

REID, John G., Maurice BASQUE, Elizabeth MANCKE, Barry MOODY, Geoffrey PLANK, and William WICKEN — *The Conquest of Acadia, 1710: Imperial, Colonial, and Aboriginal Constructions*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Pp. 297.

Canadian historiography is haunted by the Conquest of French North America in 1760, not just because of its obvious prominence as a landmark event, but because it has left our academic community riven. There is no consensus, indeed little common ground, among various interpretations of the event's meaning and significance. This is a long overdue and welcome book that gives centre stage to the other conquest event of French North America, that of Acadia in 1710. As the authors state in their introduction, this is no mere collection of essays, but rather a "coordinated effort to portray a multilayered reality", with the ultimate goal of "assessing the conquest as an event and as an episode both in conjunctural time and in the *longue durée*" (pp. xi, xix). The authors embrace from the start the notion that this event meant different things to different people and that those meanings could change. The book creates a solid centre through an apt survey of existing historiography and a thorough narrative of the event, and then builds on this with a series of analytical approaches that each illuminate one of these meanings.

Elizabeth Mancke and John G. Reid in "Elites, States, and the Imperial Contest for Acadia" discuss the "pivotal transition from delegated governance of colonies to direct metropolitan governance" in the second half of the seventeenth century that led to the embroilment of Acadia into grand schemes and strategies (p. 27). The emergent Acadian rural elite did not always work well with the military officers sent by both England and France to secure their possession, as Maurice Basque relays in "Family and Political Culture in Pre-Conquest Acadia". He notes as important that each Acadian settlement experienced the conquest differently and that, while those who had married into the official caste had a stake in France's continuing rule, the great majority had "witnessed the French laying down their arms" before (p. 48). For them, the Conquest was neither a definitive, nor necessarily a negative, event.

Geoffrey Plank's "New England and the Conquest" emphasizes that retribution rather than expansion was the central motivation for most New Englanders. Vengeance was "a matter of official policy" endorsed by both commanders and pastors (p. 70). Once that had been exacted, most New Englanders "preferred to stay isolated, protected from exposure to Acadians or native peoples, at home" (p. 85), and those who did have an interest in developing the colony, such as fishermen, had a narrow focus on Canso and actually hindered efforts to govern and settle the land.

William Wicken's article reminds us that most of the region remained Mi'kma'ki and that the fall of the fort at Port Royal was simply not a "significant event" for Aboriginals like Antoine Tecouenemac, who lived at Cap Sable and continued to follow his seasonal pattern of life (p. 86). Wicken notes that, even if the Mi'kmaq had been interested in aiding Subercase, they were much too busy during the time of the siege stocking up eels for the coming winter. Historians often discuss the difficulty of managing militias at harvest time; to note the Mi'kmaq's patterns and restrictions strikes me as a critical levelling perspective. Wicken crucially distinguishes the con-

flict of 1722–1725 as a war fought on Mi'kmaq terms by Mi'kmaq, and that only the 1726 peace treaty represented an acceptance of the “altered world” Utrecht had created (p. 99).

John G. Reid’s “Imperialism, Diplomacies, and the Conquest of Acadia” focuses on the Utrecht negotiations, starting with the standard discussions of fisheries and sea routes. He provocatively argues that empire in this period was characterized by the illusion of stability, not just in Acadia but also in Quebec and New York — an illusion that covered the continuing negotiation between colonists and “the inherently unsystematic institutions of the early modern state” that truly constituted authority (p. 110). Echoing Wicken, he points out that Aboriginal scepticism about Europeans giving away their land would leave much in doubt on the ground no matter how tidy the settlement.

Barry Moody’s “Making a British North America” is arguably the most original chapter in the book, looking closely at the precarious construction of a British urban space sharply divided from an enduring French rural territory. He examines the impact of Anglican and Masonic influences and the interest that Massachusetts had in preventing the development of a strong British colony to its north. Most importantly, while acknowledging the “bewildering array of agencies and levels of government” and that this was a time of “British instability”, he directly assaults the conventional focus on British inability to extract allegiance from the Acadians. He argues that “the real failure was the inability to acquire a population that would have strengthened the British position”, which could have been done “if there had been the will to do so” (p. 145).

