal, and illustrations of high quality. The articles focus on population centres ranging in character from rural districts to villages: Alberton, Bedeque, Georgetown, Guernsey Cove, St. Eleanors, Souris, Tignish, and Victoria. Typically, Tuck has dealt with the churches, some of the more striking residences, the major commercial properties, the public buildings, and the general architectural styles to be found in each community. Unpretentious, featuring anecdotes which are sometimes little short of incredible,²⁵ and enlivened by a critical thrust which, although gently expressed, can provoke local indignation, these articles were a highlight of the magazine when it was most successful in combining scholarly and popular interests. It is to be hoped that the series will continue *ad infinitum*.

William Critchlow Harris Jr., a son of the family head who immigrated in 1856, became an important architect, according to Tuck, "Atlantic Canada's best".²⁶ Tuck has been able to combine his interest in the Harris family and architecture by writing first a superb article on "William Harris and His Island Churches" in *The Island Magazine*, No. 2 (Spring-Summer 1977), pp. 20-7; then a book-length biography, *Gothic Dreams: The Life and Times of a Canadian Architect William Critchlow Harris 1854-1913* (Toronto, Dundurn Press, 1978); and most recently an article on the collaboration between William and his older brother Robert, the artist, in creating the remarkable All Souls' Chapel in Charlottetown.²⁷ He also published an unusual and perceptive essay on Robert as a child in Charlottetown. Based on family correspondence, it is successful in portraying Robert's development from his arrival in Charlottetown at age seven until his 17th year, when his grandmother in Wales died and regular letters detailing his activities ceased.²⁸ In addition, Tuck has edited *The Island Family*

25 See "Bedeque: A Place in the Sun", *The Island Magazine*, no. 5 (Fall-Winter 1978), p. 19, for an example.

26 Tuck, ed., *The Island Family Harris*, p. 5.

27 "The Story Behind All Souls' Chapel", *The Island Magazine*, no. 22 (Fall-Winter 1987), pp. 10-3.

28 "The Charlottetown Boyhood of Robert Harris", *ibid.*, no. 3 (Fall-Winter 1977), pp. 7-12. The publications of Ragweed Press have included a revised and abridged edition of art historian

Harris: *Letters of an Immigrant Family in British North America 1856-1866* (Charlottetown, Ragweed Press, 1983).²⁹

Another highly prolific historical writer is Georges Arsenault, an Island Acadian educated in folklore at the University of Moncton and Laval University. Arsenault has published several articles in *The Island Magazine* concerning Island Acadian customs, culture, and history. The most important of these for the professional historian is "The Miscouche Convention, 1884", concerning the meeting at which the Acadian flag and national anthem were selected.³⁰ He has also published a scholarly monograph on Island Acadian folklore, *Complaintes acadiennes de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard* (Montreal, Leméac, 1980),³¹ and eight booklets (one of them co-authored), some of which are more than 100 pages in length, on aspects of the history and folklore of Island Acadians.³² The booklets of greatest interest to most historians are probably those dealing with education and religion from 1720 to 1980; both are the products of careful and comprehensive documentary research. Arsenault has synthesized the results of his work in *Les Acadiens de l'Île 1720-1980* (Moncton, Editions d'Acadie, 1987), a 296-page volume. Well illustrated, supplied with relevant maps and thoroughly researched, it deserves the attention of all scholars interested in the history of francophone Canada or of Prince Edward Island. In addition, Arsenault has published an article in *Acadiensis* on "Le dilemme des Acadiens de l'Île-du-

Moncrieff Williamson's biography of Robert Harris, entitled *Island Painter: The Life of Robert Harris (1849-1919)* (1983); the earlier book was published as *Robert Harris 1849-1919: An Unconventional Biography* (Toronto, 1970).

29 He has also published a *DCB* article on the first resident Anglican clergyman in Prince Edward Island: "Theophilus Desbrisay", *DCB*, vol. VI, pp. 197-8.

30 See *The Island Magazine*, no. 15 (Spring-Summer 1984), pp. 14-9.

31 As well, he has written a *DCB* article on a convicted murderer who inspired oral traditions he analyzed in *Complaintes...*: "Xavier Gallant, known as Pinquin", *DCB*, vol. V (1983), pp. 335-6.

32 In sequence of publication, these are *Histoire de l'émigration chez les Acadiens de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard* (Summerside, La Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, 1980); (with Cécile Gallant), *Histoire de la Pêche chez les Acadiens de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard* (Summerside, La Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, 1980); *L'Agriculture chez les Acadiens de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard 1720-1980* (Summerside, La Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, 1981); *Courir la Chandeleur* (Moncton, Editions d'Acadie, 1982); *L'Éducation chez les Acadiens de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard 1720-1980* (Summerside, La Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, 1982); *La Chanson du Pays* (Summerside, La Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, 1983); *La Religion et les Acadiens à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard 1720-1980* (Summerside, La Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, 1983); *Initiation à l'histoire acadienne de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard* (Summerside, La Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, 1984). Arsenault has also published a brief introduction to *Les Arts Populaires Acadiens / Acadian Folk Art* (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island Heritage Foundation, 1982). The co-author of one booklet, Cécile Gallant, has published a book-length study of the cooperative movement among the Acadians in one part of Prince Edward Island: *Le mouvement coopératif chez les Acadiens de la région Evangéline (1862-1982)* (Wellington, PEI, Le Conseil Coopératif de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, 1982).

Prince-Edouard au 19e siècle".³³ This amounts to a remarkable record of productivity, and means that Arsenault has become the dominant authority on the history and folklore of Island Acadians. He has demonstrated conclusively that, in his words, "les Acadiens dans les Provinces Maritimes n'ont pas vécu exactement la même histoire. Chacune des provinces a sa spécificité".³⁴

