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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Camp, Helen B. *Archaeological Excavations at Pemaquid, Maine 1965-1974*. Augusta, Maine State Museum, 1975. 89 pages. \$6.95 paper.

Historical archaeologists, students of colonial America, and historians of early Maine will welcome Helen Camp's report based on nine years of archaeological work at Pemaquid. Her report consists of information derived from excavating fourteen building sites on the Pemaquid peninsula that date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In extent and value, this recent account far surpasses the author's earlier report on the same topic, *Pemaquid Lost and Found*, which Ancient Pemaquid Restoration published in 1967.

In the new publication, Edwin Churchill provides a brief, authoritative historical background for colonial Pemaquid, defending its inhabitants from that unforgettable libel by a royal commission which stated that downeast, "as many men may share in a woman as they do in a boat, and some have done so." Churchill describes the settlers of that battle-scarred region as hard-working fishing-farming-trading people continually beset by conflicting land claims from within and by foreign enemies from without. In the long run, the legal controversies over land proved more detrimental to the colony's future than the persistent attacks by pirates, Indians, and the French.

Churchill's brief introduction demonstrates the sort of information an historian can derive from the traditional literary sources. Helen Camp's report, in contrast, indicates the techniques and data characteristic of the historical archaeologist. Her chief function, typically, is the disciplined discovery, identification, analysis, and report of physical remains. Generally it is the historian who must provide the interpretive and contextual overview. Thus,

Helen Camp's report consists of five rather technical and analytical chapters, followed by a conclusion of only a page and a half.

She opens by describing the remains of the fourteen structures she has excavated so far, their salient features, and the distinctive artifacts that helped date and determine the nature of the building. What follows is one of the most valuable portions of the report—a pictorial presentation of significant artifacts: glassware, pottery and ceramics, iron tools, hardware, fire arms, agricultural implements, fishing gear, household items, coins, buttons, trade goods, etc. It is a pity that the State Museum did not see fit to publish in color some of these pictures, especially those of pottery and ceramics, since color plays so great a part in their identification.

The second part of the Pemaquid report analyzes these finds, especially the clay pipes. In 1954, James C. Harrington discovered that the diameter of a clay pipe stem decreased one sixty-fourth of an inch every 30-40 years during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the Harrington scale, pipe stems prior to 1620 were nine sixty-fourths, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, diameters had dwindled to a mere four sixty-fourths. 96 per cent of Ms. Camp's 8000 pipe stem fragments measured five sixty-fourths in diameter; this corresponded to the years 1710-1750 on the Harrington scale and meant that this was Pemaquid's period of peak population. Similarly the author examines the pipe stem fragments for each building site to help determine relative age and periods of occupancy for each structure.

Pipe bowls are almost as valuable as pipe stems. Their size, shape, decorative motifs, and manufacturers' marks are valuable clues, not only for dating, but sometimes even for locating the place of manufacture. Ms. Camp's numerous diagrams and illustrations make this one of the most interesting and useful sections of her report.

By contrast, Chapter IV consists solely of tables indicating the type and quantity of artifacts found not only within each building site, but also on the surface nearby. Without any interpretative comment, this is the most difficult section of the report to appreciate.

Perhaps the most famous discoveries at Pemaquid were two graves, the body in one partially covered by copper plates. Public excitement over this "Viking grave" disappeared when it proved to be an Indian. In Chapter V, Ms. Camp discusses the two Indian graves discovered at Pemaquid and the curious burial custom among some Maine Indians of covering their dead with sheets of copper.

The significance of this nine years of archaeological activity is difficult for Ms. Camp to define. In part this is because there is so much yet to do. Her brief conclusion indicates that to date there has been little to contradict the views of Pemaquid that historians have presented from traditional literary sources. But there has been much to amplify that view. In particular, the indications of a "good" life well beyond mere subsistence are significant. The existence of china porcelain, fine wineglasses, etched glassware, silver thimbles, wigs, etc. all demonstrate a level of existence which could sustain an appreciation for things of beauty. Ms. Camp points out that a cultural level like this on the eastern frontier amidst such violence was no mean accomplishment.

For anyone interested in the physical remains of early Maine, this is an important publication. A major problem confronting historical archaeologists is how to share and compare their findings with others. The Maine State Museum is to be congratulated for publishing so valuable a resource work in a field notoriously lacking in such publications.

