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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Schoodic Point: History on the Edge of Acadia National Park.* By Allen K. Workman (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014. Pp. 160. Paper. \$19.99)

The strength of Allen K. Workman's environment-focused history of Schoodic Point lies in his straightforward acknowledgement that the point and the land that now comprises Acadia National Park is a man-altered landscape. Avoiding the counterfactual romanticization of pristine wilderness, Workman escapes one of the key pitfalls that sully other popular historical accounts of national parks. In his introduction, Workman states that "however primitive this conserved land of forested shoreline may still appear, it has over time endured many severe impacts of civilization on its environment." (11) The rest of the book supports this statement, as Workman explores how humans have shaped the point, starting with the Wabanaki and ending with the creation of Acadia National Park. He covers the use of the island for timber supply and agriculture, both industries that make a clear mark on the land; however, Workman also discusses the ecological impact of sea-based economic activities, namely fishing and lobstering, that left less recognizable impacts on the land. Emphasis throughout the book on the signs of prior human activity on the island that still dot the landscape, such as apple trees and the remnants of John G. Moore's road bridgehead, add relatable credence to Workman's overarching argument.

*Schoodic Point's* narrative becomes less-compelling during the portions of the book in which Workman enumerates upon the biographies of individual settlers. These tales of rugged individualism may prove more relevant to readers who have a personal relationship to the landscape in question and are more interested in the regional minutiae of the book. These settler accounts do have a strongpoint though, which is Workman's inclusion of the experiences and details of female settlers, illustrating that these women's lives are worth more attention than a sentence stating to whom they were married. Workman also effectively illustrates the class-divide that marks the transition from a landscape of work to a landscape of leisure and preservation. In Workman's account, it is the prosperous, often elite, nature-starved, urban visitors and investors that come to the point for recreation, and exploitation of this de-

mand for recreation, that put the wheels in motion for the eventual creation of Acadia National Park.

Workman rightly recognizes that the establishment of Acadia National Park in 1916 did not mark the cessation of development on the point, but rather the beginning of a different variety of development. He describes the relationship of the naval base to the park and how road building and other projects aimed to increase the park's accessibility altered the landscape. *Schoodic Point* covers the history of this landscape effectively at the micro-level; however, there are points in the book that beg for broader historical context. For instance, a discussion of how Acadia National Park fits into broader American and North American national park trajectories and historiography would enhance Workman's argument. Acadia is a noted departure from the sublime national parks of the West, and Workman's research fits well with Alan MacEachern's treatment of national parks just across the border in Atlantic Canada, in his 2001 book, *Natural Selections* (McGill-Queen's). The spirit of *Schoodic Point*, however, rests firmly in the realm of local history, and at this Workman shines. His environmental and social history of Schoodic Point is both entertaining and informative, making the unique and fascinating history of this small part of the continent accessible to a general audience, as well as providing a strong platform from which future historians can continue to study the area.

Jessica DeWitt  
*University of Saskatchewan*

*The Irish of Portland, Maine: A History of Forest City Hibernians.* By Matthew Jude Barker. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014. Pp. 160. Paper. \$19.99)

In *The Irish of Portland, Maine: A History of Forest City Hibernians*, Matt Barker continues his recounting of an important immigrant and ethnic experience in Maine's largest city. Though not a comparative work, Baker's study raises issues still relevant for new immigrant groups and for the city and state that (sometimes) welcomes them. Primarily about nineteenth-century Portland (extending to 1901), this brief overview describes the lives of people forced from their homeland by famine and imperialism. In mid-nineteenth-century Portland, as elsewhere in the United States, the Irish confronted a new social and physical environment and a reception both friendly—in terms of providing

work—and hostile, especially toward their Catholic religion. Immigrants and their children responded by clustering in neighborhoods close to the waterfront and other work, including Gorham's Corner and Munjoy Hill, and by creating their own political, social, and religious institutions. As Barker notes, these included the Sisters of Mercy, who, in creating schools, hospitals, and orphanages, formed a safety network not provided by the government or provided inequitably by primarily Protestant welfare groups.

