

procédés de transformation» par Michel Bergeron et Paul-Aimé Lacroix; «La sellerie» par Jean Lavoie; «La cordonnerie» par Jean-Claude Dupont; «La terminologie des outils de cordonniers» par Gynette Tremblay et «Le cordonnier dans la chanson populaire» par Madeleine Béland. Cependant, seuls les deux derniers articles sur la langue et le folklore ajoutent vraiment des éléments nouveaux, compte tenu des ressemblances qui existent entre les autres articles.

En plus de celles déjà mentionnées, il y a d'autres répétitions dans cet ouvrage: la table des illustrations, tableaux et graphiques à la fin du volume répète souvent dans une forme aussi incomplète les renseignements donnés dans le texte. Même les bibliographies à la fin de chaque article, qui s'ajoutent aux références déjà données en bas de page, sont, encore une fois, répétitives. Si l'on tient compte de toutes ces répétitions, d'une douzaine de pages blanches, des illustrations et des renseignements déjà publiés ailleurs, 45% du volume est vraiment nouveau. \$27.50 est un prix exorbitant pour si peu de renseignements originaux.

Pour bien évaluer le coût total de cette monographie, il faut additionner les coûts, non seulement de sa production, mais aussi ceux de la préparation des études qui servent de base à cet ouvrage. Si l'on fait l'addition du \$6 350 que les Presses de l'Université Laval ont reçu du Programme d'aide aux publications savantes, de l'aide du ministère de l'Éducation, des contrats donnés aux étudiants par le CELAT, de la recherche sur *Les artisans traditionnels...* payée par le ministère des Affaires culturelles, des subventions (contrats et emplois d'été) que le Musée national de l'Homme a versées pour *Les cordonniers...*, *Tanneurs...*, et pour un travail sur la sellerie, et finalement du travail de rédaction et de mise en page des équipes du Boréal Express et des Presses de l'Université Laval, on arrive à un montant qui dépasse largement la valeur de l'ouvrage.

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Rider, Peter E., ed. *The History of Atlantic Canada: Museum Interpretations*. National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, History Division, Paper no. 32. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1981. 180 pp., ill. Free.

In recent years museums in Atlantic Canada, as elsewhere, have experienced a significant revolution. Gone are the rigid, often sterile approaches of the past epitomized by rows of glassed-in exhibit cases labelled "Do Not Lean" and "Do Not Touch." As one authority has

expressed it, museums in the 1980s are seen to be "both cultural resources and democratic responsibilities." In line with this trend, museums generally have shown a desire to meet a heightened interest on the part of the public sector through imaginative methods of display and arrangement, creative interpretative programmes, and informative publications and brochures. But above and beyond these developments, the very designation *museum* has taken on a new meaning. Included within this category are vast restorations such as Fortress Louisbourg, historic villages on the model of King's Landing or Village Historique Acadien, new complexes like the Nova Scotia Museum and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, and archaeological exhibits on the order of L'Anse-aux-Meadows. Even small local or community museums have not escaped the impact of change as curators strive for uncluttered thematic presentations.

In line with the above approach, the National Museums of Canada, through its Mercury Series of publications, has sought to examine the contextual background, rationale, and characteristics of representative institutions in all parts of the country. The first publication, issued in 1979 and edited by D.R. Richeson (Mercury Series No. 27), covered museums in western Canada. The volume under review (Mercury Series No. 32), published in 1981 and edited by Peter E. Rider, surveys seven museums or sections of museums in Atlantic Canada: the Maritime History Gallery of the New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, N.B.; Le Village Historique Acadien, near Caraquet, N.B.; Yarmouth County Museum, Yarmouth, N.S.; Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, N.S.; Fortress Louisbourg, Louisbourg, N.S.; Prince Edward Island Heritage Trust, Charlottetown, P.E.I.; and the Newfoundland Museum, St. John's, Newfoundland. The objective of the volume was to compare and contrast "the variety of approaches, opinions and choices of artifacts in each institution" and to illustrate "the results with photographs, thus exhibiting the richness and potential of museum displays as vehicles for ideas."

In a survey of this kind any editor is faced with a number of problems, such as geographic representation, type of institution, examples of creative and innovative approaches, not to mention questions of style and treatment of general themes. All institutions selected are known to this reviewer, and it can be fairly stated that Peter Rider has brought together an interesting and representative cross-section of what is current in the museums of Atlantic Canada. Notwithstanding the above comment, I found three of the essays of particular interest: "Le Village Historique Acadien: Interprétation de la Terre d'Acadie," by Clarence Le Breton; "Louisbourg: Managing a Moment in Time," by John Fortier; and "Museum Policy in Prince Edward Island," by Allan Rankin.