Perhaps in a later follow-up report, Ms. Camp could develop some themes left untouched in her present work. For instance, what do the foundations of the fourteen structures tell us about the structures themselves? Do their size, nail pattern, hearth and room layout indicate something about what the buildings looked like? Animal remains offer another intriguing series of questions. Do the bones suggest the kinds of meat the colonists consumed—pig, sheep, beef? Or perhaps the bones and teeth might demonstrate that the colonists were more interested in hunting deer and moose rather than raising their own domestic meat. A house by house analysis of bones might also reveal differences in economic and social structure as reflected in the types of food consumed.

Even without such considerations, however, Helen Camp's *Archaeological Excavations at Pemaquid, Maine* is a major contribution to our understanding of early colonial Maine and its settlers.

James S. Leamon
Bates College

McManis, Douglas R. *Colonial New England: A Historical Geography*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1975. pp. xiv, 159. \$8.95 cloth, \$5.95 paper.

This little book is one of the early volumes in the "Historical Geography of North America" series. Though intended primarily for the classroom, it would be useful to any reader who seeks a quick and easy survey of the fairly recent historical literature on the settlement and economy of early New England. For Professor McManis's strongest suit, at least as displayed in this volume, is the rapid summary and synthesis of the well-selected list of secondary works that provide the substance of his essay. Appropriate titles from this list, rich but far from

overwhelming, take their place as “suggested references” at the end of each of McManis’s five chapters, providing all there is by way of documentation.

The purpose of the series, according to the publisher’s blurb, is to provide “a small library of thematic studies,” each describing geographic change in the region of its concentration by considering “the interaction, in time and space, of people, place and location” (not explaining the precise difference between place and location).

Professor McManis does the job expected of him, and within the limits of the assignment does it well — except that the title is misleading in that he concentrates exclusively upon that portion of North America that was settled by the English and which subsequently became the United States. The reader who is only passingly familiar with the discipline of geography will need to be told that the author’s main stress is on “cultural” geography — on, that is to say, geographic space as affected by human activity. Once that is understood, no reader with sufficient interest in the New England past to sustain him through some rather dreary prose should have any trouble with McManis’s concepts or presentation.

The central theme of McManis’s treatment is the transformation of what he repeatedly calls the “indigenous landscape” of North America into a “Europeanized” landscape. This process, he says, was begun and completed before the American Revolution—a sound enough view from the perspective of most colonial historians, I dare say, if neither original nor terribly profound. But then, neither originality nor great profundity is necessarily the hallmark of a successful synthesis, which is what each book in this series ought to be above all.

The first three chapters get at that transformation by treating three large themes in their proper chronological

order: "Pre-Settlement European Contacts," "Beginnings of English Settlement," and "Settlement and Demographic Patterns." In the first chapter, Maine readers should find McManis's brief discussion of the sixteenth-century myth of "Norumbega" especially interesting. In the third, they will find a quick discussion, derived from some recent work on the subject, of the development of some eighteenth-century Maine frontier towns.

Chapters four and five deal with the economic activities that were founded on the resources of New England and which ultimately played a powerful role in the transformation of the "landscape" from native to European. A short epilogue takes the reader through the Revolutionary era. There is a small problem with these last two and one-half pages because of the introduction of several new concepts, most notably of ideas surrounding the process of industrialization, that cannot be developed adequately in such brief compass, even for purposes of such a swiftly-moving book as this.

Colonial New England is certainly worth the little time it takes to read. Those who teach courses in New England or colonial American history, whether to advanced high school students or college undergraduates, might consider adding McManis to their reading lists. The bibliography alone could be sufficient attraction for some instructional purposes. Other readers of this journal will learn from Professor McManis how to look at colonial New England through a geographer's eyes, get a quick survey of some good books on the subject, and gain substantial factual enlightenment along the way. In addition, they will undergo a painless lesson in the discipline of historical geography itself.

Charles E. Clark
University of New Hampshire

Melvin, Charlotte L. *Madawaska: A Chapter in Maine-New Brunswick Relations*. Madawaska, Madawaska Historical Society, 1975. vii, 86, xxvi, pages. \$5.00 paper.

Charlotte L. Melvin's examination of the Maine-New Brunswick border dispute was intended to focus upon the effect of the struggle on the Acadian community in Madawaska. While presenting a clear exposition of the escalating political and economic events which brought the dispute to crisis proportions in 1839, and eventual settlement in 1842, she fails to substantiate her claim that the development and progress of the Acadian community was retarded and "hindered by the great boundary controversy."

