

ARCHIVES AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN THE MARITIMES*

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I WAS much honored by President MacKenzie's invitation to give an address on this historic occasion, and feel glad that he gave me a free hand in my choice of subject, within the limits of the history of the Maritime Provinces. This was almost necessary, because I could hardly be expected to bring anything new to this university about its founders, or to deal as adequately with any of its distinguished graduates as Dr. Webster dealt with the career of the late Dr. Ganong last year. It is true that I played with the idea of taking a man like Abraham Gesner, who served the three Maritime Provinces well in compiling a history and description of their natural resources a hundred years ago; and that I also thought of choosing Sir William Dawson, who exerted no small influence upon the educational systems of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as well as of Central Canada, in the second half of the nineteenth century. But, as both these men were Nova Scotians, I feared that I might embarrass President MacKenzie and lay myself open to the charge of exploiting his courtesy in the interests of Nova Scotian provincial pride. Moreover, as Professor Keirstead has published his address, *The University of New Brunswick, Past and Present*, in the interval, and referred to the work of the commission on which Sir William Dawson sat, I felt that this was an additional reason why I should avoid direct reference to both Dawson and the university.

None the less, I have been influenced indirectly by both Dr. Webster and Dr. Keirstead, in the sense that, as both of them chose a subject with which they were familiar and incorporated into their discussion of that subject much of their own philosophy derived from experience, I have decided to speak about *Archives and Historical Research in the Maritime Provinces* in the hope that my experience in Nova Scotia may indicate the need, the opportunity and some of the problems of historical research, may suggest some lines of investigation for your students, and may even induce one or more of them to consider the calling of archivist as worthy of pursuit in youth and not necessarily confined to grey hairs and second childhood.

In regard to the latter, I have had ample proof in my own experience that once an archives has been established and its

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establishment made known to the public, there will be no lack of untrained applicants for a job in the institution; but there will also be a few who will enquire as to the qualifications for such a position, and set out early to acquire those qualifications. Eleven years ago I had applications for a job from more than thirty people from sixteen to sixty-six years of age, who had no more definite idea of an archives than that it was something which gave a new opportunity for employment in the government service; but three years ago I had an enquiry from a boy in Grade X who said that he was very much interested in history and would like to know "what formal education, if any, is required after completing high school, for one desiring to be an archivist." If a boy in Grade X desires thus early to be an archivist, I see no reason why some young men in this university should not be preparing themselves for such a career, especially under the guidance of Professor Bailey, who has proved his capacity for historical research and knows both the need and the value of archival collections. I, therefore, leave that point with the hope that, when this sad war is over and we can turn our minds again to a reconstruction of our past, there will be a supply of archivists here equal to the demand.

The need of historical research in the history of the Maritime Provinces may be taken for granted. Hardly a day goes by without some complaint that our histories of Canada ignore the Maritime Provinces, or give inaccurate accounts of them, or treat them as a mere appendix to the history of Central Canada; and, when the authors of these histories are reproached for their sins of omission, they naturally reply that they were unable to find an adequate history of any of these provinces from which to get their information. Unfortunately, that reply is unanswerable, and it is our duty to see that intelligent histories of these three provinces are written, so that a general historian of the Dominion can see what contributions were made by each of the original provinces and incorporate them into the history of Canada as a whole. Then and not till then, can the histories of all the British North American provinces or the historical background of the Dominion of Canada be set forth in true perspective. Then and not till then, will a school boy or adult in New Brunswick, Ontario, or British Columbia realize what a rich heritage he has in a Dominion extending from sea to sea; or realize that the history of Canada before 1867 was not merely the political history of Quebec and Ontario, but a record of parallel

movements of equal importance in all the British North American provinces, which by the paradoxical pressures of the 1860's were constrained to meet in Confederation and to unite in the name of Canada.