J.M. Bumsted has also made an exceptional contribution to Island historiography. In the past decade he has revolutionized the understanding of the land question in the first generation after the lottery of 1767. Through articles in several periodicals, and most recently his *Land, Settlement, and Politics on Eighteenth-Century Prince Edward Island* (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), Bumsted has cast entirely new light on the roles of the proprietors and the Island government establishment, and the motives behind early Highland Scottish emigration to the Island. It is probably with respect to the record of the proprietors, particularly the non-resident ones, that Bumsted has made the most striking breaks with past published work, shattering what had seemed to be an unquestioned consensus about the absentees. They have gone from villains to victims. The traditional view was that the absentees were essentially parasites who contributed little, while extracting whatever rents they could from Island tenant farmers. Bumsted began with a study of Sir James Montgomery, one of the most important overseas proprietors between 1767 and 1803, based upon newly-available Scottish documentation. He painted a sympathetic portrait of an influential, capable, and energetic absentee proprietor who, although he never saw the Island, made a genuine effort over many years to develop his extensive property there. But the lesson to be learned from Montgomery's experience would seem to be that the more a proprietor put into his Island lands — even if they were of good quality, as Montgomery's were — the more would be drained away by the necessary expenses of attempting to settle a wilderness area, and by the pitfalls inherent in attempting to oversee business operations an ocean away without the benefit of a modern communications system. The intense local political factionalism, the partisan administration of justice, and the problem of finding honest and able agents on the Island created further difficulties which were compounded by the uncertainties resulting from the American War of Independence. From a proprietor's point of view, it seemed virtually impossible in the early years to make money from the Island lands

33 *Acadiensis*, XIV, 2 (Spring 1985), pp. 29-45. Also see the overview article, "The Acadian Experience in Prince Edward Island", *Cahiers de la Société historique acadienne*, XIV, 2 (juin 1983), pp. 59-72. An article Arsenault published in 1976 is not representative of the quality of his mature work: "Le système des propriétaires fonciers absents de l'Île-du-Prince-Edouard et son effet sur les Acadiens", *Revue de l'Université de Moncton*, IX, nos. 1, 2 et 3 (octobre 1976), pp. 63-84.

34 *Les Acadiens de l'Île 1720-1980*, Avant-Propos, p. 9. Yet, remarkably, his work is not mentioned once in a recent article on Acadian historiography; see Jacques Paul Couturier, "Tendances actuelles de l'historiographie acadienne (1970-1985)", *Historical Papers* (1987), pp. 230-50.

which had been given away so blithely on 23 July 1767. The evidence led Bumsted to venture the opinion at the end of his article on Montgomery that the wise landlords were those who acted as speculators, putting as little money as possible into the Island, and hoping that the efforts of others would cause their lands to appreciate in value and enable them to sell and thereby to escape with either a gain or as little loss as possible. One of the strengths of Bumsted's article, which deserves to be considered a classic and a turning-point in Island historiography, is his awareness of the contemporary context elsewhere, whether in Scotland or London or the old American colonies. His expertise in American colonial history provided him with a comparative framework in which to evaluate Montgomery's colonizing efforts, and it is he who has explained how important the American Revolution was in disrupting life in the infant colony, insulating its inhabitants from effective external control, and creating a state of administrative and legal chaos which made many prudent proprietors reluctant to risk anything, let alone move there to live, thus guaranteeing that the land system would not work in the way envisioned in 1767.³⁵

Two other important early Scottish proprietors, the 5th Earl of Selkirk and John MacDonald of Glenaladale, have received authoritative treatment from Bumsted. His insights into Selkirk's Island venture, the motives behind it, and particularly his "compulsive-obstinate" psychological make-up, are fascinating, but the major contribution of his Selkirk research to Island historiography lies elsewhere. There has been a tendency among historians, folklorists, and writers in general to assume that Highland Scottish emigrants during the century between 1760 and 1860 were, as a whole, pushed out by desperate, intolerable conditions at home. This was frequently true with respect to migrants after 1815, particularly in the 1830s and 1840s, when the choice was all too often emigration or starvation. But in an article in *The Island Magazine* Bumsted argued that the settlers Selkirk recruited in 1802-1803

were for the most part the backbone of their society, families which were not only the most prosperous and successful in their traditional homes but those most willing to be adventurous....not displaced Highlanders who came to North America on charity because they had no choice. The estate records of the great proprietors of the Hebrides indicate that Selkirk's people had made a conscious decision to migrate and were the population the proprietors least wanted to lose.³⁶

35 See Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery and Prince Edward Island, 1767-1803", *Acadiensis*, VII, 2 (Spring 1978), pp. 76-102; "The Patterson Regime and the Impact of the American Revolution on the Island of St. John, 1775-1786", *ibid.*, XIII, 1 (Autumn 1983), pp. 47-67; "British Colonial Policy and the Island of St. John, 1763-1767", *ibid.*, IX, 1 (Autumn 1979), pp. 3-18.

36 Bumsted, "Lord Selkirk of Prince Edward Island", *The Island Magazine*, no. 5 (Fall-Winter 1978), p. 5. Also see Bumsted, "Settlement by Chance: Lord Selkirk and Prince Edward Island", *Canadian Historical Review*, LIX, 2 (June 1978), pp. 170-88.

In other words, the Selkirk settlers were not demoralized victims, but people determined, *for their own reasons*, to leave Scotland and establish a new life elsewhere. From one point of view they can be seen as pawns in Selkirk's game of self-advancement, but from another, equally valid perspective they went to Prince Edward Island with him because that was the best way open to them to fulfill plans they had already made on the basis of rational assessment of their own interests, and in defiance of their social superiors, who wanted them to remain. Thus Bumsted's work on Selkirk has challenged the stereotypes of both proprietor and Scottish settler.

John MacDonald of Glenaladale was a Highland tacksman, and unlike Selkirk and Montgomery he actually took up residence on the Island. As Bumsted has portrayed him, he emerges an honest, attractive figure who displayed a sense of responsibility in dealing with his people and who suffered greatly for his absence from the Island serving in the American War. But because the Loyalist Claims Commission established by the British government restricted its definition of "Loyalist" to "refugee", he was never compensated.³⁷ Like MacDonald, the settlers who went to his lands in 1772 do not fit the old stereotype. Through research into Scottish archival material never before used, and whose existence was previously unknown, Bumsted has established that most of MacDonald's colonists were relatively well-off by the standards of the time. They were not accustomed to privation, and indeed this helps to account for some of their early discontent with the arduous pioneering conditions they faced. Bumsted's further work on Scottish emigration, which resulted eventually in a book, led him to coin the apt term "the people's clearance" to describe the movement of Highlanders to British North America between 1770 and 1815. In emphasizing the extent to which these emigrants determined their own fates, and were not responding to coercion from above, Bumsted has underlined their strength and dignity, as common people making their own history. Although certainly not drawn from an affluent or leisured class, considered in their contemporary context they do not qualify as victims.³⁸

Bumsted's work on 18th century Prince Edward Island has come to a splendid culmination with his recent monograph on *Land, Settlement, and Politics*. This well-written book is much more than the sum of his articles on Island history

37 On this point, see Bumsted, "Loyalists and Nationalists: An Essay on the Problem of Definitions", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, VI, 2 (Autumn 1979), pp. 218-32; "Captain John MacDonald and the Island", *The Island Magazine*, no. 6 (Spring-Summer 1979), p. 16.

