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WRITINGS IN MAINE HISTORY

Books

Clark G. Reynolds and William J. McAndrew, editors,
*University of Maine 1971 Seminar in MARITIME
AND REGIONAL STUDIES, Proceedings*, (Univer-
sity of Maine at Orono, Maine: 1972) 134 pages.

This publication of the University of Maine Press is somewhat different from the books usually reviewed in the *Quarterly*. Rather than dealing with Maine history and lore, what we have here, as the title indicates, is the proceedings of a two-day seminar in regional and maritime studies that was organized and sponsored by the UMO Department of History in the Spring of 1971. The seminar program included four major topics, and in the elaboration of these topics the *Proceedings* includes professional conversations and discussions; scholarly papers; and presentations concerned with current activities in the field as well as publication and research possibilities.

The initial session, "The Present and Future in Oceanic History" is presented by two of the triumvirate of distinguished historians who comprised the major panel — Professor Gerald S. Graham, Rhodes Professor Emeritus of Imperial History, King's College, University of London and Professor Robert G. Albion, Gardiner Professor Emeritus of Oceanic History, Harvard University and Visiting Professor, University of Maine. Professor Herbert Feis is the third member of the panel, and his comments are limited to the post session discussion.

Although Professor Graham's topic is "The Pacific and Indian Oceans," his remarks are primarily concerned with the Pacific and especially the China station, as he describes his current research interests. Graham outlines

the broad principles of British foreign policy in China, which were related at times with naval operations, within the time span 1830 to 1860. With his emphasis on the ignorance of China that clouded British relations and his concluding remarks concerning the difference between British policy in India and China during this period, Professor Graham provides a valuable capsule background to Anglo-Chinese relations in the later decades of the nineteenth century.

The “Atlantic Ocean” is the topic pursued by Professor Albion, who focuses his attention on the growth of academic interest in Atlantic maritime history. Like Professor Graham, Albion is a great spinner of yarns, and his presentation, particularly concerning possible rewarding areas of research, is highlighted by some delightful anecdotes.

For the *Proceedings*, and more so I’m sure for the seminar, the remarks and reminiscences of both men relate a mood and set the scene for subsequent sessions.

“Current Research in Regional and Oceanic Subjects” is the title of the second section of the *Proceedings* which covers the second session of the seminar. Speaking first, the *Proceedings* editors, William J. McAndrew and Clark G. Reynolds, describe academic programs at the Orono campus. Stressing the regional studies approach, Professor McAndrews outlines the University’s long standing interest in Canadian Studies and particularly the activities of the New England-Atlantic Provinces — Quebec Center that was formed in 1967. Professor Reynolds describes the University’s unique graduate program in military and maritime history, a program that seeks to attract both active duty military personnel as well as students whose professional ambition is college teaching.

Providing further advertisement of the graduate history program are two papers read by graduate students, Barry Lohnes and Robert Leet. The first paper by Mr. Lohnes, entitled, "Naval Warfare in the Maritimes and Northern New England," is a concise account of some of the less-than-glorious aspects of the War of 1812. Lohnes' paper, particularly his observations regarding the desire of Massachusetts Federalists to humiliate the Republican-controlled national government, is an excellent companion piece to Herbert T. Silby's article, "A Secret Emissary from Down East," *Maine Historical Society Newsletter*, vol. II, No. 4, Spring 1972.

19th Century."

Concluding this section is the paper by Robert Leet, "American Whaling in the Arctic Regions in the Late 19th Century."

The third section of the *Proceedings* is devoted to three formal, documented faculty papers that were presented during the third session of the seminar — all addressed to the topic, "The Philosopher-Historians of the Golden Age of Naval Thought."

The first paper by Professor Donald M. Schurman of Queen's University is presented in abstract due to the fact that it was based on a full length biography of Professor Schurman's subject, Sir Julian Corbett. Entitled, "The Education of a Naval Historian: Sir Julian Corbett and the Russo-Japanese War Staff History," this paper deals with the problems confronting Corbett when he set out to write an official staff history of that war. Corbett, who would later write an official history of naval operations in World War I, learned from his Staff History experience that writing accurate history often times was extremely difficult. Not only was it difficult to make

sense out of inter-departmental memoranda, but also frustrating were his efforts to convince high-ranking security conscious officers that accurate history required access to sensitive documents, and that scholarly attitudes were not necessarily alien to the best interests of the Royal Navy.

