Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Ingeborg Marshall, *A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk,* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996, xxiv + 640 pages, $45.00 (cloth).

Reviewer: *Susan Walter*
Saint Mary's University

A distillation of years of research, Marshall's book contains material on the Beothuk culled from published and unpublished documents and archaeological investigations.

Part 1, "History," is organized chronologically beginning with Beothuk first contacts with Europeans in the 16th century and ending in the late 1820s with their demise "as a viable cultural unit" (p. 14). Beothuk interaction with Europeans and other Native groups is the theme. Marshall argues that "starvation, harassment by Europeans and by other native groups, and diseases brought from Europe contributed to a steady population decline" (p. 4), and the Beothuk's foraging adaptation was undermined as access to coastal and inland resources was eroded (e.g., pp. 62, 65, 69, 79, 91, 137). Unlike other Native groups, they had minimal involvement in the fur trade and did not acquire firearms (p. 287). Nonetheless they obtained metal from the seasonally abandoned European fishing stations. Beothuk retaliation "usually took the form of taking equipment from, rather than attacking, fishermen" (p. 38), and furriers (p. 76). Metal implements appear to have assisted Beothuk in intensifying exploitation of resources still available to them (e.g., pp. 111-112, 330).

Part 2, "Ethnography," addresses numerous topics including the position of the Beothuk in Newfoundland prehistory, the distribution and size of population, aspects of social organization, subsistence patterns, transportation, world view, etc. The sparseness of some sections reflects severe data limitations, a problem Marshall acknowledges (e.g., pp. 249- 250, 285). Information regarding Beothuk culture pertains mainly to the second half of the 18th century and to bands that organized caribou drives in the Exploits River vicinity.

Marshall's account is readable, interesting, and its usefulness as a reference work is enhanced by the headings, cross-referencing, maps, tables, figures, and juxtaposition of diverse descriptions of the same event (e.g., p. 143). Marshall situates her sources in cultural context (e.g., pp. 106-107), and includes short biographies of 12 major sources of documentary information (Appendix 2, pp. 238-246). She considers bias in her sources; however, even more caution might have been exercised. Marshall suggests that the Beothuk "would have had the island more or less to themselves" (p. 14) when Europeans arrived on the scene, but states also that "Micmac . . . may have visited the south coast to trap or fish, and Montagnais may intermittently have hunted on the Northern Peninsula" (p. 14). Since there is evidence that other Native groups were exploiting Newfoundland resources (e.g., pp. 42-45, 56, 60), it may be misleading to state that "the Beothuk are believed to have been the only permanent residents on the island" (p. 14). Nor can it be assumed that Beothuk exploited *only* resources on Newfoundland and offshore islands. More critical use of ethnographic analogy would be welcome. For instance, Marshall states: "while there is no detailed information on Beothuk leadership, it is reasonable to assume that Beothuk bands were headed by individuals whose qualities and roles were similar to those described for other hunter-fisher-gatherer *band* societies" (p. 289, emphasis added). Yet she provides evidence of differential rank at least for the later contact period (e.g., differential attire, bearing, burial, housing, etc., pp. 289-291, 349, 356, 342, 410). Additionally, Beothuk had more emphasis on food storage than did other foragers in the region (e.g., pp. 62, 67, 138, 195-196, 296, 307-308, 359-360, 363).

These qualifications aside, the book is a major contribution to our knowledge of the Beothuk, raising questions which future archaeological investigation and/or other sources may address.

John C. Kennedy, *People of the Bays and Headlands: Anthropological History and the Fate of Communities in the Unknown Labrador,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995, xii + 296 pages, maps, and index.

Reviewer: *David S. Moyer*
University of Victoria

Unknown Labrador refers to the southeast coast of Labrador. This book fulfils the author's "promise to the people of southeastern Labrador to write a book about their history and way

of life" (p. vii). This promise is critical to the understanding and evaluation of the book, which at times seems to narrate detail that is perplexing to an outsider, even one who is reasonably well-acquainted with Newfoundland culture and history. Nonetheless, the book makes an important contribution to the anthropology of peoples and cultures on the periphery of the world economic system. For much of its history, southeastern Labrador has been the colony of a colony. The author points out that the study "breaks new ground on a number of substantive issues: the role of Inuit enclaves in early European settlement; the relationship of early permanent settlement to the American fishery; the account of the nineteenth-century Settler adaptation and the reasons behind its disruption during this century; the critical account of the impact of the Grenfell Mission, The Labrador Development Company and the construction of military bases on Settler communities" (p. 6). This review will focus on those aspects of the book that are particularly relevant to the general anthropological reader.