As in other histories dedicated to the examination of particular events, claims are made which are often difficult to support. The author seems to have this difficulty not only with the issue of effect on the local community but also as to the potential inherent in this conflict for an Anglo-American war. While the struggle for timber and land was eminently important to Maine and New Brunswick, it must be pointed out that it was of lesser importance to Washington and London. Contrary to accepted Maine tradition, there is little evidence to suggest that England or the United States were willing to wage war and jeopardize their mutually beneficial trading relations for the grasping timber entrepreneurs of Maine and New Brunswick. As to the Acadian settlers on the frontier, both sides seemed to have regarded them as caretakers to be ignored in the final disposition of the valuable territory. Neither side made great claims or evidenced any real desire to protect or extend the civil or property rights of the original tenants. It is all too clear that both regarded the issue to be one of profit not people.

Given these attitudes on the part of the protagonists, it is unfortunate that the author does not deal more

insightfully with the people “in the middle.” While her descriptions of the Acadian community in Madawaska are justifiably limited by a lack of source material, she shows an amazing lack of understanding of the basic nature of that society. The Acadian community was a peasant community, one in which progress and development were not particularly valued. Church, family and land were valued far above education, economic advancement or the alien concept of “progress.” Retaining their traditional society, providing their basic needs and producing a little extra for outside trade goods and comforts was sufficient for this isolated communitarian society.

It is little wonder that outside observers, who cherished economic growth and development, should regard them as a people who “have no great taste for building and improving, being generally content with mere necessities,” or people who were, “more fond of the fiddle than the hoe.” To the Yankee individualists they seemed to be a slothful and unproductive people. It is interesting that an observer of the Acadians’ cousins in Canada should come to much the same conclusion about Quebec society:

The English colonist amasses means and makes no superfluous expense; the French enjoys what he has and often parades what he has not. The former works for his heirs; the latter leaves his in the need in which he is himself, to get along as best he can!¹

The author has, in some sense, accepted these pejorative ethnocentric assessments and attempted to explain away the society’s “backwardness” by laying the blame on the boundary dispute. But in so doing she contradicts her thesis by pointing out, that while land tenure was a problem, the community continued to grow and expand. Few Acadians abandoned their holdings, churches continued to be built, the population increased and settlement spread along the river. The normal functioning of life seems not to have been affected to any great degree. The Acadians were apparently content to accept any

government as long as it did not infringe upon the basic continuity of their society. In their long struggle for survival the Acadians had withstood the machinations of the French and the English, and it was clear that their society would survive the alien domination of the Americans. In that struggle for survival lies the true heroism and history of the Acadians of the Madawaska valley.

Herman Ganzevoort
University of Calgary

¹ Pierre-Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix, S.J., *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, III, (Paris 1744), 79.

Mundy, James H. and Shettleworth, Earle G., Jr. *The Flight of the Grand Eagle: Charles G. Bryant, Maine Architect and Adventurer*. Augusta, Maine Historic Preservation Commission. 1977. 155 pages. Free upon request. 50¢ postage.

This crisp, scholarly work is a triumph of dogged research and commands greater respect than any Maine biography in recent years. Powered by the combined talents of two of this state's more capable historians, James Mundy and Earle Shettleworth, *The Flight of the Grand Eagle* will hopefully serve as a prototype for future Maine biographies. It is perhaps this pooling of skill and knowledge that helps to explain the book's success. As a point of comparison, Benjamin Lease's recent biography, *That Wild Fellow John Neal and the American Literary Revolution*, discloses only a facet of Neal's character. A good writer and researcher, Professor Lease contributes greatly to our understanding of Neal as a literary figure, but pointedly ignores Neal's more lasting contributions as an art critic and patron. Messrs. Mundy and Shettleworth

come closer to producing a whole man: flesh and blood. In the process, they lead us to a clearer understanding of Maine politics and events along the Canadian border. No researcher can fail to admire the way in which the authors have resurrected Charles G. Bryant (1803-1850) from the obscurity of what seems to have been a nineteenth-century political cover-up.

