

Maine History

Volume 48 | Number 2

Article 6

7-1-2014

Book Reviews

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Recommended Citation

Raymond, David, Susan J. Harmon, Polly Welts Kaufman, Ron Baines, Dale Potts, Andy DeRoche, Ann Morrisette, Paul T. Burlin, and Shannon M. Risk. "Book Reviews." *Maine History* 48, 2 (2014): 320-341.
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol48/iss2/6>

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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Spice of Popery: Converging Christianities on an Early American Frontier. By Laura M. Chmielewski. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012. Pp. xv, 336. Paper. \$38.00.)

For much of its early history, Maine was a borderland region caught up in a power struggle between England and France for control of the North American continent. The history of colonial warfare in Maine and its devastating impact on its settlements is an oft-told tale, but a study of the resultant instability on religious life in Maine breaks new historiographical ground. Even without the constant state of war, the establishment of traditional religious institutions, such as the church and the clergy, the implementation of Puritan orthodoxy would have been difficult if not impossible. A polyglot of Puritans and all manner of Protestant dissenters, the settlers of Maine came not to make a “city upon a hill” but a livelihood based on fish, furs, and timber.

Inspired by both the recent studies on life in borderland regions such as Maine and the trend in religious history to render a more complex picture of the American religious experience, Laura M. Chmielewski’s *The Spice of Popery* is a study of religious culture on the Maine frontier during the colonial period of French-Indian-English warfare between 1688 and 1727. Chmielewski’s contends that Protestant and Catholic “Christianities” converged on the Maine frontier to create a more open, less sectarian view of religion than was found in the more populated and established regions of New England where encounters between Catholics and Protestants were rare. Thrust together by the economic necessities of trade and intertwined in European political struggles, the settlers of Maine were forced to coexist in ways unthinkable to those in the more stable and settled regions of New England and New France where religious conformity was strictly enforced. Relying heavily on captivity narratives, Chmielewski draws a picture of the contested nature of religion and the impact that captivity had on the lives of average Mainers.

For Chmielewski, the term “religious culture” includes conversion, marriage, rights of inheritance, missionary work, and material culture. Although she acknowledges that theological differences were significant factors separating Protestants from Catholics, she specifically excludes the content of belief and theology from her analysis. What she seeks is religion at the existential level, not the intellectual. Throughout most of this period of unrelenting warfare, Maine was vulnerable to French and Wabanaki raids during which many English Protestants were taken captive and ransomed to protectors in New France. Efforts made to entice the captives to convert to Catholicism met with varying degrees of success. Puritan stalwarts, such as Hannah Swarton and Mary Plaistead, were able to resist the wiles of the French priests, maintain their Puritan commitment to God, and return to New England with their souls intact. Others, generally adolescent boys and girls, were more vulnerable to conversion efforts and often, through kind treatment and constant tutelage of the village priest, converted to the Catholic faith. In particular, young girls were most vulnerable to these advances, taking French Catholic husbands in addition to the Catholic faith.

Protestants often tried to undo the damage of captivity by tying a return to Maine and the Protestant faith to the inheritance of property, but this persuaded only the few who had been baptized as a pragmatic convenience and did nothing to alter the lives of those (mostly women) who had entered into holy matrimony. Conversion could easily be undone, but marriage, which was seen as a sacred and nearly indissoluble bond, could not. This complicated family life, linking Protestants and Catholics through marital ties forcing a kind of spiritual *détente* on the inhabitants.

Next, Chmielewski draws comparisons between Protestant and Catholic missionary work and material culture. She finds numerous similarities between missionaries Father Sebastien Rale and Rev. Joseph Baxter; well-educated, politically and diplomatically astute, dedicated to saving the souls of the Wabanaki, and the “material culture of lived religion” such as the church calendar, buildings, and furnishings, but these similarities tend to be insubstantial. There is no doubt that the English Protestant settlers in Maine were not stalwart Puritans and their faith was diverse, but enough remained from the faith once delivered to the Puritan saints to prevent anything other than a peaceful but tense coexistence between the two Christianities. The theological divide between Protestants and Catholics over the methods of salvation and interpretation of scripture served as the impossible wedge between the two

groups; an antipathy which Chmielewski admits was lessened but never bridged in the borderlands.

Other than the first chapter of her book, where she sets the stage of the “religious eclecticism” found in colonial Maine, Chmielewski relies heavily on the stories of captives and captivity narratives to support her arguments. The advantage of this approach is that it provides important insight into the religious lives of ordinary people. Given the small number of captives and the even smaller number of captivity narratives, heavy reliance on the testimony of captives and their families is also a limitation.

