

tive for the working class, the NDP will succeed electorally.

Attempting to develop a blueprint for the future electoral success of the NDP, this book provides an excellent analysis of Grant Notley's leadership and of the political culture of Alberta. The contributors, however, fail to resolve the struggle between those in the party who favour ideology and those who seek power; yet the majority clearly want the NDP to act more like a traditional party in the Canadian context. As a result, this book is more concerned with how to obtain power than with any vision the NDP might have of Alberta in the future. Nevertheless, this collection of essays is essential reading for anyone interested in Alberta politics and for any party seeking to govern the province.

Kenneth Munro is an associate professor in the Department of History at the University of Alberta and a specialist in French Canadian history.

People and Place — Studies of Small Town Life in the Maritimes

edited by Larry McCann
Fredericton, N.B.: Acadiensis Press, 1987, 263 pp.

People and Place is a collection of essays written by faculty members of Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick as part of a project on small town life, sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The editor, Larry McCann, writes that the project was the faculty's "opportunity to learn about ourselves." The book can be seen as the attempt of a group of thoughtful people to reveal the deeper meaning of the place in which their lives and work are rooted. If taken as such, the book has an immediate appeal for anyone interested in the Maritimes' "regional identity."

This exercise in self-knowledge gets off to a bad start with William Godfrey's essay on "James Glenie and the Politics of Sunbury County." Loyalist themes are undeveloped and remain a mere setting for a parochial political thesis which is interesting only for specialists.

Perhaps the collection should have started closer to home; this is suggested by the more satisfying quality of Dean Jobb's essay, "Sackville promotes a Railway: The Politics of the New Brunswick and P.E.I. Railway, 1872-1866." A photograph by Thaddeus Holownia shows one of Sackville's foundries built

near the main track while a map on the next page illustrates the story: the rivalry between Sackville and Amherst to become the centre of an economic corridor between Prince Edward Island and the major port of Saint John. If you are unfamiliar with the history of the region, this essay is worth reading if only for the way Jobb portrays the diverse resource-based economy of Sackville as it took on a new manufacturing base under the direction of an energetic group of well-established local entrepreneurs. The purpose of building a railway to P.E.I. was to promote economic growth and the whole town was delighted by the shrewd political manoeuvring which successfully brought it to completion.

As a historical slice of regional life this essay is fascinating, but the reader is left startled by this image of a booming economic life which is a stark contrast to the ghost town Sackville is today. At least part of the meaning of the Maritimes — part of the mystery of the region as a whole — is focused by what happened in Sackville.

The very next essay by McCann and Burnett takes us further down what became the Inter-Colonial Railroad to New Glasgow, Nova Scotia which, during the same period, was transforming itself into a major industrial area. Another Holownia photo shows the steel plant in Trenton (along with New Glasgow, Stellarton, and Westville, these Pictou County "towns" constitute the industrial core of northern Nova Scotia) and a few pages later there are a couple of panoramic maps of New Glasgow. These maps are less informative than the map in Jobb's essay. Nevertheless, we get a visual sense of how steel and coal changed the character of the communities. The authors provide a scholarly argument that the North American rags-to-riches stories of this age were the exception to the rule in New Glasgow where a closed, traditional social hierarchy kept "things" the same even as the economy was quickly changing. However, we never get a broader politico-economic perspective on why New Glasgow never fulfilled its potential of the late nineteenth century.

Perhaps I should be satisfied with these two competent, sometimes lively accounts of Sackville and New Glasgow life, and not take seriously the editor's claim to some degree of self-knowledge. After all, as the editor writes, the authors are a "truly multidisciplinary lot" and a synthetic historical perspective is very hard to achieve. Still, I was struck by the way the collection as a whole managed to evade the phenomenon which could be the most obvious unifying theme — Confederation. This is the event ingrained in the conscious-

ness of many Maritimers and it explains a great deal about the place and the people who live here.