38 See *ibid.*, pp. 15-20; "Highland Emigration to the Island of St. John and the Scottish Catholic Church, 1779-1774", *Dalhousie Review*, LVIII, 4 (1978-79), pp. 511-27; "Scottish Emigration to the Maritimes, 1770-1815: A New Look at an Old Theme", *Acadiensis*, X, 2 (Spring 1981), pp. 65-85; *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America 1770-1815* (Edinburgh and Winnipeg, University of Edinburgh/University of Manitoba Presses, 1982).

since 1978; it is a work of synthesis. Beyond the use of new sources, particularly Scottish ones, the most striking strength of this closely-reasoned book is the broad historical perspective, including a strong comparative dimension, which permeates discussion of land policy and settlement. Although the subject is a small and underpopulated colony, the approach is anything but parochial, and justifies the claim on the flyleaf that "this is not a local or regional history, but a book in colonial and imperial history that focuses on Prince Edward Island". Bumsted's framework has enabled him to place the lottery of 1767 in proper context, as an outgrowth of a British policy orientation favouring "due subordination", evident since the Proclamation of 1763, instead of dismissing it as an anachronistic aberration. At the same time, he has pointed out that the disinclination of strategically-placed British politicians in the mid 1760s to appear to be preparing to coerce the rambunctious American colonists to the south doomed the scheme devised by the Earl of Egmont for settlement of the Island, since a vital part of that plan had been its promise to generate soldiers for the British army. While Egmont's proposal was politically unacceptable, Bumsted has also demonstrated convincingly that certain of its features had a major impact on the policy which did emerge, a policy which was, for 1767, the "liberal" solution. In his words, "To a great extent, the [Board of Trade's] hand had been forced by the earl" (p. 26). Bumsted's comparative approach has a vertical as well as a horizontal aspect, for he has included a brief "prologue" on the French regime, 1720-1758, in which he has drawn instructive parallels between the experiences of early French and Acadian settlers on Ile Saint-Jean and later British colonists; the nine-page treatment can be recommended as the best short account of the subject. The prologue also contains its warning that there is an iconoclastic thrust to the book, for in questioning an assertion by D.C. Harvey about the tribulations of Acadian refugees on the Island after 1748, Bumsted comments that "too much can be made of such hardships among a pioneer population" (p. 9).

But the real focus of the book is on the British regime, and here Bumsted has made a host of landmark contributions. His account of early British settlements on the Island is authoritative; he has demonstrated how spending and patronage excesses in 1768 by the lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia, Michael Francklin, played into the hands of the proprietors who were arguing in favour of separate status by creating the impression in London that almost anything was preferable to leaving the Island under the political control of Halifax; and he has clarified the issue of quitrents, and the role they were intended to play in financing the Island government, as never before. In the course of doing so, Bumsted has continued his rehabilitation of the historical reputation of the early proprietors, stating that "more money was paid in quitrents over the years by the proprietors of the Island of St. John than in any contemporary British colony in North America" (p. 36). He has also calculated that by 1775 when, according to his estimate, the population of the Island was approximately 1,500, individual

proprietors had invested possibly as much as £40,000 in the settlement process (p. 64). At least some proprietors had made a very significant per capita investment in the settlers they attracted to the Island and “Most of the resident population on the Island in 1775”, Bumsted remarks with his customary lack of circumlocution, “owed their presence to a proprietor, although few showed any signs of gratitude” (p. 50). But, as already noted, the American Revolution disrupted completely what was a difficult and expensive process in normal times. Given the additional hardships American privateering raids imposed on the settlers by interrupting the supply of essential provisions, many, perhaps one-half, left for other colonies. These departures necessarily disheartened the proprietors who had shown signs of activity. After losing a supply ship to privateers in November 1775, one pair of proprietors apparently decided to leave their hapless settlers to their own devices; those settlers eventually left for Pictou (p. 67).

As part of *Land, Settlement, and Politics*, Bumsted has provided the first modern scholarly analysis of Island Loyalists. According to his calculations more than 60 per cent were disbanded soldiers. In fact he makes it clear that the proportion may have been much greater than 60 per cent, for an applicant who claimed refugee status was eligible for more land than a soldier. Hence, “more than one disbanded soldier chose to apply for land as a refugee” (p. 103). Sixty-six per cent of the grantees officially classified as soldiers had had some previous connection with the Island, most having been stationed there as part of the substantial garrison established after the American raids in the 1770s. A portion of these disbanded soldiers had been members of a local volunteer company which had never served off the Island, and some had improved land on the Island already. Indeed, it is a fair inference from Bumsted’s evidence that many (and probably a majority) of the local volunteers among the Loyalist grantees had never even *seen* the rebellious colonies. Among the civilian minority most seem to have been in Nova Scotia, often Shelburne, before moving to the Island. Both soldiers and civilians were established quite deliberately by Patterson on townships he and his cronies had purloined through an improper land auction in 1781, as a means of strengthening their grip on those lands.³⁹ The Loyalists obliged by providing Patterson with a supportive assembly in 1785, when his back was against the wall — although ultimately this would not be enough to save his job or his real estate. Thus there was definitely a distinctive quality about the Prince Edward Island Loyalist experience, and Bumsted has revealed how inextricably the story of Island Loyalists was bound up with the land question. His analysis of the first detailed census of the colony under British rule, in 1798, suggests that most Loyalists had left by that time, and that those having

39 There was also a “Late Loyalist” element which became, over the years, very vocal about the alleged wrongs they had suffered. Bumsted does not find merit in their claims; see *Land, Settlement, and Politics*, p. 118.

no previous connections with the Island and those not tied down by family commitments were likeliest to leave. But his examination of those who remained on the Island casts doubt on whether the land system as such, or government neglect, can be blamed for the departures. Most who persisted in remaining on the Island did not remain where Patterson had placed them *despite* legislation passed in 1790 which confirmed the titles of those who had stayed put. Thus difficulties over land title do not appear to have determined departures; rather, Bumsted suggests, “the mobility of the Loyalists” and their search for economic opportunity caused them to gravitate to more developed parts of the Island and, no doubt, to more developed political jurisdictions (pp. 191-2).