I am aware that several volumes of historical and descriptive material have been written on New Brunswick, that special subjects such as the St. John River, the Loyalist Settlements, the Miramichi and St. John Fires have received special attention, and that the *Collections* of the New Brunswick Historical Society and *Acadiensis* contained many articles historical or biographical; but, for a comprehensive, interpretative history of New Brunswick we look in vain. Even on the political and biographical side of history, which has received most attention, there is still much research to be done; and, in doing that research, an effort should be made to overcome the natural vice of eulogy, by going behind the conventional obituary notices and applying the critical faculty to men and movements as they were before death overtook them. Even the Loyalists should be made to stand before the bar of history.

The late Dr. Ganong did great service to the scientific study of New Brunswick history. Some of his work was done once and for all, and needs only to be mastered and incorporated into the general body of knowledge; but one aspect of his work, the narrative and critical history of New Brunswick in the 19th century, was little more than projected; and therefore his plan needs to be expanded and completed. To do this will require the combined labour of many research students, and the mature reflections of a trained mind to direct those students and to synthesize their conclusions. But, before these students can labour effectively and this mature mind can make the synthesis, many manuscripts, books, magazines and newspapers must be assembled in one place, arranged, catalogued and made easily accessible to those who can use them.

Dr. Ganong knew and wrote long ago about the value of an historical museum, and suggested a way by which such a museum might be acquired and maintained. Before he died he had the joy of seeing his dream come true, and both an historical and a scientific museum magnificently housed in the same building. Of this museum New Brunswick has a right to be proud, and for the contributions of Dr. and Mrs. Webster to that museum she ought to be grateful; but both Dr. and Mrs. Webster would be the first to admit that for historical research a museum, like patriotism, is not enough. You still need to have your archives

assembled in one building and properly organized, so that a student can follow a subject from the beginning to the end in all the documents or journals or papers that throw any light upon it. Until that is done, it will be impossible for New Brunswick to have a full and complete account of her past written or published. Until that happy day it will be impossible to complete and expand the work for which Ganong laid the foundations and provided an outline. By the memory of Ganong, therefore, I appeal to you to take the earliest possible steps to get your archives organized for use.

In emphasizing the need and value of an archives for further historical research, it is the 19th century that I have in mind more than the 17th and 18th centuries, and historical students rather than historical tourists. I do not think that we in the Maritime Provinces need do much more research on the Indian and Acadian periods, or even on the pre-Loyalist and Loyalist periods. They have been well worked over, all pertinent facts about them have been garnered, and both our historical museums and our historical journalists have presented the tragedy and romance of those periods fully. All we need to do now is to reconcile the various accounts of the Acadian tradition, to tone down the harsher criticisms of the pre-Loyalists and the indiscriminating eulogies of the Loyalists, and to bring them all into perspective with the subsequent historical narrative.

But, with the exception of such political movements as responsible government and confederation, the history of all the Maritime Provinces in the 19th century has been very inadequately studied; and yet it was only in the middle decades of that century that we emerged as New Brunswickers, Nova Scotians or Islanders, self-conscious makers of history. It was only then that we began to formulate our own social and cultural ideals, to develop our own land and immigration policies, and to gain control of our own political and economic organization; and it is in seeking the genesis and course of these movements in each of these provinces that our own provincial archives are indispensable: for much of the material contained in them cannot be found elsewhere, as only the conflicts of imperial and local policies and general reports upon the progress of the colonies appear in the correspondence of the lieutenant-governors and colonial secretaries, while accounts of the ordinary everyday activities of a nascent society have to be sought in the petitions to the local assembly, the correspondence of local officials with school boards, agricultural societies, religious denomina-

tions, etc., and in contemporary newspapers, magazines and pamphlets. It is from these sources chiefly that one can trace the evolution of the social, economic and political organizations of the provinces, and it is this evolution that constitutes our history.