The area comprises the coastal region south of Hamilton Inlet (at the head of which is Goose Bay) running to the entrance of the Strait of Belle Isle, which separates Newfoundland from Labrador. The ethnic composition of the region is European, primarily English, Inuit and Innu (formerly called Montagnais-Naskapi) and their descendants. Especially important is the racial and ethnical mixture that characterizes the region and its history.

With respect to the Inuit, Kennedy carefully documents the presence of their enclaves in the region in the late 18th and early 19th century. Based on archaeological and historical data, he believes that "these enclaves were not established until the final decades of the eighteenth century" (p. 84). This care is necessary because one is dealing with the extreme southern limit of Inuit culture. In addition to purely voluntary migration, he suggests that the founding Inuit population may have been people banished from Moravian missions further north, or the descendants of northern Inuit middlemen traders who settled in the region. Further, it is clear from the documentary sources that in the 18th century the Inuit were conducting predatory raids on Europeans in the region. This is in marked contrast to the reported nature of Inuit/White relations in most other areas.

The settlement of the region involves a transition from temporary occupation of the region for trading, and then seasonal exploitation of the local fishery, and finally to the establishment of a resident population. In the middle period there was a long and complex interaction between those who permanently settled on the coast, i.e., settlers, and the various transient populations of American, French and Newfoundland fishers. In particular, it is argued that Americans played a crucial role in facilitating settlement in the region. The author takes special care to differentiate the southeast Labrador pattern from the Newfoundland pattern. He notes that "scholars of early settlement [in Newfoundland] emphasise two key points . . . a) that merchants voluntarily began supplying former servants with supplies, on credit, and b) the timing of permanent settlement depended on the availability of women as wives for potential settlers" (p. 73). Three factors serve to differentiate southeast Labrador from the Newfoundland situation: "a) the disorder and competition which characterize the early British era; b) the transient trade, especially with the American traders; and c) the presence of Inuit women as potential spouses" (p. 74).

The settlers established a subsistence pattern that the author labels "seasonal transhumance," a term usually applied to pastoral societies. Though the pattern is interesting in its own right, it also is important because it has become a key element in the identity of the local people in the face of rapid contemporary social change. The winter settlements were on the mainland and "confined to the family level of integration, reflecting the minimal labour requirements of relatively individualistic endeavours like trapping, hunting, and cutting wood. Winter settlements were spaced far enough apart to permit easy access to renewable resources" (p. 91). In summer people moved to the outer coast where the cod were available. Here "several families normally lived near one another because many hands were necessary to haul cod seines and seal nets, or cooperatively hunt migratory waterfowl. The cod and seal jointly produced were convertible, albeit on credit, into imported necessities such as fishing salt [for preservation], flour, molasses, tea, and pork. The joint production units or crews of summer and fall epitomised a more complex division of labour than was necessary in winter" (p. 91). This adaptation was only possible with linkages to the world economy that were inevitably controlled by outsiders. In the 19th century outside mercantile establishments played a dominant role. The influence was increased by the fact that, for the most part, two firms predominated. In the 1860s and 1870s there was a major turnover with two companies gaining control of the region. "The Hudson's Bay Company and Baine Johnston moved into the region . . . and lost little time in exerting control over local resources" (p. 100).

Much of the book is structured around the emergence and decline of this interesting subsistence pattern. There is a strong focus on the history and influence of outside institutions, agencies and their policies and practices. The author divides the developments of the 20th century into "two broad types: developments compatible with the Settlers' dispersed and mobile lifestyle and those which were not" (p. 127). Three of the compatible developments that were particularly important in the early 20th century are: the modern herring fishery, the modern whaling industry and the fur industry. However "1900-49 was also the twilight of the traditional Settler lifestyle, the era romanticized by contemporary Labradorians in song and story" (p. 127). Throughout this era and after Confederation, however, there was continual pressure for population concentration by a large number of different forces. The climax was the well-intentioned but now infamous Resettlement program. One of the strengths of Kennedy's

book is that he eloquently demonstrates that the genuinely well-intentioned but misinformed can do as much damage to a traditional way of life as the mean-minded, greedy and self-serving.