Charles G. Bryant came from a large and struggling Maine family, but managed a solid education, which probably included some study with the architect, Alexander Parris. Around 1824, he established himself at Bangor as a housewright. He seems to have arrived at a pre-ordained moment, for Bangor was in the midst of a lumber boom, and the newly-rich merchants sought residential and business buildings befitting their means. In 1830, Bryant became Maine first professional architect. His many Greek Revival homes and buildings, including the Bangor House (1833-1834), the Mercantile Bank (1833-1834), the Pine Street Methodist Church (1836-1837), and one of America's first garden cemeteries, Mount Hope (1834-1836), are carefully documented. Bryant emerges as one of the nation's first urban planners, a capable engineer, and one of the most gifted provincial architects of the 1830's.

The Panic of 1837, the worst depression since the Embargo of 1807, ended Bangor's building spree, and put Bryant out of business. Paralleling his architectural career, was Bryant's sociopolitical rise in militia and mechanic circles. In 1833, an anti-Irish disturbance turned into a three-day orgy of pillage, burning, and assault. While all official accounts of the incident have vanished, it is known that Captain Bryant successfully crushed the riot as soon as his militia company was ordered up. The young soldier became the darling of the politicians, and a confidant of the lumber barons. Like many young men of the day, Bryant came to consider himself somewhat of a military

expert. It is therefore not surprising that he joined the nearby Canadian Rebellion in hopes of making his fortune. Intelligent, articulate, and not adverse to telling a well-placed lie, Captain Bryant marched across the Vermont border with an army of Canadian rebels in late 1837. Driven back at Moore's Corners, he then involved himself in two more invasion attempts in the next months. Falsely claiming to have fought in Texas, the Bangorian was made the military advisor to the Canadian rebel leader, Dr. Robert Nelson. At the same time, Bryant opened a military academy at Bangor and openly recruited American volunteers. Bryant's high-placed connections in Maine politics and his military bearing gained him the confidence of Nelson who believed, probably quite correctly, that Bryant was the agent of Governor Edward Kent. The degree of Kent's involvement in the Canadian Rebellion is uncertain; but with the Maine lumber interest, he favored a weak Canadian Republic in the Aroostook border negotiations. Trusted by the Canadians, Bryant became one of three Divisional Commanders, or Grand Eagles, in their secret Hunters' Movement. The Patriot Hunters Society may have had as many as 40,000 members on both sides of the border, including, it is said, Henry Clay and the governor of New York. Nelson planned his invasion, "The Great Hunt in the North Woods," for the fall of 1838. The hunt finally materialized as a series of uncoordinated disasters. Bryant's autonomous army of Americans crossed the border, but withdrew before seeing action. His mission a failure, Bryant returned to Maine for the Aroostook War. Still a Patriot Hunter, he served as military engineer in the pay of the State Land Office.

Maine's misguided attempt to create an incident in Aroostook failed to draw the United States into war with Britain, and Captain Bryant was once more out of a job. He became a political millstone around too many

dangerously-extended necks, and found himself abandoned by those who were his backers. With his eldest son, Bryant sailed for the Republic of Texas. His neighbors were pleased to see him go, and within a few years the Grand Eagle was all but erased from memory. Virtually no mention was made of Bryant in local histories, to the extent that his buildings became attributed to such major architects as Isaiah Rogers, Richard Upjohn, and Charles Bullfinch.

The authors do not stint Bryant's career in Texas, where he worked as an architect, soldier, lithographer, engraver, and theater owner, with scant success. At Galveston, Bryant produced two splendid buildings, the Gothic Revival St. Mary's Cathedral (1847-1848), and the County Prison and Court Room (1847-1848). In 1850, Major Charles G. Bryant was killed by a Lipan raiding party while serving as mustering officer and commissary for the Texas Rangers. Thus ended the colorful career of Maine's Grand Eagle.

Though a unique and talented individual, Bryant was very much a man of his times, the epitome of the Anglo-Saxon adventurer. While the invasion of Canada now seems a pathetic and impossible pipe-dream, it then seemed a logical piece of America's manifest destiny jigsaw puzzle. The annexation or purchase of Canada seemed as inevitable as that of Mexican territory and Oregon. There was hardly a political unit in the world not staffed by white advisors. At once practical and romantic, many of these adventurers were wildly successful. For example, General Charles Gordon commanded the armies of China and Egypt; Sir James Brooke conquered Sarawak in 1841 and established a dynasty of white Rajahs that lasted until 1846; and Colonel William Walker, Nashville's "Grey-Eyed Man of Destiny," conquered Nicaragua, became president, and attempted to bring the Central American republics into the Union as slaves states. What Bryant had

in mind in Canada is unknown, but it could hardly have been more fantastic than the plans of Brooke or Walker.

