

'em, must be one part entertainer, one part researcher, one part teacher, and one part brilliant administrator! This is the real challenge facing museums today. I was disappointed that Schlereth had nothing to say about the training of curators. And I found his clinging to the image of the museum as a community attic seriously out of date. Surely museums must pursue a very different strategy if they are to survive – consisting of well defined goals, carefully selected collections, and profound respect for the intelligence of museum goers, especially their willingness to confront hard truths and their need to probe the complex meaning of the world they have created.

What is that world created by our democratic societies? Small objects? Petty pleasures? A preoccupation with physical ease? De Tocqueville's forebodings about the capacity of creature comforts to enervate our souls seem even more salient today. Yet surely that is not the whole story. The world is full of strenuous challenges and many of them, ironically enough, involve objects. The generation of electric power, once such an unquestioned boon, is now a more complicated part of our lives. The coming of mass industrial society, with its densely packed cities and standardized habits of dress and behavior, has raised new questions about sexual identity and reduced the number of safe outlets for our aggressive impulses. The penetration of less industrialized societies

with our goods and our gospel of consumption has provoked both emulation and exploitation.

One could go on about the poisoning of the natural world, the destruction of the landscape, etc. My point is, and I think Tom Schlereth would agree, that museums and material cultural studies are ideal sites from which to contemplate the impact of objects upon humanity. Such projects are not without risk, as the recent uproars over the "Into the Heart of Africa" exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Robert Maplethorpe photography exhibit in the United States chillingly attest. Perhaps what we need is not more data, but more courage: a firm sense of the importance of our cultural mission and a willingness to contest the role objects play in what de Tocqueville calls "the greatness and the glory of mankind."

Schlereth's new book is a superb place to begin the dialogue which we must all undertake in order to meet this challenge. Although I and perhaps others may disagree with individual points, we must all be grateful for the range of his subject matter, the depth of his research, and the profundity of his commitment. I urge everyone to read it. They will find new insights in every chapter, interesting comparisons of Canadian and American practice, and a truly midwestern cornucopia of strategies to explore the meaning of the object.

Catherine C. Cole, ed.,
Norwegian Immigrant Clothing and Textiles
DOROTHY K. BURNHAM

Cole, Catherine C., ed. *Norwegian Immigrant Clothing and Textiles*. Occasional Paper no. 1. Edmonton: Prairie Costume Society 1990. 113 pp., 58 illus. Paper \$13.00, ISBN 0-9694539-0-6.

In May 1987 at the Beaver House Gallery in Edmonton an interesting gathering took place. Canadian and American researchers came together with a Norwegian costume expert to discuss what information exists concerning the clothing worn in North America by Norwegian immigrants and to

what extent the textile making skills of the homeland were utilized as adjustment was made to a pioneering life. It is not easy to gather the necessary funds for a publication and to expend the energy necessary to turn the passing excitement of a one day seminar into a permanent contribution but, with this small book, that has been accomplished. Congratulations to the Prairie Costume Society and Catherine C. Cole, editor, and to all others who have worked on the project.

The publication is well designed, the cover is attractive, the format excellent but the type is rather too small for comfort. The

size is modest, but within its slender 113 pages there are five important essays concerning a so-far almost ignored subject. The essays provide easy and interesting reading even for the nonspecialist. As the texts are well supported by footnotes and there is a long and varied list of suggestions for further reading, the earnest student will find the way open to a rich area for costume research.

The scene is set by David Goa, Curator of Folk Life at the Provincial Museum of Alberta, Research Fellow of the Calgary Institute for the Humanities, lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Alberta and himself of Norwegian descent, a combination of experience that provides rich insights for his introductory essay. Humour there is but, as with so many others who found their way to North America, emigrants from Norway were making a serious escape from a way of life that was becoming increasingly difficult both economically and religiously. Facts are given concerning areas of settlement, dates and sizes of the waves of newcomers but, more importantly, the thrusts back of the decision to emigrate are brought into focus: a growing desire for democracy, the spread of education generating a middle class that had little to look forward to in Norway and, above all, the strength of the pietist movement. In ten very thought provoking pages a firm foundation is provided for the costume research contained in the papers that make up the rest of the book.

The second essay, "Tradition and Transition: Norwegian Costume from Norway to the United States 1840-1880," is by the well-known authority, Aagot Noss, head curator and in charge of the folk costume department at the Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo. As indicated by the title, only costumes worn in Norway and their adaptation to life in the United States are covered. An interesting body of information is given and the references from letters written home are fascinating, providing rich and very human insights into the changes the newcomers were facing. One wishes very strongly that similar quotes from letters written from Canada could have been given; but, in spite of the later time frame for settlement on this side of the border much of the information is relevant.