Also interested in the best interests of the Royal Navy of the Victorian era was the subject of the second paper, "Sir Herbert Richmond and Reform in the Royal Navy: The Founding of the *Naval Review*." In this paper Professor B. D. Hunt of the Royal Military College provides an in-depth study of the pre World War I activities of this British sailor-scholar. Best known for his *Statesmen and Seapower* (1946), Richmond, as pointed out by Professor Hunt, was a unique figure in the pre World War I Royal Navy — an extremely competent line officer and commander and an intellectual as well. Impatient with the prevailing conservatism and disillusioned by the lack of perception of his superiors, Richmond set out to challenge what he saw as out-dated tactical notions. Richmond, moreover, was concerned about long range strategic considerations at a time when the Admiralty was primarily interested in building faster vessels and continuing to emphasize single line-of-battle formation.

Much of the paper stresses Richmond's attempt to pressure the Admiralty to modernize its thinking. Such pressure was to be applied by means of a service journal, *The Naval Review*. The *Review* became a "concrete expression of a quiet revolt against Naval tradition." Although censored and at times suppressed by the Admiralty it provided a vehicle by which Richmond and other "young Turks" could vent criticism as well as attempt to educate their superiors.

The third paper, presented by Professor Clark G. Reynolds of the University of Maine-Orono history department, deals with Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, the American exponent of sea-power. In his paper, "The Thalassocratic Determinism of Captain Mahan," Professor Reynolds looks at Mahan not only as a naval analyst and strategist but also as a major historical philosopher. Utilizing Mahan's book, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890) as the basis for according such recognition, Professor Reynolds stresses the proximity of Mahan's ideas with such contemporary and more famous American historians, Frederick Jackson Turner and Charles A. Beard. As Turner and Beard explained American character in terms of environmental and economic forces, Mahan combined environment and economic forces with political and military characteristics in order to explain a nation or peoples bias toward dominion of the sea.

After reviewing Mahan's ideas concerning the great European seafaring nations of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, Professor Reynolds looks at Mahan's study of the United States. Suddenly the Captain's historian-philosopher image becomes blurred as he uses propaganda and chauvinistic arguments to strengthen his urging that America follow the imperialist route. Regardless of his shortcomings, particularly with respect to his understanding or misunderstanding of the American situation, Professor Reynolds believes that Mahan did ask important questions about the nature of seafaring men. Moreover, he concludes by citing examples of modern day historians who have utilized the thalassocratic factor or variations of it in their writings.

Of the three papers I found this to be the most interesting and provocative as well as being consistent with

the overall topic — philosopher-historians in the golden age of naval thought.

Following a lengthy and open discussion which provides an interesting postscript to the papers just described the seminar concluded with the final session, “Research and Publications in Maritime and Regional Subjects.” The final pages of the *Proceedings* are given over to the words of those who addressed themselves to this topic. Roger Taylor, President of the International Marine Publishing Company of Camden, leads off with an extremely interesting and useful account of what is involved in getting a book published. Not only does he provide insight concerning what editors look for in terms of manuscripts, but he also suggests opportunities for “getting published” and topics, such as technical maritime history, that deserve the attention of students and devotees.

An equally interesting presentation is given by Captain Paul Ryan, Deputy Director of Naval History in the Navy Department. Like Mr. Taylor, Captain Ryan speaks to the graduate student or researcher, and he provides a great deal of information pertaining to the various naval records repositories in the Washington area.

In a more formal fashion than his predecessors, Commander W. A. B. Douglas, Senior Historian and Director of History of the Canadian Forces, concluded the seminar and the *Proceedings* with his topic, “The Ocean in Nineteenth Century Canadian History.” For the graduate student or researcher interested in Canadian maritime history, Commander Douglas provides a brief but still comprehensive view of Canadian maritime historiography complete with detailed footnotes.

In conclusion let me say that this little book of 134 pages is well worth more than a glance. Although it is not oriented toward Marine history it will be helpful to those who have always wondered what maritime or regional history is all about. For those who are considering a career in the history profession it contains both insight and advice. Finally it is an excellent advertisement of various academic activities at the University of Maine. If such success in organizing such a productive seminar can be achieved with what the editors describe as hasty plans, certainly the second seminar scheduled for October 1973 will be even more successful.

DAVID C. SWITZER
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CORNWALL, L. P. and FARRELL, JACK W. *Ride the Sandy River*. Edmonds, Washington, Pacific Fast Mail, 1973. 247 pages, illustrated. \$15.00.

