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Nancy L. Rhoden, ed. *English Atlantics Revisited: Essays Honouring Ian K. Steele.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007. xxviii + 528 pp. $85.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7735-3219-9.

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In Steele's Footsteps

Most Atlantic historians know well Ian Steele's *The English Atlantic* (1986), one of the classics in the field. This innovative study taught scholars to regard the Atlantic Ocean as a bridge, connecting an increasingly integrated Anglo-Atlantic in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Less familiar, perhaps, is the full range of this productive historian's scholarship. In the festschrift volume honoring Steele, his students and colleagues return to many of the themes that characterized Steele's work. Like the 2003 conference on which it is based, *English Atlantics Revisited* reflects this influence in its organization. The essays parallel the evolution of Steele's career, beginning with imperial politics, then turning to the Atlantic Ocean, then to the intersection of military and frontier history, and finally to social history.

In her introduction, Nancy L. Rhoden frames the collection as simultaneously a tribute to Steele's legacy and a reflection on the state of the field he helped to inspire. After tracing the roots of Atlantic history to Charles McLean Andrews and the imperial school, Rhoden raises questions about the utility of Atlantic history as a dominant paradigm among early Americanists. Rhoden's queries are likely familiar to Atlantic historians: Has the concept been overused to the point of meaninglessness? Is it too Anglocentric? Is it really just imperial history repackaged? Does it tend to exaggerate the unity of the Atlantic world? And is it really new? Unfortunately, the seventeen essays that follow do little to address these questions directly.

The essays in the first section, "Contexts," and the volume's last essay assess the influence of Steele's corpus of scholarship. Richard Johnson's "Changing Spaces" examines Steele's five monographs and how they have inspired the work of other scholars over the last forty years. John Shy evaluates Steele as a military historian, using the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz as his baseline for comparison. At the end of the volume, John Murrin's conclusion returns the reader to a consideration of Steele's legacy and the decades of scholarship that he influenced.

Part 2 is concerned with the politics of empire, taking as its inspiration Steele's first monograph, *Politics of Colonial Policy* (1968). Barbara Murison's contribution reveals William Blathwayt as a key administrative figure during the reorganization and rationalization of empire in the 1670s and 1680s. She argues that Blathwayt helped to steer the imperial bureaucracy during this critical period by virtue of his myriad administrative posts. Blathwayt's many administrative positions also meant that he was well placed to influence the careers of colonial governors and other imperial officials. Essays by Randy Dunn and Stacy Lorenz illuminate the centrality of such patronage to the careers of eighteenth-century governors Francis Nicholson and William Gooch, respectively. Although Lorenz argues "that policy and persuasion–not patronage"–explains Gooch's success in Virginia, her essay also demonstrates its importance to Gooch's own rise within the imperial administration, just as Dunn argues with respect to Nicholson (p. 82).

The four essays presented in part 3 examine the subject with which Steele is most often associated–the "Maritime Atlantic." Sara Morrison creatively combines environmental and naval history in her essay "Forests of Masts and Seas of Trees." Morrison argues that the centrality of the navy to England's national security necessitated a conservation policy governing the use of royal forests. Neil Kennedy and Michael Dove each make a plea for areas of the Atlantic that they believe have been neglected by historians: Bermuda and Hudson Bay. Rather than outliers justifiably ignored, Kennedy and Dove portray the two colonies as representative of greater trends

within the Atlantic world. Kennedy argues that Bermuda should be considered the first Anglo-Atlantic colony, already enmeshed in networks of transatlantic exchanges of goods, people, and ideas by the 1620s. Although such exchanges were characteristic of the eighteenth-century Atlantic, such an early establishment would mark Bermuda as exceptional. Maritime commerce similarly connects Hudson Bay to larger Atlantic trends. Dove argues that the increasing predictability and safety of voyages to Hudson Bay exemplify the role played by shipping in creating the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. His explanation of the company's decision not to expand inland–due to the risk of Bourbon attacks before 1763–connects his essay to that by Daniel Baugh. Baugh's discussion of the rival navies of the eighteenth-century Atlantic nicely dovetails with Dove's observation that imperial struggles in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries "were at least as much contests to control oceanic space as they were efforts to promote land-based empire" (p. 177).

Military and Amerindian history, the focus of Steele's most recent two monographs (*Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the "Massacre"* [1990] and *Warpaths: Invasions of North America, 1513-1765* [1994]), are the topics covered in the volume's fourth section. Jon Parmenter's persuasive essay sets out to revise our understanding of the alliance between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Iroquois) and the Albany Commissioners, circa 1723-55. He argues that reliance on printed records has distorted historians' understanding of both groups. In contrast to most scholarship on the subject, he finds in the manuscript records evidence for a dynamic and skillfully negotiated relationship that largely benefited both parties. The hefty prosopographical table (6 1/2 pages with notes) that accompanies his essay is testimony to the diverse sources that he has plumbed. One wishes, however, that he had made more than a passing reference to the table to elaborate its significance. Alexander Campbell's essay imaginatively uses military history as a window into the process of frontier settlement. His study of the Royal American Regiment demonstrates how these men participated in many of the characteristic activities of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world–migration, settlement, and transatlantic trade. The careful attention to environmental and geographical factors exhibited in Michelle Hamilton's contribution (and a number of others in the collection) is reminiscent of similar concerns in *The English Atlantic*. Hamilton argues that due to their remoteness, commanders of British garrisons in the Old Northwest were forced to rely on French and Indian inhabitants for much of their provisioning and quartering. Yet, in contrast to Richard White's "middle ground" model (*The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* [1991]), this reliance was characterized by an imbalance of power and no desire on the part of the British, to find shared cultural meanings.[1] Hamilton suggests that this relationship, therefore, "qualifies the meaning of the middle-ground model and its equal application to all groups residing in the Old Northwest" (p. 332).

The essays in the final section explore social history from four very different perspectives. David Norton argues that the Mohegan convert Samson Occom drew on Amerindian traditions to become a Christian sachem and shaman. As Murrin notes in his concluding remarks, the case for Occom as shaman is particularly tenuous. The evidence to which Norton points, such as the inclusion of music in religious ceremonies, could easily derive from other sources. Kenneth Lockridge's contribution presents a fascinating historical mystery: why did the Swedish painter Gustavus Hesselius produce such unusually sympathetic portraits of two Indian chiefs? Lockridge takes the reader on a lively journey to unravel his mystery. Along the way, he nicely captures both the diversity of the middle colonies and the anxiety such heterogeneity could create. (The essay is a revised version of one previously published on *Common-place* [http://www.common-place.org/vol-04/no-02/lockridge/index.shtml].) Rhoden's essay, the early fruits of a larger project, explores the effect of the Revolution on patriarchal authority in Virginia, using Landon Carter and Richard Henry Lee as her case studies. The evidence from the Lee family, in particular, raises the question of to what extent a father's concern over a son's spending habits and future direction are directly tied to the revolutionary context and which are more universal. It would also be useful in the larger study to get a sense of how her project compares to Rhys Isaac's *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation* (2004). Margaret Kellow's contribution takes a wide-ranging look at the impact of the American Revolution on the abolition movement in late eighteenth-century Britain. The quality and sweep of this and the other seventeen essays in the collection make a fitting tribute to a scholar whose interests and admirers are equally catholic.

Note

[1]. See also Richard White, "Creative Misunderstandings and New Understandings," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser. 63, no. 1 (2006): 9-14.

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