Charles G. Bryant has now assumed his rightful place in local, national, and international history. Though his military career must be judged an interesting failure, his architecture in Maine and Texas stands as a lasting memorial to his talent.

William David Barry
Portland Museum of Art

Van Deventer, David E. *The Emergence of Provincial New Hampshire, 1623-1741*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976. xviii, 302 pages. \$14.50 hardbound.

Over the last decade and a half, numerous studies have used newly developed sociological, economic, and political tools in the analysis of early New England towns and colonies. *The Emergence of Provincial New Hampshire* is the first published work to systematically utilize these tools in developing a full-scale model of a specific northern New England society.

Van Deventer undertook a formidable task. His investigation included politics, economics, religion, and social structure and the changes and inter-relations of these over nearly a century and a quarter. By in large, he succeeds by carefully delineating the various elements and their relations to the overall scheme, and by supporting his findings with impressive documentation.

The portrait presented proves to be strikingly at odds with old stereotypes concerning the colony. Specifically, Van Deventer introduces several important revisions. For example, he shows that rather than a bunch of unruly

fishermen, the first permanent settlers were generally farmers with an overwhelming desire for stability and order. And on the provincial level, he demonstrates that, contrary to traditional interpretations, New Hampshire was far more than just a northeastern segment of Massachusetts; that it was in fact a colony with its own unique, vital history, a history worthy of telling for its own sake.

The social patterns that Van Deventer reveals will be surprising to many students of New England history. The earliest settlers concentrated on farming in order to assure their economic survival, and only after establishing an agricultural base, did they begin to turn to fishing, lumbering, and commerce to any meaningful degree. The shift was slow throughout the seventeenth century with farmers first becoming farmer-lumbermen, farmer-traders, etc., and only by the end of the century moving into wholly non-agricultural occupations in significant numbers. Retarding progress were the Mason proprietary controversy, Indian wars, competition and conflict with Massachusetts, and a plethora of internal economic problems including capital scarcity, labor shortages and inflation.

For all this, New Hampshire had acquired a mature and vigorous economy by the early eighteenth century, an economy based largely on the exploitation of the extensive timber resources within the province (especially mast pines) and the creation of a widespread, complex commercial network. Portsmouth had become the foremost mercantile center north of Boston. Largely responsible for this growth was the merchant class, concentrated in the port city. The upper echelon of Portsmouth's rapidly stratifying society, the merchants carefully displayed their exclusive status through large homes, fancy dress, titles and similar symbols beyond the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, a situation that

gained increasing significance as a variety of factors shifted the locus of political power from the towns to the province by the early 1700s. By 1740, New Hampshire had become a vital, strong colony. With an economically prosperous and socially sophisticated seaport, well established agricultural towns, and a vital timber industry, the province had moved far from its halting beginnings.

Van Deventer's study reveals that New Hampshire was much more like its southern neighbors than previously thought. What is more important to Maine scholars is the fact that the patterns he found are probably similar to those of early Maine. From a number of similar studies being done at this time, it appears likely that many of the old stereotypes are no more applicable to this region than to early New Hampshire. Van Deventer's study is almost certainly the first of a number that will devastate the traditional portrait of northern New England and replace it with a whole new model.

There is no question as to the value of Van Deventer's work; but it does have some shortcomings. First, it makes for dull reading. Little is done to lighten the statistical load dumped on the reader in the text, charts and graphs; the organization forces numerous repetitions of information; but worst of all, the writing style is ponderous, including clauses, phrases, and qualifiers, to the point of leaving the reader totally confused. And if that was not enough, countless lists are included in the text. The reader has to be determined to plow through the book, and that is a shame because it is a good book.

Less important, but worthy of mention, are a couple lapses in the analysis of specific points concerning the earliest period of New Hampshire's history. Van Deventer never satisfactorily bridges the shift from English fishermen working off ships and from the Piscataqua station to provincial fishermen living in and operating

from local communities as part of the micro-economic system. A second weakness is his blithe acceptance of the stereotype of widespread rowdiness and anarchic conditions in the 1630s and 1640s. His evidence simply does not support his statements and my own research suggests a quite different pattern for the northern New England region.

In summary, although *The Emergence of Provincial New Hampshire* is not the most readable book, it is certainly one students of Maine history ought to peruse carefully. Van Deventer was looking at New Hampshire in his study, but much that he found will be applicable to Maine as well.

Edwin A. Churchill
Maine State Museum

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