Barker draws upon his own extensive research in primary sources, especially that of newsprint media and his photographic collection. He also builds upon his previous work and that of other historians, such as that compiled by editor Michael Connolly in *They Change Their Sky: The Irish in Maine* (Orono, Maine: University of Maine Press, 2004). Barker states in his introduction that he intends a more comprehensive study that will go into the twentieth century, which should answer some questions his work leaves unanswered. For one thing—perhaps because of this intended sequel—this book has no conclusion. This narrative is aimed at a local audience interested in this subject of the Irish community in Portland. Partly due to this focus, and to space constraints, there is little analysis of the meaning of this story and its relationship to the Irish experience in America or even specifically in Maine.

Strengths include a social-history focus and a wide topical breadth, from the sinking of the *Bohemian* in 1864 to the Civil War and rowing clubs. Barker also emphasizes the role of Irish women within workplaces, families, religious institutions, and dubious enterprises like bootlegging. Perhaps future studies will discuss further the underside of Irish life, including less amusing criminal activity, domestic violence (mentioned briefly), family abandonment, hazardous employment, and disease. While it is surely too much to ask of a short narrative account, I hope that it will inspire others to ask more comparative questions suggested by this fascinating content. How does the Irish experience compare with that of other immigrant and migrant groups? With which groups did they, cooperate, quarrel, and intermarry? We know from Michael Connolly's study of the Portland longshoremen that hostility towards African Americans was part of the Irish work experience. Did it shape the Irish response to the Civil War draft? What were the twentieth-century repercussions of this experience?

Barker shows how one immigrant group “became American” by fighting to preserve some of its culture (including language), creating insular groups, and adjusting to a new world. Adaptation included ef-

forts at naturalization and participation in local and international politics. I'm sure we will see more in the twentieth-century story. Barker's account of the Portland Irish efforts for famine relief in the nineteenth century reminds us that Portland and its changing population have always been part of the world, looking backward and outward, as well as inward and forward.

Eileen Eagan  
*University of Southern Maine*

*The Negotiator: A Memoir.* By George J. Mitchell. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015. Pp. 416. Hardcover. \$28.00)

By almost any measure, George Mitchell has led an extraordinary life. In this memoir—his fifth book—he skillfully weaves together some of the most compelling, funny, dramatic, and poignant stories from his life in and beyond Maine. In doing so, he shares important lessons upon which we can all reflect to lead better, and more meaningful, lives.

The chapters about Mitchell's early life will likely be of special interest to the readers of *Maine History*. He and his four siblings grew up in Waterville in a close-knit family. His father, the orphan son of Irish immigrants, often worked as a janitor when he could find employment. Mitchell's mother emigrated from Lebanon at eighteen and worked nights at textile mills while raising her children with her husband. Although his father's formal education ended after the fourth grade and his mother never learned to read or write English, both stressed the value of education to their children, all of whom went on to complete college degrees.

Readers may be surprised to learn that Mitchell's interest in politics was not an early passion. While studying European history at Bowdoin College, he contemplated a career as a history professor. Instead, he pursued a law degree in Georgetown University's evening program while working as an insurance adjuster. Intending to return to Maine to practice law, he was unable to find a job with a Maine law firm and so he joined the staff of Senator Edmund Muskie ("... the smartest person I ever met"), changing the course of his life—and that of the world—forever. (353)

In striking contrast to current American political discourse—all-too-often tainted by harangue and hubris—Mitchell's story illustrates his steadfast commitment to building productive relationships in Con-

gress. Immediately after being elected Senate majority leader, he visited Senate minority leader Bob Dole. Acknowledging the challenges they would face in leading the Senate, Mitchell committed to abide by simple norms (e.g., open communication, respect for their differing views and values, no personal attacks) that could help foster cooperation despite their differing political views. Dole wholeheartedly reciprocated. Of their six years working together as Senate leaders, Mitchell states: “We negotiated hundreds of agreements . . . but not once did a harsh word ever pass between us, in public or private.” (164-165)

