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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Tape-Recorded Interview: A Manual for Field Workers in Folklore and Oral History. By Edward D. Ives. (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1980. Pp. 130. Cloth. \$9.75. Paper. \$5.50.)

The historian has long conducted interviews to gather personal statements and information about events and experiences. The tape recorder has reduced the necessity for copious note-taking, made his task more convenient, and given birth to oral history. The growth of oral history programs has, in turn, brought forth a variety of manuals.

The Tape-Recorded Interview grew from a simple mimeographed format, which appeared in 1973, and a "slightly augmented" edition published as Volume xv of *Northeast Folklore* in 1974. Both bore the title *A Manual for Field Workers*, and the supply of both was soon exhausted. The present revised and enlarged edition should prove to be as successful as its predecessors.

A section of the workings of the tape recorder is a welcome addition to the earlier versions and will prove a godsend to those who have a tendency to be wary of the complexity of machines. The tape recorder is complex, of course, but Ives makes it clear that what the interviewer needs to know about is not. His explanations of its parts (with figures) are clear and concise. He discusses cassettes vs. reel-to-reel, tape weights (he recommends 1.5 mil tape, and tells us, ". . . half mil tape is an invention of the Devil. . . Avoid it."), and gives a helpful list of actions to take when, at an interview, you turn the machine on and nothing happens. His four simple steps may resolve the problem "before you conclude that doomsday has come. . . ."

The chapter on interviewing is replete with good advice on finding and contacting interviewees, the preparations

that should be made for the interview, and the techniques for obtaining good results. Ives emphasizes that the interview must be thought of as a “trialogue,” considering the tape recorder as the third party. He points out, however, that the third party is blind and that visual things such as gestures and photographs must be identified and described on the tape to ensure clarity.

An important aspect of this manual is the stress that Ives places on proper record-keeping throughout the entire process of arranging, conducting, and processing a tape-recorded interview, both on the tape and off. The importance of keeping a journal, noting all circumstances of each interview, is underlined. Failure to do so may well give one cause to regret it later. Says he, “. . . the fact that I have sinned and suffered the consequences makes me the ideal advocate for virtue: keep a journal and keep it up to date.”

As one who believes the tape to be the primary document, Ives details the processing procedures of the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History. While most oral history archives transcribe the interview and thereafter seldom refer to the tape, folklore archives generally reverse this procedure by encouraging researchers to use the tapes. A complete catalog (“precis”) of an interview is prepared that keys the subjects discussed to the numbers of the digital counters on the tape recorder. For those who would do a transcript instead, he discusses the problems involved: accuracy, dialect, tags, and interjections. The compendium of forms and letters given in the appendix further emphasizes the need for good documentation and for the orderly procedures that are required for oral history programs.

All this good advice comes from a man highly qualified to give it. Edward D. (Sandy) Ives is a professor of folklore at the University of Maine at Orono. He has been doing field

work with a tape recorder for years, and that work has resulted in many articles and books. His interests, and those of the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History, which he directs, are in “ documenting the lives of common men and women—woodsmen, river-drivers, fishermen, farmers...” throughout Maine and the Maritimes. This interest in what may soon be some forgotten occupations and ways of life will, through interviews with participants, salvage an essential element of social history.

Marjorie A. Duval
University of Southern Maine

The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Waterville, Maine, 1828-1978. By Abbot E. Smith. (Waterville, Maine: First Congregational Church, 1977. Pp. 98. Paper. \$4.50.)

Reading the history of someone else’s local church is a bit like watching your neighbor’s home movies: it is best done in small doses and infrequent intervals. For without a personal connection with those involved, interest in their history and progress usually wanes. Nonetheless, Abbot E. Smith has crafted a book of local church history that is easily readable, short (there is much to be said for brevity in these matters), and frequently articulate in discussing the broader ramifications of issues of church history, doctrine, and organization. The book is occasioned by the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Waterville Congregational Church. The one hundred and fifty years of church history come to life under the author’s touch. As the son of William Abbot Smith, a highly respected pastor of the Waterville church from 1921-1936, his feeling for the church is personal, warm, and informed.

