

RUSHFORTH, Brett – *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France*. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. Pp. 406.

This sharp and superb study begins with an indigenous woman weaving the fine fibers of dogbane, porcupine quills, and moose hair into an intricate Indian slave halter. Although few of these works of “fine art” and “human cruelty” have been preserved, Brett Rushforth reminds us that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such tools of enslavement were used in every quarter of North America (p. 3). But this halter and the bondage it symbolized were apart of a wider history. Across the Atlantic and far from the region known as the *Pays d'en Haut*, French manufacturers were mass-producing straight-bar shackles for the French Empire’s expansive and expanding Atlantic slave trade. *Bonds of Alliance* seeks to understand how Up Country, a territory sufficiently removed from French settlements along the St. Lawrence River, operated as the destination from where free Indians were legitimately captured, then traded by allied nations, and sold into slavery in French settlements throughout New France and the Caribbean.

In *Bonds of Alliance* Brett Rushforth charts the “dynamic interplay” between indigenous and Atlantic slaveries by tracing the cultural, legal, and social practices in a particular corner of the French Empire: New France. Rushforth counters a historiographical tradition that has tended to characterize Canadian slavery as a failed version of French Caribbean slavery. In contrast, Rushforth contends that slavery in New France was “a thing of its own” (p. 300) locating its dynamism in the similarities and differences between indigenous and French understandings of enslavement; the various ways that free native peoples in the *Pays d'en Haut* used the slave trade to meet the challenges of colonialism; the central role that the slave trade played in maintaining and eroding French–Indian alliances; and how slaves themselves lived, loved, and labored across the colony. After nearly 400 pages of Rushforth’s elegant yet dense prose, New France emerges as a colonial society structured by slavery: it was a place where individuals like Pierre Chesne dit Labutte of Detroit or Pierre Gaultier de Varennes et de La Verendrye – whose “trail” is commemorated on highway signs in rural Manitoba – were able to ascend the colonial order of things through their involvement in the Indian slave trade.

This book challenges us to seriously re-think slavery’s role, and the history of race, in French colonial projects in early Canada. Like many before him, Rushforth draws upon Jesuit dictionaries and published recollections, notarial registers and state correspondence, travelogues and archeological evidence – all impeccability acknowledged in impressive footnotes – illustrating that how we frame historical sources is as important as the sources we use to craft our histories. Rushforth’s focus on slavery enables him to revisit these documents to shed light on how French settlers, missionaries, traders, and colonial officials as well as allied and enemy, free and enslaved Indians used, understood, and experienced enslavement in New France.

Chapter one examines the “general custom of the country” that located honour in the Ottawa, Iroquois, Fox, Cree, Sioux, and Illinois warriors’ practice of taking captives. Rushforth found that “Indians of the *Pays d'en Haut* expressed their relationship to slaves through metaphors of domestication and mastery, comparing captives to dogs and other domesticated animals” (p. 35). Jesuit priest Jacques Gravier recorded this social and cultural process as *nitaïe* – which he defined as “my domesticated animal, my dog,

my cat, also, my slave” (p. 37). In chapter two, Rushforth takes readers from indigenous North America to the trans-Atlantic world of French imperial slavery. By interrogating how French society understood slavery and justified its existence in their Christian nation, Rushforth argues that Nigritie functioned in the French geographic imagination as a space “uniquely suitable as the presumptive source of slaves” (p. 104). Chapter three explores French efforts like Jacques Raudot’s 1709 Ordinance that made Indian slaves in New France “like the Negros of the Islands” (p. 137).

The second half of the book hones in on the various ways indigenous people – as slaves, allies, or enemies – were involved in the Indian slave trade. Chapter four explores the complex alliances formed amongst free indigenous peoples and French officials that were sealed through the exchange of people; an exchange that produced “creative tensions that neither French nor Indian participants could fully control, and to which everyone would adapt with terrific creativity” (p. 197). While French administrators supported an alliance with the Foxes to gain access to the interior, and the Foxes sought an alliance with the French to protect themselves from their French-allied enemies, French-allied Indians undermined these diplomatic efforts by continuing to trade Fox captives to the French as slaves: ultimately this allowed French-allied Indians like the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and the Illinois a way to oppose colonial power.

Chapters five and six examine the exploitation of Indian slaves by French colonial slavery. In chapter five – which is entitled “The Custom of the Country,” a phrase linked in Canadian historiography to the important work of Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer Brown – Brett Rushforth explores the carnal relations of indigenous, Metis, and French peoples, both free and slave that were structured by ideas of domestic slavery. The book’s final chapter takes us into the households along Rue Saint-Paul in Montreal where fully half of all colonists owned both their home and an Indian slave. In an effort to recover the details of enslaved individuals’ lives, this chapter recounts the individual histories of Jacob, an Indian slave of a Metis master (p. 302); Mary Joachim, a Fox slave whose master, Julian Trottier dit Desrivières, accused her of theft in 1725 (p. 320); Jacob, a Fox slave shot in 1728 at point blank range by Jean Gaboureau dit La Palme (p. 338); and Marie Marguerite, who was sold to Marc-Antoine Huard de Dormicourt only to be exported to Martinique (p. 347). This may not have been a “slave society” – a peculiar historiographical distinction used to establish hierarchies of slavery – but the cultural, legal, and social practices Rushforth uncovers certainly cast New France as a society that hoped to become one.

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STRONG-BOAG, Veronica – *Fostering Nation? Canada Confronts Its History of Childhood Disadvantage*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011. Pp. x, 302.

Veronica Strong-Boag provides an important and much-needed analysis of the genesis and implementation of the fostering of children in private homes and institutions in English Canada. She explains that the book “explores the missteps and detours of a century and