Maurice Basque’s next article returns to consider the perspective of the Acadian heads of families. He argues that, even at Annapolis Royal, accommodation with the British was far from complete, noting that only 36 of about 120 heads of families signed the limited oath to Caulfield in 1714, and he suggests there was a significant “uprising” of Acadians in support of St. Castin’s siege in 1711. Overall he highlights the essential pragmatism of these Acadians, who in a small world utilized “accommodation, neutrality, and/or open support for French or British Crowns as a means to promote and protect their own interests” (p. 159). What these interests were and how the imperial state might have accommodated them is an avenue that could be further developed.

Finally, Elizabeth Mancke’s “Imperial Transitions” describes how the Acadian declining of the oath of allegiance at a number of levels hindered the development of the colony. She emphasizes that the pursuit of colonies depended on acknowledgement by the colonists that they were subject to a particular monarch — not just symbolically but in paying taxes, staffing civilian governments, and perhaps defending the colony (p. 181). That the Acadians at no time as a group did any of these things suggests that neither the French nor the British was ever able to force this acknowledgement, which raises the question of whether Acadia was ever really anyone’s colony at all.

This book leads to a number of provocative speculations on the nature of the colonizer-colonized relationship, indeed questioning whether there is such a thing as a “colonial era” (p. 208). I believe this could further be developed by the authors. In

achieving their stated purpose they have started to open a veritable Pandora's Box; they need to tell us "so what?" or to close the box again. Reconnecting this detailed analysis of the fall of a French fort in 1710 with the overall historiography of French North America could add a layer of significance that would deliver a shattering blow to conventional interpretations. One can hope that an approach like this to 1760 might be on the horizon.

Gregory M. W. Kennedy
York University

SCHAMA, Simon — *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution*. London: BBC Books, 2005. Pp. 437.

"[H]owever awkward it is for orthodox history of the Founding Fathers and their revolution, the genesis of African-American liberty is, then, inseparable from the British connection" (p. 18), so Simon Schama tells us. If one wants to see the first authentically free African American society, he explains, we must look to Britain, not America. With his characteristically bold flourishes, Schama exposes what numerous American historians have long known: that the British emancipated thousands of runaway slaves who sought their protection during the Revolution and that many were given land grants and the rights of British subjects in the British colony of Nova Scotia. In the new republic of America, by contrast, slave society was further entrenched by the Founding Fathers.

Rough Crossings is a big book that intertwines the history of the Black Loyalists with that of the triumph and failures of the British abolition movement. It is written in the vivid prose we have come to expect from Britain's most popular historian and contains some wonderful moments. What disappoints is that Schama has chosen to tell the story of "the slaves" of his title largely through the actions of two white protagonists, Granville Sharp and John Clarkson, both of whom left richly detailed letters and journals for him to quote extensively. Yet, if the story of these runaway slaves is so significant, surely they, not Sharp or Clarkson, should be at the centre of the story, as agents in their own drama.

Schama has given us a splendid account of the long neglected Granville Sharp, a man desperately in need of a good biographer, and his account of the complex decision of Lord Mansfield in the Somerset case is the most cogent I have read. Equally compelling is his portrait of John Clarkson, brother of Thomas, the man employed by the Sierra Leone Company to coordinate the transport of 1,200 black settlers from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone. The passionate, resourceful, highly-strung Clarkson is the heart of the book, described on the book jacket as "the Moses of this, one of the great exoduses in British history". Schama has great material in John Clarkson, who left an incredibly detailed daily journal, recording his weeping fits and hysteria, as well as his less histrionic actions as the exodus coordinator and early governor of Sierra Leone.

Listen to Schama's description of Clarkson addressing a large congregation of