

clothing of 309 on-site sawmill workers from pictures. The volume also contains an extensive bibliography, an extremely useful glossary of terms related to wood technology and a large fold-out map showing the location of mills and factories noted in the text.

In short, *Sawpower* is highly recommended for those with an interest in wood technology or with wood-technology equipment in their collections.

Debra McNabb, *Old Sydney Town: Historic Buildings of the North End*

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Debra McNabb. *Old Sydney Town: Historic Buildings of the North End*. Sydney, N.S.: Old Sydney Society, 1986. 102 pp., ill. Paper \$10.95, ISBN 0-9692642-1-6. Cloth, price not available, ISBN 0-9692642-0.

For most Maritimers, and indeed for most Canadians, the image of Sydney, Nova Scotia, is that of a down-at-the-heels, turn-of-the-century steel works casting a rusty pall over the skyline of a working-class city. This is the very heart of industrial Cape Breton—an often tormented outpost of Canada, beset by newsworthy environmental damage and chronic underemployment, periodic labour unrest, political cynicism and, what sociologists would call, “other social pathologies.” Yet in historical terms the city has a longer, more varied and, perhaps one might say, distinguished lineage, extending over two centuries to when it was founded by Joseph Frederick Walle DesBarres in 1785 as the capital of the Loyalist colony of Cape Breton.

For thirty-five years it served this important colonial function while also taking its place as a busy port and centre of trade within the Gulf of St. Lawrence rim, a subset of the larger North Atlantic trading orbit. The annexation of Cape Breton by Nova Scotia scotched Sydney's aspirations and colonial pretensions during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, but the movement after 1860 toward an industrial phase based on coal extraction, and later iron and steel, sustained its importance as one of the few larger urban places in Nova Scotia. Rightly or wrongly, present-day Sydney seems to be a prisoner to the dirty failing steeltown stereotype.

The purpose of this book is to challenge that image, to create for not only the citizens of Sydney but also anyone else who cares to learn a sense of that more varied history by focusing on the surviving built heritage of the

city's colonial quarter, the north end. This is then a work of celebration and consciousness raising—the effort of a local heritage society. Composed principally of elegantly rendered pen and ink illustrations of individual buildings drawn by Lewis Parker, and brief contextual biographies of each building prepared by Debra McNabb, the book falls into what is becoming a widely used formula for a genre of historical architectural work in this country. The focus of attention is on the building, its sequence of owners and uses, and the “lore” that is associated with it. In this case there is no apparent attempt to create a systematic order in the arrangement of entries; nor is this a guidebook for a walking tour as sometimes happens in books of this type.

It is important to respect the “sense-of-place” intentions of this book and this genre. Everyone interested in heritage preservation recognizes that there is a critical relationship between public recognition of the past in our midst and the opportunity for salvage, preservation and scholarly study of the material history. If the public are oblivious to their surroundings and the context of their creation, the pace of destruction will continue. Books like *Old Sydney Town* have an important part to play in the process of public education. In this regard, McNabb has struck an appropriate balance between a deeper, more analytically penetrating historical investigation of the social and settlement history and landscape of Sydney, and the more anecdotal thumbnail sketch of familiar but little understood buildings that fill a neighbourhood. One senses that McNabb knows her readers well and aims the account directly at the layperson.

For those with a professional or scholarly interest in architecture, the book has little to offer except in an indirect way. Individual buildings are not subjected to architectural analysis. Sensibly McNabb even steers away

from the application of "period" labels, which in other studies of this genre are too often inappropriately or incorrectly used. Nor is there any attempt to edit out ordinary, lower-class buildings that might not fit the classificatory schemes of conventional architectural history. Happily the author has adopted a very honest and democratic view, allowing the north end to be seen as a living neighbourhood filled with the accretions of every decade, of buildings great and small, public and private. No one "classic" period is favoured. It is, in short, a record of how several generations of an unpretentious people created, lived in and

responded to their neighbourhood. That said, one cannot help but think that there is room for another type of study of Sydney, one that probes into the nature of the transition from colonial capital to industrial city. What of the other neighbourhoods? How was the industrial worker housed, and what housing ideals and images were implemented in this location? Were there connections between industrial housing in Cape Breton and that being built elsewhere in North America, or in Britain? The questions are tantalizing.

Alaric and Gretchen Faulkner, *The French at Pentagoet 1635–1674*

JEAN DAIGLE

Alaric and Gretchen Faulkner. *The French at Pentagoet 1635–1674: An Archeological Portrait of the Acadian Frontier*. Augusta and Saint John: Maine Historic Preservation Commission and New Brunswick Museum, 1987. 330 pp. Paper \$24.95, ISBN 0-935447-03-2. Available in French; not yet released at time of review.

Cette étude archéologique retrace la vie matérielle d'un poste de traite fortifié situé dans une région disputée entre la France et l'Angleterre au XVII^e siècle. Les auteurs soutiennent deux thèses qui éclairent la vie des habitants de Pentagouët. L'économie de la région n'est pas contrôlée, comme certains l'ont prétendu, par le Massachusetts; les fouilles soulignent l'arrivée, même en période de guerre, d'une variété des produits en provenance de France, de Hollande et d'Angleterre. Les conditions d'approvisionnement, toujours aléatoires à l'époque, imposent, même s'il est interdit, le libre-échange! La recherche souligne aussi l'ingéniosité des Européens qui doivent, face à la rareté de certains produits et aux difficultés d'approvisionnement, faire preuve de savoir-faire. En recyclant les produits métalliques (fer, cuivre) et en réparant d'autres qui sont brisés, ils peuvent continuer à maintenir leurs habitudes de vie et assurer la viabilité de l'établissement.

Durant sa courte existence (1635–1674), le poste est soumis à de nombreuses attaques; sa démolition en 1674 signale la disparition d'un avant-poste assurant la prédominance française de la région.

Par la suite, la région est soumise, pour près d'un siècle, aux contrecoups de la politique internationale. Les auteurs réconcilient les découvertes archéologiques, poursuivies durant quatre ans, avec les témoignages (tels les inventaires, et les descriptions orales et picturales) du XVII^e siècle. Les fouilles dégagent la physionomie d'une poste de traite fortifié abritant une vingtaine d'employés, alors que les rapports de l'époque accentuaient surtout les caractéristiques défensives de l'ensemble.

Une étude des habitudes alimentaires, des céramiques, et des divers objets utilisés par les habitants souligne leur fidélité aux us et coutumes de l'Europe. L'ouvrage contredit l'interprétation traditionnelle selon laquelle les Français adoptent rapidement les usages des Amérindiens. Leur mission est d'établir une autre France; somme toute le «fort at Pentagoet was a European world» (p. 267). Les fouilles archéologiques présentent des individus désireux de conserver leurs habitudes de vie. Même si, par exemple, l'ours fait maintenant partie de la diète alimentaire, il est consommé dans de la vaisselle et sa chair est découpée à l'aide de couteaux apportés d'Europe.

L'ouvrage, divisé en dix chapitres, touche tous les aspects de la vie matérielle de l'époque. Après l'introduction, le chapitre deux fait un bref historique du poste de traite. Le chapitre suivant touche l'historique de l'occupation du site et des fouilles archéologiques entreprises à Pentagouët depuis le XVII^e siècle. Les chapitres suivants, plus techniques,