

unacceptable absence in a piece of significant historical research. The writing and organization do not do justice to the author's knowledge and research experience. The format has made the story too fragmented and disjointed. Much of the book is organized around reproductions of original drawings with text limited to what will fit on the opposing page and the room beneath the picture. In addition, the pictures are arranged to present a lock site by lock site history of the Rideau Canal from Ottawa to Kingston. The linear route-oriented approach has an obvious advantage in that it should help boost local sales and local pride; each lock or settlement has its own page. The disadvantage is that various problems, techniques and issues are not brought together enough for the synthesis which is one mark of good historical writing. Thematic essays or conventional chapters would have offered more scope for the historian. The decision to eschew almost entirely modern drawings has weakened the book. Historical drawings should have been supplemented by modern drawings to explain the technology. The use of both types would have made a more readable and satisfying book. The reviewer's criticisms of *Building The Rideau Canal* should be kept in perspective; they are overshadowed by the author's achievements in researching and writing the book and I strongly recommend it to anyone interested in local or transportation history.

Norman R. Ball

The Traditional Furniture of Outport Newfoundland

Peddle, Walter W. *The Traditional Furniture of Outport Newfoundland*. (St. John's, Nfld.: H. Cuff Publications, 1983.) 200pp., ill. Paper \$14.50, ISBN 0-919095-37-2.

Readers of the *Bulletin* are probably quite familiar with Walter Peddle's writings on Newfoundland furniture. They will be pleased to know that these have finally (after long and trying years in the hands of faithless publishers and public agencies) found their full growth in a book. However, the readers may be a little surprised by the format. *The Traditional Furniture of Outport Newfoundland* comes not as a coffee-table book, nor as a compact version of same, but as an octavo paperback. This format, while it may not do justice to the author's work, well serves his purpose of reaching the general public of Newfoundland. Because the book is comparatively reasonable in price, it may be bought by readers other than the wealthy academics and lawyers who own the pieces the book illustrates.

The book follows a fairly standard pattern for most regional furniture studies in that it has an introduction (as well as a preface and a foreword) to set the framework of the material and then examines the furniture category by category. Peddle does not merely identify piece, provenance, and maker. His captions take into account the use of the item, the sources of its material, and sometimes its design. In some cases he is able to relate the piece illustrated to other pieces in that idiom or from that particular region of Newfoundland. This is possible because this book grew out of Peddle's contact with Newfoundland furniture through an antique business he ran from 1973 to 1982. (He is now education officer and associate curator of material history with the Newfoundland Museum). He knows virtually all the pieces he illustrates because they were pieces he acquired. He brings an intimate knowledge of the furniture to the book, a knowledge that would be unusual in any other regional context.

The other side of this virtue is not so pleasant: the pieces he illustrates are almost all that remains of Newfoundland furniture. This is not to suggest that there was little furniture made or that Newfoundlanders were ill-furnished. Rather it suggests that much has been taken out and that much has been thrown away. As Peddle makes clear in his preface, there has been a steady stream of pickers in the last decade—a decade which coincided with an interest in traditional furniture. Prior to that the pickers were few and were selective about what they took and, generally speaking, their markets had not gone into "pine and plants" as a mode of decoration. Of greater effect has been the local discarding of outmoded furniture—furniture not only outmoded but distinctly unfashionable.

The production of the book, while it allows for general distribution, does pose some problems in layout. Many captions are on the page beside the illustrations they relate to and, were it not for some tiny directional arrows buried in the binding, it would be difficult to determine which illustration went with which caption. This is a defect the publisher could have corrected by reducing the size of illustration or by a limited change in layout. A number of photographs are marked with scratches or similar blemishes, and the cover photograph has been printed fuzzily.

