

Edith Fowke has published in the field of folksong and folktale since 1957. The present collection of tales and legends is an important contribution to the study of folklore and will enhance the knowledge that all Canadians have of the francophone part of our heritage.

NOTES

¹Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*. Helsinki. Folklore Fellows Communications 184, 1961. Stith Thompson: *Motif Index of Folk Literature*, 6 vols. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1955-1959.

Margret Andersen has published widely on French and Québec Literature, and on Women's Studies. At the University of Guelph she has been involved in organizing a Literature in Translation course on children's literature, which draws together specialists on the subject in German, Italian, and Spanish, as well as English and French.



Joe Mufferaw: Ottawa Valley Legend

S.D. NEILL

Tall tales of Joe Mufferaw, Bernie Bedore. Illus. by Yüksel Hassan. Toronto, Consolidated Amethyst Communications Inc., 1963. Illus. c. 1979. 61 pp. \$6.95 paper. ISBN 0-920474-12-8.

I first heard of Joe Mufferaw several years ago when Stompin' Tom Connors sang his version of the feats of the Ottawa Valley strong man.

Bedore is not credited by Stompin' Tom, who probably picked up the Mufferaw stories by word of mouth.

Bedore makes a point, on the verso of the title page, of telling us that "the character Joe Mufferaw and the name Joe Mufferaw are part of the registered trademark of Mufferaw Enterprises Ltd." The tales and the character in the book are, Bedore points out, "copyrighted as the intellectual property of Bernard Vance Bedore". An earlier edition of the tales was published out of Arnprior, Ontario, as "A Mufferaw Distribution" in 1966. Edith Fowke lists Fenn-Graphic as the publisher. This edition must not have been widely distributed for it is not to be found easily. I have not seen it, but *Quill & Quire* listed it along with other works on Canadian folklore in vol. 42:9 (pp. 12-13).

I found this claim to ownership of a folk hero paradoxical and somewhat sad for a storyteller. Bedore is touted as a well-known personality in the Ottawa Valley and Fowke says Mufferaw has been 'commercialized' largely through Bedore's efforts, and mentions a 1971 television series, "Mufferaw Land" (p. 305). But Joe Mufferaw does not belong to Bernie Bedore, as the bibliography at the end of this review shows.

American and Canadian folklorists have demonstrated that he belongs to the lumbermen of Ontario and the Lake States. Fowke cites George Monteiro's article "Histoire de Montferrand: L'Athlète Canadien and Joe Muffraw", which describes the spread of stories all across the northern states about a character whose name varied from Montferrat to Mouffreau, Moufferon, Muffraw, and even Murphraw. Richard Dorson makes the point that Paul Bunyan was not well known among the lumberjacks, Bunyan's fame being primarily the result of commercialization. Quoting from Walter Wyman's book, which tells the life story of Louie Blanchard, Dorson writes: "Louis Blanchard, the French Canadian woodsman of Wisconsin, recalled that the 'big man we heard from was Joe Mouffreau, a big Frenchman who was supposed to have come over from Canady' " (p. 174). Wyman, who had taken down Blanchard's story, tells us that Blanchard was born on the Chippewa River in Wisconsin in 1872, and his father was a French Canadian (p. x).

Dorson notes "the French Canadian lumberjacks had their own hero, Joe Mouffreau or Mouffron, who as yet has not found his biographer". Monteiro's article, relying heavily on Benjamin Sulte's *Histoire de Jos. Montferrand*, provides some background to the types of story told about "Mufferaw", as well as the geographical distribution of the character. Monteiro also indicates relationships between the French Canadian hero and other strong men including Paul Bunyan.

Donald McKay gives the "true" story of Montferrand, his boxing feats and his fights against the Irish of Bytown. Montferrand was born in 1802 and died in 1864. His fame as a strong man was well-established by 1830.