There is a great deal more to this book, as Bumsted gives a compelling account of the development of political factions, and the unfortunate legacies which this feuding left for the 19th century.⁴⁰ One of the most enduring of these inheritances was an entrenched distrust between the absentee proprietors and the Island government. As already indicated, Bumsted’s work has revised our understanding of the role played by the early overseas proprietors. In any work of revisionism, the question of balance arises. This book passes the test, for one of its distinguishing characteristics, particularly in the later chapters, is the hard-headed analysis brought to bear on the actions of all the major parties involved. According to Bumsted, by the end of the 1780s “most of the proprietors...continued only to attempt to hold on to their property without expense” (p. 162). In commenting on a petition in 1790 by 25 proprietors asking for a reduction in quitrents and indicating that the money saved would be used to assist the settlement process, he has this observation: “No evidence exists to suggest that a substantial number of proprietors, especially the major British ones, would have taken advantage of any reduction in quitrent payments to become active developers” (p. 171). He notes that in 1790-1793 some 900 new Highland Scottish settlers arrived on the Island, but it appears that they did it on their own, without the assistance or encouragement of any proprietor. Inertia had set in — and in part, it is fair to point out, as Bumsted does, this was because settling the Island had proved distinctly unprofitable for those who had made serious efforts in the early years. Bumsted cannot be saddled with the accusation of writing “history from the top down”, for if there is any “class bias”, it seems to emerge in the respect he has for the ability and determination of the common settlers to make their own history. Their decisions on where to settle and whether to remain depended much more on their own assessment of what was good for them than on the actions of proprietors or governments — a theme reminiscent of “the people’s clearance”. A sophisticated example of the historian’s art, *Land, Settlement, and Politics* supersedes all previous accounts of the era on Prince Edward Island and sets a

40 Much of the analysis of the political factionalism was foreshadowed in his superb article, “The Origins of the Land Question on Prince Edward Island, 1767-1805”, *Acadiensis*, XI, 1 (Autumn 1981), pp. 43-56.

new standard in Island historical writing. No student of British North America in the last third of the 18th century can be considered informed without being thoroughly familiar with it.

In addition to the publications already mentioned, which centre on the land question and the early years of British rule, Bumsted has made other contributions to Island history. His study of the Loyal Electors, the first political society in what is now Canada, who flourished under lieutenant governor J.F.W. DesBarres (1805-1812), challenges D.C. Harvey's interpretation, published 50 years earlier, which presented them as forerunners of the Reform movement of Coles and Whelan.⁴¹ In another article, on an entirely different topic and set in a somewhat later era, "The Family and Household of Edward Jarvis, 1828-1852", Bumsted has examined in depth the family life of the chief justice who extricated the Island's Supreme Court from the welter of political conflict. Bumsted utilized some of the recent scholarly writing on the Victorian family, and argued that "the Jarvises were not only *representative* of the norms of their class's family culture, but even *archetypical* of patterns as described and analyzed in recent historical writings on the Victorian family and related matters".⁴² As well as his contributions to Island historiography, Bumsted has analyzed Island historiography itself in a stimulating essay published in 1982. He focused on three major concerns: the land question, the Island and Confederation, and the Island since Confederation — the last being distinguished primarily by inattention on the part of writers of non-fiction. He also pointed out the enormous gaps in the literature, particularly with respect to economic history and social conflict.⁴³ There has been some progress in these areas over the intervening six years: several articles on Island banking have appeared, a competent general history of the fishery has been published, some of the violence associated with one notorious landlord (a son of John MacDonald of Glenaladale) has been recounted, and the impact of the Tenant League on Island political alignments in the 1860s has been examined.⁴⁴ But by and large Bumsted's general criticism still holds. We still know virtually nothing about the extent and profitability of the timber trade which flourished

41 See Bumsted, "The Loyal Electors of Prince Edward Island", *The Island Magazine*, no. 8 (1980), pp. 8-14; Harvey, "The Loyal Electors", Royal Society of Canada, *Proceedings and Transactions*, 3rd ser., XXIV (1930), Section II, pp. 101-10.

42 *The Island Magazine*, no. 14 (Fall-Winter 1983), p. 23.

43 See "The Only Island There Is: The Writing of Prince Edward Island History", in Smitheram *et al.*, eds., *The Garden Transformed*, pp. 11-38.

44 See Douglas O. Baldwin, "The Growth and Development of Charlottetown Banks, 1854-1906", *Acadiensis*, XV, 2 (Spring 1986), pp. 28-52; Baldwin and Helen M. Gill, "The Savings Bank of Prince Edward Island: Philanthropy and Self-Interest in the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, XX, 4 (Winter 1985-86), pp. 115-25; Kennedy Wells, *The Fishery of Prince Edward Island* (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1986); Ian Ross Robertson, "Donald McDonald", *DCB*, vol. VIII (1985), pp. 530-33; Robertson, "Political Realignment in Pre-Confederation Prince Edward Island", pp. 35-58.

in the early years of the 19th century, and we know little more than we did about the Escheat agitation of the 1830s and 1840s, Canada's first agrarian protest movement. In another historiographical article, part of *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, Bumsted has given due attention in a broader Canadian context to two "amateur" historians of the Island, John Stewart and Andrew Macphail. Stewart, an active and highly controversial political participant, published in 1806 the first book-length history of any of the Maritime colonies. Too often overlooked or dismissed, it is a serious historical work which, as Bumsted has noted, "provided the basic foundations of subsequent interpretations of the early British period on the Island until very recently".⁴⁵ As for Macphail, an accomplished essayist, Bumsted considers his 71-page essay on Island history in *Canada and its Provinces* (1914) to be "one of the best-written pieces of provincial history ever produced" (p. 354).

Bumsted has also published some two dozen articles on Island figures, great and small, in the *DCB*. Among them, the sketch of Edmund Fanning, the Island's second governor, stands out particularly, for in it he used Fanning's experiences in revolutionary North Carolina to illuminate his peculiar backstage political style in Prince Edward Island.⁴⁶ Bumsted's article runs counter to the tendency in Island historiography to present Fanning as a somnolent drifter with the tide, and it is convincing. Certainly Fanning's record of longevity on the Island (the longest tenure in its history despite an incredibly awkward beginning) and his being the only governor over the colony's first 55 years to avoid removal from office in disgrace suggest that he knew what he was doing. But Bumsted has also demonstrated how sterile the Fanning regime was in terms of dealing with the root problems of Island development and the entrenched mistrust between Island residents and the absentee proprietors, and how little difference there was between Fanning and Patterson in such basic matters as perversion of the judicial system and the drive for personal gain.

