

New Brunswick Literature and the Pursuit of Bibliography

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As A.W. Pollard stated in an article entitled "The Need of Bibliography," published in 1921 in *The London Mercury*, each book is "an event in the spiritual history of the country and city and therefore a record of the publishing of books ought to be kept."¹ New Brunswick literature to this day, however, remains virtually untouched by bibliographers. The following review of the state of bibliography in the province—primarily concerned with works written in English—will concentrate on publications which are specifically focussed on New Brunswick topics rather than on publications which include New Brunswick writing as only one part of their contents. It will do so because, despite the importance of national bibliographies, regionally or locally produced bibliographies are apt to do a better job of locating and identifying regional publications.

The pioneer work in New Brunswick literary bibliography is W.G. MacFarlane's *New Brunswick Bibliography: The Books and Writers of the Province* (Saint John: The Sun, 1895), plus his supplements in the *New Brunswick Magazine* (Volumes 1-2, 1898-99). MacFarlane cites a large number of literary works, many of which have not even yet been located and are, presumably, lost; his bibliography is of little help in locating materials because his annotations are rarely fully documented, though they are often informative and chatty.

Before 1950, there are only two additional items worth mentioning. The first is *A Catalogue of the Rufus Hatheway Collection of Canadian Literature* (Fredericton: U of New Brunswick, 1935), a work which, as the title indicates, is a catalogue rather than a bibliography. The Rufus Hatheway Collection is important principally for its Bliss Carman holdings; but, within the collection's guidelines, selected Canadian literature is still being added, including Fiddlehead and Goose Lane publications. The second item is William Inglis Morse's enumerative bibliography, *Bliss Carman: Bibliography, Letters, Fugitive Verses and Other*

¹ 3 (Feb. 1921): 399.

Data (Windham, Conn.: Hawthorne House, 1941). This enumerative bibliography provides an introduction to a New Brunswick poet who is, bibliographically, very elusive. (Ironically, the best bibliography on Carman to date is in Volume 2 of the *Bibliography of American Literature*.)² Despite the fact that, during the early part of this century, important texts were produced by such established writers as Charles G.D. Roberts, Theodore Goodridge Roberts, and Francis Sherman, there are no other specifically bibliographic reference materials but these prior to mid century. Andrew T. Seaman's "The History of Maritime Literature," in *Acadiensis* (8 [Spring 1979]: 130-37), discusses two national publications, Ray Palmer Baker's *A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation . . .* (1920) and Carl F. Klinck's *Literary History of Canada* (1965, 2nd rev. ed, 3 vols., 1976), noting the relative lack of Atlantic Canada material contained in both. Had the bibliographical record been more complete, Atlantic Canada might have been better represented. The problem, in other words, is both long standing and persistent.

During the 1940s and subsequently, however, a number of indexes were founded. The *Canadian Periodical Index*, in the course of its operation, has included New Brunswick literature under headings such as poetry, Canadian fiction, and so on. For the period 1957-65 and for the year 1972, the Atlantic Provinces Library Association and the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council co-operated to produce the *Atlantic Provinces Checklist*. This classified bibliography has a section devoted to literature. One problem with both publications is that, during this time, many New Brunswick writers—principally poets—were publishing in small literary publications in the United States because similar Canadian magazines and publishers were virtually non-existent. For instance, during the 1950s, Alden Nowlan was living in Hartland, New Brunswick, and Fred Cogswell in Fredericton, some seventy miles away; they first became aware of each other's existence through the Notes on Contributors section in *Miscellaneous Man*, a little magazine which was published in San Francisco.³ No library in New Brunswick carries this journal or such publications as *Hearse*, *Flame* or *Quicksilver* in which both poets also appeared.

In 1953, as part of his Diploma in Library Science, the late A. Robert Rogers compiled *Books and Pamphlets by New Brunswick Writers, 1890-1950* (London, 1953). There is only a type-

² (1957): 42-76.