In the Public Archives of Nova Scotia I have been conducting or directing researches for several years on the origins of our people, the beginnings of industry, trade and commerce, the development of transportation and communications, the cultural, social, economic and political organization, and the gradual transformation of British Americans into Nova Scotians. In doing this I have found continual reference to similar movements in New Brunswick, and considerable interchange of ideas and services between the two provinces. Thus the idea took hold of me that in all our history there were similar or parallel movements; and it is because of this sense of a parallel, if not a common, history that I am telling you some of my discoveries, in the hope that if someone here attempts similar studies, he will find the same sort of movement, differing only in dates and other minor details.

For example, by breaking into the hitherto neglected period between the War of 1812 and the definite struggle for responsible government, I found that this was a period of the utmost importance in the formulation of Nova Scotian ideals and the formation of a Nova Scotian character. In this period there was a gradual awakening of all Nova Scotian faculties, intellectual, moral, economic and political, promoted by journalists, clergymen, political leaders, and other public-spirited citizens, both native-born and immigrant, through newspapers, magazines and public subscription libraries, social, literary and scientific societies, mechanics' institutes, agricultural and temperance societies, common schools, grammar schools and academies or colleges. This awakening both spiritual and material was accomplished by appeals to local patriotism, and led to a remarkable growth in provincial pride, which culminated in that democratic revolt against monopoly in Church and State known as the demand for responsible government, and in that aspiration for Imperial partnership which was Nova Scotia's substitute for Confederation. In other words, the period between 1812 and 1837, or more accurately the first three decades of the 19th century, formed a period of apprenticeship for the master workmanship of the next three decades when Nova Scotians were a self-

conscious, self-confident people, determined to exercise the fullest rights of British subjects and insistent that Nova Scotians were the equals in every respect of their fellow-subjects in Great Britain.

In an effort to apply an interpretative phrase to the movement, and in the belief that mind rather than matter was the dynamic force, I have called it the *Intellectual Awakening of Nova Scotia*, but I feel confident that if someone here will work through the newspapers and magazines, the statutes and journals of the legislature, the petitions for bounties or other assistance to schools and societies, the records of ship-building and transportation, he will find that New Brunswick too had its period of awakening, when it gradually got the idea that it was a distinct entity within the old Colonial System, that it should know best how to deal with its own local needs, and that it should take thought of its future relation to both Great Britain and the United States. He may not find that the dates of the movement were identical with those which I have assigned to Nova Scotia, nor that all the societies or organizations which were active in Nova Scotia appeared in New Brunswick; but I know that some corresponded, and that in some instances there was mutual borrowing of ideas, when the borrower seemed to make more effective use of the idea than the lender.

In 1830 the *British American Society* was founded in Saint John to relieve the distressed, and to strengthen the bonds of national union by affording opportunities for the interchange of liberal and patriotic sentiment. In calling attention to this organization, *The Novascotian* approved the idea, and said that some of the New Brunswick papers expressed a wish that the example might be followed in other colonies. I do not know the history of this society, or whether it had branches in other parts of New Brunswick, but I do know that its example was followed in Nova Scotia: for three years later *The Nova Scotia Philanthropic Society* was founded in Halifax with the same ideals, and for almost a quarter of a century it continued to be the focus of Nova Scotian national consciousness. It met regularly according to its constitution, held annual banquets or picnics with patriotic speeches and parades, fostered local talent, boasted of natural resources in men and things, and, in general it emulated the activities of the North British, Charitable Irish, and St. George's Societies. Its activities ceased only when its work was no longer necessary: when self-government had been achieved, when immigration had practi-

ally ceased, and the majority of Nova Scotians were native-born or sufficiently assimilated to take their "Nova-Scotia-ness" for granted. It was a member of this society who originated the use of the Nova Scotian flag. In 1858 he presented one to the Halifax Cricket Club, and in 1860 he presented another to the Provincial Secretary to be flown from the top of Province House on the natal day of Halifax, which day the society had been wont to celebrate through lack of a St. Andrew, St. Patrick or St. George to venerate as a patron saint.