The third article "Immigrant Handweaving in the Upper Midwest," also concentrates on the United States. The author, Dr. Carol Colburn, as a graduate museology student

had an internship at Vesterheim in Decorah, Iowa and the opportunity to study the western immigrant textile experience. In her essay, she fits the Norwegian contributions in with the general picture of development as that part of the country opened up: home production, professional work on a local scale, small factory work and finally, all processes out of the home and into large factories. As the area of settlement she deals with predates the Norwegian presence on the Canadian prairies, only part of the information she gives applies directly to a Canadian-based textile and costume use; nevertheless, her information provides valuable background for Canadian Norwegian studies.

The fourth essay, "The Tradition in Alberta: A Case Study of Valhalla Centre," by Heather Prince, is apparently based on research done for a Master's thesis for the University of Alberta. Valhalla Centre, in northwestern Alberta, was founded as a Norwegian Lutheran community by a missionary-evangelist, Halvor Nilsen Ronning. Where better to look for Norwegian textile traditions? The periods of major settlement are of late date, 1912-1920 and again 1925-1929. Many of the settlers came to Valhalla after some years in the United States and their old country traditions had already weakened. Few of those who came directly from Norway were still accustomed to wearing distinctive folk costumes but, treasured in various families, Heather Prince discovered articles of clothing and household textiles that had been brought when people came from Norway or that had been sent later by family members. She also found distinctively Norwegian taste in the embroidery done locally for such things as cushion covers and decorative table linens. It is known that Norwegian settlers did do simple weaving in Alberta, but there was no evidence for it in Valhalla. The spinning of wool was common in the community and garments knitted from the homespun yarn show the influence of Norwegian patterns. In Valhalla Centre after more than 75 years, ties with Norway were still strong.

The fifth essay, "The Farvolden Collection of Norwegian Costumes and Textiles," by Barbara Schweger of the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, describes in considerable detail material brought by one family who came from the Telemark region to Alberta. Most immigrants arrived with few posses-

sions but the Farvolden exit from Norway in the years following 1922 must have been a major operation. It seems that nothing was left behind and the numerous large crates that came with them contained not only the useful things needed to start a new life but family treasures and memorabilia of all kinds. What remains has now been given to the Alberta Provincial Museum in Edmonton and as most pieces have good documentation they provide a valuable resource for those interested in Norwegian decorative arts and costume. Disappointingly, nothing is recorded concerning the Farvolden's produc-

tion after arrival in Alberta. David Goa, in his introduction, tells of a baptismal blanket woven by Nona Farvolden, donor of the collection to the Museum and to whom this volume is dedicated, but in Schweger's article there is not a word of description and no picture – possibly the article is not photogenic but it was a bit of a let down that this piece of documented Norwegian-Canadian weaving was ignored.

In spite of this last small criticism, this is an excellent and interesting publication and one that deserves a wide distribution.

Paul Rutherford,

When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952–1967

JOHN E. TWOMEY

Paul Rutherford, *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952–1967*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 637 pp., 66 illus. Paper \$25.95, ISBN 0-8020-6647-X. Cloth \$65.00, ISBN 0-8020-5830-2.

At long last students and scholars in the field of Canadian communications have an in-depth historical analysis of Canadian television programming even if limited to the prime time hours (7 pm to 11 pm) and the monochrome years (1952–67).

With the exception of the study of Canadian television drama by M. J. Miller, *Tune Up The Contrast: CBC Television Drama Since 1952* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1987) and F. B. Rainsberry's *A History of Children's Television in English Canada, 1952–1986* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1988) insights on television programming had to be fathomed from the published reminiscences and biases of on-air personalities such as Knowlton Nash, Peter Trueman, Alex Barris, Warner Troyer, and Roy Bonisteel.

Paul Rutherford, chairman of the University of Toronto's history department and author of several books on Canadian media history, states his book is an amalgam of three distinct subjects: 1. the story "of the noble experiment of a national programming service...that strove to supply viewers with a

made-in-Canada brand of entertainment, news and views;" 2. the "art of television ... broadly defined to include both the styles and the messages programmers and producers offered viewers;" and 3. the answer to the "McLuhan Question ... what happens to society when a new medium of communication enters the picture?" (pp. 5, 6).

Rutherford further tells us that his book is "a viewer's history" focused on "what people saw in the way of home-grown shows when they tuned in the TV set" (p. 6).

The first three chapters are on the structure of the Canadian system of television and how it was shaped by CBC/Radio Canada, CTV and other private broadcasters. The richness of detail in these chapters indicate that Rutherford and his team of researchers thoroughly mined the lode of historical materials on broadcasting found in periodicals of the time, government documents and CBC archives. More data was gathered via personal interviews and by monitoring recently created oral history tapes of public and private broadcasting decision makers.

The larger second part of the book consists of seven chapters on the genres of prime time programming. They are reviewed in chronological order as each genre attained prominence. Rutherford labelled his five genres: Information (newscasts, panel discussions, talk shows, etc.) where the viewer is