What of the religious life of the thousands of ordinary Mainers who did not endure captivity? The majority of Mainers were not taken captive and may have found their inchoate theological views reinforced by the experience. Chmielewski’s use of the terms Protestant and Catholic, which she defines broadly in terms of “theology, practice, politics, and . . . ethnicity”, is also troublesome. To lump together all variations of Protestants found in Maine, whose opposition to each other was nearly as rancorous as that which divided Protestants and Catholics in general, distorts the religious reality. One wonders what kind of varied reactions of the Protestant sects (Puritans, Baptists, Quakers, etc.) had to their encounters with French and Wabanaki Catholics. Despite these concerns, Chmielewski has authored a well-written monograph that provides insight into religious and social life on the Maine frontier in the tragic years of frontier warfare than has heretofore been told primarily from military and political perspectives. The history of religion in Maine is an underdeveloped topic and *The Spice of Popery* is a welcome addition to the literature of colonial New England.

DAVID RAYMOND

Northern Maine Community College

Champlain’s Dream: The European Founding of North America. By David Hackett Fischer. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2008. Pp. x, 834. Paper. \$18.99.)

Samuel de Champlain continues to hold a mythical place in Canadian history. Considered to be the “Father of New France,” Champlain was a navigator, explorer, cartographer, and ethnographer par excellence. Champlain held the King’s Commission as Captain in the Royal

Navy and another as Lieutenant General in New France. By 1633, Champlain was absolute ruler of his domain, subject only to Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu. He was, however, denied the title of governor by Richelieu, as he was not noble. Perhaps one of his most impressive feats was the twenty-seven Atlantic crossings he made over the course of thirty years without losing a ship. The atrocities committed by European explorers and colonizers, such as Christopher Columbus, against Native peoples have in recent years created an academic climate which vilifies the White man and his effort to exploit the Americas for profit. Champlain has been lumped in with the likes of Cartier and Columbus, and Brandeis historian David Hackett Fischer would like to rehabilitate the image of Champlain. The general public prefers to read biographies, and it is through the medium of biography that Fischer has become a best-selling author. His critically acclaimed work *Washington's Crossing* won a Pulitzer Prize, and *Paul Revere's Ride* was equally well received among the historical community and public. In *Champlain's Dream*, Fischer seeks to recreate his success in writing top-down history in the style of Francis Parkman by telling the story of Champlain and his role in the founding of French Canada. His work is most of all a response to ethno-historians, such as Bruce Trigger, who Fischer labels as "dark spirits" (73) and "iconoclasts" (8, 564-566). Since the turn of the twenty-first century, there are historians who are returning to the study of leaders and empire builders. According to Fischer, their methods are more empirical, balanced, and less ideological. Fischer situates *Champlain's Dream* among this new scholarship. The time has come, according to Fischer, to counter the pervasive political correctness among historians, who have sought to debunk the achievements of White empire builders. In his effort to contribute to the historiographical narrative a rehabilitated Champlain, Fischer tirelessly researched both the documentary and archaeological evidence of Champlain's era, as well as read the ethnographic works of Champlain. He provides many interesting details of Champlain's youth that have been little researched in the past. As the result of his research and insight, Fischer portrays Samuel de Champlain as a man, who had a dream of humanity and peace in a world of cruelty and violence. His vision for New France was the creation of a multicultural space where harmony reigned. Champlain certainly maintained an interest in American trade routes and natural resources, but his overriding goal was, however, to transport humanist ideals to New France.

Trigger portrays Champlain as ambitious, ethnocentric, and ignorant of Native culture. Fischer responds to what he perceives as Trigger's cyni-

cism with an emphasis upon a Champlain, who was driven to create a just society in New France based upon humanist principles. Champlain's direct access to Henri IV, and the humanist circles which formed around the king, had a great influence on Champlain's thinking. While the humanists influenced Champlain, Henri IV and his style of governance based on tact and generosity was to have the greatest influence upon Champlain as colonial administrator. Both Henri IV and Champlain were devout Catholics, who, in reaction to the bloodshed of the religious wars in France, came to despise religious bigotry and governance based on fear and violence. They adhered to the universal ideal of the Catholic Church, whereby all people were the children of God and recipients of Christ's mercy. Fischer believes that the Catholic idea of a universal religion embracing all cultures would be a spiritual key to the kingship of Henri IV and to Champlain's colonial enterprise in New France.

According to Fischer, it was Champlain's humanist principles that enabled his successful negotiation with Native peoples. In contrast to Trigger's assertion of Champlain's ignorance of Native culture, Fischer portrays the Frenchman as considerate and receptive of Native traditions. During Champlain's first exploration of North America in 1603, a *tabagie* at Tadoussac set the tone for a relationship based on humanist principles. The *tabagie* marked the beginning of an alliance between France and the Montagnais (modern day Innu), the Algonquin from the Ottawa River, and the Etchemin (from the Penobscot in Maine). Champlain's voyage to Norumbega in 1604 repeated the success at Tadoussac. In Norumbega, he approached the Natives with only a few men and made no display of weapons. He sat down with the Indians in another *tabagie*, took interest in their ways, honored their customs, and treated them with respect. They were receptive to Champlain and reciprocated his gestures of goodwill. An alliance was made between Champlain, the Algonquin, the Montagnais, and the Huron to fight the Mohawk, which is indicative of Champlain's success in diplomacy.