But, if Nova Scotia borrowed the idea of a patriotic society from New Brunswick, the reverse is true of the idea of a mechanics' institute. The *Mechanics' Institute* was organized in Halifax in 1832, and during the next three decades was a real university of the people for the city of Halifax, from which the idea spread to Dartmouth, Windsor, Truro, Stewiacke, Antigonish, Sydney and other places in Nova Scotia, as well as to Charlottetown, Saint John and Fredericton. In this institute weekly lectures were given during the winter months on literary and scientific subjects; and before it some of the most inspiring addresses of Joseph Howe were given. It was as President of the *Institute*, in 1834, that he gave that address on love of country and faith in Nova Scotia which inspired the youth of his generation and still speaks to the heart of those who read it to-day. It was that address which suggested to me a title for the period 1837 to 1867, as the Age of Faith in Nova Scotia, of which more anon.

At the moment I wish to call attention to an address which he gave before the *Institute* in 1835 on poetry. In all his addresses he had a practical purpose, and in this he emphasized the value of poetry in the evolution and inspiration of democracy. Of all the fine arts, he argued, poetry was the peculiar friend—the favourite of the poor. The charms of music, painting, and statuary belonged to the privileged orders, as they alone could command the most gifted performances and the specimens of finished skill; but the songs of the poet were addressed to every rank and found a home in the cottage as well as the palace. He recommended the study of the popular poets, and asserted that he who wrote the popular songs was more influential than he who made the laws of a country.

It is not so much for the uses of poetry which Howe advocated, although these are important in interpreting the rise of democracy in Nova Scotia, that I allude to this lecture now, as for the fact that this meeting of the *Institute* was attended

by Lemuel Allan Wilmot of New Brunswick, who was much impressed by the institution and announced his intention of forming one at Fredericton in connection with the one at Halifax as soon as possible. The idea of the Mechanics' Institute, then, was borrowed by New Brunswick from Nova Scotia; but the first in New Brunswick was organized at Saint John in 1838, and that at Fredericton not until 1842. Both were cordially welcomed by the Halifax *Institute*, and their progress regularly reported by the Halifax papers. That of Saint John was referred to by John S. Thompson, Secretary of the Halifax *Institute*, in his report for 1839, in the following terms:

The opening of Institutes at St. John, N. B., at Charlottetown, P. E. I., and at Truro, N. S., has given pleasing evidence of the growth of public spirit and intelligence in these colonies. Your committee commenced a correspondence with each of these bodies, and resolved that the Presidents of each should be *ex officio* members of the Halifax Institute. They cannot refrain from congratulating the infant Institution at St. John, on the success which has attended its first efforts. Already, in numbers and friends, it far excels that which may be called the Parent Institute at Halifax—but in such a work there is no room for envy—the prosperity of any one of those establishments should be considered as a general triumph and, although each should aim at the highest attainable character, when each does its best, it should rejoice to be outrun in such a race.

In December, 1841, *The Novascotian* noted that the membership of the Saint John Institute had increased from 269 to 525, that its building had cost £2300, its library £200, its philosophical and chemical apparatus £250; and that of the £2700 expended to date the Provincial legislature had given only £720. Obviously the Mechanics' Institute of St. John was outstripping the mother society.

Again, in September, 1842, *The Novascotian* carried the following news item copied from the *Courier*:

A public meeting was held at Fredericton on the 6th instant, at which the Hon. Thomas Bailie presided, and William Watts, Esq., acted as secretary; when it was resolved to establish a Mechanics' Institute at the seat of government; and to petition His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor to direct a balance of £200 of the "Fredericton Improvement Fund", which remains unappropriated, to be applied towards the erection of a suitable building for the Institute.