While most of the material in Bumsted's *DCB* sketches is also in his articles and his recent monograph, for the majority of writers whose work on the Island appears in the *DCB*, that is the only place to find the results of their research. Historian Michael Bliss has described the *DCB* volumes as "[t]he most important books published in Canada since 1966",⁴⁷ and the *Dictionary's* contribution to Island historiography has been correspondingly large. The demands of the *DCB* have played a more determining role on the Island than elsewhere in directing

45 "Historical Writing in English", in William Toye, General Editor, *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 351. See also Bumsted, "The Stewart Family and the Origins of Political Conflict on Prince Edward Island", *The Island Magazine*, no. 9 (Spring-Summer 1981), p. 16. F.L. Pigot, "John Stewart", *DCB*, vol. VI, p. 737 deals with Stewart's *An Account of Prince Edward Island* in a cursory way.

46 *DCB*, vol. V, pp. 308-12.

47 "Bliss on Books", *Globe and Mail Report on Business Magazine*, April 1986, p. 102.

historical research and it has become necessary for anyone seriously interested in Island history to seek out the relevant articles in the *DCB*.⁴⁸

No one curious about the controversial Loyal Electors can ignore H.T. Holman's fine sketch of the extraordinarily contentious James Bardin Palmer, and anyone seeking to understand the relatively unknown period in Island history from 1813 to 1830 must now read carefully the excellent article by M. Brook Taylor on William Johnston, Palmer's mortal antagonist from soon after his arrival on the Island in 1812 until his death in 1828. There is no better account of the tortured politics of that era. In sorting out the confusions in some earlier versions of the struggle over responsible government in the 1840s, it is necessary to go to Taylor's "Francis Longworth [Jr.]" and "John Longworth". Those wishing to move beyond political history and to understand the actual workings of leasehold tenure on the estate of a resident proprietor in the first half of the 19th century once there was a significant number of settlers will have to read Taylor on Charles Worrell (a large proprietor who turned out to be a victim in more than one respect); and anyone interested in the early commercial history of the colony will be required to turn to Holman's suggestive piece on John Cambridge. For those seeking a scholarly assessment of the state of the Roman Catholic Church on the Island during the era between the death of the legendary Bishop Angus B. MacEachern in 1835 and its turn towards aggressive ultramontaniam in the 1860s, Edward MacDonald's article on Bishop Bernard D. Macdonald (1837-1859) is indispensable.⁴⁹ Some of these subjects are major figures and others are not; but all of the articles just cited illuminate essential parts of major themes in Island history, and *there is no other way to find the information* short of going to the archives and getting one's hands dusty. In some other cases, such as Weale's article on Donald McDonald, one of the most important evangelists in Island history, although the material has appeared

48 On this point, see review by Ian Ross Robertson of *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. IV, in *The Island Magazine*, no. 8 (1980), p. 42; and Bumsted, "The Stewart Family and the Origins of Political Conflict in Prince Edward Island", *ibid.*, no. 9 (Spring-Summer 1981), p. 18, "A Note on Sources". Yet in a 33-page review article on Maritime history published by the *Queen's Quarterly* in 1984, W.G. Godfrey does not mention any specific articles in the *DCB* and does not mention or cite *The Island Magazine* at all. Indeed, the Island would appear to be the stepchild of Maritime History, for of the contemporary writers referred to in the text of the present review article whose work had appeared prior to Godfrey's date of publication, the following were not mentioned: Arsenault, Clark, Croteau, Holman, MacDonald, Pellisier, Rankin, Rogers, D. Stewart, Taylor, and Tuck. Those whose work on the Island is alluded to, although sometimes obliquely, are Baglolle, Francis W.P. Bolger, Bumsted, Fischer, Milne, L.F.S. Upton, and Weale. The only publications by three (Baglolle, Bolger, Weale) of these seven to be cited appeared in 1973. See Godfrey, "'A New Golden Age': Recent Historical Writing on the Maritimes", *Queen's Quarterly*, XCI, 2 (Summer 1984), pp. 350-82.

49 See *DCB*, vol. VI, pp. 565-69, 359-61; vol. XI (1982), pp. 526-8 and 528-9; vol. VIII, pp. 953-5; vol. VI, 107-10; and vol. VIII, pp. 528-30. Taylor has also published a superb brief sketch of Francis Longworth Sr. in vol. VII (1988), pp. 511-2.

elsewhere subsequently, it was published in the *DCB* first.⁵⁰ For many additional subjects, on which the *Dictionary* is neither the only nor the earliest published source, it is none the less the best presently available.⁵¹ Most of what we have learned about the leadership and political context of the Escheat movement since the 1970s has been published in the *DCB*.⁵² Its importance to Island history deserves emphasis, for to ignore its contribution to Island historiography is to ignore a great deal of development and refinement.

Thus Prince Edward Island historical writing has grown in many directions since 1975, and has benefited particularly from the emergence of a local periodical and the requirements of a national project. It has also reflected the differing trends in specific branches of history. An obvious example is urban history. Since 1980 three notable books, with diverse approaches, have appeared on Charlottetown and Summerside. The first to be published, Robert Allan Rankin's *Down at the Shore: A History of Summerside, Prince Edward Island (1752-1945)* (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island Heritage Foundation, 1980), was commissioned by the municipal government and the town newspaper. Fluently written and well illustrated, this book is accessible to the intelligent general reader. Most of the volume concerns the second half of the 19th century, when Summerside emerged as a population centre, and Rankin has given an authoritative account of the period, based on careful research. He has provided a clear explanation of the geographic and economic factors which caused the town to develop, and deft portraits of such individuals as shipbuilders James Colledge Pope, John Lefurgey, Angus McMillan, John MacKenzie, the outrageous

50 See *ibid.*, vol. IX, pp. 480-1. Weale's other articles on Donald McDonald are: "The Minister: The Reverend Donald McDonald", *The Island Magazine*, no. 3 (Fall-Winter 1977), pp. 1-6; "The Time is Come! Millenarianism in Colonial Prince Edward Island", *Acadiensis*, VII, 1 (Autumn 1977), pp. 3-34.

51 As a case in point, compare Edward MacDonald, "Angus Bernard MacEachern", *DCB*, vol. VI, pp. 447-51 with J.C. Macmillan, *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island* (Quebec, 1905); E.J. Mullally, "A Sketch of the Life and Times of the Right Reverend Angus Bernard MacEachern", *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report*, XIII (1945-46), pp. 71-106; F.W.P. Bolger, "The First Bishop", in M.F. Hennessey, ed., *The Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island, 1720-1979* (Summerside, 1979), pp. 22-57; G. Edward MacDonald, "The Good Shepherd: Angus Bernard MacEachern, First Bishop of Charlottetown", *The Island Magazine*, no. 16 (Fall-Winter 1984), pp. 3-8; Allan F. MacDonald, "Angus Bernard MacEachern, 1759-1835: His Ministry in the Maritime Provinces", in Terrence Murphy and Cyril J. Byrne, eds., *Religion and Identity: The Experience of Irish and Scottish Catholics in Atlantic Canada* (St. John's: Jespersion Press, 1987), pp. 53-67.