Despite the book’s title, Mitchell received no formal training in negotiation or conflict resolution. But he got more than his share of on-the-job training in his efforts to resolve conflicts in the Senate, Northern Ireland, the Middle East, as chair of Disney’s Board of Directors during a period of corporate turmoil, and when investigating the problem of performance-enhancing drugs in Major League Baseball.

Mitchell writes with eloquence and passion about the scholarship program he created to help needy Maine high school students pay for a college education. Especially because of the personal and financial insecurities he experienced growing up, Mitchell recognized the critical importance of a college education in building self-esteem and nurturing future leaders and engaged citizens. Indeed, the majority of these Mitchell Scholars have been the first in their families to obtain a bachelor’s degree. Of his program, which has provided scholarships to nearly 2,300 students, Mitchell writes: “I’ve done a lot in my life [but] I’ve never done anything better or more meaningful.” (347)

In the book’s final chapters, Mitchell reflects on the enduring lessons of his life and work—the value of listening more than talking, being perseverant and patient in the search for solutions, taking risks, and being ready when chance presents new opportunities. Here and elsewhere, Mitchell is forthright in acknowledging his mistakes. His unwavering commitment to learn from those mistakes reminds us that they are an inevitable part of trail-blazing efforts.

Taken together, these stories of Mitchell’s life serve as a powerful symbol of the triumph of hope over despair, of courage over fear, of the resolute over the wavering, of a belief in a better world over acquiescence to the status quo. With its rare combination of wisdom, compassion, and vision, *The Negotiator* can serve as an invaluable source of insight and inspiration for an increasingly complex world.

David D. Hart  
*Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions*  
*University of Maine*

*The Visual Language of Wabanaki Art.* By Jeanne Morningstar Kent (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014. Pp. 142. Paper. \$19.99)

Rich with stunning images of historical and contemporary artwork from “Wabanaki” peoples (defined by the author as the Micmac, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, and Abenaki tribes) this book presents, describes and interprets symbols and motifs found in several art forms from several Northeastern tribes. Embroidered clothing (moose hair, porcupine quills, glass beads), carved pipes (but not root clubs or walking sticks), incised birch bark, woven bags (but not baskets) are all well represented in the many images scattered throughout the book as well as in the color plates located in the centerfold. The author is an enrolled member of the state-recognized Coosuk-Abenaki tribe of Vermont. Kent is also a retired art teacher and works as a consultant with the Institute for Native American Studies in Washington, Connecticut. Additionally, she is an artist who uses beadwork, makes dream catchers and Native American dolls, children’s games and especially gourd rattles. Many of the images she uses are from the Mount Kearsage Indian Museum in Warner, New Hampshire, some from the Mashantucket Pequot museum in Connecticut and some from the Abbe Museum in Maine.

The author lists a number of design elements (such as trees, flowers, animals, sky), provides an Abenaki translation when there is a corresponding word, and, where possible, provides an explanation of the meaning of that design element. Not all designs have a deeper meaning—some represent the natural world (a leaf or flower) but some refer to a story. This is especially true of much of Passamaquoddy artist Tomah Joseph’s birch bark designs. He often incorporated themes from traditional literature in his designs. Kent does not discuss this aspect of the Joseph’s designs to any extent. However, she does provide a simple history of the changes in the design elements in these art forms pre- and post-contact. She also points out that much of the earlier work, created as it was with fabric and birch bark, has been lost to the natural elements of weather. The earliest designs for which there is a record occur on some stone tools and on petroglyphs.

