

more than adequate artifact base for the exhibit and the museum.

The design and physical production of the exhibit was carried on at the Nova Scotia Museum, adding to the difficulties of coordinating the exhibit. Because close collaboration and communication was imperative, a liaison person with the Nova Scotia Museum was appointed to channel information materials and help arrange meetings with various staff involved in the project.

The Media Services Section of the Provincial Department of Education, located away from the Nova Scotia Museum, produced two videos on the exhibit's theme. This group became the fourth party outside of the DesBrisay Museum to be involved in the joint exhibit project.

The project researcher pursued topics developed through a proposed storyline for the exhibit. Monthly reports on progress ensured that research requirements were being met.

Meetings and conversations were held frequently with the Chief Curator of Exhibits and the designer at the Nova Scotia Museum. The influx of artifacts during the research effort changed the design approach part way into the project. In addition, as a result of the large amount of photographic and text content, it was decided that French translation would be provided in a publication form carried by the visitor. Translated text from the exhibit was organized to correspond with numbered panels in the exhibit.

The Ross Farm Museum, the living agricultural

museum of the Nova Scotia Museum Complex, was the scene for the video productions. This museum is located in Lunenburg County about 60 km from DesBrisay. The museum makes use of oxen in its normal activities and was an ideal setting to document the oxen at work in logging operations and the blacksmith making and fitting shoes to a team of oxen.

The Ross Farm Museum was exceptionally cooperative in the video programming and other aspects of the project. And, in turn, participating in these productions created an awareness among the Ross Farm staff that certain routine activities which were not part of public programming to date could be of potential interest to the public.

The three-year project ended about two weeks past the scheduled opening date for the exhibit. This was only possible through the cooperation of the groups directly involved in the project and the number of museums contributing artifacts and photographs from their collections.

The DesBrisay Museum prides itself in being able to contribute to the province's travelling exhibitions programme. The resulting collection is a welcomed addition to the museum's holdings. During the oral history research, information arose which led to the acquisition of a home-made child's toy known as the "wooden ox." This artifact is of a type that would not under normal circumstances have survived the years. It was through oral history research that we were able to know of the existence of such an artifact.

Another positive result of the oral history research was the human perspective on a life associated with oxen which is evoked through the exhibit.

Gary Selig

U.S. 40: A Roadscape of the American Experience

Thomas J. Schlereth, *U.S. 40: A Roadscape of the American Experience* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1985), 150 pp., ill. Paper \$13.95, ISBN 0871950014.

At the outset of his "above-ground" archaeological treatise on U.S. Route 40, Thomas Schlereth quotes an extraordinary claim made by Rev. Horace Bushnell in a sermon he delivered in 1846, as follows:

The road is the physical sign or symbol by which you best understand any age or people...for the road is a creation of man and a type of civilized society.

What follows is a stimulating and provocative study of one of the most significant, if not ignored, artifacts of the twentieth century – the North American highway. Schlereth, a "cultural" historian, teams with Seldon Bradley, a documentary photographer, in focusing on the 156-mile Indiana portion of this 160-year-old transportation route. U.S. 40 originally served as one of the United States' National Roads – opening up settlement of the West. It was subsequently incorporated into the U.S. Interstate Highway System and, like all great roads, was eventually superseded by a new controlled-access freeway known as Interstate 70.

Schlereth presents his material in three parts. The first

part focuses on the history of the highway in general and the second on U.S. 40 in particular. The third section is really an elaborated bibliography for those interested in pursuing the topic further. In the Bushnell tradition, he covers not only the detailed technical aspects of highway design over the past hundred years, but also its symbolic content and influence on day-to-day life in Indiana. All of this is intended to provide the reader with what Schlereth describes as a combined "history" of American road transportation, a "primer" for investigating past and contemporary landscape, a "portfolio" of documentary photography, and a personal "assessment" of the cultural role that the road has played in the American experience.

The book is highly successful as both a history and a primer. It is well researched and full of detailed analyses of historical forms of road and roadside development. However, it has serious shortcomings as a photographic portfolio and cultural assessment.

The placement of the photographs is not synchronized with the text and thus makes them difficult to reference. More importantly, Bradley's documentation of the contemporary highway is uninspiring and makes little effort to capture some of its phenomenological characteristics – its speed, its vistas, its dangers. For example, there is not a single view from the driver's seat. Instead, we are always looking at U.S. 40 from places we are least likely to ever actually view it – the shoulder or the centre of an overpass. The strip maps, oblique aerials and vistas kept by most highways departments are noticeably absent – as are representations of the road by contemporary artists.

Of more serious consequence, though, is the book's failure to present a convincing perspective of the cultural significance of the road within the, albeit ambitious, context of "the American Experience." Instead we are treated to something akin to a popular or local history of what at best can be described as "the Indiana Experience – from Richmond to Terre Haute." One suspects that the most significant symbol of contemporary experience is Interstate 70 and yet its role in the current life of the region, including its intersection with U.S. 40, are virtually ignored.

Schlereth's self-consciousness, and his pre-occupation with documenting his methodology (hence the inflated bibliography) and selling the idea of "above-ground" archaeology, rather than setting himself clearly within a tradition of transportation and landscape history, undermine the seriousness of his efforts and ultimately belittle this tradition. In fact, archaeology – especially that dealing with the "road" – has never been limited to the underground – as can be no more clearly demonstrated than by Giovanni Piranesi's renderings of the Appian Way which were completed in the late eighteenth century.

In summary, *U.S. 40: A Roadscape of the American Experience* presents us with an exciting and provocative opportunity that is never fully realized. The road is reduced rather than enobled – and that is surely something Reverend Bushnell would have regretted as much as we do.

John van Nostrand