52 Nicolas J. De Jong has written a sketch of an Escheat leader, Bumsted has limned briefly a pro-Escheat newspaperman, and Phillip A. Buckner has provided authoritative assessments of three governors in the period of the most intense Escheat agitation. See De Jong, "John MacKintosh", *DCB*, vol. XI, pp. 566-8; Bumsted, "William Rankin", *ibid.*, vol. VII, pp. 734-5; Buckner, "Sir Aretas W. Young", *ibid.*, vol. VI, pp. 820-2; "Sir John Harvey", *ibid.*, vol. VIII, pp. 374-84; "Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy", *ibid.*, pp. 295-7.

“champion tailor”, and Robert Tinson Holman (1833-1906), merchant extraordinaire, free trade advocate, and outspoken atheist, whose empire emerged as the dominant mercantile interest in the town. But Rankin’s book is more than a tale of the “great men” of the town, and, using diaries, account books, and other available sources, he gives a sympathetic understanding of the lives and problems of the mechanics and labourers who worked for the Popes, the Holmans, and other members of the town’s economic elite. Originally conceived as a centennial project to mark the town’s first century as an incorporated municipality (1877-1977), the book stops with World War II. Indeed, in terms of the present century, its actual coverage is more limited than that description suggests, and revolves almost entirely around the silver fox fur industry,⁵³ which had a major impact in Summerside from 1910 (when the Holmans became involved) until the 1930s. An index would have enhanced the utility of this valuable and path-breaking study.

Irene L. Rogers’ 351-page *Charlottetown: The Life in Its Buildings* (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation, 1983), which is based on many years of meticulous research, has the declared objective “to tell the story of the town through its buildings, with particular emphasis on the 19th century” (p. III).⁵⁴ Long recognized as an authority on Island (and particularly Charlottetown) architecture, Rogers has arranged her material street-by-street, focusing on the history of individual buildings. The chapters, unnumbered, are based on the streets and squares of the town as planned in the 18th century, plus adjacent extensions. The sole important exception is a brief chapter (excluding illustrations, less than ten pages in length) entitled “The Growing Years”, in which she outlines the factors which influenced the town’s development and notes various civic improvements. In each of the 27 street- and square-based chapters, which are arranged in alphabetical sequence, the organization is building-by-building, or rather address-by-address, because the stories of previous buildings on particular sites are sometimes told (e.g., 96 Brighton Road). The result is more inventory than history. Although undoubtedly providing reliable data on the architectural heritage of the capital, accompanied by scores of self-chosen illustrations, the book only occasionally fulfills the promise of its title. What principles of selection have been used? The only hint is the quasi-apology that failure to include a house reflects difficulty in finding information (p. III). In the end, the book is most useful as a work of reference, for it has little internal unity and, despite the accumulation of detail,

53 This is a subject on which Rankin had already published. See his “Fox Farming on Prince Edward Island”, in Baglole, ed., *Exploring Island History*, pp. 165-74; and “Robert Oulton and the Golden Pelt”, *The Island Magazine*, no. 3 (Fall-Winter 1977), pp. 17-22.

54 Rogers has also published a booklet, *Walks in Charlotte Town* (Charlottetown: Prince Edward Island Heritage Foundation, 1980), which is essential equipment for anyone interested in exploring the older parts of the capital. Both publications are illustrated by Tuck.

gives little sense of the life of the community.⁵⁵

There is almost no consideration of the relationship between Charlottetown and the rest of the Island, and no suggestion that the substantial citizens of the capital may have been at odds with other Islanders. The fact that the vast majority of Charlottetown burghers did *not* illuminate their properties in celebration of Responsible Government in 1851 (pp. 77-78) is surely not surprising when one remembers that for many years voters in the capital had been sending Tories to the House of Assembly to oppose virtually all reform measures, including constitutional reform.⁵⁶ This lack of enthusiasm for Responsible Government could have given Rogers the occasion to reflect on the sometimes conflicting interests of Charlottetown and those outside; instead there is the comment that Responsible government was “not necessarily popular” at the time (p. 78). With whom? Nor does the existence of an underclass in the Bog, a predominantly black area — surrounded by areas which are treated in the book — receive recognition beyond passing mention of the ‘Bog School’ (with the association unexplained) and the ‘West Bog’ (pp. 67-8, 269). ‘Black Sam’s Bridge’ is noted, but the implication seems to be that Samuel Martin’s nickname resulted from his occupation as chimney-sweep (p. 22). Perhaps such limitations can be linked to the author’s statement that the book “is written, primarily, for the people who live in the houses” (p. III). The intent is to foster “appreciation and preservation” (p. 11). Indeed there is a prescriptive element, reinforced by literary sanction, in the preservationist passion evident throughout the volume; examples of unsympathetic or destructive renovation are pilloried, and one house is mentioned as having been “desecrated” (p. 155). A useful, although incomplete, index is included, and it must be stated that anyone seeking information on the material Charlottetown which has survived from the 19th century should consult this book, for, within the limits of the author’s interests, the primary sources have been exhaustively combed.

The third volume on urban history, and the most recent, is *Gaslight, Epidemics and Vagabond Cows*, a collection of ten essays on Charlottetown in the Victorian era. The political elite, health, law enforcement, and municipal services are among the subjects of the individual essays. The variation among the contributions

55 One instance in which the sense of a community trying to live and breathe emerges is Rogers’ account of the struggle, ultimately successful, by the city in the years following Confederation to have part of Government House Farm converted into a park for city residents. See *Charlottetown: The Life in Its Buildings*, p. 32.