Symmetry of design is the dominant factor in Wabanaki design elements as described by Kent, most strikingly in the use of double curve motifs and common division of designs into four units. The author also adds some useful discussion on the method of *sgraffito* (scraping) designs on birch bark. Common among the Algonquians but not in the



Northeast is the use of negative inscribing—scraping away the background to reveal the design (background is dark), while the Wabanaki use mostly positive inscribing—scraping the design itself into the bark (design is dark). Kent, however, notes that recent artists are using both ways of creating designs as well as stamping, which is not seen in older materials.

Kent describes and explains some of the design elements and shapes, which she claims were not always named. Some of these common symbols include air, arch, arrow, crosshatch, circle, comets, crescents, crosses and so on. The double curve motif is *abebikawtaha wawioگان* in Abenaki. She relates that these are actually symbols denoting alliances; they are political symbols and most commonly used to decorate clothing and personal items.

Finally, Kent's work includes interviews with eight contemporary artists from across the region: five are from Maine, the rest are Abenaki from Vermont and Canada. I think the book would be useful to Native Studies classes or to anyone interested in Wabanaki culture and arts.

Pauleena MacDougall  
*University of Maine*

*Bar Harbor in the Roaring Twenties: From Village Life to the High Life on Mount Desert Island.* By Luann Yetter. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2015. Pp. 128. Paper. \$21.99)

Bar Harbor, Mount Desert Island, and Acadia National Park: What other Maine landscapes have as storied and entangled histories within such a small footprint? Given the area's influence upon Maine history—as well as the history of landscape tourism in the Northeast—one would expect a mountainous bibliography of scholarship. However, among the mounds of publications on summer display, local varieties abound. Where have all the scholars gone? It is high time for historians to wade seriously into the misty history of Mount Desert. The haul promises to be good.

Luann Yetter's *Bar Harbor in the Roaring Twenties* illustrates the assets and deficits of local history and the rich potential for scholars of future histories of Mount Desert. Yetter, a writing instructor at the University of Maine at Farmington, has cleverly focused on a single decade

passed over in other histories of Bar Harbor and the Island. A self-described discoverer and teller of good historical stories, Yetter has fashioned lively narratives around memorable people and local incidents, largely at Bar Harbor, between Armistice Day in 1918 and the Great Crash of 1929. This narrative framework implies an arc of declension; tellingly, the book's subtitle portends a stolen decade's joy ride, "from village life to the high life" (9).

Each of the dozen brisk chapters is titled after a catchy quote and enticingly sprinkled with period images. Yetter frequently and skillfully animates her stories through contemporary quotations and artful characterizations of individual actors and interesting scenes. Like an early moving picture, the chapters portray vignettes with dramatic flair: patriotic soldiers and tragic endings; winter carnivals and summer horse shows; rum-running escapades; death by fire and ice; visits by a tsunami and a great dirigible; pioneering cancer research; clubs, balls, parades, autos, radios; and, alas, the demise of outer-island communities along with Bar Harbor high society. These vivid stories will surely appeal to The History Press's intended market.

Regrettably, the book misses its fuller potential as historical scholarship. Reading it feels like thumbing through the Island's early newspapers, and therein lies the leading deficit of Yetter's work and the critical problem with similar narrative and local histories. The book "reports the major stories of the day," as the foreword's author correctly states (10); however, it does not engage critical historical analysis. Yetter does not reference any scholarship related to the 1920s and rarely scrutinizes the events she narrates. Citations do not exist, and the bibliography is comprised almost entirely of newspaper sources. The book's shortfalls are not new to the century-old production of myth-making histories about Mount Desert. Fortunately, the Mount Desert Island Historical Society's magazine, *Chebacco*, has begun to seed a historiographical landscape generally deserted of academic works.

