

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.<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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

authors of *Glass Manufacturing in Canada* have bravely responded with honest comments:

Despite documentary evidence that pressed glass was made in Canada, little is known about which specific patterns were produced. (p.24)

Glass manufactured in Canada... formed part of a larger North American industry. In the area of pressed glass in particular, the lack of uniquely Canadian characteristics in either style or technique has made its identification difficult. (p.1)

For those who have invested a lot of money in Canadian pressed glass, the strongest comment is the hardest to swallow: "From a stylistic point of view, there is no Canadian pressed glass" (p.24).

Rottenberg and Tomlin soften this, adding:

The very proliferation of pressed glass, whether Canadian, American or English, on the nineteenth-century Canadian market, makes it all the more essential that examples be included in a Canadian historical collection. Their origins may be questionable, but their existence in Canadian homes is not. (p. 24)

Unfortunately, this is not supported by any evidence that the glass in the History Division collection was acquired to document its use in Canadian homes. The feeling is rather that this collection, as others, was amassed for its presumed "Canadian-ness."

The dichotomy here is that, while rejecting the belief that Canadian glass is unique, this publication surveys those patterns which have been labelled "Canadian," politely indicating by the white spaces on the pages what minimal information exists on these pieces.

In the *Maine Antiques Digest* for December 1982, Hyla Wulfs Fox, in a provocative article on Canadian glass, raised the collector question: "Why hasn't something been published or written [presumably by museums]...to stop the perpetuation of misinformation that has appeared in print over so many years (since 1955) by so many people."<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately for Hyla Wulfs Fox, *Glass Manufacturing in Canada* will not receive the mass distribution of such collector bait as *Glass in Canada*, the most recent perpetrator of misinformation.<sup>5</sup> Although *Glass Manufacturing in Canada* appears to have been produced with the intention of informing the collecting public, that public, the intended audience, will probably never see it. This is regrettable for such an honest and forthright presentation on the state of glass studies in Canada belongs in every collector's library.

#### NOTES

1. Of the 21 accepted Nova Scotia pressed glass patterns, Rose Branches, Tassel and Crest, and Trenton Block are not included here.

2. Janet Holmes and Olive Jones, "Glass in Canada: An Annotated Bibliography," *Material History Bulletin* 6 (Autumn 1978): 117.
3. 1974 ICOM (International Council of Museums) definition: A museum is a non-profitmaking, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment.
4. Hyla Wulfs Fox, "Canadian Glass," *Maine Antiques Digest* 10, no.12 (December 1982): 26B-28B.
5. Gerald Stevens, *Glass in Canada: The First One Hundred Years*, ed. Ralph Hedlin and Heidi Redkop (Agincourt, Ont: Methuen, 1982). For a critical look at this publication, see reviews by Major R.A. Harvey Snyder and Hyla Wulfs Fox, notably the *Glasfax Newsletter* 15 (February 1982) and *Toronto Star*, 7 October 1982, respectively.

Deborah Trask

## Canadians and their Environment

Ruddel, David T. *Canadians and their Environment*. 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.35, ISSN 0316-1900. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1982. iv, 113pp., ill. Free/gratuit.

The National Museum of Man's latest addition to its History Division Mercury Series examines the ways Canadians have coped with their environment. The book covers a wide range of Canadian history but concentrates on our frontiers. Men and women are portrayed not only labouring on the agricultural settlement frontier, but also on the fur, lumbering, mining, and urban frontiers. The author directed his study to emphasize "the detrimental impact on the environment and human health" of resource exploitation, the effects of which are to be seen in many of the illustrations used.

Based upon one of five thematic areas in the National Museum of Man's history exhibit, "A Few Acres of Snow," the book is most successful as an exhibit guide and supplement. The format of short text summaries combined with numerous illustrations and their captions does not lend itself to startling conclusions nor the in-depth synthesis of more formal Canadian histories, but it does allow an entertaining story to unfold for the non-professional reader. The short texts are well written and the many illustrations bring Canada's past to life. The bibliography, divided by subjects, is particularly useful; the individual is able to follow up his or her own area of interest. In addition, some of the illustration captions include a reference, an excellent means of encouraging someone to delve deeper into a specially inter-