

**Alan G. Macpherson, ed. *Four Centuries and the City: Perspectives on the Historical Geography of St. John's.***

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each family owned. For a colonist like Baltimore, architecture — more than his household furnishings — became a sign of rank and status.

Beaudry, Goldstein, and Chartier suggest that new directions need to be taken in the study of these first colonies. Rather than continuing to research the relationship of old world to new, of continuity or adaptation from the English homeland, they argue that attention needs to focus more closely on the varieties of class and status within each of these colonial adventures. More sense must be made out of what the artifact norms were within a particular colony, rather than a comparison with the material life of an English homeland.

Regardless of the archaeological issues raised by these essays, there is one important underlying theme. In most cases, the historic players involved with these iconic settlements have merely been names on a page, persons connected to dates, people long disappeared. The recent burgeoning of historical archaeology has come, in part, from the desire of lay people today to make their past, their heritage, somehow tangible. Jeffrey Brain's comment sums up the importance of direct relationship of past things to people today: "On the floor of the storehouse in the southeastern corner was a caulking iron, as evocative an object of shipbuilding as could be imagined. Holding that tool, a well-built *Virginia* [one of the vessels involved in Maine's Popham colony], and its trans-Atlantic crossings become very real" (106).

This volume of *Avalon Chronicles* is an important collection for anyone interested in early English colonial ventures in the New World. What is important is that through such studies, historical names in scholarly textbooks take on a more human face, and become more meaningful to ordinary people. That meaning comes from the fact that we can actually see and touch the plate from David Kirke's table or a wine glass from Lord Baltimore's cupboard. By discovering the things of history, the past can relate much more directly to the present. We realize these were people much like us, surrounding themselves with objects that were the everyday necessities of their time, objects that still remain.

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*Four Centuries and the City: Perspectives on the Historical Geography of St. John's*. Edited by Alan G. Macpherson; cartography by Charles M. Conway. St. John's, NL: Department of Geography, Memorial University of Newfoundland, c2005, ISBN 0889013691

*FOUR CENTURIES and the City: Perspectives on the Historical Geography of St. John's* chronicles the historical evolution of St. John's from the period of European contact to the first years of the twenty-first century. This book makes a significant contribution to the social and physical sciences on St. John's as both a city and a

cultural landscape. The overall purpose of the book is the investigation of St. John's existing cultural landscape as the storyboard for the historical processes that created it.

Using the old adage that physical geography is the stage and human geography is the play, the book provides insights into the history of both. The book begins with Alan Macpherson's detailed account of some of the original European actors in 1627. He re-creates an employment and demographic profile that is almost unimaginable to the current resident in terms of occupational structure. The next chapter, by Joyce Brown Macpherson, addresses the vegetational history of St. John's. Of all of the chapters in the book, this one is perhaps the most challenging for non-specialists in its use of pollen assemblages, but the rewards are more than worthwhile. Chapter 3 is by Jeffrey Orr and concerns the presence of Scottish merchants in St. John's between 1780 and 1835. While Orr takes us right into the hardships of the era, he then extends the reach of the chapter beyond Newfoundland and situates the island within the trans-Atlantic economy.

The next chapter, by Robert MacKinnon, is an insightful look at the agricultural fringe in St. John's and branches out into agriculture across the island. After Chapter 4, there is a subtle shift back from more straightforward landscape analysis to the investigation of socio-cultural processes that drive urban morphology and cultural landscape creation. Chapter 5 is by Christopher Sharpe and is executed with a multi-pronged analysis of the Churchill Park Garden Suburb. Many new planning insights are provided, and anyone with an interest in Newfoundland planning will find this absorbing. A.J. Shawyer provides the next chapter on the C.A. Pippy Park, an enormous park on the northern edge of the city. Shawyer systematically addresses the pre-park conditions and the evolution of changes in property tenure, while simultaneously providing many insights into the personalities and motives of the organizations and the actors involved. Chapter 7, the final chapter of the collection, is again by Christopher Sharpe along with Shane O'Dea and concerns heritage conservation in St. John's. The chapter is a mixture of conservation theory and on-the-ground factual research culminating in a strong conclusion for the book.

Perhaps the most obvious strength of the book is the uniformly high-quality delivery of the individual chapters. Each chapter is in-depth, methodologically sound, and well written. The inclusion of endnotes with each chapter also soundly contributes to the scholarly value of each work. Throughout the book, the cartography by Charlie Conway and others is first-rate, with balanced map composition and good minimization of dead areas.

Another obvious strength of the book lies in the wide range of subject matters that are tackled, all of them interesting. Each chapter brings a fresh perspective on St. John's, and, in totality, more than nicely covers many interesting aspects of the city's spatial history over the past 400 years. With a book of this nature, different

readers will find some chapters more interesting than others, and this is a function of the widely ranging subject matters presented.

There were a number of research revelations outside of the conventional wisdom that were presented as well. This indicates the wide purview of the research involved, and the completeness of efforts undertaken. Sharpe's chapters, for example, stand out for the depth of the criticisms presented regarding the historical processes that have resulted in St. John's. Certainly, the nuance of his writing really brings the reader into the thought processes and contextual details that must influence secular decision-making.

For the general public, the book sheds light on the historical processes at work that provide elements of the city's spatial form. For lay readers, their interests will be piqued and fulfilled by the amazing depth of the resources presented. For scholars, the individual chapters lay the foundation on the topics so that they can be used as points of departure for subsequent research. Many research voids are identified (e.g., by Jeffrey Orr, by Christopher Sharpe), and these serve to orient future scholarly activity. Overall, this book now represents the canon for the historical geography of St. John's.

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Glen Norcliffe. *Global Game, Local Arena: Restructuring in Corner Brook*. St. John's: ISER, 2005, ISBN 1-894725-03-4

THIS BOOK EXAMINES the restructuring of the pulp and paper industry in Corner Brook. The author focuses on the transition from the Bowaters to Kruger operations in 1984, but places this change in historical context. Norcliffe argues that we must go beyond empirical description of the transition of pulp and paper production from early company paternalism through Fordism to the lean production of the Kruger era. Such description of structural shifts in production allows us to place what happened in one town in a global context of the integration and liberalization of international markets, trade patterns and the movement of capital. But it obscures the manner in which local circumstances and social relationships resist and consequently shape the precise form of industrial adjustment to global forces. This book advances the importance of understanding the "reflexivity" of restructuring, arguing "that you cannot simply read off local consequences of restructuring from some master template: local outcomes are *constructed* [emphasis in original] through a subtle interaction of global and local interests" (p. 18).

The study's analysis of the impact of industrial restructuring on the lives of Corner Brook's mill workers and their families is effective. The Kruger takeover kept the mill open. Although people clearly appreciated the chance to continue to have work in the forestry industry, it is also clear that they have paid a high price.