Near the book's end, the author outlines the story he has told. "It has been a story of the Waterville Congregational Church as an institution – an organization – with members, officers, finances, a building, a constituency beyond the intimate circle of its membership, a program of public meetings involving music, readings, prayers and preaching, and other gatherings devoted to study or to entertainment and sociability. The account has outlined the beliefs which informed the membership. We have followed as best we could the crises and triumphs of the institution, its origin and growth, setbacks and advances." It is this process of adjusting to cultural, doctrinal, and physical changes which makes for the most interesting reading in the book. Without this capacity for change, Abbot writes that the church would have "perished or succumbed to the mediocrity of mere existence."

Often the changes come less through design than through reaction to events outside the church. Sometimes the reactions are sharp; at others, muted. A doctrinal change within the church from "old-fashioned Calvinism" to what Abbot calls "modernism" occurs without notable evidence of any "severe internal church controversies. . . ." Abbot wonders whether this silence is evidence of "a remarkable tolerance in the parish, or remarkable intelligence, or merely theological apathy. "

There are chapters that also tell of the changing roles of women in the church (and consequently, of men; i.e. the women eventually get more power and the men get more fellowship), and the changing character of the Sunday School. The early difficulties in establishing a church without a pastor or a building gave way to later difficulties in keeping the church afloat during the Great Depression. Finally, some early 1960s urban renewal in downtown Waterville forced the church to relocate; and through some able leadership in the church, this became the occasion for the construction of a new and larger building.

This book will interest those who have a personal connection with the Waterville Congregational Church. It also will appeal to those who more generally hold an interest in church history, especially as it reveals a church reacting, adjusting, and sometimes influencing the social and cultural events of its time.

Donald G. Hodgson
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Thrust for Canada: The American Attempt on Quebec in 1775-1776. By Robert McConnell Hatch. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979. Pp. xiv, 295. Cloth. \$12.95.)

The American Revolution produced two nations since it failed to include the provinces of Quebec and Nova Scotia, which subsequently became refuges for American Loyalists, the nucleus of English Canada. The story of the American invasion of Canada in 1775-1776 is one of the most fascinating chapters in the history of the Revolution, partly because of the principal characters on both sides and partly because so much hung on the clash of small armies. The survival of Canada as a separate nation may have depended on the resolution of a motley defense force of 1,700 within the walls of Quebec City.

Counting on the gratitude of the French Canadians for the Quebec Act of 1774, General Guy Carleton had sent reinforcements to his beleaguered colleague Gage, in Boston, leaving fewer than 2,000 redcoats to defend Canada. He hoped to recruit 6,000 hardy Canadian farmers. Counting on the desire of the French Canadians to throw off British rule, the American Congress dispatched a small invading force in two columns through Maine and

New York to seize Canada. Congress hoped Canadian farmers would flock to the cause of Liberty. Both Carleton and Congress were mistaken. The Canadians remained massively neutral, leaving the field to the contention of corporal's guard: "Congressional" versus "Ministerial," to use the terms of the Americans at the time. The defenders retreated behind the walls of Quebec City with their 114 cannon from which the Americans, with no large cannon, could not dislodge them. A desperate attack through a December blizzard was rebuffed and never repeated. Failing to take the city, the Americans lost Canada to a large British force from the sea in the spring of 1776. By summer they had been driven from Canada. Only Arnold's brave stand with a naval force at Valcour Island in Lake Champlain delayed a British invasion of New York in the fall.

Robert Hatch puts flesh on those bare bones and tells, in painstaking detail, the story of the invasion. And what a story it is! This is the American counterpart to G.F.S. Stanley, *Canada Invaded*. The tale does credit to the toughness of Benedict Arnold's starving troops making it to the outlying settlements of Quebec after a harrowing winter march from Maine and mounting a siege with 700 men. Then there is the resourcefulness of Lieutenant Governor Hector Cramahé and the "unfailing composure" of Guy Carleton who pulled together a mixed group of civilians and various regular military into a disciplined garrison in Quebec. After the abortive assault of December 31 the morale of the garrison soared while that of the besiegers slumped as their officers bickered and the Canadians turned against them.

