

La thèse la plus chère au cœur de l'auteur ranime un vieux débat: lequel, de Charles de La Tour ou de Charles d'Aulnay, l'histoire doit-elle exalter? Lauvrière, historien partial et peu exact, a commis la bêtise de vilipender le premier et d'encenser le second. Exception faite de quelques conjectures superflues et de quelques arguments peu probants, l'auteur démontre à la satisfaction du lecteur que La Tour ne mérite pas autant que son père l'épithète infamante de traître et que la réputation de grand colonisateur faite à d'Aulnay est passablement usurpée. Cette discussion a sans doute son intérêt, mais son mérite est ailleurs: elle fournit l'occasion d'une intéressante critique des écrits de Nicolas Denys. Au terme de l'exercice, celui-ci se retrouve tout à fait réhabilité comme mémorialiste.

L'ouvrage est étayé d'un luxe de notes et de références. Quelques renvois sont fautifs (par exemple, p. 328, note 310a; de même, on cherche en vain en appendice la note 14 annoncée à la p. 1187). Certaines reproductions de cartes sont illisibles. L'index, qui constitue le volume 5, est copieux, mais fragmenté en quatre parties, ce qui complique la consultation. L'ordre des entrées est capricieux. Ainsi Joseph Du Pont Duvivier ne se trouve pas dans les *d* sous Du Pont, mais dans les *p* sous Pont. Ce sont là toutefois des vétilles, surtout à côté du principal défaut de l'ouvrage: sa langue. Fort ami des solécismes et des barbarismes, l'auteur est tout à fait brouillé avec les conjugaisons. Heureusement, le ton est généralement sobre. Il lui arrive rarement de laisser échapper des énormités comme cette comparaison entre le sort des Acadiens et «les persécutions des premiers chrétiens de la part des empereurs romains» (p. 1783). Somme toute, les solides qualités de ce travail d'érudition rachètent largement ses insuffisances. Si l'on osait, après un tel labeur, on demanderait la suite à son auteur. Ce serait le meilleur hommage à rendre à un utile ouvrier de l'histoire.

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JEAN DAIGLE, éd. — *Les Acadiens des Maritimes: Études thématiques*. Moncton, Centre d'Études Acadiennes, 1980. 691 p.

Once more the Centre d'Études Acadiennes has published a work which is a necessity for anyone interested in Maritime history, let alone those with a passion for matters Acadian. *Les Acadiens des Maritimes* is a collection of fifteen essays, each one a "state of the art" account of the achievement of scholarship concerned with Acadian life at the opening of the 1980s. While the essays inevitably vary somewhat in quality, all are worthy of consideration and a number will remain fundamental to the study of their field of enquiry for many years. The bibliographical information brought together in the footnotes to the essays, the graphs, the charts, the maps, as well as the specialized bibliographies interspersed through the volume, make this a reference work that will admirably supplement the inventories of sources, research and publications already put in print by the Centre.

But these essays are much more than a pleasantly literate guide to the work of others. Together they form a massive and fundamental expression of Acadian particularism, of the separate and distinct nature of Acadian identity. The two opening essays on Acadian history, one by the editor of the volume, Jean Daigle, and the other by Léon Thériault, demonstrate that from 1604 to 1978 there has been a unique Acadian experience, the life of a clearly visible community building

a distinct, if complex and sometimes diffuse society. This historical affirmation is followed by three articles which trace Acadian economic experience, demographic growth and geographical circumstance. Together these five articles present what might be called the topography of Acadian studies, the conjunction of event and structure that is the base of Acadian experience.

In the same way, but on a somewhat different plane, the next four articles, dealing with politics, religion, language and education, demonstrate the Acadian response to the boundaries of their lives. Taken together, they show a community acting in a coherent and consistent pattern that establishes traditions which, both in some particular shading as well as in specific grouping, are unique to the Acadians. As scholarly writings, the essays have the same important strength and the same minor (given considerations of space) flaws. All present the knowledge of Acadian circumstances almost exclusively from the perception of the Acadian people, and overlook to a greater or lesser extent the wider context. As is suggested, given the constraints of length that must have been imposed, this is understandable if regrettable. Philippe Doucet's excellent essay on the aims and ambitions of the Acadian political élite would, however, have gained much from the introduction of some general statements about the imperatives of North American and European politics during the same time frame. Acadian struggles appear, on occasion, not merely as the history of a unique community, but as a history unparalleled. The subtle distinction between the assertion that Acadian life has been a unique combination of circumstances which make them a distinct grouping among the peoples of the world, as opposed to the claim that the Acadians experienced something no other human communities have endured, is occasionally blurred. As a result all these essays ignore to some extent the fact that the policy of many of the powerful, whose actions deeply and sometimes adversely affected the Acadians, had priorities very different from those of the Acadian community itself.