56 Harry Holman states that “Night lighting was considered so unusual [in Charlottetown] that until the end of the last century, a ‘general illumination’ was a symbol of public celebration. On such occasions, the entire town’s inhabitants placed candles or lamps in their windows. Such displays rarely failed to impress visitors and townspeople alike”. See “‘A Lamp to Light Their Paths’: Lighting the Streets of Charlottetown”, in Baldwin and Spira, eds., *Gaslights, Epidemics and Vagabond Cows*, p. 139. According to Rogers’ source, only 25 houses of 600 were illuminated on 23 April 1851.

exceeds the usual. Two, apparently written by undergraduate students, strive to convey the flavour of Charlottetown in the years 1855 and 1914, respectively, “through the use of fictional letters, based upon authentic primary sources”.⁵⁷ *Ceci peut être la fiction, mais ce n’est pas l’histoire*. Such cute concoctions do a disservice to the book as a whole, and raise questions about the *raison d’être* of the volume. Four of the remaining eight have been written by one author, Douglas Baldwin (also one of the editors); these concern “the Charlottetown political elite”, public health services, pure water, and sewers. The chapter on the political elite explains who did and who did not become involved in Charlottetown municipal politics as councillors and mayors and why. In the course of this discussion Baldwin illuminates some of the variables in social status within the town, and sets the stage for his other three chapters. Yet his subjects — public health, pure water, and sewers — are so closely related that they could have been dealt with as a group. The “bacteriological revolution of the 1880s” (the identification of microorganisms rather than foul air as the cause of disease) figures in all three, although the desire for tolerable drinking water (particularly on the part of temperance people) and protection against fire and against increases in fire insurance premiums were more important to Charlottetonians than public health as rationales for establishing a water works system; the same individual, public health officer Dr. Richard Johnson, emerges as a central force in dealing with each issue; and Johnson certainly saw connections between these concerns, even if he did cling to some of the old medical beliefs about the importance of bad air. These three chapters include information on the history of Charlottetown which cannot be located easily otherwise, but one has to wonder whether 54 pages of text is justified. Less is sometimes better.

The remaining four essays have been written by four different authors. “The Early Years” by Peter E. Rider is a competent survey of the period prior to incorporation in 1855. A piece by E. Boyde Beck on regulating the marketplace reveals chronically antagonistic relations between town and country following incorporation as the municipality attempted to use its power to protect the interests of resident merchants as well as to exercise the traditional function of protecting consumers — and usually encountered resistance from provincial legislators. A chapter by H.T. Holman deals with the controversies surrounding street illumination as it moved from luxury to necessity in the minds of Charlottetonians. Greg Marquis has contributed an informative essay on the police force, but has included serious misstatements. The hiring of five night watchmen in Charlottetown in 1865 was not done to counter “the threat of civil disobedience by tenant farmers” (p. 91), but to counter the desertion of soldiers, as a reading of Appendix G to the *Journal* of the House of the Assembly, 1866, one of the sources Marquis cites, makes clear. Furthermore, the implied sequence of

57 Baldwin and Spira, Preface to *ibid.*, p. vi.

events is incorrect and the causal chain of events which Marquis seems to be asserting is equally incorrect: the troops, who arrived on the Island on 6 August 1865, could hardly have come in order to back up the watchmen, whose hiring (so as to stanch the flow of deserters from this very group which had arrived on 6 August) was reported on 30 August 1865 as being planned (pp. 91-2). An accurate reading of Appendix G and attention to chronological sequence would have prevented the jumbling of information which virtually turns effect into cause.

The essays by Rider, Beck, Holman, and Marquis (plus one of Baldwin's contributions) originated in a federally-funded "summer works" programme under Rider's direction, the "Charlottetown History project", which extended over several summers. Too frequently there is little evidence of depth of research or real familiarity with the material under study. Edward Whelan's first Island newspaper, the *Palladium*, was publishing twice, not once, a week, when it was quoted by Marquis (p. 86); and had the author been more familiar with Whelan's personal habits, it is unlikely that he would have reported uncritically Whelan's claim in 1855 that "the public peace was never seriously menaced by the staggering and roaring inebriate" (p. 90). Baldwin refers to MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) (pp. 41-2) at a time when there were only MHAs (Members of the House of Assembly) and MLCs (Members of the Legislative Council), and confuses Alexander Laird Jr., an MLC, with his brother David, a federal cabinet minister (p. 44). Moreover, it is not at all clear whether Baldwin knows who "the Premier" who criticized the disorganized state of Charlottetown during the session of 1867 (p. 42) was: James C. Pope, who began the year as premier, or George Coles, who succeeded him. This is relevant because one was a 56 year old Charlottetown businessman and lifetime resident, whereas the other was a 40 year old businessman from the brash and rising rival Summerside. The difference has a bearing on the interpretation of the remarks cited by Baldwin since, according to Rankin, Charlottetonians had a tendency to mock Summerside's pretensions. Criticisms by Pope might be interpreted as 'tit for tat', whereas similar comments by Coles can be interpreted as civic concern based on decades of personal experience. In fact, the critic was Coles. Examples of inadequate knowledge of context could be multiplied. As urban history, the focus of this collection seems excessively narrow: of the three economic roles Rider's opening chapter ascribes to Charlottetown in the 19th century (market town, administrative centre, communications hub) the reader learns little about two in succeeding chapters. Ultimately, Rankin's urban biography of Summerside, with its combination of thorough research, focus on community development, and sensitivity to metropolitan-hinterland relationships, is more satisfactory than either of the two volumes on Charlottetown.

All three books on the Island's urban history concentrate on the years before 1900, and this is a characteristic they share with most of the important work done on Island history over the past 13 years. There is one notable exception: *The Garden Transformed*, a collection of eleven essays on Island history between

1945 and 1980. Edited by a philosopher, a political scientist, and a sociologist, all faculty members at the University of Prince Edward Island, the quality of most pieces is quite high. Aside from Bumsted's historiographical essay, probably the most interesting paper for readers of this journal is "Politics in a Beleaguered Garden" by political scientist David Milne, one of the co-editors.⁵⁸ Since the appearance of the book in 1982, another political scientist, Ian Stewart, has published an article, based on the results of provincial general elections from 1904 to 1982, examining a factor too often neglected in commentaries on Islanders' voting behaviour at the provincial level: the desire to be "in line" with Ottawa.⁵⁹ This brings us back, full circle, to the concerns Baglole and Weale articulated about Island autonomy when founding the Brothers and Sisters of Cornelius Howatt in 1972-1973. Perhaps there is some comfort, even if somewhat ironic, for them in the ability of the provincial Liberals in 1986 to overcome the powerful tendency to conform to the example set by federal voters, which is rooted in a sense of dependence on federal largesse.

