

## *Book Reviews*

**New England Planters in the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1759-1800.** JUDITH A. NORTON, ed. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PRIMARY SOURCES. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993. xviii-403 p.

There are two tangible results of the decision taken in the mid-1980s to establish a Planters Studies Centre at Acadia University, Wolfville. The first was a series of three volumes of essays (two have been published under Margaret Conrad's editorship: *They Planted Well. New England Planters in Maritime Canada* [1988] and *Making Adjustments. Change and Continuity in Planter Nova Scotia 1759-1800* [1991]; a third will appear in 1994 edited by Barry Moody) derived from successive triennial conferences. The second is this book.

The information it contains derives from a computer database, which is still not available either at Acadia or elsewhere, despite claims to the contrary made at the September 1993 Planters Studies conference. The vast bulk of the material is in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia [PANS] (3-278), with a lesser amount in the Public Archives of New Brunswick, for settlements originally part of Nova Scotia (278-319). Much of this material is well known to the few students so far attracted to the subject. The final section lists materials found in New England repositories (320-367) containing material unknown to scholars when the project began. The bulk of it could only be related to Nova Scotia once the particular names of the 2,800 families had been established in a computer listing. This research undertaken, in part with SSHRCC funds, by the editor, who worked on the project from the outset, gives the volume special importance.

The individual descriptions are generally excellent. Frequently they can be longer for a single document, than for several volumes of related material. It reflects more the editor's degree of familiarity with each item, rather than the historical value of separate manuscripts. Each usefully includes the exact reference to the *fonds* concerned. Each is given a descriptive label by subject, which is later grouped in the main subject index. As each index entry lacks both subdivisions and cross references, which such an important reference tool ought to contain, it is far less useful than it could so easily have been. Some such diverse subjects as "Slavery" or "Dykes" can quickly be located. Others require more effort. As there is no single item for "Crime," several items must be consulted. There is no item for rum or madeira and other wines, which are covered by "Alcohol." "Women" loom large in the index, but there are unhappily no subdivisions, for instance, for widows, who were much noticed in the third planter conference. Children are noted only under "Child maintenance."

A further complaint is the artificial and unnecessary division in the index the editor has made between planters and what she labels non-planters. Perhaps a simple asterisk beside the name of one group or the other, in a single name index, would have sufficed, if she wanted to distinguish them. A New Englander, for instance, who happens to find his way to Halifax, about the same time as his fellows were taking up land, much of it formerly occupied by expelled Acadians, is classified as a non-Planter, a concept he would have found not only inaccurate but perplexing. It obliges users to look in two indices when one index would have served the purpose.

I must make two observations about its title. It is not a bibliography, which can refer only to books—and no books are listed here—but a guide to manuscripts. Secondly, the maritime provinces formed no part of Canada until 1867. Before then they had nothing to do with Canada, but were of British North America, and the title should have made this explicit.

Frankly, I was amazed at the expensive format for so focused a volume. At \$125 a copy I cannot imagine that many interested professors in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, let alone their students, will afford it. Here I fault the Planters Studies Committee, which presumably made the decision. The model perhaps should have been the well produced and moderately priced *The Loyalist Guide. Nova Scotia Loyalist and their Documents* (1984) published by the PANS.

Finally, there is no rationale offered to explain the end date of 1800. We all understand that a stop has to be made somewhere. Yet the date chosen was already being questioned in the historical conferences, long before this publication was in its final stages. There may have been an excellent reasons, but the user deserved an explanation. All such objections, could easily have been corrected had the manuscript received a wider circulation.

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**Manuscripts and Government Records in the United Kingdom and Ireland Relating to Canada.** BRUCE G. WILSON, ed. Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1992; xxxi-705 p.

In 1964, armed with Crick and Almon's *Guide to manuscripts relating to America in Great Britain and Ireland* (1961), and the resources of the National Registry of Archives, I located and then visited British archives known to hold documents of interest to the Fortress of Louisbourg Restoration Project, with whom I had a year's contract. With three research assistants, we looked at perhaps 400,000 manuscripts, of which about 30,000 were microfilmed for use in Louisbourg and Ottawa. In the process I had discovered dozens upon dozens of other collections, scattered throughout the United Kingdom, containing Canadian materials touching every aspect of Canadian history from European contact to the mid-twentieth century.

Although the Crick and Almon *Guide* had been of real value, it was quite wrong in its claim that it had included all Canadian materials before 1867. I returned from