³ Alden Nowlan cites this journal in "Something to Write About," in *Canadian Literature*, 68-69 (1976): 9; Fred Cogswell, however, believes the journal in question was *Candor*, a poetry magazine operating out of Missouri.

script copy available of this work, which serves as a starting point for more substantial bibliographical endeavours.

Much more significant is J. Russell Harper's *Historical Directory of New Brunswick Newspapers and Periodicals* (Fredericton: U of New Brunswick, 1961). A committee is currently engaged in expanding this work and bringing it up to date.

Even in critical and scholarly articles on New Brunswick literature, one finds very little discussion of bibliography. Typical of this seeming inattention is Fred Cogswell's article "Nineteenth Century Poetry in the Maritimes and the Problems of Research," in the *Newsletter of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* (5 [Sept. 1961]: 5-19). Here Cogswell states: "When I looked at the quantity of work produced in the Maritime provinces during that period [1825-1880] . . . I was overwhelmed by the amount and variety of verse to be found in newspaper, magazine and book publication"(5). Later in the article, Cogswell muses on the reasons why Canadian anthologists and literary critics have either neglected the writers he deals with or wrongly evaluated them, indicating problems with both R.E. Watters' *Check List of Canadian Literature* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1959) and A.G. Bailey's significant essay, "Creative Moments in the Culture of the Maritime Provinces," published in the *Dalhousie Review* (29 [1949]: 231-44).

Since Cogswell's paper, two preliminary works of bibliography of the materials he refers to have been published at Mount Allison University. These are *Pre-Twentieth Century Literature of and About the Maritime Provinces: A Bibliography* (Sackville: R.P. Bell Library, Mount Allison University, preliminary edition, 1978) and *A Preliminary Checklist of Nineteenth Century Canadian Poetry in English* (Sackville: Canadian Studies Program, Mount Allison University, 1976). The former is based upon Watters' *Checklist* cited above; the latter, upon the special collections holdings at Mount Allison University. Also important is Gwendolyn Davies' unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "A Literary Study of Selected Periodicals from Maritime Canada, 1789-1872" (Toronto: York University, 1980).

Despite the efforts cited above, most of the basic work in this and other areas of New Brunswick bibliography is still to be produced. In the process, more often than not, each new researcher will discover new sources. A case in point is Mary Elizabeth Smith who has published "English Drama in New Brunswick," in *A Literary and Linguistic History of New Brunswick*, edited by Reavley Gair and others (Fredericton: Fiddlehead and Goose Lane, 1985, 167-91). Her essay includes a large

number of references to works about which scanty bibliographical detail is cited; it offers a challenge to any bibliographer but makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of the English language drama and theatre in New Brunswick.

Before listing a number of bibliographic projects in New Brunswick literature which are now in progress, I should like to mention, at least cursorily, several publications which have appeared during the past few years. One is "A Checklist of Recent Literary Publications of Atlantic Canada," an ongoing bibliography which has appeared in issues 138, 141, 145, and 148 of *The Fiddlehead*. Here Atlantic Canada material is gathered under the headings of anthologies/collections, bibliography, drama, juvenile, poetry, prose, and general. It also includes materials about these subjects.

Two Nova Scotia projects which involve New Brunswick writing as part of the Atlantic provinces have been produced recently. The most ambitious—if flawed—of these is Charles T. Laughter's compilation, *Atlantic Provinces Authors of the Twentieth Century: A Bio-Bibliographical Checklist* (Halifax: School of Library Service, Dalousie U, 1982), a work that badly needs a second and revised edition. The other compilation is Iain Bates' and Ann Nevill's *Atlantic Libraries and Archives: A Directory of Special Collections* (Halifax: Atlantic Provinces Library Association, 1981), a very general work.

