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2018

Conflicted Colony: Critical Episodes in Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland and Labrador

Miriam Wright
University of Windsor

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Recommended Citation

Wright, Miriam. (2018). Conflicted Colony: Critical Episodes in Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland and Labrador. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 87 (3), 475-476.
<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/historypub/108>

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Penfold concludes that the corporate fantastic proved to be “a brittle form of hegemony,” undermined by its dependence on a single retailer at a time when Eaton’s was in decline and the entire retail industry faced a structural crisis. In a twist of irony, he notes, it was the non-professional, volunteer-led civic fantastic model that proved resilient and continues to mount Santa Claus parades that remain popular with children and their parents, who continue to find joy in seeing a child’s wonder at the make-believe on parade.

ROSS FAIR,
Department of History, Ryerson University

Kurt Korneski. *Conflicted Colony: Critical Episodes in Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland and Labrador*. McGill-Queen’s University Press. xii, 236.
\$34.95

One of the challenges historians of Newfoundland and Labrador often face is the wider public’s perceptions of the province’s character and history derived from the very strong “branding” provided in television tourism advertisements and popular culture. Images of a peaceful, friendly, independent (and white) rural people set against dramatic and colourful landscapes may book plane tickets, but they can be deceiving when thinking about the former British colony’s history. Kurt Korneski’s new book *Conflicted Colony* meets that challenge, offering glimpses into state and society on the eastern edge of North America that is more complex, conflicted, yet ultimately more engaging than the sweet blandness of the tourism copy. Employing insights from social, economic, ecological, spatial, and “new” diplomatic history as well as borderland approaches, Korneski focuses on five case studies in nineteenth-century Newfoundland and Labrador. While varied, the cases all involve conflicts between the St. John’s-based colonial and merchant elites, localized populations, and outside imperial powers in the midst of an often-precarious resource-based economy. These include a dispute over Americans catching bait, the use of seine nets in Fortune Bay, conflicts over salmon fishing and claims to the resource in Hamilton Inlet, Labrador, and the Newfoundland’s government’s attempts to pursue landward-based development (specifically building a railway) on the Avalon Peninsula. Also explored are two cases involving fishing and governance on Newfoundland’s west coast, complicated by the “French Shore,” where in a series of diplomatic negotiations through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, France received rights to fish and establish shore installations in an otherwise British-claimed colony.

While a number of these conflicts have previously been discussed by historians, Korneski brings a fresh approach, arguing convincingly that these incidents can be better understood through a borderlands framework. St. Georges Bay, Fortune Bay, coastal Labrador, and even the Avalon Peninsula, he suggests, were borderlands – in-between places where people negotiated their lives in the larger environment of overlapping social, economic, cultural, imperial, and political relationships. Korneski carefully layers the stories, exploring everything from the culturally diverse populations, to their localized use of resources, to their relationships and trading practices with French, American, and Nova Scotian fishers and traders, to merchants and state authorities from St. John's. The local and the global interconnect, and we see, for example, how fishers destroying seine nets in Fortune Bay or Margaret Cullen of Foxtrap protesting the Newfoundland railway were tied to both regional and international forces. Korneski's attentions to individuals and families as they negotiated their ways through these environments as well as his sensitivities to ecological difference and change are particularly effective. What emerges is a complex, but enriched, picture of Newfoundland state formation, with localized sensibilities, identities, and sense of the world interacting with, and often resisting, directives and encroachments from St. John's as well as imperial powers. This work is a most welcome contribution to the literature on nineteenth-century Newfoundland and Labrador, problematizing ideas of a single "Newfoundland" and suggesting the possibilities of using spatial and borderland approaches to conceptualize this region.

MIRIAM WRIGHT,
Department of History, University of Windsor

Mary Helen McMurrin and Alison Conway, eds. *Mind, Body, Motion, Matter: Eighteenth-Century British and French Literary Perspectives*. University of Toronto Press. x, 294. \$75.00

The stimulating articles in this volume present new approaches to some complicated, concepts concerning materialism in the eighteenth century, concepts that have been considered and debated before, but not in this impressive, challenging, and, at times, provocative manner. One of its intentions may well have been to spark more debate and discussion, and it certainly succeeds in doing so. The articles, which are of a uniformly high quality, will appeal to a broad spectrum of interests, aesthetic, literary, philosophical, French, and English.

Divided into two sections, "Pre-Reflective Experience" and "Materialism," the articles ask us to look at some familiar, and some not so familiar,

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