Maritimers are haunted by memories of the "Golden Age," which they believe characterized life in the region immediately before Confederation. According to the myth, Confederation was something we were manipulated into; it destroyed a whole way of life and the economy based on that life, and led the region into the doom and gloom of the twentieth century. (Perhaps the most accessible way for other Canadians to understand this belief is to view the National Film Board's evocative video, *Empty Harbours, Empty Dreams*.) No doubt the authors in this book cannot swallow this myth whole. Still, they cannot start to "learn about ourselves" without confronting the basic truth conveyed by the myth and its influence on the region's consciousness.

This evasion reveals the ambiguity of the book's apparent leading theme. The opening sentence of the editor's preface reiterates its subtitle — "the Maritimes is a region of small towns." The authors are supposed to have "recognized the significance of this fact," but either as an assumption or a leading theme "this fact" is nonsense. Rhyme off some of the major station stops on the railway — Moncton, Sackville, Amherst, Truro, New Glasgow and Sydney. Only Sackville can really be considered a small town, and in Jobb's essay we see that town struggling to become a large manufacturing centre; in the twentieth century it lapsed back, forever, into being a small town. In general, these railway stops signified one basic fact: the Maritime economy was changing in the late nineteenth century from the traditional fishing (or "land and sea" which captures the interaction focused in the shipping industry) to the newer industrial and manufacturing bases. This meant a shift from small town to urban life. McCann writes that "the essays group themselves quite naturally into three major themes: casting the pattern; the temporary of traditional society; and contemporary small town life." Yet the 1870s and 1880s around which the first group of essays generally revolve was the time when the traditional pattern was being broken; this time was really the "passing of traditional society."

In sum, the politico-economic themes raised in the Sackville and New Glasgow essays are not developed or complemented by the others even though economists DeBenedetti and Price write about contemporary economic trends in the Maritimes. In an atrociously jargon-ridden and mathematically obscure text, which is com-

plemented by nine statistical tables, the authors seem to want to prove all the horrible things ever said about the "dismal science." They draw the breathtaking conclusion "that towns moderately dependent on the service sector grew, and that towns highly dependent on the 'smokestack' and primary industries suffered decline." The social scientists who dominate the third section do as good a job of stifling any sign of life as decades of bureaucratically inspired mega-projects in the Maritimes have done.

The same sort of puerile "objectivity" is behind the essay "Obligations for Care in Small Towns" by Storm, Storm and Strike-Schurman who conclude, for example, that "the consensus appears to

be that children should have their needs of their elderly parents met. This is the idea of the enlightened self-interest provide. Patrick ... "Weekly Newspaper ... least readable, but ... imaginative, eclectic ... Maritime journalism ...

A welcome change ... Ross' story of "The Pictou Island." In a manner Ross traces ... from the arrival of a ... that of the Highland ... his essay resides in ... and ability to synthesize ... fully in a clear narrative ... easily sizes up the ...



be that children should be aware of the needs of their elderly parents and organize assistance." This statement gives an idea of the enlightenment the essay will provide. Patrick Baker's essay on "Weekly Newspaper Reporting" is at least readable, but fails to discuss the imaginative, eclectic and distinctively Maritime journalism that does exist.

A welcome change of pace is Eric Ross' story of "The Rise and Fall of Pictou Island." In a warm informative manner Ross traces life on the island from the arrival of a few Irish families to that of the Highland Scots. The power of his essay resides in his perceptive eye and ability to synthesize detail insightfully in a clear narrative line. The reader easily sizes up the interaction between

school relocation, television and unemployment insurance. Further in this piece, the story of the hippies arriving in the 1970s and managing to integrate their new, communal life-style into the old ways gives a cheering edge to that typical Maritime feeling of loss for what once was (whatever it was).