“Migrant French-Canadian lumberjacks carried his fame to northern Ontario and the pine camps of Michigan and Wisconsin where he may have been – who knows? – a model for the tall tales of the legendary Paul Bunyan whose stories first appeared it seems, in the 1850s in the Adirondacks, New York, and Michigan pine camps. In the English-speaking camps he was ‘Joe Muffraw’ and one old Lake States shantyman who had come from Quebec in his distant youth recalled: ‘Joe Muffraw? We knew about him. There were two Joe Muffraws – one named Pete’. Long before Paul Bunyan and his blue ox Babe there were stories of Joe Montferrand and his mythical pet white moose” (pp. 38-39). McKay interviewed 130 men who had worked in the lumbercamps as part of his research. He does not mention Bedore, but cites Sulte in his bibliography.

There is quite a lot of information about the strong man behind the legend, but very little has been published about Joe Mufferaw himself. Indeed, Bernie Bedore’s book is all we have. He has, in this small book, told a number of Bunyanesque tales about Mufferaw and his white moose Broadaxe, and told them well. He puts the tales in the mouths of local characters, Joe Beef, Joe Gwah, and Jimmy and Barney, who sit around the stove in the old Central Hotel in Arnprior and spin tall tales of their days in the lumber camps. Everything is larger than life and no time is wasted with explanations or descriptive passages. Action and exaggeration overwhelm credulity but create a great sense of fun. In the tale about “some fine athletes”, Joe Mufferaw brings his nephew up from the Gaspé to take part in a hockey game: “Joe left the rink on Chats Lake at Arnprior on a dead run and an hour later he returned with his nephew who lived down in the Gaspé. His nephew was a small man compared to Joe Mufferaw but he was about the size of Louis Cyr. He was a son of Joe’s sister, and she could lift a full grown draught horse on each hand.”

The bit about Joe’s sister is not really relevant to the story, but is in the tradition of the tale teller in the camps. Joe’s sister is sketched indelibly in one short, swift line. Joe Beef continues the story: “They faced off and Monty (the newpew) got the puck. He shot from his own defence line straight as a die for the other goal. It hit the post and bent it double, then bounced off the other post and went through the boards and a ten foot bank of snow and ice. It kept on going out across the lake and broke four ribs in an old Indian who was fishing through the ice in the mouth of a creek five miles away. The puck then slowed down and rolled against a huge boulder where it sank itself so deeply that Joe had to dynamite to get it out.”

The speed and strong character in these lines strike home immediately and make the tales a delight to tell, even more than to read. One needs to use facial gestures with eyes and mouths to make these stories glow.

Hassan’s illustrations are strong black and white line drawings that match the Mufferaw character and the style. They also balance the large bold type.

Considering the value of Joe Mufferaw as a legitimate Canadian folk figure, and the dearth of tales about him, Bedore's book, the only one of its kind, is an essential purchase for folklore collections. It is also especially valuable for children's libraries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dorson, Richard M. *America in legend: Folklore from the Colonial Period to the Present*. New York: Pantheon, 1973.

Fowke, Edith. *Folklore of Canada*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976.

McKay, Donald. "Tales of the Timberbeasts: Joe Montferrand", in *The Lumberjacks*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978, pp. 35-39.

Monteiro, George. "Histoire de Montferrand: L'Athlète Canadien and Joe Muffraw", *Journal of American Folklore*, 73 (1960) 24-34.

Wyman, Walker D. *The Lumberjack Frontier: The Life of a Logger in the Early Days on the Chippeway, Retold from the Recollections of Louie Blanchard*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969.

Sulte, Benjamin. "Jos. Montferrand", in *Mélanges Historiques études éparses et inédites*, comp. par Gérard Malchelosse. Montréal: G. Ducharme, 1924, vol. 12, 9-60. (McKay cites a 1912 edition, Fowke a 1905 issue by Beauchemin. The first edition was published in 1883.)

S.D. Neill is a professor at the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Western Ontario where he teaches a course on storytelling.



The Fashioning of Fables

SAVITHRI DE TOURREIL

From Tale to Tale. Tibor Kovalik. Illus. by author. Mosaic Press/Valley Editions. 1979. 55 pp. \$10.95. ISBN 0-88962-096-2.

The best feature of this collection of stories is the emphasis it places on the creative process itself. It shows how different peoples have recognized that the essence of human experience is crystallized into tales that are