

Introduction

M. A.P. Renouf

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Introduction

M.A.P. RENOUF

IN THE LATE 1970s a popular item of material culture, pinned on many office or kitchen walls, was a Newfoundland-centred map of the world (M.U.N. Department of Geography 1977), used in ironic response to the common geographical and economic perspective of the island of Newfoundland as somehow hanging off the edge of the North American continent. The perspective derived from Newfoundland and Labrador's long history resonates with this map. Far from being a cultural outlier, over the past eight to nine thousand years the Province was a crossroads of various aboriginal, and eventually European, cultures. Prehistoric routes, first of people and subsequently of information, connected Newfoundland and Labrador south to Maine and the Maritime Provinces, northward to Greenland and the eastern Canadian Arctic, and in the last one thousand years, eastward to Europe.

The eight papers in this volume illustrate the longevity and complexity of the Province's heritage. Bryan Hood summarizes the archaeology of the initial human occupants of Labrador, the Maritime Archaic Indians, Priscilla Renouf surveys the Palaeoeskimo occupation of Port au Choix and the Province, and Ralph Pastore brings the prehistoric, or pre-document, period of the Province into the sphere of historic records in his discussion of the history of Beothuk research. Peter Pope bridges the gap between archaeology and history, in his paper arguing for a Beothuk role in the seventeenth century development of year-round English settlement on the island. Stuart Brown places claims of pre-Columbian European forays across the Atlantic in their historical context, thus situating the Norse site at L'Anse aux Meadows in a larger perspective, and Jim Tuck describes the results of the first few years of the Ferryland Archaeology Project, which focusses on Lord Baltimore's Colony of Avalon. Sonja Jerkic surveys the wide range of information inferred from the human skeletal remains that have been excavated from prehistoric and historic sites in the Province, and Cathy Mathias introduces the subject of archaeological conservation and reviews important advances in conservation that have

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been made as the result of its key role in recent Memorial University historic archaeology projects.

While the papers in this volume provide a solid framework for understanding the prehistory and early history of this Province, they do not cover the entire range of archaeological research that has been carried out. In particular, aside from the discussion of burial remains in Sonja Jerkic's paper, there is no review of the archaeology of the Neo-Inuit, or Thule, who are ancestral to the modern Inuit populations, although in Labrador archaeological research into Neo-Inuit sites has been on-going (Tuck 1975; Schledermann 1972; 1976; Kaplan 1980; 1985; Jordan 1978). Similarly, while this volume highlights some of the work that Memorial University of Newfoundland's Archaeology Unit has carried out in the Province, many other researchers have been active in the archaeology of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Foremost amongst these is William Fitzhugh, of the Smithsonian Institution, whose long involvement with Labrador began in Hamilton Inlet (Fitzhugh 1972), and who later ranged north to include the Torngat Mountains (Fitzhugh 1980). Fitzhugh's site surveys and excavations covered the full range of aboriginal occupation, from the Maritime Archaic up to and including Recent Indian and Neo-Inuit periods (Fitzhugh 1977; 1978; 1984; 1985). Together with the late Richard Jordan (1980) of Bryn Mawr College and eventually the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, their Torngat Archaeology Project was the umbrella for a number of M.A. and Ph.D. theses, on the Maritime Archaic (Hood 1981; Lazenby 1984), historic period Innu (Loring 1992), Palaeoeskimo (Cox 1977; Nagle 1984; Thomson 1988) and Neo-Inuit (Kaplan 1983).

Memorial University has had a similar cadre of graduate students who have worked on archaeological material from Newfoundland and Labrador. Carignan (1974), Renouf (1976), Kennedy (1980) and Austin (1981) focussed on the Maritime Archaic, while Madden (1976), LeBlanc (1973), and Penney (1985) wrote about more recent Indian periods, and Chute (1977), Marshall (1984), and MacLean (1989) were concerned with aspects of Beothuk material culture. Investigation of Palaeoeskimo sites was the subject of theses by Sawicki (1983), Robbins (1985), Simpson (1986), Kroi (1986), Kennett (1991) and Murray (1992), and Schledermann (1972) excavated Neo-Inuit sites. Pope (1986) and McAleese (1991) dealt with aspects of the early historic period in Newfoundland and Labrador, respectively. In addition, theses on Newfoundland and Labrador archaeology were written for other universities (Linnamae 1973; Way 1978; McCaffrey 1983; Schwarz 1990; and Jensen 1993). A number of these researchers have continued in the field of Newfoundland and Labrador archaeology (Penney 1986; McCaffrey 1986; Marshall 1988; 1989; McAleese 1993; 1994; MacLean 1994; Schwarz 1994; Robbins 1989; Renouf this volume).