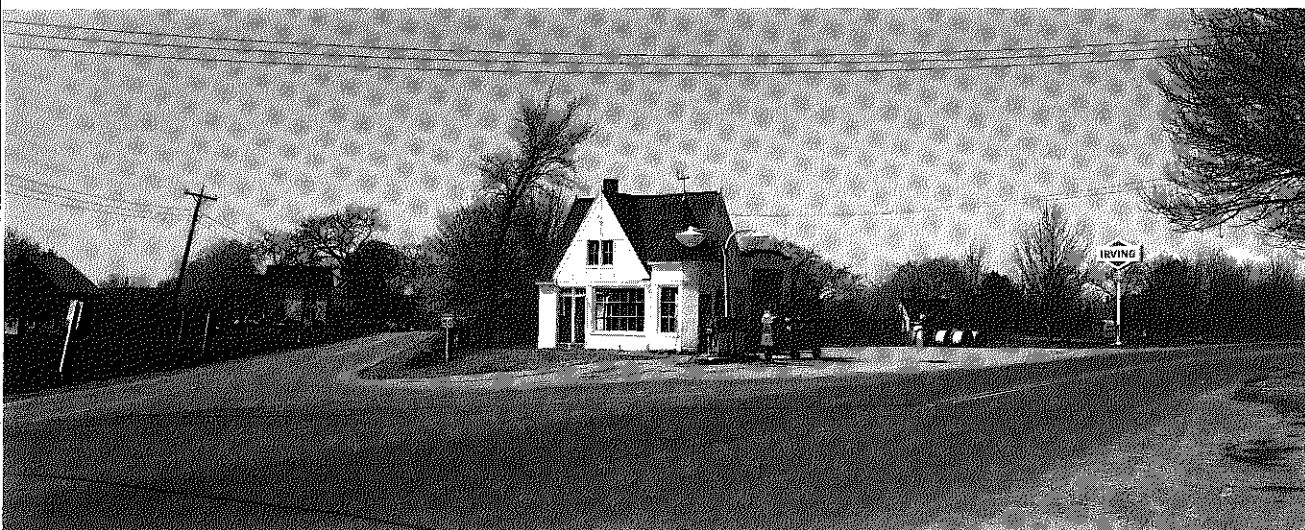
Richard Knowles' essay on "The Mulgrave Road Co-op Theatre Company" focuses that feeling in what is undoubtedly the most inspiring essay in the book. It describes a small town "occupying the rugged northeast corner of mainland Nova Scotia" coming alive in theatre and enacting its present identity by telling stories of its past. As Knowles goes through the company's various productions we meet all the

flesh and blood Maritime characters so often missing from some other essays — the fisherman most pointedly.

The inspirational quality of the essay derives from the cooperative nature of the company: townspeople become actors whose art reflects the material conditions of their lives. By this process, a historically recognized loss is turned into a gain. Still, the very fact of incorporating material conditions into one's art can turn back on itself. The whole concept is so bound up with community life that the logical artistic step of going "big-time" seems strange if not contradictory. Is always being on the road any different from going down the road?

One wonders whether the questions raised by Knowles are bound up with the

theatre only, and not with the more solitary pursuit of writing literature, for example. This collection does have two essays by Carrie MacMillan and Gwen Davies on the Maritime novel (1880s-1920s) and Maritime poetry (in the 1920s and 1930s) respectively. As the Maritimes became a more urban society its novelists and poets realized the danger of people losing their sense of place; yet it is only out of the "seaward vision," as Carrie MacMillan puts it, that a distinctively Maritime imaginative literature can be sustained. MacMillan and Davies frequently imply that the value of Maritime literature lies in this inherent tension because there is no avoiding the fact that it is not good enough, not tough enough to let the place speak for



photographs by Thaddeus Holownia
reprinted from *People and Place*

itself. Rather, love of place often intrudes in a gushing fashion in the description of natural phenomena, and the sense of loss for a passing way of life invariably becomes nostalgia.

