Marjory Whitelaw. *First Impressions: Early Printing in Nova Scotia*.
Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1987. 48 pp.; \$6.45 (paper). ISBN
0-88871-083-6.

This brief but ambitious pamphlet by Nova Scotia writer Marjory Whitelaw is published by the Nova Scotia Museum as part of the Education Resource Services Program of the Department of Education of Nova Scotia.

Writing in an easy to read style, the author gives a general history of the press in Nova Scotia from the arrival of Bartholomew Green in 1751 to the end of the nineteenth century, with the chief emphasis being in the period before 1840, and on printing in the capital, Halifax. Several of the most prominent names in the trade, John Bushell, Anthony Henry, Robert Fletcher, and the Howes, are mentioned. The author has interspersed the story of the press with a history and description of the elements of printing – paper, ink, presses and type. This general account is followed by a chronology of printing developments (from the invention of movable type by Gutenberg to 1849, when the Associated Press opened a telegraph service in Halifax), a selected bibliography, and a short page of notes.

Although there is no question that the most prominent centre of printing in the Maritimes was Halifax, it is a pity that so much of the history in this pamphlet is taken up with developments there. Pictou and Yarmouth each receive one paragraph, Shelburne several more. One paragraph is devoted to printing in other languages – French, Gaelic and German.

It is very evident that Whitelaw has undertaken no new research to produce this booklet; her selected bibliography shows a number of secondary sources. The only bibliographies used are Marie Tremaine's *Bibliography of Canadian Imprints* and *Nova Scotia in Books, 1752-1967*.

The verso of the title-leaf gives complete information as to the make-up of this little pamphlet – the designer, type used, paper stock and printing company. This attention to detail is not carried out within the text which is quite badly designed. The top and bottom margins are too narrow, the side margins wide, and often filled with small illustrations. Some of these have captions, most do not. In several instances the illustrations are allowed to run off the edge of the page in a quite disconcerting manner.

The pamphlet is obviously not meant for the knowledgeable reader but rather was written to provide an introduction for the interested neophyte. It synthesizes a number of secondary sources, most of which are now out of print, and it does this job admirably. It is only regrettable that a book on the history of the press could not itself have been a more attractive product.

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