

could afford it. For the moment American Woodworking Tools provides an interesting alternative.

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The Little Boats; Inshore Fishing Craft of Atlantic Canada. Ray MacKean and Robert Percival. Fredericton, N.B.: Brunswick Press, 1979. 109 p., ill. ISBN 0-88790-104-2. \$12.95 paperbound. Reviewed by David A. Taylor.

In the past maritime history neglected the small, inshore working boats of Canada in preference for the study of larger, more costly vessels, such as ocean-going square-riggers and coastwise schooners. As a result, little is known of the history of the smaller vernacular craft of Canada and, even today, despite evidence of considerable regional differentiation in boat design, construction, and use, literature on the subject is remarkable only for its paucity. (The strong ties between the boatbuilding traditions of Maine and Atlantic Canada are discussed in C. Richard K. Lunt, "Lobsterboat Building on the Eastern Coast of Maine: A Comparative Study," Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1976. My own fieldwork in Newfoundland has revealed tremendous regional differences within the island's boatbuilding tradition.) Against this background, the recent publication of The Little Boats; Inshore Fishing Craft of Atlantic Canada by Ray MacKean and Robert Percival is extremely propitious. This work represents the first published attempt since Howard I. Chapelle's American Small Sailing Craft; Their Design, Development and Construction (New York: W.W. Norton, 1951) to document a large number of North American boat types and the first to restrict its focus to Atlantic Canada.

The authors' goals in this slim volume are two-fold: to salvage and preserve information about boat types which are in danger of quietly passing into oblivion and to stimulate an interest in these previously little-known

work boats. Although the authors trace the reason for the disregard of these boats to their lack of romantic appeal in comparison to grander vessels possessing "clouds of billowing canvas" (p. 11), it is ironic that they view these previously unappreciated small boats with considerable romanticism of their own:

There is something sorrowful about a boat abandoned in a remote field or on a lonely beach... one cannot help but gaze upon it and speculate on the trials it has been through, the calms and the storms, and wonder if it has served a useful life worthy of its designer's dreams and its builder's skills. One is apt to reflect that this honourable little boat was once privy to a fisherman's moments of courage and qualms, sufferings and successes, and has ended in some desolate spot without marker or epitaph. (p. 14)

This passage is reminiscent of John Ruskin at his prolix, anthropomorphic best.

The contents of The Little Boats are a rather unusual and perhaps unlikely marriage of the work of a maker of scale model boats, Ray MacKean, and the work of an artist who has produced realistic paintings of boats, Robert Percival. (Under the aegis of the New Brunswick Museum, MacKean's models and Percival's paintings are being exhibited throughout Canada.) In essence, the book is a compilation of black and white as well as colour photographs of MacKean's models and Percival's paintings, plus brief historical sketches of each boat type. Other features include MacKean's short description of how scale models are made, Percival's comments on the painting of small boats, and anecdotes by both about the fishermen of Atlantic Canada. The book depicts the following boat types, many of which have never before appeared in print; Shelburne (Nova Scotia) dory, Gaspé pink, Labrador boat, Nova Scotia pinky, Grand Manan (New Brunswick) scale scow, Cape Island (Nova Scotia) boat, log dug-out canoe (Bay of Chaleur), board salmon canoe (New Brunswick), Prince Edward Island shore boat, sailing sardine carrier (Bay of Fundy), motorized sardine carrier (Bay of Fundy), St. Margaret's Bay (Nova Scotia) trap skiff, Prince Edward Island shallop, Lunenburg (Nova Scotia) trap skiff, Northumberland Strait lobster boat, Bush Island (Nova Scotia) boat, Tancock (Nova Scotia) whaler, Newfoundland skiff, and Saint John (New Brunswick) harbour salmon skiff.

For the student of material culture, the strength of the book lies in MacKean's superbly crafted models. These models, which appear to be highly authentic representations, provide the reader with what is probably a good survey of many of the major types of small boats in use in Atlantic Canada, especially the Maritime Provinces, from the mid 1800s to the present.

While it is easy to understand the value which scale models play in conveying the form of the boat types under study, the value of Percival's paintings is hard to justify. Admittedly subjective, the paintings may offer some contextual data, but on the whole little can be learned from them about the form of the boats which is not more accurately shown by a model. In addition Percival's comments on the evolution of his artistic career, while offering insights into his personal motivations, tell us nothing about the boats.

It is difficult to criticize a ground-breaking work such as this which contains much fresh data, but it must be pointed out that The Little Boats contains a number of serious shortcomings which raise as many questions about the boats discussed as the book answers. The most significant flaw is the omission of important details such as lines plans, body plans, and, incredibly, the scales to which the models were built. Without this information, notably the lines plans, it is impossible to obtain an accurate understanding of the form of the boats. Furthermore, the absence of these details prevents the researcher from conducting precise comparative studies, analyzing performance characteristics, or building exact replicas. Of course not all readers will require such precise data, and it should be noted that, for a number of models, the inclusion of photographs taken from a variety of angles allow one to arrive at a reasonably good understanding of general form. However, in the case of a few models the dearth of photographs prevents the reader from obtaining even a general idea of form. The book is further weakened by the omission of detailed construction data, a description of the method used to take the measurements of actual boats upon which the models are based, and a bibliography.

Regardless of the weaknesses of The Little Boats, it does represent an important contribution to the study of a long-neglected aspect of the

material culture of Atlantic Canada, a contribution which may serve as a catalyst for the investigation of Canada's rich boatbuilding heritage by material culturalists and other scholars.

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Quilts and Other Bed Coverings in the Canadian Tradition. Ruth McKendry.  
Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979. 240 p., ill., index, biblio.  
ISBN 0-442-29778-5.\$39.95. Reviewed by Leslie Maitland.

Before proceeding with an examination of this book, one serious problem should be cleared up. Quilts and Other Bed Coverings in the Canadian Tradition is not about a Canadian tradition, nor is it particularly about quilts. It is about bedding in general, with an emphasis on quilts, and it is concerned with a strictly Upper Canadian tradition. Eager readers in the West, Quebec, and the Maritimes who spend \$39.95 for a book which they assume will give them a national perspective on this particular craft are going to be disappointed by this display of central Canadian myopia, so buyer beware.

But as a material history study of bedding in Upper Canada, McKendry's book is commendable in many ways. It is refreshing to see someone presenting a craft from the point of view of material culture, attempting to set this craft within its social and economic context rather than presenting us with yet another collector's guide to a particular antique. As William E. Taylor points out in the foreward, material history is a "still young discipline," whose methodology is yet to be clearly established. Any attempt at this approach breaks new ground. McKendry's approach is to trace the production of beds and bed coverings through all stages from raw material to finished item. The availability of manufactured materials, production of homespun, the bed, the bedstead, and all the bed furnishings are examined thoroughly. In so doing the author makes clear the importance of textile and bedding production for the household and thereby brings into focus one of the many roles that women played in the family economy.