This is a pity because the best Maritime art does possess that toughness which can juxtapose historical loss with some promise not of "a future" but of what is here now. The paintings of Alex Colville and novels of David Adam Richards come to mind. However confining the small town mentality may be, some primal identification between people and place remains. And this makes the obsessive dream of Toronto to become a "world-class city" seem parochial indeed. The photography of Thaddeus Holownia often captures this sense brilliantly (in his marshland work, for example), but the photographs reproduced in this book fail to do justice to his vision. Perhaps the theme of "Gas Station" is just not to my taste; but the failure of the photographic images undoubtedly has something to do with a straightforwardly inappropriate context. *People and Place* itself, in fact, is a highly uneven collection of essays looking for an appropriate context.

Roderick Nicholls is a Philosophy professor at the University College of Cape Breton.



photograph by Thaddeus Holownia, reprinted from *People and Place*

Still circulating, slowly working their way in from the periphery, the Native margins in this country: stories, rumours, half-truths, lies, myths. Stories about pipelines, about hydro-electric projects, about the sporadic explosions of violence, about mercury poisoning. Stories that are the by-product of, or the sub-plots in a larger pattern of the systematic, continuing oppression of the aboriginal inhabitants of Canada. Somewhere in these sub-plots – as in the case of the two stories you will read about here, the story of a doctor or the story of a uranium mine – we perhaps catch a glimpse of these historical processes in their everyday disguise, as experiences. And, more rarely, a glimpse of how the historical process of dispossessing Native people is resisted on a day-to-day level, of the struggle that life has become in these margins, of the ways Native people find to fight against the Canadian State and international capital.

The two stories reviewed below illustrate, in part, that this struggle spills over the boundary of political economy as we narrowly conceive it, and even over the boundary of culture as that concept is exchanged in Native Studies. The struggle has come to inform every aspect of life, however we might choose to analytically slice it up. So, in one case we hear a story of how medical care in a small Native community is a highly charged, political issue. In the other, of how a large uranium mining project changes (threatens?) the way of life of another community by destroying the environmental basis of traditional Native pursuits. Some of these stories are told well, others badly; but I think we must read them all carefully and learn what we can, piece together what we can, because in some way or another we have a role to play. What we know helps to determine that oldest of political questions, whose side we're on.

Peter Kulchyski teaches Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

An Error in Judgment: The Politics of Medical Care in an Indian/White Community
by Dara Culhane Speck
Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987,
281 pp.

Alert Bay, the setting for Dara Culhane Speck's *An Error in Judgment: The Politics of Medical Care in an Indian/White Community*, is located on Cormorant Island off the northern tip of Vancouver Island. I read this book the week I returned home to Denman Island, also offshore, midway up the eastern coast of the Island. Like the weather, Speck's book was grey, dark and disturbing.

Renee Smith, an eleven-year-old member of the Nimpkish Indian Band, died in an Alert Bay hospital of a ruptured appendix on January 22nd, 1979. The author, a Band member by marriage, details the death and the events

which followed. The far more than a mere. These include: the inquest, a provincial by the Band; the College of Physicians revoke the licence of the sician found responsible for the death of an over woman from an over arrival in Alert Bay physician; his subsequent suicide; and, finally, into health care in Alert Bay is a carefully crafted how, exactly, the "p". The author intersperses with background on and Native communities the history of the community on Kwakwaka'wakw organization and health care in Canada B.C. in particular.

The result is a story, not only to our myriad of issues which Nations in this country methodology, researching.

Stories about Denman focuses on Dr. Pickism, negligence as a vehicle to historical and political which the administration and Indian health. The book is an ambitious portrayal of social condition, conflict and small community dynamics. Her analysis convincingly exposes the colonial attitudes of Alert Bay. Her analysis and supremacy is searched. Using a descriptive analysis of the situation in the community from local papers around the controversy and transcript inquiries, Speck puts colonial, assimilative attitudes are merely political past.

Her treatment of the community is open, honest does not gloss over conflicts and destruction her own adopted perhaps best illustrated comes of the boycott inquiry. Noting the administration of the hospital, the Province mends the appointment Eric Powell, an A