

*Fiction in the Archives* itself is a most artful book. It is a carefully cut and beautifully polished gem which, while introducing us further to the detail of French Renaissance society, allows us to observe at work the consciousness of one of the most creative historians of our times.

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Bruce S. Elliott — *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988. Pp. xvii, 371.

The "new approach" heralded in the subtitle of this book is indeed new and valuable. Bruce S. Elliott has combined the techniques of the "Leicester School" of English local history and quantified immigration history to produce an unparalleled picture of a group of immigrants to Canada. His subjects are 775 families of Irish Protestants who migrated from Northern Tipperary between 1818 and 1855. With meticulous research, Elliott moves beyond the aggregate to explore the movements of individual migrants. Here, real people weave in and out of the statistics.

Genealogy is at the heart of the analysis. Elliott reinforces recent arguments about the importance of family in the nineteenth century. The usual process was one of "chain migration". People migrated to areas where their kin or friends were already settled, creating a number of Tipperary colonies, the largest of which were near Ottawa and London. Once he has settled his immigrants, Elliott turns to a close analysis of land-holding and inheritance strategies. The provisions made for widows and the dowries of daughters are discussed in greater detail than we have seen for any other group of Canadians. He finds, in contrast to the speculation of some previous historians such as David Gagan, that "ultimogeniture" was preferred to "primogeniture", that is, farmers passed their estates to their youngest sons, not their eldest. Elliott is very convincing in his treatment of family economic strategies and gives ample ground to believe that his findings about the Tipperary migrants can be generalized to other Ontario farmers.

The book is a methodological and research *tour de force*. However, it suffers from some of the languors found in other quantified studies, and adds to them some of the problems of genealogy. This is not a book that one devours in a single sitting. The first half, in particular, is hard slogging; the reader has constantly to think — this is important, it is good for me — to keep soldiering through. There is much more on the genealogical roots of Tipperary Protestants than most readers are likely to need or want; Dr. Elliott seems to have been reluctant to waste any of his meticulous research and he jams in every loving detail. The pace picks up somewhat with the migration, but we are still treated to an excess of detail on every topic. Worse, some of that detail is repeated several times. Elliott's topical organization works to clarify his analysis, but it encourages repetition. We hear on pages 87, 183 and 294 about Margaret Clarke's pregnancy and her husband George's cute misspelling that the family "staid at Montreal" because of the pregnancy. Frederic William Richardson's provisions for his sons turn up on pages 196-7 and 215-16, and we hear that his rocky homestead looked like "a fortress" on pages 197 and 216. One's head begins to fill with echoes.

As with other scholars before him, Elliott finds that his quantitative research can take him only so far. One result is that, on some of the more interesting questions, he ends with unsupported speculations. He finds, for example, that his families were more likely eventually to become urban in the London district than their compatriots in the Ottawa Valley. Why?

That the tendency of the Tipperary Irish to move into towns and cities was greater in the London area than it was in the Ottawa valley probably related more to local differences in terms of land availability, quality, price and demand than it did to inclination (181).

Perhaps that is so, but it is the kind of guess one might have made without carrying out research. This is all too common. On other questions, we do not get even guesses. Certain forms of inheritance strategies common in Tipperary were not practised in Canada. We wonder why, but we are given no guidance. More significantly, we discover little about family size, marriage patterns and other details one might expect in a study which stresses the importance of family. As an aside, the index does not help in understanding family relationships. The entry for "Family, extended" advises us to "See Kin". The entry for "Kin", in turn, is empty except for the advice to "See Assistance; for Kin; Inheritance; Migration, chain". Again, the echoes begin in one's head.

The book is very light on some of the topics one routinely expects to see discussed in modern social history. Social class receives little definition and no systematic treatment. The chapter on economic strategies is in fact devoted to patterns of inheritance rather than to a full-blown discussion of economic life. Nor, surprisingly, are mentalities well-treated. Elliott contends, early in the book, that migration is primarily to be explained as "a strategy of heirship" (6), that is, as primarily concerned with providing security for children. This is the central contention about Protestant Irish ideology, yet, it is a contention which does not rest on a base of evidence. When migrants are quoted about their reasons for leaving Tipperary, the most common reason given is to escape the disturbances troubling their homeland, not their "strategy of heirship". The ideological core of this book is a hollow one.

There are other central assumptions which remain on the level of conjecture. Following Donald Akenson, Dr. Elliott contends that the Irish were primarily a rural people in Canada. He deals, of course, only with Protestants about whom there has not been much dispute. Even so, he does not provide comparative data which would permit us to assess the tendencies towards rural and urban destinations among these migrants as compared to other groups in Canada. We can only piece together bits of data, since he does not give an overall figure for the number of families who ended in urban areas. The result is hazy, but the figures do not look much different than those for other ethnic-religious groups. We finish not much wiser on this question which Akenson and Elliott make so central in their theories about the Irish.

If the subtitle is accurate, then, the main title is not. This is not a book about "Irish Migrants in the Canadas", it is a book about the migration of some Irish Protestants to Canada and the inheritance patterns they adapted in Canada. The study is revealing and valuable on the two topics of migration and inheritance, but it falls far short of providing a picture of the Canadian lives of the migrants. Nevertheless, if one is not misled by the title into expecting more than Dr. Elliott really intends to deliver, this is a book which should be read with care by all students of pre-Confederation Canada and by anyone interested in new approaches to immigration history.

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Joshua A. Fogel, ed., transl. — *Life Along the South Manchurian Railway: The Memoirs of Itō Takeo*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1988. Pp. xxxi, 241.

In the competition among the foreign powers at the turn of this century for concessions in China, Japan had made clear its interest in China's northeastern provinces called Manchuria. From 1905, when it defeated Russia, until its outright invasion of Manchuria twenty-six years later, Japan used the South Manchurian Railway (SMR) as the most obvious symbol of its imperial penetration.

Under the rules of the imperial game, foreign powers were allowed to finance, build, police and administer China's railways and the immediate zones through which they passed. It was no coincidence, then, that the incident which provoked the Japanese occupation of Manchuria was the detonation of a bomb on the tracks of the SMR on 18 September 1931. This close link between the