This book is descriptive history at its best, good reading and massively documented from the available primary sources. It is not analytical. The reader of term papers will want to comment on the lack of introductory or conclusive statements, but there is still a place for descriptive history.

One minor error occurs on page 3 where the author says that most of the seigneurs were members of the noblesse. Actually few Canadian seigneurs were of the French nobility, although that term may have been applied to them locally. This is a small quibble in a well written and enjoyable book. It is recommended for anyone interested in the Revolutionary War.

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Native North American Spirituality of the Eastern Woodlands: Sacred Myths, Dreams, Visions, Speeches, Healing Formulas, Rituals and Ceremonials. Edited by Elisabeth Tooker. (New York: Paulist Press, 1979. Pp. 302. Paper. \$7.95.)

In this book Elisabeth Tooker presents the religious views of a number of different tribes. She does this by excerpting the best available English translations of their dreams and visions, rituals and ceremonials, and parental instructions to children, as well as by showing the relationship between religion and medical practices. Tooker emphasizes that her readers will not come away with a comprehensive knowledge of the religions of the Indians under consideration. She does hope, however, that they will gain insights into their beliefs and acquire some knowledge of their moral and ethical codes.

Tooker contends that the time has come for Indian accounts of Indian religious beliefs. Heretofore information on the subject has been largely supplied by whites. She contends that however talented and scholarly some researchers have been, they were rarely Indians. Consequently, from the arrival of the first Europeans, we have been supplied with a mass of misinformation.

In her long introduction Tooker includes a discussion of manitou, which she believes is “perhaps the most central religious conception in the beliefs of these Indians (the Algonkin people). She quotes William Jones, a Fox scholar, who defined manitou “as an unsystematic belief in a cosmic, mysterious property which is believed to be existing everywhere in nature.” As the meaning of this word is debated by scholars, Tooker notes that the Jones definition has been challenged as too restrictive. One scholar cited the Ojibwa idea that stones are alive and possess manitou. Another Indian told of the health-giving power of hot stones. When the hot stones were sprinkled with water in a sweat house, the manitou from the stones permeated his body driving out pain and sickness.

In summarizing her introduction, Tooker states that “the world of the Indian – both spiritual and otherwise – is not to be understood by assuming it is like ours.” This is hardly a profound statement and is not intended as such. Anthropologists have emphasized the point for years. Tooker, however, illustrates some of the differences in the texts she has selected.

The first chapter, “Cosmology,” discusses Iroquois myths on the creation of earth, human life, and the natural world. The version selected is Seneca, and students of Glooscap legends in Maine and the Atlantic Provinces will recognize the similarity of the Glooscap and Seneca versions. Since Tooker mentions, on several occasions, the diffusion of beliefs across the Indian world, the similarity of the two creation stories proves a good illustration.

The chapter, “Dreams and Visions,” begins with accounts of parental instructions to children on morals and ethics. Since the subject of wife and child abuse is so strong a concern today, it is interesting to note a Winnebago instruction: “Do not abuse your wife. If you make your wife suffer, you will die in a short time. Our grandmother, the

earth, is a woman, and in mistreating your wife, you are abusing her. Most certainly will you be abusing our grandmother if you act thus. Since it is she who takes care of us, by your action you will be practically killing yourself.”

The dreams narrated in this chapter indicate that dreamers should believe that their dreams direct them to a solution of critical problems or reveal the cure of sickness. The texts selected assume a beneficent spirit has provided the helpful information. Three Penobscot dreams from Dr. Frank G. Speck's *Penobscot Shamanism* are included.

Then follow six chapters on ritual and ceremonials. They have been drawn from the Delawares, the Winnebago, the Menominees, the Fox, and the Iroquois. This review would become much too long if any attempt were made to summarize them. There is, however, room to say that the texts of these rituals provide much information on the religions of the subject tribes. Differences due to the different cultural environments of the several tribes are also apparent.

I recommend this book to students and casual readers seeking knowledge of Eastern Woodland Indians.

Roger B. Ray