In her engaging exploration of this singular decade, Yetter has provided a valuable road map for future historians. Further studies of the era would do well to integrate the park more fully and to extend the scope from the park's 1916 founding to the Great Fire in 1947, a period that also brackets the two world wars and George B. Dorr's reign as first superintendent. Examining the enterprises of Dorr and his associates would also highlight enduring debates over and competing visions of Mount Desert's past and future. As American modernism roared

through Bar Harbor in the Twenties, unprecedented efforts produced and memorialized the past at Mount Desert. In 1931, public controversies erupted over the mountain names and carriage roads (both involving Dorr), exposing conflicting views of the Island's past and future. The 1920s was a pivotal decade concerning the future development of Mount Desert and the power of its past. That history is full of riches.

Nathan H. Price  
National Cathedral School

*The Franco-Americans of Lewiston-Auburn.* By Mary Rice-DeFosse and James Myall. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2015. Pp. 176. Paper. \$19.99)

From the first arrivals of French-Canadian migrants to the present day, authors Mary Rice-DeFosse and James Myall draw a portrait of the Franco-American community of Maine's Twin Cities in *The Franco-American of Lewiston-Auburn*. Identity is the guiding thread of this monograph, which retraces the life and experiences of this community from 1860 to 2014.

The monograph is organized chronologically, with each chapter corresponding to a defining period. The first chapter, "New arrivals from the North (1860-1890)," introduces people and the places, allowing readers to familiarize themselves with the origins, settlement patterns, and principal institutions of the community. Chapter Two, "A Franco-American Belle Époque (1890-1914)," reflects a period of significant population growth within the Franco-American community of Lewiston-Auburn. In this chapter, the authors address the social and political life of the community, as well as the emergence of a distinctive Franco-American identity, which was defined by a commitment to both American citizenship and Canadian and European French culture.

While Chapter Two presented what the authors referred to as a golden age for the community, the following period—as the title of Chapter Three, "Hard Times (1914-1941)," indicates—was a theater for numerous exogenous hardships such as natural disaster and economic depression. The authors also highlight a concurrent growth of nationalism in America during this period, which exposed populations from a

non-English Protestant background to discrimination. For Franco-Americans, these aggressions and the pressure to assimilate contributed to the strengthening of the *Survivance* movement.

Subtitled “Acculturation, Negotiation, Affirmation (1941-1970),” Chapter Four, “New Horizons,” highlights the irony of Franco-Americans being valued for their language in military service while being mocked for it in civilian life. For many, escaping prejudice meant submitting to Americanization. The influence of the entertainment industry, along with the increased cost of sending children to private parish schools, brought the English language into French-speaking families’ homes.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a new Franco-American identity emerged, according to the authors. Chapter Five, “Renaissance and Reinvention (1970-2014),” shows the acknowledgement of the prejudice and stereotypes suffered by Franco-Americans and highlights their new identity, which the authors describe as being American with French roots. A newfound interest in ethnic diversity in the United States provides the perfect context for the community to celebrate its culture and identity, and the book’s last chapter presents numerous resources for and about contemporary Franco-Americans.

Franco-Americans shaped the urban, social, and political landscape of the Lewiston-Auburn area, and the authors bring their story full-circle by mentioning today’s French-speaking Sub-Saharan African immigrants in both the introduction and the conclusion. In doing so, they highlight the importance of immigration in shaping the special identity of Maine’s Twin Cities. The numerous illustrations and archival documents reproduced in the book provide the reader with interesting visuals that support the authors’ arguments. If some parts of this work seem anecdotal, the use of a collection of oral interviews as well as the choice to focus on a selection of key individuals in the community contribute to a relatable narrative. *The Franco-Americans of Lewiston-Auburn* is a good introduction to one of Maine’s most important ethnic groups and, more broadly, to the Lewiston-Auburn area. The division of the chapters into short sub-themes also makes it an easy and accessible read for lay audiences, while maintaining its value as an academic resource. This book would be particularly useful for anyone teaching in the areas of Franco-American studies, Francophone studies, and Maine history.

Elisa Sance  
*University of Maine*