This is a story of Maine's two foot wide gauge, Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad Company that provided service to the people of Franklin County for more than fifty years. Opened in 1879 as the Sandy River Railroad Company, and consolidated in 1908 with smaller lines, it formed the largest narrow gauge road in the country. By 1930, the depression, automobiles and trucks, made their impact felt, and operations ceased in 1935.

Traditionally, railroad pictorials are not much more than albums of someone's favorite pictures and too often their coverage is restricted to a relatively short period of

time with a narrow range of subject matter. You either like what the author likes — or you don't!

In this book the authors have produced an excellent combination of the pictorial and the printed word. The quality and selection of the more than 250 rare photographs is of the highest, unfortunately they overlap the single page in several instances. The inclusion of many illustrated maps and station layouts is particularly well done and add much to the composition.

While derailments are not pleasant reminders, at least to railroaders, they must be considered as a part of railroad life and many have been included in the book.

The reproduction of actual timetables, engineman's train orders, tickets, buttons and cap badges are excellent and contribute to a well rounded story. The engine rosters of the several railroads composing the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad Company have some shortcomings but are much better than some previously published.

There is only so much that can be said about the road, but much depends on the manner. I believe that the authors have produced an excellent story for the beginner as well as for the "Buff" They compare favorably with the best of Moody and Crittenden, early writers of this road. The book is well worth the cost.

RICHARD F DOLE
Maine Historical Society

ECCLES, WILLIAM J. *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760*. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969, and *France in America*. New York, Harper & Row, 1972.

Professor Eccles' two volumes fill a long-felt need for short, scholarly and readable histories of New France. Since Francis Parkman's monumental series has been shelved as a curiosity by revisionist historians of Eccles' type, few works in English have appeared which offer an in depth view of the French during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Eccles' *France in America*, the latest addition to the New American Nation Series, provides a well-considered narrative introduction to this history. *The Canadian Frontier*, part of the Histories of the American Frontier series, attempts an interpretative overview of New France despite the fact, as Eccles argues, that the colony does not fit the Turnerian model.

Both books nimbly synthesize the more outstanding controversies in Canada's colonial history: the nature and role played by the French Crown, the development and motivation of the seigneurial/bourgeois-gentilshommes class, the varied functions of diocesan and missionary clergy, the difficulties of constructing a viable northern economy and finally the Imperial conflict between France and England. Both works benefit from Professor Eccles' unique contribution to the history of New France, the interplay between martial and aristocratic values within the colony. Neither book is the final word on any of these subjects. The gestation of Canadian social history has only just begun.

The Canadian Frontier is helpful for the many questions it asks and the tentative answers given. It offers the general reader a guide through the largely misunderstood issues of Canadian colonial history. Additionally,

it suggests points of comparison between the development of New France and the English colonies.

Eccles does not discuss successfully, however, the dynamic between French institutions and the northern frontier. The subject is not approached with thematic consistency; too often Eccles' argument loses itself in a narration of undigested detail. One chapter entitled "Institutions and Environment" is actually about the establishment of Royal government and the transfer of French institutions to American soil. Very little is said about the impact of the frontier on these institutions. In another chapter Eccles argues that Canadian frontiersmen, unlike their English counterparts, did not destroy the wilderness. Their way of life, he asserts, required the preservation of forest and Indian. This argument is circular. Eccles does not explain, or attempt an explanation, why Canadians held values so remarkably different from colonial Englishmen.

France in America is also disappointing. The work includes useful, and unusual, chapters on French activity in the West Indies and Louisiana. Unfortunately, Acadia is ignored except for occasional and uninformative asides. The reader will learn little of the intense and irritating relationship between Massachusetts, Acadia and New France from this book. The Abnaki Indians, who were the focal point between French and English colonies, are referred to seven times. Five of these references assert only that Canada and Acadia relied on the Abnaki to defend their borders. None of the Jesuit missionaries, including Sebastien Racle, are mentioned. The Sieurs de Villieu, de Villebon and the Baron de St Castin, who almost single-handedly confounded Massachusetts during King Williams' War, are overlooked. The expulsion of the Acadians is given one paragraph. *France in America*,

and this is true for *The Canadian Frontier* as well, is not very useful for readers and researchers concerned with French activity on the frontier they shared with New England.

Despite these shortcomings both volumes are important because much of the information they convey is not readily available to English and unspecialized readers. They both conclude with comprehensive bibliographical essays which critically examine the mass of primary and secondary source materials on the history of New France.

