

## **“Devon Remembered is a fine historical resource.”**

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Railways - *Devon Remembered*

*Mouth of Nashwaak - Gibson Fire A Door-to-Door History of South Devon (1691-1945) Volume 1*

*By Carol Randall and Robert McNeil*

In the past few decades there has been a growing interest in the history of everyday people and small places. History, in the collective imagination, is no longer just those events that took place long ago and far away, but is all around us and worthy of telling, remembering and recording. This realization is both fed by and responsible for a marked increase in the publication of local histories across North America.

One the newest and most ambitious offerings to the genre is *Devon Remembered*, by Carol Randall and Robert McNeil, which surveys the history of Devon. Devon was created in 1917 when the villages of Gibson and St. Mary's Ferry amalgamated. It maintained a town council until 1945 when it incorporated with the City of Fredericton.

*Devon Remembered* recounts the history of South Devon (Gibson). It is evident that Randall and McNeil, both long-time residents of Fredericton North, took on this project as a labour of love. They have painstakingly gathered, transcribed and sorted a copious amount of research into 300 pages and that's only for Volume I.

*Devon Remembered* is subtitled *A Door-to-Door History of South Devon*. Randall and McNeil go down the nine streets and avenues in the area and discuss the history of each residence and the families who lived there. They tell us a variety of interesting and often heartbreaking stories of personal tragedy, the effects of the First and Second World Wars and the 1893 Gibson fire, perhaps the ultimate defining event in the history of the community.

*Devon Remembered* is peppered with well-reproduced maps and photographs of people, homes and business that compliment the text well. The index of names is a useful feature.

*Devon Remembered* would have benefited from a more thorough proofreading, and the text could have been tightened considerably by editing out the overlapping and repeating of stories. And, while the book is a great genealogical resource for individuals and families from the area, the inclusion of so many birth and death dates within the text and the listing of marriages and begettings can be confusing and of little interest to the general reader.

These quibbles aside, *Devon Remembered* is a fine historical resource and a reminder that "history happens here." Randall and McNeil are to be commended for their contribution to the historical knowledge of both Fredericton and New Brunswick. This is a great holiday gift for anyone who has lived in Devon or has connections to or an interest in Fredericton's northside. It can be purchased at the Jean Coutu Pharmacy, Devon Park Plaza.

- reviewed by LAURIE GLENN NORRIS