

référence pour les diverses catégories de chercheurs-archéologues, ethnologues, historiens, etc. En remarquant la bonne qualité des nombreuses illustrations et l'ampleur de la bibliographie, on peut dire que l'ouvrage doit constituer le point de départ pour une recherche multidisciplinaire qui devra aboutir à une compréhension globale du phénomène et du rôle important occupé par la pêche dans l'histoire du Québec.

. . . . .

Early Ontario Potters: Their Craft and Trade. David L. Newlands. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979. 245 p., ill., biblio., index. ISBN 007-082972-1. \$29.95. Reviewed by Elizabeth Collard.

It is not so long ago in Canada that some of the major museums, in so far as they were interested in ceramic wares, concentrated almost exclusively on the exotic and the magnificent. The work of Canadian potters, whose output consisted largely of what a Kingston newspaper of 1867 called "stone crocks and all that class," was relegated to the background or totally ignored. In one of this country's oldest and largest museums, which I used to visit regularly in the 1940s, not a single piece of Canadian pottery was on display. There was not even a piece put away in a storage room. How radically the picture has changed may be gauged by the fact that the same museum now has one of the best collections of Canadian pottery in the country.

Private collectors led the way (as they have so often done in all areas of collecting in North America), but once the lead was given, public collections began quickly to reflect the growing interest. Understandably, if unfortunately, very little was actually known about Canadian potters. Much that was accepted in the beginning was based on hearsay, on romantic legends, or uncertain tradition. There is still much of the credulous in the attitude towards Canadian pottery. Disciplined research, however, has been making steady progress. The latest evidence of that progress is David Newlands's new book on the potters of Ontario, a scholarly, documented,

detailed study, well illustrated and devoid of that bane of material history investigation, facile speculation.

Since Ontario had more potters than any other part of Canada, knowledge of their methods of production and marketing, as well as of the wares themselves, is of interest beyond the boundaries of that province. Some of these potters had, in fact, experience in other parts of Canada before setting up in Ontario. O.L. Ballard, who started the first pottery in Cornwall in the 1860s, is an example. Ballard was an American who had previously worked in St. Johns (now St. Jean), Quebec. (An alert editor should have spotted that St. Johns in Quebec is spelled without the apostrophe, not "St. John's," as it appears in the text; and it should also be noted that when Ballard's name appears in full on his stoneware it is "Orrin," not "Oren," but these are minor slips.) Other potters came to Ontario from Germany, either directly or via the United States; many came from the British Isles. Newlands traces all these strains and their impact upon the industry in Ontario.

The earliest Ontario pottery of which there is a record is that of Samuel Humberstone in Grenville County. Humberstone is particularly interesting as a United Empire Loyalist. He was born in Staffordshire, had worked in Pennsylvania, and was one of those who defended the king's cause with the New York Volunteers. Before 1796 he had established his pottery in Canada.

No example of Samuel Humberstone's work is known today. The earliest marked piece of Ontario pottery illustrated by Newlands is an earthenware jar with the date 4 January 1825, the work of Jacob Bock, a potter of German origin active in Waterloo County. The most recent pottery dealt with in this book is the Foster Pottery in Hamilton, which closed in 1974. The period covered, therefore, is just short of two centuries.

The value of this work lies solidly on the author's documentation from contemporary sources. Much Ontario pottery was never marked, but Newlands has gone to considerable trouble to assemble illustrations of as many marked examples as possible. An appendix gives close-up photographs of the marks. Museum curators, as well as private collectors, will welcome, too, the

section on the care of pottery collections: how to display, store, repair, even how to ship pottery when lending pieces for exhibition. If further evidence were needed that Canadian pottery has come into its own, it would be Newlands's advice to private collectors to lend anonymously. Canadian pottery is now in the unfortunate realm of articles worth stealing.

The study of ceramics contributes to a variety of disciplines: archaeology, history, economics, sociology. It has, for instance, been possible to investigate a few pottery sites in Ontario. Use has been made of this material, as well as of documentary sources. The economic aspect of the potting industry has been explored (few Canadian industries have ever been free of the brooding shadow of foreign imports and potting was particularly vulnerable). The place of these modest wares in the world of their day has been gone into and their decline noted, as the stoneware pickling crock gave way to the icebox and the milk-skimming pan to mechanical separators on Ontario farms. Here is a book which advances Canadian material history a long way.

. . . . .

Handy Things to Have Around the House. Loris S. Russell. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979. 176 p., ill., biblio, indexes. ISBN 0-07-082781-8. \$19.95. Reviewed by Hilary Abrahamson.

Despite its dimensions, glossy cover, and casual title, Handy Things to Have Around the House is no conventional coffee table book. The author, Loris S. Russell, is a distinguished scholar and a Curator Emeritus of the Royal Ontario Museum. He has sought in this work to trace the origins and describe the development of North American household appliances from their most primitive to most complex. This is accomplished without resort to nostalgia-laden prose on the joys of the nineteenth-century home or even a hint of idle antiquarianism. The result is a highly detailed and informative piece, but definitely not easy reading.