The last six essays of the collection are, in the context of this work as an affirmation of Acadian identity as much as a presentation of academic interest, in many ways the most significant essays. While the nine earlier essays present the state of present scholarship concerning Acadian life with great authority, the material they contain is more or less part of general Canadian academic knowledge. They demonstrate what has been for the most part admitted, the reality of the Acadian community. But with these essays on Acadian education, material civilization, literature, art, theatre and music, one enters the world of Acadian cultural distinctiveness. It has been possible for some to admit the existence of Acadian community without granting the Acadian people a character of their own. These essays set out to present achievements in the realm of culture, and they implicitly claim not merely important traditions of Acadian daily life but impressive attainments of Acadian writers and artists.

The first of this group, Alexandre Savoie's essay on Acadian education, is a clear account both of the literacy of pre-Deportation Acadian society and of the struggle for Acadian education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is followed by Clarence LeBreton's essay on "Civilisation matérielle en Acadie", which establishes not only the present competence of Acadian craftsmanship in occupations such as marsh-draining, lumbering and fishing, but also the links between contemporary expertise and past traditions. In "Les Traditions et la littérature orale", Anselme Chiasson outlines a heritage of customs surrounding the stages of human life, birth, education, marriage and death, which have been passed down through the generations. The bibliography of Acadian literature compiled by Marguerite Maillet surveys writings from the time of Marc Lescarbot to Antonine Maillet and Léonard Forest. Brigitte and Claude Roussel in "Les Arts visuels" concentrate upon twentieth-century artists; and the final essays by

Jean-Claude Marcus and Neil Michaud, concerned with the traditions of music and theatre among the Acadians, also emphasize the present.

Thus the sum of these articles is the presentation of a distinctive Acadian cultural heritage, the separation of Acadian tradition from other communities, however closely akin some may be. From the surviving crafts catalogued by LeBreton to the folklore traditions outlined by Chiasson, the note of a particular Acadian culture is struck. Whether the literature presented is the lyric romanticism of Forest or the brutal agony of Herménégilde Chiasson writing: "Please, make us a beautiful ghetto, not in a territory, no, no, right in us, make each of us a ghetto, take your time please", there is an unmistakable resonance. Here is the statement of art, the attempt to communicate that which is of one's own, not only to self and to kin, but also to the stranger.

Whatever lacunae can be discovered in this volume (and one wonders why the article on material culture did not treat, even superficially, weaving, spinning and quilt-making), if there be errors (and the Acadian choirs won prizes in Wales, which is *not* England), if there be matters of proportion that one might ask to be adjusted (such as the wider considerations of Western life), nevertheless the work itself is of crucial importance. Writings about the Acadians have far too often been either polemical outpourings or the restricted investigation of some single facet of Acadian experience as a case study of a wider non-Acadian-centred issue. To a great extent this has been due to a lack of knowledge about the reality of Acadian experience. What these essays collectively demonstrate is the impressive amount of hard evidence now available on Acadian matters. This work makes visible that which has hitherto been easy to ignore. Its publication ought to alter significantly both the writing of Acadian history in particular and the writing of history of the Maritimes in general.

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COLIN READ. — *The Rising in Western Upper Canada, 1837-8. The Duncombe Revolt and After*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982. Pp. 326.

Voici un livre qui, bien qu'il ne relate qu'un épisode particulier du mouvement insurrectionnel haut-canadien de 1837-38, en fera jusqu'à un certain point progresser la compréhension, ne serait-ce que parce qu'il explore des faits jusqu'ici négligés par les historiens et qu'il propose une nouvelle version de ces événements. En effet, dit C. Read, la thèse traditionnelle affirme que W.L. Mackenzie, le chef des rebelles, et ceux qui l'ont suivi dans la révolte représentaient vraiment les griefs légitimes de la majorité d'une population opprimée par une minorité tory. Bien entendu, ainsi que le reconnaît l'auteur, cette thèse ne s'est pas perpétuée intégralement jusqu'à aujourd'hui: elle a fait l'objet, dit-il, de sérieuses retouches de la part d'A. Dunham et de G. Craig et, à bien y penser, elle n'est pas du tout celle à laquelle nous sommes habitués D.G. Creighton. Que tout cela soit entièrement fondé ou non ne change rien au fait que Read prétend proposer une nouvelle interprétation qui peut se résumer en un certain nombre de propositions: (1) les réformistes ne représentèrent jamais d'une façon continue et claire la majorité de la population dont ils se réclamaient et c'est pourquoi leurs adversaires leur disputèrent avec beaucoup de succès la faveur populaire, comme ce fut le cas lors