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Review of *Theorizing the Bringing Back the Past: Historical Perspectives on Canadian Archaeology* Edited by Pamela Jane Smith and Donald Mitchell

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Bringing Back the Past: Historical Perspectives on Canadian Archaeology. Edited by Pamela Jane Smith and Donald Mitchell. Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada, paper no. 158. Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1998. xv+276 pp. Figures, tables, notes, references. \$29.95 paper (ISBN 0-660-15974-0).

Bringing Back the Past consists of a collection of papers about the development of archaeology in Canada, most of them based on presentations delivered in sessions at three annual meetings of the Canadian Archaeological

Association beginning in 1994. The first of these was organized by Pamela Smith and the late William E. Taylor Jr.; Donald Mitchell collaborated with Smith after Taylor's untimely death in 1994.

The papers are grouped under four loosely defined themes: people, institutions, regions, and "toward the present." As one might imagine given the scope of the subject matter, the volume is by no means comprehensive, but it certainly provides a good overview of some of the key personalities and flavor of Canadian archaeology. The editors state, somewhat immodestly, that "The political and social contexts of our discipline are here recorded for the first time and archaeology's contributions to our society are now recorded." William Noble, one of the book's contributors, can in fact lay claim to this statement on the basis of a paper published in 1972.

Part one opens with an excellent piece by Gerald Killan dealing with the beginnings of the discipline in the late nineteenth century and the contributions of Daniel Wilson and David Boyle. William Noble's paper presents a respectful and sensitive discussion of J. Norman Emerson's contribution as teacher and researcher at the University of Toronto from the late 1940s until his death in 1977. Those of us who took courses from Dr. Emerson probably recall them as more entertaining than enlightening, but he was a master at inspiring a love for the discipline in his students and beyond. Dr. Emerson, as he was always called, ran weekend "digs" each fall for his introductory anthropology students at the Iroquoian site of Cahiague, located about an hour's drive north of Toronto. More than three hundred students under the direction of a battery of teaching assistants had their first, and for many their last, taste of fieldwork here. As Noble points out, numerous professionals across Canada now contemplating retirement received their foundation with Emerson.

Richard MacNeish's self-indulgent mini-autobiography is both entertaining and informative. His contributions to the discipline are widely known, but in Canada they have kept at least two generations of students busy with research projects building on his initial perceptions, or attempting to bridge MacNeish's "leaps of faith" in his interpretations. His tireless energy was instrumental in establishing North America's first Department of Archaeology at the University of Calgary; and along with Emerson, he trained many of the most prominent professionals in the country. MacNeish candidly admits that he left academia because the workload, often involving hours of administration each week, hindered his own research interests.

Bruce Trigger's paper is rich with insight, though his memories of his days at the University of Toronto, and particularly of J. Norman Emerson,

are less than complimentary. I applaud Trigger's observation that "as far as possible archaeology and anthropology should be part of a more general social discourse" as well as his regarding "the obscurantist language used and defended by many postprocessual archaeologists . . . as a retreat into social and intellectual irrelevance" (89).

Only a few institutions are covered in the second part of the book, including the Royal Ontario Museum (D. M. Pendergast), the Anthropological Division of the Geological Survey of Canada (R. Richling), the National Museum of Canada (I. Dyck), and the University of Manitoba (L. Petitpas, W. J. Mayer-Oakes, G. Monks, and C. T. Shay). Pendergast deals with the ROM's contribution to archaeology outside of Canada, which though interesting ignores the institution's long involvement in Ontario archaeology. I was surprised to read about the disappearance of the "Art History" approach of the museum in the 1950s. My own recent (mid-1990s) experience suggests exactly the opposite: minimalist displays with impressive lighting on glorious objects, and nary a label in sight. Likely this is an outgrowth of a widespread trend of putting designers rather than researchers in charge of displays, resulting in decontextualized objects with little or no informative content. The papers by Richling and Dyck, in addition to their good historical summaries, relate the experiences of archaeologists struggling to justify their programs to administration-obsessed bureaucrats. MacNeish touches on this in regard to Arctic explorer, ethnologist, and archaeologist Diamond Jenness. The situation is even worse today with demands for performance indicators and constant requirements to justify research.

