

To their credit Pain and Shakespeare avoid the anecdotal excesses that plague other accounts of early Pacific coast logging. Instead, the authors have concentrated on identifying artifacts and explaining their use. By drawing together materials from diverse and scattered sources, Pain and Shakespeare have produced a work that may prove useful in museums with small collections of logging artifacts. Workers in institutions with larger collections or more extensive research goals, however, will find the publication disappointingly inadequate. West Coast Logging offers the reader a pleasant ramble through a bygone industrial age, but falls far short of being a truly rigorous or illuminating study.

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Life How Short, Eternity How Long: Gravestone Carving and Carvers in Nova Scotia. Deborah Trask. Halifax, Nova Scotia Museum, 1978. 100p., illus., bibliography, notes. ISBN 0-919680-09-7. \$9.95, hardcover. \$5.95, paperback.

The number of gravestone studies has increased phenomenally during the past ten or so years with the Puritan gravestones of New England receiving the most attention, these being the topic of several books, numerous articles, and an entire symposium.¹ A similar interest is beginning to develop in Canada as witnessed by recent research by historians, artists, cultural geographers, and folklorists.² Deborah Trask's book, Life How Short, Eternity How Long, looking at gravestones in Nova Scotia, is the latest product of this trend.

Like many of the works which deal with artifacts and which are being published in this country today, Trask's book is largely

illustrative. This in itself is not a drawback since the publication of data obtained from studying objects can be done most clearly through visual means. However, major questions remain unanswered in this book and a more elaborate use of text could have remedied this.

On a fundamental level, research on a specific artifact type such as gravestones usually entails broad geographic surveys, either in a particular community or in larger regions. In any such spatial fieldwork we should systematically record entire areas or sample selected regions by time period in order to achieve representative results. The archaeologist's careful recording of a specific site provides a model for this kind of methodology. Although Trask's book supposedly deals with gravestones in Nova Scotia generally, we are never told exactly what areas of the province were surveyed and thus on what data her conclusions are based. The reader recognizes, for example, that there is little on the Acadian or Irish gravestones in Cape Breton. Nor is the reader told about the approximate number of stones examined or their time span.

Besides this lack of discussion of actual field methodology, the book itself could read much more smoothly if it were better organized, even with a simple rearrangement of chapters. The discussion jumps from a survey of imported stones of the eighteenth century to angel heads as a motif to specific Nova Scotia carvers then back to motifs and so on. A much more logical organization could have started with a discussion of stones by origin and ethnic group -- the chapters on imported stones, German and Scottish types -- followed by the local Nova Scotia carvers. The motifs used could have been grouped in one unit, as could the materials used.

Trask does not discuss the correlations between religious denomination and gravestone motif and this is an important topic for future research. Much has been made of the Protestant fundamentalist use of elaborate symbols in New England; whether

this is true for Nova Scotia would be interesting to know. Only one decidedly Roman Catholic gravestone is depicted and I suspect that examples exist -- perhaps in Cape Breton -- that used the elaborate symbols of the passion motif common on early Roman Catholic stones in Newfoundland.

In spite of these several limitations, the material presented in the book is exciting, indicative of the importance of many of these artifacts which are literally crumbling in our local cemeteries. The Hay family of Halifax, originally from Scotland and probably related to the Hay family of carvers in Newfoundland, produced elaborate Adam and Eve scenes for customers in the area; these are some of the most complex gravestones in all of North America. Trask does not mention that this particular motif was common on Scottish gravestones of the same time period;³ it is likely that the Halifax motifs came from a carver's pattern book, given the widespread distribution of this design in the homeland. The use of a central skull flanked by bones and an hour glass is also distinctively Scottish for the time period.

In spite of these criticisms, works such as Deborah Trask's are important. This book provides over 140 illustrations relating to the Nova Scotia gravestone tradition, as well as much documentation on carvers in the province, giving us data to compare with other regional traditions. Such research is crucial in all parts of the country and many such studies are necessary before larger trends can be examined. Trask's book is the product of Canadian material culture studies which are only in their initial stages and the Nova Scotia Museum should be commended for its lead in promoting and publishing many of these studies. As more scholars become involved with such research, both our methodologies and the questions we ask will become more refined and revealing of the complexities of our common past.

NOTES

1. Among the books are Allan I. Ludwig, Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and its Symbols (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966); Dickran and Ann Tashjian, Memorials for Children of Change: The Art of Early New England Stonecarving (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1974); Peter Benes, The Masks of Orthodoxy: Folk Gravestone Carving in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 1689-1805 (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977). For a partial listing of articles see Thomas A. Zaniello, "American Gravestone: An Annotated Bibliography," Folklore Forum 9 (1976): 115-37. Papers from a recent symposium are published in Peter Benes, ed., Puritan Gravestone Art, Annual Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife (Boston: Boston University Press, 1976).
2. Brian S. Osborne, "The Cemeteries of the Midland District of Upper Canada: A Note on Mortality in a Frontier Society," Pioneer America 6, no. 1 (1974): 46-55; David B. Knight, Cemeteries as Living Landscapes (Ottawa: Ontario Genealogical Society, 1973); Carole Hanks, Early Ontario Gravestones (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974); Gerald L. Pocius, "The Place of Burial: Spatial Focus of Contact of the Living with the Dead in Eastern Areas of the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland" (M.A. thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1975).
3. See Betty Willsher, Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth Century Gravestones (Edinburgh: Canongate Publishing, 1978).

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