What this book lacks, and indeed what most regional Canadian furniture studies lack, is an overall sense of the place of this furniture in the context of the people who made it and for whom it was made. Too often the antiquarians of furniture history have been too satisfied with style developments, as set down in the principal style books (Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton) and repeated in the coffee-table books, to investigate the much broader range of forms and situations which influence the making of any single piece. This is not to be seen as a condemnation of Peddle's book for it must be recognized that all work must begin with description—discussion and discrimination are

the processes that follow. In fact Peddle does discuss some of these factors and is aware of both situations and the contemporary craft as both this book and his more recent writings on Winter, Parsons, and Cody (in *Canadian Collector*) have made clear. This sort of specific work — detailed documentary research, oral history recording, careful artifact examination — must be developed in Newfoundland. And to it must be linked selective research in related sub-disciplines (architectural history, costume, technology) and related areas (on the north Atlantic rim) to produce a coherent picture of the Newfoundland craftsman and his/her products.

Shane O'Dea

Glass Manufacturing in Canada: A Survey of Pressed Glass Patterns

Rottenberg, Barbara Lang, with Judith Tomlin. *Glass Manufacturing in Canada: A Survey of Pressed Glass Patterns*. National Museum of Man Mercury Series/Musée national de l'Homme, Collection Mercure; ISSN 0316-1854; History Division Paper/Division de l'histoire, Dossier, no. 33, ISSN 0316-1900. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1982. vi, 77pp., ill. Free/gratuit.

Glass Manufacturing in Canada is as honest a publication on pressed glass in Canada as is possible to produce at this time. A report on what is known about the Canadian pressed glass industry, it is a collaborative effort between Judith Tomlin of the National Museum of Man (History Division) and Barbara Lang Rottenberg, currently with the Canadian Heritage Information Network. Before you yawn thinking this is just another CanGlass checklist, I should point out what the authors are careful to emphasize: a great deal about glass, Canadian glass in particular, is not known. This slim volume shows us just how enormous is the gap between the story of the pressed glass industry and the material evidence of its production.

The first third of the publication consists of short, concise histories of each manufacturing company, grouped chronologically by province. These have been excerpted for the most part from Rottenberg's 1979 thesis for a Master of Philosophy in Museum Studies degree at the University of Leicester, England. Thirty-five companies from seven provinces are discussed.

The rest of the book, the survey of pressed glass patterns, contains photographs of single artifacts, arranged alpha-

betically by popular pattern name, with some catalogue information. The photographs are clear and detailed. Accompanying the photographs are notes about Canadian dig sites, comments on American manufacturers, and references to the patterns in printed sources. The objects and patterns illustrated in *Glass Manufacturing in Canada* are all in the collection of the National Museum of Man, History Division. All patterns believed to have been manufactured in Canada are not included, presumably because they are not represented in the collection.¹ This collection, by the way, has never been on public display.

Sensibly, no attempt has been made to list possible shapes found in each pattern. As the authors point out: "The specific artifacts illustrated were chosen to display the design in question rather than to indicate that this individual piece was made in Canada.... Given the market for Canadian glass, it appears unlikely that all forms of all patterns would have been produced" (pp.24-25).

As well as no shape checklist, there is no real dating of patterns and no factory attributions except through "dig" sites. These digs are not explained, leading one to the conclusion that they may have been excavations undertaken by the National Museum, although they most likely refer to the efforts of interested people "digging holes on a glass factory site and finding glass."² Though the digs are mentioned, there is no attempt here to evaluate the evidence on which most pattern attributions have been made.

Another noticeable omission in the survey is any reference to provenance. This is not so much an oversight on the part of the authors, as a reflection of museum collecting attitudes in the 1960s and 1970s. Those were the heady days of pattern identification from scanty sherds and everyone, including museums, scrambling to get the jump on other collectors. Through the 1960s, for example, most of the pressed glass in the Nova Scotia Museum collection was acquired undocumented from dealers. Under these conditions, the history of ownership of the particular item became irrelevant and often lost. Currently the term "material evidence" is heard whenever museum collecting and collection policies are discussed.³ There is a sense that a museum collection should consist of objects with a documented history and should be more than just another random collection, publicly owned. Yet, in terms of pressed glass collections, the latter is our legacy.

The very fact that so much attributable "Canadian" pressed glass now exists in public collections only documents the nationalistic collecting fervour of the 1960s. It must not be easy for the National Museum of Man to admit publicly that their collection (and by implication all other collections) is based on little more than wishful thinking.

The pressure on public institutions from collectors has been to have more Canadian patterns identified. The