An interesting recurring theme comes to light with respect to economic development in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Most us can recall the Come-by-Chance refinery fiasco, the cucumber greenhouse scheme and the more successful Churchill Falls project. These may be only latter-day descendants of the Labrador Syndicate (1909-30) scheme to build a 10-mile *dam* across the Strait of Belle Isle, linking southern Labrador with Newfoundland. "Atop the dam would be a rail causeway facilitating rail lines to St. John's. The dam would also deflect the cold Labrador current back into the Arctic, thereby enabling the Gulf Stream to warm the climate of Newfoundland, the maritimes and the northeastern United States" (p. 128). This is only an extreme example of a penchant for grand schemes that would instantly solve the problems of the region. Like all such schemes it had little concern or understanding for the people of the region. It remains to be seen how the Vosey Bay Nickel Mine turns out. After all, in the best of such grandiose development traditions, the mine started out as a search for diamonds in Labrador.

The book makes a number of contributions to theory. The author explicitly writes an anthropological history. The superficial impression, however, is that he is an anthropologist trying to write history. At one level there is a tendency to write an institutional history of the outside agencies impinging on the coast. This is paralleled with references to extensive field work. The specific references to the field-work setting, on the other hand, are disappointing because of their relatively small number. However, the resulting history is better than superficial impressions would suggest. It is a history guided by field work and ethnographic experience. Such an approach suggests new places to look and new questions to ask. The movement is both ways; it generates new questions to ask of one's informants and new ways to read the archival material. Kennedy does it effectively but less explicitly than one might have wished.

There are a number of editorial criticisms that should be made. The maps are inadequate. One needs better maps of Labrador in general and southeastern Labrador in particular to follow important parts of the argument. Fortunately, I had access to such maps. Further, a glossary would have been very helpful. This is generally true but becomes critical with respect to weights and measures. For example, the reader is only belatedly told that a quintal is 112 pounds and a measure of salt fish. Similarly, salted salmon appears to be measured by tierce. By context, one could work out that it was a measure that appeared to be something like a quintal. However, it is explained in the supplement to the second edition of the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* as being 300 pounds of salmon. The dictionary also gives a specific Labrador usage from *Them Days*, a Labrador magazine: "A tierce, now, is bigger than a barrel. He's roughly thirty-one inches high thirty-six or thirty-seven staves and the head is twenty-one inches in diameter" (p. 759). A third measurement on page 166 mentions fathoms of wood. Only the *OED* offers some help. It is apparently a "certain quantity of wood; now, a quantity 6 ft. square in section, whatever the length may be" (Vol. 5, p. 762). These are but a few examples. Admittedly, the author was in a difficult position, writing in the first instance for the people of southeastern Labrador. But surely the publisher's editor(s) could have done more to make the book more accessible to a general reader.

Some things are explained in glorious detail. This reviewer's favourite is on page 111. "Settlers made lozenges from molasses and kerosene. One spoonful of kerosene was added to about two cups of molasses and the mixture heated to the soft-boil stage, kneaded, and cut into small squares, These lozenges were used to treat sore throats, as was a mixture of friar's balsam and sugar."

Jun Jing, *Temple of Memories: History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village,* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996, 217 pages.

Reviewer: *Elizabeth Lominska Johnson*
University of British Columbia

This study is developed around a single culminating event: the rebuilding, in 1991, of the Confucian temple in the town of Dachuan in southwestern Gansu Province. Gansu is a poor province; it is also ethnically diverse, and has had an especially violent history during this century. Jun Jing approaches his examination of this event by focussing on social memory, the collective reconstruction and interpretation of the past. In his words, "this study offers a bottom-up approach to the problem of remembrance in a country where mass amnesia and selective remembrance have been vigorously promoted by state authorities."

The structure rebuilt as a Confucian temple previously had been used for the worship of Confucius and other ancestors. The majority of the former residents of Dachuan, and many people in neighbouring villages, claimed descent from Confucius and collectively constituted a higher-order lineage. They had been formally acknowledged as members of the Kong clan in the 1930s, and elders still cherish childhood memories of sayings and legends associated with this heritage. The status and power resulting from this claim of illustrious descent resulted in the persecution of many Kong people during the revolutionary period, the memory of which was too sensitive for the survivors to discuss directly. The community itself was almost destroyed when it was displaced by reservoir construction in the early 1960s. Its members were forcibly evicted, causing suffering that never has been officially acknowledged. One of the most traumatic memories of this period, one rarely mentioned, concerns the fact that