

The book's major flaw is its map, "Waterways of the Fur Trade," with its western and northern margins along the Rocky Mountains and Lake Athabasca. Too many maps of this type fail to show the Pacific Coast, especially south of the 49th parallel. Yet the objective of fur traders from the era of New France was the Western Sea and after the publication of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's *Voyages* in 1801, the mouth of the Columbia River. It seems curious that Americans would overlook the site of the Pacific Fur Company's Astoria, which became Fort George under the North West Company or, indeed, the Hudson's Bay Company's entire Columbia Department from Alaska to California. With the waterways north of Lake Athabasca omitted altogether, the far northwest of the continent, the Mackenzie Department, fares just as poorly. This

weakness, however, is partially overcome by an excellent section entitled "Fur Trade Site-Seeing," a three-page listing of interpreted and non-interpreted fur-trade sites in Canada and the United States (including Oregon, Washington and the Northwest Territories).

Wheeler introduces his book by confessing his belief in "the power of the artifact." His belief shines through in every page of this, his last contribution to helping Canadians and Americans alike become more aware of their common fur-trade heritage. Sadly, one of his final wishes could not be fulfilled. It was to see *A Toast to the Fur Trade* reviewed in the *Material History Bulletin*.

Jean Morrison

Teaching Maritime Studies

P.A. Buckner (ed.). *Teaching Maritime Studies*. Fredericton, N.B.: Acadiensis Press, 1986. 299 pp. Paper \$16.00. ISBN 0-919107-08-7.

This collection of essays was originally presented at the conference "Teaching Maritime Studies," held at the University of New Brunswick, November 1985. The purpose of the conference was to give a comprehensive overview of the current research in the field to secondary teachers and school administrators charged with implementing a new course, "Maritime Studies." The course was instigated by the Maritime Council of Premiers amidst controversy and concern within some school systems and provincial departments of education. The conference was intended to mitigate objections to the introduction of the course by providing educators with a concise statement of what leading academics in the field consider to be significant and current.

As a source book for teachers of Maritime Studies in secondary schools, this book is a good beginning. There are thirty-four essays here, none more than fifteen pages long. They are divided into seven sections: history and geography, ethnicity, women's studies, political economy, folklore and literature, the environment, and bibliography. The essays recapture the feeling of the conference. Their style ranges from the formal presentation of Graeme Wynn's "Beyond Capes and Bays," with numerous footnotes, carefully selected illustrations, and a lengthy bibliography, to the appropriately informal, anecdotal style of Edward D. Ives' "The Foxfire Approach: Oral History in the Classroom," and Rick Williams' excellent and impassioned first-person exposition, "Teaching Politics in the Maritimes: Challenging the Vacuum."

In his essay, "Studying the Maritimes: A Plea for an Interpretive Framework," T.W. Acheson identifies what is key to the successful implementation of this new curriculum: providing teachers and ultimately students with a critical understanding of the theoretical structures that give the facts about the Maritimes meaning. These structures must be part of the content of the course, and it is here, Acheson says, that those who have conceptualized the course have failed. Many of these essays attempt to redress this failure by providing clear statements of the theories and questions which inform the research presented.

For example, the three essays on women's studies present a content area for which many social studies teachers are ill prepared because of their training and because there are few readily accessible curriculum materials. Martha MacDonald's "Studying Maritime Women's Work: Underpaid, Unpaid, Invisible, Invaluable" provides a clearly elicited approach for examining everyone's everyday experience in terms of how the economy works, what women's role within the economy is and why, and how alternatives to this situation might be developed.

Regrettably, some of the least valuable essays for teachers are those about material culture studies. Susan Buggey's "The Built Environment: A Heritage Resource" is a lucid explanation of changes in attitude toward the value of heritage buildings and the process of identifying and cataloguing them. It does not, however, provide guidelines for answering the core questions it raises: Why should we bother to document the built environment? Why are our attitudes about this kind of activity changing?

D.A. Muise's "Material Culture and the Teaching of Maritime Studies" does not add much to this level of discussion. As he explains, the first step in artifact literacy is a detailed examination of the physical properties of a class of artifacts, such as the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings, but thus far this work is "too administratively centred to be of much use in research design" (p. 243), let alone to be of use in the classroom. He provides a critique of the sources of artifact research and a plea for "increased methodological interaction between academic and institutional historians and between history and its sister disciplines – particularly Geography and Folklore" (p. 244).

In "Maritime Material Culture Studies in Heritage Resource Institutions," Peter E. Rider provides some encouragement to teachers. They will "find the world of material culture studies relatively easy to enter" and can expect to be assisted by the region's numerous museums (p. 248). He goes on to give some useful hints on the critical viewing of exhibits and about using the other educational resources available through museums. While there is no doubt these museum resources are valuable, tight budgets, the rigid timetables of secondary schools, provincial restrictions on access to many of these resources, and the summer schedule of many museums limit the potential of these institutions to provide the support Rider envisions.

From a pedagogical perspective, the most interesting of the essays about material culture is Peter Ennals' "Inside the Front Door: Recent Approaches and Themes for Interpreting Past Housing." First, Ennals questions why material culture should be taught in secondary schools at all and warns that "it is not clearly nor widely understood how the insights that can be derived from an examination of material artifacts are to be used in the pursuit of knowledge" (p. 235). He says in his experience even university students "lack the intellectual framework for this sub-field" (p. 236). He goes on to describe three approaches to the study of housing – art historical, preservationist, and his own framework, "various manifestations of the so-called 'new' social history" (p. 237). He concludes by a few tantalizing allusions to his work on vernacular housing in the Atlantic Region.

What interests me most about the four essays devoted specifically to material culture studies is that they are included at all. The field of material culture studies is in

the unusual position of having been accepted as an important facet of Maritime Studies by curriculum planners and politicians before the field itself is sufficiently developed to provide the content required. I think one explanation for this is that the grassroots movement that began about fifteen years ago among teachers and others interested in the history and culture of their own region has truly taken root. In 1977, at the instigation of P.A. Buckner, an Education Section was added to *Acadiensis*, and I was asked to write the first contribution, "Recent Developments in the Teaching of Local Studies: An Overview" (vol. VI, no. 2, pp. 135-144). As I look over the names of the numerous teachers cited in that article, I realize most of them are still here and their passionate commitment to enabling Maritimers to have access to their own history and culture remains. The difference is that many no longer spend their time leading field trips into cemeteries and digging up old dumps. Instead, they are principals, superintendents, university and union administrators, deputy ministers, and at least one minister of a provincial department. They are now part of the educational power structure.

What does this mean for the academics interested in material culture and the teachers charged with teaching Maritime Studies? It can be viewed as an opportunity; however, people like Buggiey, Ennals, Muise, and Rider must lead the way. Material culture studies has the potential to integrate and transform existing disciplines and there may even be a new discipline in the making. There is real work here for students, not just the predigested problems of textbooks. Raw material needs to be collected, described, and analyzed. For students and their teachers to participate in this intellectual adventure, I ask the academics who are mapping the way to assist in the next step beyond this book. Curriculum materials need to be developed that frame current work in material culture in the context of how theories are developed, are tested, and fit within disciplines. Ennals' work on vernacular architecture would be an excellent focus with which to begin this endeavour because the artifacts are attractive and abundant. This kind of curriculum development is hard work and implies a third step, teacher training. The goal of my proposal is to make it possible for students to genuinely contribute to our understanding of material culture and actively participate in constructing their understanding of themselves.

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