For far too long, Acadian history in Atlantic Canada has

been overshadowed by later events; thus, the decision to recreate an Acadian village was widely applauded. To achieve a balanced view of Acadian life, the Village Historique Acadien consists of five farms, a fishing complex, forge, tavern, general store, school, and chapel, along with representative houses and shops. The stated objective of the village "is to underscore, through its interpretative efforts, the contributions of pioneer Acadians to the ideals and culture of contemporary Acadia so that the gifts of the past will be appreciated by present and future generations." Clarence Le Breton's essay is important because of his lucid description of the efforts of the museum staff to combine accessibility and involvement. "Accessibilité et participation, voilà à notre humble avis au Village Historique Acadien les deux pré-requis nécessaires pour finalement entreprendre une interprétation d'ordre économique d'une société particulière ayant aussi une histoire et un patrimoine particuliers." Museums contemplating programmes involving widespread public participation will find Le Breton's article of interest.

Inevitably, Fortress Louisbourg must loom large in any discussion of museum interpretation in Atlantic Canada. However, John Fortier's essay goes beyond mere description to argue a case. Fortier's answer to those who would criticize efforts such as the Louisbourg restoration is direct and to the point. He suggests that at Louisbourg one will find "a re-appraisal of the throw-away society and a search for alternatives to the urban life style of urban North America. In each of these areas the reconstruction of Louisbourg, like other outdoor museums, has something to say to those who will accept it as a work of scholarly enquiry." Further, he points out persuasively that both museums and restorations have their place and both are required for a balanced appreciation of our heritage. "The strong points and limitations of each are obvious: preservation aims at a continuing use from the fabric of the old; museums attempt to show the old as it was. We need both.... In the end, Louisbourg may not be preserving old buildings, but it is preserving a heritage and a way of life — to the extent that such a thing can be done in the face of many practical difficulties." Fortier also deals with the problems inherent in simulations and "period presentations." Visitors to Fortress Louisbourg should not look for a "time trip" but rather "a framework to re-experience, however dimly, a critical period in the lives of real people."

Allan Rankin in "Museum Interpretation of Island History" points out that for the past fifteen years "Islanders have breathed their past like morning air — exhaling family genealogies, community histories, folklore, local museums and historical societies as well as professional museum work." Central to this development has been the work of the Prince Edward Island Heritage Foundation with headquarters at Beaconsfield, a charming Victorian building, magnificently located on the edge of Charl-

retown harbour. In his article, Rankin describes the foundation's exhibition programme, whose purpose is "to illuminate through the creative use of three dimensional objects, graphic images, and words, distinctive aspects of Prince Edward Island's social and economic history." What follows is a description of three exhibits: "Crossing the Strait," "The Silver Fox," and "The Horseless Carriage." For each the historical theme is first explained, the details of the exhibit outlined, and specific problems arising in the research, design, and installation are noted. Creative use of existing facilities, ingenious arrangement of artifacts, and careful and painstaking research are all hallmarks of these exhibits, some of which "went on the road" and were shown in centres other than Charlottetown. As museums are inevitably placing more time and attention on outreach programmes, a careful reading of Rankin's article is warranted.

The fact that I have singled out three articles for special attention should not be taken to mean that the remainder of the volume is less than satisfactory. Far from it. These three have been highlighted because their approach differed from the remainder of the volume. Certainly those interested in the work of smaller museums will find Eric Ruff's description of the work of the Yarmouth County Museum of interest, while the problems of museum interpretation in larger institutions such as the Nova Scotia Museum, Newfoundland Museum, and the New Brunswick Museum are capably handled in the remainder of the articles. The volume is well sprinkled with carefully selected photographs, for the most part well reproduced. An exception is a diagram on page 82 that is unreadable and ought to have been presented in another way.

During a time when "financial cutbacks" and "slashed budgets" have become bywords, the interpretative staffs of museums must be both responsive and responsible. The challenge has been well stated by John Fortier and provides a fitting conclusion: "we are probably better at our job when we are continually challenged to explain ourselves. This process will continue.... The tension of self-examination, the search to improve, the challenge to communicate, the management dilemma of preserving while using may well be the most remarkable [characteristic of] ... the years ahead." Anyone with an interest in museum interpretation should find a place on their bookshelves for *The History of Atlantic Canada: Museum Interpretations*.

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