KENNETH M. MORRISON
University of Maine, Orono

BUTLER, BEN and NATALIE. *The Red Schoolhouse Neighborhood (Farmington, Maine)*. [Farmington, 1973.] \$3.00.

The Red Schoolhouse Neighborhood (Farmington, Maine) is the fifth in a series prepared by Ben and Natalie Butler for the Farmington Historical Society. This unique way of presenting local history might be examined by other societies in other towns contemplating the presentation of town history. In all five of these so-called pilgrimages, a particular section of the town or a neighborhood is examined on a "pilgrimage" after the history of the neighborhood has been unearthed as only Ben and Natalie Butler can do. For example, the focal point of this pilgrimage was the little Red Schoolhouse preserved by the local history buffs of both Wilton and Farmington. This was School District #14 in 1812 when the town was divided into sixteen such districts, theoretically to bring the three R's to the doorstep of every family in

spite of the legendary two miles trudged to school by grampa in his day. State law in the early days ruled that district schools be supported solely by the families of school age children living within the district. Families were large, lots originally settled were broken down by succeeding generations as sons married and settled nearby, hence nomenclature bearing the name of such and such a neighborhood became common in Maine towns. For many years District #14 was known as the Butterfield neighborhood.

The task of the Butlers in this well illustrated 11" x 8½" booklet of 79 pages was to identify, along a designated route, the homesteads whose occupants, over the years, supported the school. It would seem that such a presentation would make the neighborhood come to life. However, it seemed to us to be more a listing of families than a recording of living history. It is valuable as a historic record. For a town society wishing to compile local history it is a format that various interested people can work on if the town is not so fortunate to have such a team as originated this pilgrimage.

ELIZABETH RING
Maine Historical Society

SMITH, MARION JAQUES. *Pokey and Timothy of Stonehouse Farm*. Freeport, Maine, The Bond Wheelwright Company, 1973. 70 pages. illus. \$3.00.

As the cliché runs, now we have seen everything. Here is local history told to the young people of the Bath area through the eyes of Pokey the skunk. This delightfully seasoned Thorntonesque classic contains so much charm

and humor that it may lead to the de-skunking of many small Pokeys and even to the establishment of skunk kennels so great will be the demand after reading it.

Pokey was not the product of family planning. He was simply the most precocious of a prolific family of skunks who lived in Mr. William King's potato field on Stonehouse Farm in Bath — that is, those who hadn't been caught in traps. More inquisitive than his brothers and sisters, Pokey's mother gave him more attention, teaching him especially to avoid dangers incident to his natural enemies and to man-made contraptions, suggesting in subtle ways the similarities of skunks and children if they didn't do what mother said. She believed Pokey resembled his grandfather, Jimmy Skunk, who was more daring than discreet and had nearly lost his life while living under Mr. William Webb's woodshed, neighbor to Mr. Peleg Tallman's in the village. Before Jimmy got carried off to Mr. King's in a barrel by mistake, his adventures in the shipyards and sawdust piles along the waterfront in Bath proved very educational. It was after he got to Mr. King's place that he married Merry Skunk and produced a family line.

As for Pokey, not much of interest might have been learned from his life had not his horizons been unexpectedly broadened. Straying too far afield one day he was snatched in the cruel talons of a great owl and flown over the harbor where the vessels lay in wait until the War of 1812 was over. Of course, had Pokey lifted his tail when he got caught in a cross fire between the British and the militiamen, he might have helped to drive the enemy away. But, by that time Pokey had been operated on. It was because he had lost his protection that his new master, ten-year-old Timothy, son of Captain Oliver of Mr. King's brig *Ann* took such good care of him carrying him

in a basket wherever he went in the exciting days of June 1814. So we learn of sea battles and privateers and of fire-arms and swivel guns at Fort Popham along the Kennebec, and of Mark Langdon Hill, Captain Denny McCobb and Colonel Reed of the Georgetown Scouts. We also learn of more peaceful pursuits, such as making candles, whale oil, how men dressed, and the use of oxen instead of horses over the roughly bushed District roads. In fact the talented teacher who wrote this must have had some special gift to be so conversant with the small animals of Pokey's world. Pokey indeed is the Jonathan Livingston Seagull of skunkland with one important difference — down-to-earth Pokey had much more fun. Thornton Burgess couldn't have done better.

The printing and illustrations are by the author.

ELIZABETH RING
Maine Historical Society