Important research is also being done outside the Atlantic region. Of note are the following:

- A. Thomas Vincent of Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, has completed *The Amaranth, 1841-1843; Contents, Notes and Index* (Kingston: R.M.C., 1984) and is continuing to work on his early Canadian cultural journals (ECCJ) databank project.⁴ The contents of 15 journals—of which *Stewart's Literary Quarterly* and *The Amaranth* originate in New Brunswick—have been incorporated into this data bank to date. New Brunswick writers are, of course, to be found in other sections of this work as well.
- B. The University of Calgary Library has recently acquired the Alden Nowlan papers and is developing for publication (probably in 1987) a holdings list for these. I am presently compiling a descriptive bibliography of

⁴ Vincent's Loyal Colonies Press is exemplary. This press has published *A Chronological Index of Locally Written Verse Published in the Newspapers and Magazines of Upper and Lower Canada, Maritime Canada and Newfoundland through 1815* (1979), *Eighteenth-Century Canadian Poetry: An Anthology* (1981), and others.

Nowlan's writings. This project offers a number of interesting challenges which will be difficult to surmount. For example, in an article which Nowlan wrote in 1976, he mentioned that, writing under three pseudonyms, as well as his own name, he had published his first three hundred poems in small literary periodicals in the United States. Some of his short stories and articles were published in newspapers, and other scripts were broadcast over television and radio.

- C. The Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts (CEEET), based at Carleton University in Ottawa, has announced a forthcoming scholarly edition of James DeMille's *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*. DeMille is the only New Brunswick writer to be included so far in this project.
- D. Minor, but bibliographically essential, are two graduate student projects. At Queen's University, Woody Reppert of Grand Manan is completing a dissertation which will collect and analyze the poetry dealing with Grand Manan Island that has been written to date. An issue of the *Grand Manan Historian* will feature some of the results of this work, which Reppert expects to complete by September, 1987. Helen L. Bateman's *Home Is Where One Starts From* (Scoudouc, N.B.: Helen L. Bateman, 1984) considers Westmorland County through the journalistic literature of the last half of the nineteenth century.
- E. The field of children's literature, in New Brunswick as elsewhere, has been, until recently, a neglected specialization in bibliography. Several sources which constitute a useful beginning in the field are: L.S. Loomer's "Early Children's Books of the Atlantic Provinces: Notes on the Literature to 1915," in *The Occasional* (6 [Fall 1980]: 8-13) and (6 [Spring 1981]: 23-26); Irene Aubrey's "Canadian Children's Literature in the Atlantic Provinces," in the *APLA Bulletin* (47 [Sept. 1983]: 5-9), and a number of articles by Claude Potvin on Acadian children's literature, including "La minorité acadienne et sa littérature de jeunesse," in *Si Que* (6 [automne/hiver 1983/1984]: 166-77). A further helpful source in this area is the *Newsletter* of the Canadian Research Society for Children's Literature.

Special attention has been paid to the teaching and criticism of New Brunswick and Maritime literature in recent years at the University of New Brunswick itself. In 1978, the university compiled *Alfred Goldsworth Bailey: A Checklist of His Work and Related Criticism* (Fredericton: U of New Brunswick). Since then, John Coldwell Adams has published "[Charles G.D. Roberts]: A Preliminary Bibliography," in *The Charles G. D. Roberts Symposium*, edited by Glenn Clever (Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1984, 221-49). A bibliography of Bliss Carman, being compiled by Terry Whalen, is scheduled to appear in 1989 or 1990 in the final volume of the *Annotated Bibliography of Canada's Major Authors*. A much needed access to indexes is supplied by Agnez Hall, P. Ruthven, and Eric L. Swanick in *An Inventory of New Brunswick Indexing Projects--Inventaire des Projets d'Indexation au Nouveau-Brunswick* (Fredericton: Council of Head Librarians of New Brunswick, 1980). There have also been recent catalogues of collections from the Bell Library at Mount Allison University and from the library of the Université de Moncton. A new work on the Bell Collection at Mount Allison University is expected to be issued shortly. The recent publication of *A Literary and Linguistic History of New Brunswick* in 1985, edited at the University of New Brunswick, is bound to stimulate and serve as a base for further literary studies and bibliographies.