I have not followed the history of these institutes farther; but this is enough to show that mechanics' institutes were a

significant factor in the intellectual awakening of New Brunswick as of Nova Scotia, and that anyone who wishes to interpret the evolution of local culture in New Brunswick must take account of them. The same is true in regard to the evolution of provincial patriotism, for it was in the *Institute* of Saint John in 1852 that William Watts, Jr. made his brilliant appeal to his fellow countrymen to have confidence in their country and themselves. I shall quote a paragraph from this address in dealing with my next suggestion, and conclude this part of my subject with the hope that someone will review the history of New Brunswick in the early decades of the 19th century, from some such point of view as I have indicated, and that in doing so he may find that the varied and tentative gropings of his forefathers towards self-expression ultimately fitted into a pattern, which was more clearly perceived in the next generation. Incidentally, I should like to know what the "Fredericton Improvement Fund" was. Did the government of New Brunswick actually have a matured plan for beautifying its capital over a hundred years ago? If so, what was that plan and how far was it carried out?

In attempting to analyse the period subsequent to the intellectual awakening of Nova Scotia, I made and published a number of preliminary studies, each dealing with some tributary to the general stream of history, and all pointing to the same conclusion: that in the period from 1837 to 1867 Nova Scotians were increasingly self-conscious as such, quite aware of what they were trying to do in fitting themselves for and demanding self-government, constantly comparing their institutions with those of the British Isles and the United States, striving to maintain a distinct existence on this continent and ultimately to obtain a junior partnership in the British Empire.

In tracing the *Nova Scotia Philanthropic Society* from its beginning in 1834 to its end in 1858, I found that it hailed every success of Nova Scotians at home or abroad, called attention to their natural resources and urged their exploitation to the full.

In *Hopes Raised by Steam, in 1840*, I illustrated from contemporary newspapers how Tory and Reformer alike expected the establishment of regular trans-atlantic communication by steam to bring a great influx of immigrants and tourists to Nova Scotia, and to make Halifax the *entrepôt* for North America; how the temperature of provincial pride rose to boiling point over the fact that it was a Nova Scotian who estab-

lished the first regular line of steamships; and how this achievement was celebrated in moving verse by John McPherson, the young school teacher who styled himself the "Harp of Acadia."

In a series of articles on provincial aid to education, I followed the struggles for an educational system, from the first tentative efforts to bonus those townships which would assess themselves, to the final establishment of compulsory assessment and free schools on the eve of Confederation; and I found that the leaders in this movement insisted that only those people who enjoyed a general diffusion of education were worthy of self-government, and that province-wide education and responsible government were regarded as the twin pillars of national self-respect.

In *Nova Scotia and the Durham Mission* I argued that, though Lord Durham's Report undoubtedly had some influence upon the course of the movement towards responsible government in Nova Scotia, Nova Scotians were working towards that idea before the rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada made that report necessary; and that they would have got responsible government earlier if the rebellions had not taken place and his report had been unnecessary. In other words, responsible government was the natural goal of Nova Scotia's intelligent and skilful apprenticeship.

In *History and Its Uses in Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia*, I showed that the chief motive of all historical writing in Nova Scotia prior to 1860, when Beamish Murdoch commenced his voluminous chronicles, was to make Nova Scotia better known to herself and to the British people; and that one of its school histories, with the attractive title *The Land of the Mayflower*, took this high-minded attitude towards patriotism:

Let Nova Scotians cultivate an acquaintance with the past history of our country; let them acquire a thorough knowledge of its present state, especially with respect to its rich and exhaustless resources; let them understand thoroughly its relationship to other countries, particularly to Britain; and, when in possession of the powerful agent **Intelligence**, let them labor with zeal and determination in building up, not merely their own fortunes, but conjointly therewith the Provincial prosperity, and then shall we see our country rapidly rise to her true and rightful position among the states of the earth.

In *The Spacious Days of Nova Scotia*, I attempted to link up several of these ideas, and to illustrate from contemporary prose and poetry, most of which appeared in the newspapers

and magazines, the character and outlook of the Nova Scotians. In that article I developed the thesis that, from 1837 to the achievement of responsible government in 1848, Nova Scotians manifested an increasing confidence in themselves and proved their ability to direct and control all their own domestic concerns; that the celebration of the centenary of the founding of Halifax gave public expression to this faith in themselves; that the first provincial exhibition in 1854 gave an opportunity for all Nova Scotians to display their mental and material products to themselves; and that the prizes and medals won at the International Exhibition of 1862 convinced them that they had become known to the world.