Regional papers, the focus of part three, cover only a few areas of Canada: Nova Scotia (S. Davis), Quebec (C. Martijn), and British Columbia (D. Mitchell). Martijn's retrospective on Quebec archaeology, like Trigger's paper added after the conference, is comprehensive (with fifty footnotes) and a valuable addition to the historical literature. Mitchell's study covers the development of a difficult period in BC archaeology, namely the beginnings and proliferation of cultural resources management (CRM). His rather negative feelings about how archaeology has become overbureaucratized probably reflect the opinion of many North American academic archaeologists. I must admit that archaeological permit system requirements have become onerous because of the overhead necessary to meet them. The sheer magnitude of the CRM industry, however, which developed in response to a general conservation ethic in the North American public, makes such wistful observations about a time when there was more balance rather quaint.

The last two papers in part three deal with specific issues, namely Thule (R. Park) and fur trade archaeology (O. Klimko). I agree completely with Park's assertion that Thule archaeology should not be treating sites as villages, and that the typological approach applied by Mathiassen in the 1920s is only one way to examine assemblages. One can only hope that those engaged in this area of Arctic research will agree with his suggestions.

Beginning the final section (there is no conclusion or summary statement by the editors) is a long discussion by N. Ferris of the CRM industry in Ontario. Illustrated with numerous 3D bar graphs, it highlights the problems faced by a burgeoning private sector industry that appears rather chaotic and in much need of professionalization, and that must change itself or risk having change imposed from outside. Competition between consultants is intense in Ontario and other regions of the country as well, but responding to this by lowering daily charge-out rates to Mac-job levels surely undermines the value of our discipline and the resource we are supposed to be conserving. Compared to many other sectors of the environmental sciences, archaeology, I believe, commands less respect and certainly less funding.

Ferris also mentions aboriginal involvement in co-management of the heritage of indigenous peoples; Loring's paper expands on this theme. All archaeologists working in northern Canada are well aware of the necessity for community collaboration and initiation of archaeological projects. This has long been the case in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and more recently has come to apply to British Columbia and Labrador, as Loring notes. Other regions will soon follow. The Inuit of the newly formed territory of Nunavut in the Eastern Arctic have assumed complete control over heritage issues. Over the past ten years, regular sessions at regional and national conferences in Canada have been devoted to the need for working with aboriginal people, and it is significant to note that First Nations archaeologists are now presenting the results of their own work at these conferences.

Other papers deal with women archaeologists (M. Latta, H. Martelle-Hayter, and P. Reed), the role of amateur societies (E. Johnson and T. Jones), and role models and mentors (R. Park). Amateur societies have been crucial to the development of the discipline, in some cases having been responsible for heritage legislation (as in Alberta) that would likely be difficult if not impossible to implement today. They also serve as a significant constituency that can rally in support of continued government involvement when the bean-counters start looking for more fat to cut.

Bringing Back the Past must have been a difficult project to develop and see to a satisfactory conclusion. Inevitably the book is incomplete. I would have welcomed, for example, a more unified discussion of the impact of cultural resource management on the last twenty-five years of the discipline, possibly along the lines of David Burley's excellent "A Never Ending Story: Historical Developments in Canadian Archaeology and the Quest for Federal Heritage Legislation" (*Canadian Journal of Archaeology*, 1994). But emphasizing omissions would be unfair. The book succeeds in providing a range of voices about the long and at times precarious story of our development and deserves to be recommended to students and professionals with any involvement in Canadian archaeology. Numerous photographs of some of the personalities of Canadian archaeology, as well as maps and other illustrations, enhance its appeal.

I think William E. Taylor Jr. would have been pleased with the result.

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