Archaeological research has been on-going on the Quebec side of Labrador since the late William Taylor of the Archaeological Survey of Canada conducted pioneering excavations in Ungava (Taylor 1958). Research has continued in

Ungava (Samson 1981; Plumet 1985; Plumet and Gangloff 1991) and the Basse-Côte Nord (Pintal 1989; Plumet *et al.* 1994; Plumet 1994; Pintal 1994), much of it carried out by the Laboratoire d'Archeologie, Université du Québec à Montréal. A wide range of archaeological research on Quebec's Lower North Shore is covered in Martijn's (1988) comprehensive bibliography of the aboriginal presence in the Strait of Belle Isle. On the Newfoundland and Labrador side of the Straits, Elmer Harp of Dartmouth College conducted an archaeological site survey (Harp 1951), which was built upon by Robert McGhee of the Archaeological Survey of Canada who, together with Jim Tuck, reconstructed the framework of human occupation of that area (McGhee and Tuck 1975). Later, Jim Tuck directed a long term project, excavating the sixteenth century whaling site of Red Bay (Tuck and Grenier 1989), building on the archival research of Selma Barkham (1989).

In addition to their involvement in the interpretation of the Province's heritage, Parks Canada has been active in excavations, in particular those at L'Anse au Meadows (Wallace 1991), which followed Anne-Stine Ingstad's (1985) earlier investigations, and those at Port au Choix (Renouf 1993) built upon the foundation of the earlier work of Elmer Harp (1964) and Jim Tuck (1976). Parks Canada has also carried out significant archaeological work at Signal Hill (Ferguson 1985).

Archaeology in the Province demonstrates two things. Firstly, Newfoundland and Labrador's archaeological heritage is rich and varied. Secondly, and connected to the first, it is an important Provincial and community resource. Jim Tuck's earlier Red Bay project and his current work in Ferryland draw many thousands of visitors, as do L'Anse aux Meadows, Port au Choix, and Signal Hill. Visitors come from many points of origin, and they are particularly numerous when excavations are in progress. In Labrador, we see the beginnings of greater participation of aboriginal people in archaeological research, as aboriginal and research communities become increasingly aware of the stake that the former have in the projects of the latter.

Excavations and ancillary lab-work provide jobs for local students, and in those areas where archaeological resources have been developed, visitors provide a basis for a small-scale tourism industry. Parks Canada is planning a new interpretation centre at Port au Choix, based on the work of Harp, Tuck and Renouf, and the Historic Resources Division of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation will open an interpretation centre focussing on the early Beothuk site at Boyd's Cove, Notre Dame Bay, based on the work of Pastore. Historic Resources is planning interpretative signage at the Maritime Archaic burial mound at L'Anse Amour, in the Strait of Belle Isle, based on the work of Tuck and McGhee, and a museum for the interpretation of Labrador's cultural and natural history, to be situated at Northwest River. The Canada/Newfoundland Cooperative Agreement on Tourism and Human Resources has provided the financial support for the Ferryland Archaeology Project, which has enormous visitor potential, given its proximity to St. John's. Perhaps one of the greatest opportunities, yet to be realized, is the development of the archaeological resources of the city of St. John's, where

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remains of buildings destroyed in the great fires lie stratified beneath the modern downtown core (Pope 1993; in press).

However, archaeology is not just about tourism dollars. Ultimately, it is about informing Newfoundlanders about their Province, and Canadians about one of their ten. In much the same way that the Newfoundland-centred map of the world stimulated us to view the Province from a new perspective, the results of archaeology change our perceptions of Newfoundland and Labrador, tilting the Province at a new angle, placing it in a new light.

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