In subsequent studies, I found that no fewer than eighty newspapers had been published for a longer or shorter period between 1837 and 1867, and that most of them were edited and published by native-born Nova Scotians, who were trying to give expression to the faith that was in them and to realize the hopes with which they had embarked on journalistic careers. Finally, I came to the conclusion that the best interpretative phrase I could employ to link up all these ideals, efforts and achievements was *The Age of Faith in Nova Scotia*, the age of confidence in their country and themselves.

My second suggestion, therefore, is that someone in New Brunswick should take this idea as a preliminary thesis, and see when the people of New Brunswick, as distinct from the official group which was supposed to represent imperial interests and royal prerogative, began to feel confidence in themselves, to fit themselves consciously for self-government by education, to organize for the discussion of local problems, to demand control of their own land, to develop their own industries, to improve their communications, and, in general, to throw off the colonial mind and think as a self-respecting people. From the interchange of official correspondence, in extracts from New Brunswick newspapers, and from discussions of New Brunswick affairs in contemporary Nova Scotian newspapers, I gather that the same forces were operating in a similar manner in both provinces in this period also, although provincial consciousness and racial solidarity may have developed more slowly and a little later in New Brunswick, for both historical and geographical reasons. In any event, I find that William Watts, Jr., of Fredericton, in an address before the *Mechanics' Institute* of St. John, complained of a lack of confidence on the part of his fellow countrymen in their own country and themselves as late

as 1852; but he noted that the provincial Exhibition of that year had done something to remedy that defect in their character.

Like the Exhibition in Nova Scotia two years later, this Exhibition had been inspired by the great Exhibition of 1851 in London, at which New Brunswick was shamefacedly represented "by a lump of asphaltum, the figure of an Indian, and a bark canoe". But the Exhibition of 1852 was a marked success, and entirely the work of local talent. The architect of the Pavilion was Mr. Stead of Fredericton, the huge canvas for the roof and walls was fashioned and sewed by Mr. Gardiner of Saint John, the diplomas were engraved by Mr. Avery of Saint John, the Exhibition Song was written by Mr. Watts of Fredericton, set to music and sung by Mr. Foster of Saint John, and the oration was delivered by Judge Wilmot, who rejoiced that New Brunswickers at last had an opportunity to know and appreciate themselves, and propounded once more his faith in popular education and the projected railroad as a means of binding the people more closely together and ushering in a new era of prosperity. A full account of this Exhibition was published in the *Journal of the New Brunswick Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture, Home Manufactures and Commerce*, Vol. I, Part IV. This *Journal* and the work of this *Society* deserve extended notice in any history of New Brunswick.

Perhaps the general character and effect of this Exhibition is expressed best by the following extract from the speech of Mr. Watts above referred to:

John Bluenose stood amazed, surprised, confounded, in view of the crops of his own farm and garden—thought at first it must be somebody else's—and when the glad surprise settled at last into the more glorious conviction that it was all the fruit of provincial fertility and industry—John fired up with new courage, cocked his hat, gave a tug to his shirt collar, and went home with larger faith, vowing he'd make the next show better.