This does not exhaust the range of historical material published since 1973. *One Woman's Charlottetown: Diaries of Margaret Gray Lord 1863, 1876, 1890* (Ottawa, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1988) edited by Evelyn J. MacLeod, adds detail and a feminine perspective to our knowledge of social life among the Charlottetown elite in the mid-Victorian era; it is drawn from the diaries of a daughter of Colonel John Hamilton Gray for three years. An abridgement of the proceedings and report of the land commission of 1860 documents the life of the rural population, and is accompanied by a 22-page essay on the history of the land question from 1767 to the legislated abolition of leasehold tenure in 1875.⁶⁰ After a generation of unavailability, *The Master's Wife*, Sir Andrew Macphail's classic memoir of late 19th century rural life in a very Scottish community, has been reprinted, with an introduction, and has begun to receive the recognition it deserves.⁶¹ Two of the most interesting recent publications are the study of Lebanese immigration by Weale and the *Dictionary of Prince Edward Island*

58 For a more detailed assessment, see review by Ian Ross Robertson in *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XVII, 2 (June 1984), pp. 391-3.

59 See "Friends at Court: Federalism and Provincial Elections on Prince Edward Island", *ibid.*, XIX, 1 (March 1986), pp. 127-50. Stewart notes that this trend began in the 1870s; see n. 74 on p. 150. It was overlooked, for example, in Wayne E. MacKinnon, *The Life of the Party: A History of the Liberal Party in Prince Edward Island* (Charlottetown, 1973).

60 Ian Ross Robertson, ed., *The Prince Edward Island Land Commission of 1860* (Fredericton, Acadiensis Press, 1988).

61 (originally published 1939; reprinted Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1977), Introduction by Ian Ross Robertson. See Kenneth MacKinnon, "Technique in *The Master's Wife*", in *Essays on Canadian Writing*, no. 31 (Summer 1985), pp. 65-74; Janice Kulyk Keefer, *Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction* (Toronto, 1987), particularly pp. 36-7, 48-54, 68-9. The recognition is trans-Atlantic, for *The Master's Wife* is required reading in at least one course at the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.

English (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988), edited by T.K. Pratt. Weale's volume began as a public lecture, and retains a semi-conversational tone. It is unorthodox in terms of the usual norms of historical writing. The author disclaims expertise (p. 2) and describes the study as "very general and incomplete" (p. vii). There are few endnotes, and many of the individuals quoted directly are not identified. Yet the booklet is informative about the transformation of the Lebanese from door-to-door rural peddlers with a rudimentary command of English to highly integrated members of the community. Is it accurate? Given the lack of adherence to scholarly convention noted above, it is impossible to give a definitive verdict. In dealing with the delicate issue of ethnic prejudice, Weale presents a flattering picture of mainstream Islanders. The allegation that a "determined" attempt was made to keep the Lebanese out of Summerside, which he reports that he was told "several times", is relegated to an endnote. There is no indication of how thoroughly Weale researched this question. Attractively presented, the volume features as a cover illustration a photograph of two children, one of whom is the present premier of the Island, age 2 (identified on p. 39) — a curious choice indeed.

Pratt's *Dictionary* is a considerably more systematic, scholarly, and rigorous work. The focus is non-standard words used now or formerly by English-speaking Islanders, with eight listed categories of exclusions. The entries are not confined to 'Islandisms', that is, terminology apparently unique to Prince Edward Island, for they include non-standard words documented elsewhere, but not usually associated with the Island. Inevitably, the appearance of such a work will flush out enthusiasts with their own additions. Yet, aside from wondering whether such 19th century sources as newspapers (particularly letters to the editor) and government documents have received sufficient attention, this reviewer is disinclined to search for omissions. Pratt has probed the vocabularies of both the respectable and the rough. "The works", ecstatic vocalizing and contortions by the followers of the evangelist Donald McDonald, are present; a "teddy" (of shine) is included, as is "gaffle" (to take possession of or to overcome, somewhat illegitimately); and guidance for non-Islanders to such locational terms as "up west", "across", and "the other side" is provided. Surprise: "bare pole" is confined to the Island. Some of us thought everybody knew what that meant. Moving beyond the individual entries, one serious reservation about the labelling must be expressed: in describing the provenance of terms within the Island, Pratt refers to the present parliamentary constituencies (Hillsborough, Malpeque, Egmont, and Cardigan), with one (Hillsborough) renamed 'Charlottetown', and Summerside added. For a scholarly work, these constituency labels seem terribly transitory. The current federal constituency names have been used as such for less than 20 years. When going outside Charlottetown and Summerside, why not use the counties, which have been in existence for more than 220 years, which appear on almost all maps of the province, and whose boundaries do not change? Modifications, such as "western Prince", "southern

Kings”, and “central Queens” could be added for greater precision. As well as being easily linked to virtually any map of the Island, these terms conform to local usage. The author gives reasons for his choice of federal labels (p. xvii), but they are of questionable weight.

Comparisons with the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* are inevitable.⁶² Both dictionaries have “citations”, or concrete, authentic examples of usages of words which constitute compendia of information on the details of local working life, migration patterns, values, and attitudes. As such, they help to establish the distinctiveness of the respective traditional societies. Pratt’s is a much smaller volume, as one would expect. In the first place, Prince Edward Island has been less isolated historically than Newfoundland. But this project was also begun much later than the work on Newfoundland, and long after Prince Edward Island’s cultural integration with the outside world could be considered virtually complete. In all probability, a similar study begun 35 years ago would have yielded a substantially richer harvest. But Pratt is not to be blamed — just the opposite, for he is retrieving what there is to be retrieved, and doing so with scholarly rigour and sophistication. He closes the book with the opinion that Island proverbs deserve a book in their own right. He is probably the person to do it, for he has already published an article on the subject.⁶³ This reviewer is waiting anxiously.

For the future of Island historiography in general, it is obvious that there is a need for additional research on the 20th century, but it is equally important that syntheses of the research on the earlier period be undertaken. With Bumsted’s landmark monograph, this task has begun for the 18th century. The 19th century beckons.

IAN ROSS ROBERTSON

Filling the Lacuna: Recent Developments in Atlantic Canadian Literary Biography

FOR YEARS CANADIAN SCHOLARSHIP HAS LACKED the basic critical tool of sound biographies of important literary figures. This shortcoming has been rectified in part in the last decade or so by several important studies of writers who had their origin in the Atlantic region. While these biographies differ in

62 G.M. Story, W.J. Kirwin, and J.D.A. Widdowson, eds., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (Toronto, 1982).

63 See “The Proverbial Islander”, *The Island Magazine*, no. 10 (Fall-Winter 1981), pp. 8-11. Also see Pratt, “Island English: The Case of the Disappearing Dialect”, in Smitheram *et al.*, eds., *The Garden Transformed*, pp. 231-43.