Now, what of the future? What is particularly important at this juncture is that the general public and the politicians, as well as specialized scholars, be made more aware of the need for and the importance of ensuring that bibliographic materials by New Brunswick writers be conserved and made accessible, as far as possible, within the borders of this province. The English poet Philip Larkin wrote in his article entitled "A Neglected Responsibility," published in 1979 in *Encounter*, noted that

if British librarians resign the collection and care of their manuscripts to the librarians of other countries, they are letting one of their most rewarding responsibilities slide irretrievably away . . . the best place for a writer's papers is in one of the libraries of his country. I think they are most likely studied there and studied with greater understanding; I think they are more likely to grow there by the addition of further related collections from his family and friends¹

¹ (July 1979): 33-41.

While it is true that there are some excellent literary holdings in New Brunswick—including papers of Charles G.D. Roberts, Bliss Carman, Elsie Pomeroy, Fred Cogswell, and others—I cannot overlook the fact that the Alden Nowlan papers are at the University of Calgary, the Dan Ross papers are at Boston University, the Desmond Pacey papers are at the Public Archives of Canada, and, apparently, the Douglas Lochhead papers are destined for the Public Archives as well. A more aggressive, activist policy on the part of various New Brunswick institutions, as well as stronger financial backing for such projects, is very much needed to collect new materials and to add to existing literary collections. What is immediately needed is a collections' committee formed from various institutions and charged with the task of examining collection policies, pooling resources where necessary, and determining priorities.

Quite apart from collecting materials, there are many resource needs in New Brunswick that bibliographies could supply. We desperately need bibliographies (preferably descriptive) of Charles G.D. Roberts, James DeMille, Desmond Pacey, and Fred Cogswell, to name only a few. We need more publication of holdings of literary materials in New Brunswick museums and archives; older lists are very much in need of updating. Additional indexes to eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century periodicals, journals, and books are much needed. In this connection, *The Fiddlehead*, a very prestigious periodical, might well celebrate its one hundred and fiftieth issue by completing and printing an index of itself.

More letters and diaries need publication to make them available to a wider circle of readers. A start was made recently by Elizabeth McGahan in her anthology *Whispers from the Past: Selections from the Writings of New Brunswick Women* (Fredericton: Goose Lane, 1986). A good introductory analysis of the whole field of Maritime women's diary literature, as surveyed and documented by the Maritime Women's Archives Project, is to be found in Margaret Conrad's *Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950* (Ottawa: CRIAW, 1982). The Mount Allison University Maritime Literature Reprint Series has been successful in making available a number of works by out-of-print authors. Perhaps consideration should be given to a Maritime or an Atlantic Provinces University Press to expand publishing in this area.

As well as the above, we need research into the printing arts in New Brunswick—details regarding printers, booksellers, publishers, and the relationships between them, as well as the trade and copyright practices affecting the whole complex book

trade across the Canadian provinces, or involving Canada on the one hand, and Great Britain and the United States on the other. In the meantime, better use could be made by institutions and individuals of facilities currently at their disposal. The School of Library Service, Dalhousie University, could assign more bibliographical and indexing projects. These need not be one-student term papers, but could be team projects of more than one year in duration. Do the various English departments in New Brunswick universities assign as essay topics descriptive bibliographies or annotated, enumerative bibliographies? Do the professors themselves in these departments make sufficient use of the research tools grants of SSHRCC?

Both library schools and English departments are natural centres of bibliographic instruction in any academic institution. Since New Brunswick has no library school, all the more responsibility for the training of its students of higher education in the practice and theory of bibliography ought, therefore, to fall upon the English departments of New Brunswick universities. The teaching of bibliography at the university level is many faceted; as Richard Landon has written:

I think a course must contain a history of the discipline for context, a clear and prolonged enunciation of the techniques of bibliography, and as much background information concerning printing, publishing, bookselling and all the aspects of book production and distribution as can be conveniently fitted into the framework of the course.²

These proposals are not without complications and difficulties, but all of them, given the resources and the interest, are feasible.

New Brunswick Legislative Library

² "Education for Descriptive Bibliography," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* (18 [1979]: 29).