But you must not suppose that Bluenose was led to this conviction by the evidence of his own eyes employed on these trophies of his own fields—that had been too bold by half for him. He had to wait till a gentleman who had just returned from the great Upper Canada Fair, then lately held at Toronto, had first declared that our farm produce was greatly superior to theirs;—till another traveller who had been present at many of the great agricultural anniversaries in the United States had given the same testimony;—till Mr. Sykes, the English railway contractor, had endorsed a similar opinion, and an Ayrshire farmer, who had time and again seen the finest agricultural shows in Scotland, repeated the same tale;—then, and not till then, the glad assur-

ance settled down into the heart of Bluenose, that notwithstanding his little faith—his imperfect husbandry—his paucity of agricultural implements—his wastefulness in manures—his carelessness in drainage—his disregard of systematic cropping, indeed of all the appliances of scientific agriculture—the simple fertility of the soil, and his own unskilled industry, had enabled him to gather on those shelves a show of field and garden productions worthy to be pitted against the best results of wealthy and systematic farming in the best agricultural districts of the old world or the new.

With this stimulating bit of self-criticism I leave you to work out your own interpretation of the period, and hurry on to the end of my address. I cannot offer any suggestions in regard to the interpretation of post-Confederation New Brunswick history, as I have not yet reached final conclusions about Nova Scotia, except to say that it went through a period of frustration and has only recently recovered its old confidence in itself and emerged from the Slough of Despond. Within the last two decades there has been a new renaissance of literature and the arts, and I believe we are again entering an all-round age of faith; but I hope that I have already said enough to convince you that without an adequate provincial Archives you cannot have an intimate interpretation of provincial history: fragmentary sources can only shed broken lights upon shadowy outlines, leaving the inner life dark and obscure. However, I cannot conclude without a word as to the value and uses of historical research to-day. Like an Irishman's preface, this comes at the end rather than at the beginning.

You may have noticed that I have assumed the desirability and necessity of historical research in local history, insisted upon certain prerequisites for that research, and suggested certain lines of investigation based upon my own experience; but that I have only hinted at the kind of historical study which I believe to be worth while, and have said nothing of the pressures that are put upon an archivist to divert his energies into unprofitable channels and waste his time on inconsequential details. I confess that in the midst of this global war, when the very existence of western civilization is at stake, it is difficult to keep one's mind upon past ages even when thinking in terms of nations, empires and continents, because events and systems of the past are so overshadowed by the events, ideologies and modes of warfare to-day. Still more difficult is it to keep one's mind upon the past history of small provinces on the fringe of a large

continent; but for those of us who cannot take an active part in one of the armed forces in defending our civilization abroad, it is our duty to keep the cultural fires burning at home, to search out the origins and character of our civilization, and to know what we want to preserve in the era of reconstruction. Lord Acton once defended the study of modern as distinct from ancient and mediaeval history on the ground that it was "a narrative told of ourselves, the record of a life which is our own, of efforts not yet abandoned to repose, of problems that still entangle the feet and vex the hearts of men"; and Joseph Howe once said in defence of his demand for local control of Nova Scotian policy, "Though Nova Scotia is a small country, there are in these questions a dignity and an importance on account of the principles involved."

Here, then, is my justification for an intelligent approach to local history, as distinct from futile fiddling with first things as such, and prolonged searching for genealogical records of obscure people. For history is organized knowledge obtained by investigation and enquiry. It is a record of human effort and achievement under various conditions. It narrates, explains and interprets. It traces origins, change and development. It attempts to discover causes, results, relationships and tendencies. It recognizes geographical or physical features as conditioning factors, but keeps its eye on the aspiring spirit of man. Its conclusions are limited by the materials which have been preserved, and the validity of even those conclusions may be questioned on account of the fact that conditions and events cannot be reproduced in a laboratory for verification. Obviously, the historian cannot foresee the future, but he can reconstruct the past of his community, describe the forces both material and mental, national and international, which conditioned that past, indicate the reactions of the people to those forces and, in so doing, suggest how they may react to given conditions in the future according to their nature and nurture.

This kind of history, serious but not necessarily solemn, both descriptive and interpretative, is quite worth while. It not only satisfies a natural curiosity, helps us to know ourselves in strength and weakness, trains us to look for forces within and beyond our control, and teaches us patience with the slowness of evolutionary processes, but, by showing us that our forefathers have done great things together under adverse conditions, inspires us to cooperate for great purposes in the future.