Scholars, including Fischer, agree that Champlain viewed the Iroquois League as a major threat to his design for New France. It is also generally accepted that Champlain believed that only concerted military action against the Mohawk, who were "keepers of the eastern door" to Iroquoia, would achieve peace and security for trade expansion. Fischer argues that Champlain's limited use of force proved successful, as his successors later used too little or too much force against the Iroquois. The victories of Champlain and his Indian allies at Ticonderoga and Rivière des Iroquois against the Mohawk brought years of peace between the French and the Mohawk.

Unfortunately Fischer devotes little analysis to the actual settlement of New France, and what he does present does not necessarily add to the existing scholarly research on the topic. He does make the interesting observation that Champlain was quicker to recognize the humanity of the Indians than that of his own servants and laborers. The settlements of Acadia and Quebec were stratified and feudal; there was no democracy or equality for French settlers. Nonetheless, Champlain's dream for New France was one whereby Natives and the French lived closed together, preserving their cultures, guided by principles of universal faith, and respectful of universal law. The instances of cultural *métissages* or transferences, such as the French adoption of Indian words, between the Native communities and the French attest to a degree of closeness between the communities. A useful supplement to Fischer's analysis of cultural transfer would be the bilingual work of Laurier Turgeon et al. entitled *Transferts culturels et métissages Amérique/Europe* or *Cultural Transfer, America and Europe: 500 years of Interculturation*.

There is no denying that Fischer thoroughly researched the life of Samuel de Champlain. However, *Champlain's Dream* loses focus with the assassination of Henri IV, as the vast sea of facts presented by the author overwhelm the central theme of humanism. The reader may not be entirely convinced that Champlain was more humanist than shrewd merchant working for king and country. Furthermore, Fischer's harsh language concerning ethnohistorians is unprofessional and detracts significantly from his work. Fischer's primary target the late Bruce Trigger was made honorary member of the Huron-Wendat Nation as the result of his work *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1600*. In *Native and Newcomers*, Trigger seeks to counter ethnocentrism by presenting the findings of archaeology and social anthropology to demonstrate the important role that Native peoples have played in the history of Canada. David Hackett Fischer wrote a book of over 800 pages on the influence of humanism and governance based upon tact and generosity; yet he fails to personally embrace these ideals when speaking of his historical colleagues. Nevertheless, the student of Champlain would do well to read *Champlain's Dream* for its interesting portrayal of Champlain the humanist and its in-depth detail concerning heretofore little researched aspects of Champlain's youth. A balanced perspective would also include Trigger's works and his Huron colleague Georges Sioui's *For an Amerindian Autohistory*, which presents a history based upon Native cosmology.

SUSAN J. HARMON
University of Maine

Indians in Eden: Wabanakis and Rusticators on Maine's Mount Desert Island, 1840s-1920s. By Bunny McBride and Harald E.L. Prins (Camden, ME: Down East Books, 2009. Pp. v, 185. Paper. \$16.95.)

McBride and Prins, using photographs, anecdotes, and biographical sketches, have documented the high tide of cooperation between the Wabanakis and the well-off rusticators on Mount Desert Island between the 1840s and the 1920s. During the summers, the residents of the "Indian Encampment" there provided a special quality of life in the famous summer colony. Among the Wabanakis in the Indian Encampment were Penobscots from Indian Island, Passamaquoddies from Pleasant Point, and Maliseets from Houlton. They all contributed in many ways.

Guided canoe tours offered by the Wabanakis were one thing, but owning an Indian-made birchbark canoe became a status symbol among the rusticators. The native craftsmen used little hardware. They made the canoes out of a large sheet of paper white birch bark lashed with durable black spruce roots or deer sinews. They framed the canoes with roots of black spruce, finishing off the bottom with spruce or cedar sheathing. All of the seams were coated with spruce gum. Popular with the women rusticators on Mount Desert Island were the fancy baskets they bought from Wabanaki women who wove them out of sweet grass dyed with local plants.

Although the authors illustrate the importance of the "Indian Encampment" to the Wabanakis themselves over a period of nearly eighty years, they emphasize the opportunity for the rusticators to meet some remarkable Wabanakis. Among them was Frank Loring, known to the public as Chief Big Thunder. He was the quintessential Penobscot Indian. The authors point out that he used his native heritage as a survival skill. He was a storyteller, hunter, guide, tribal historian, collector of native artifacts, as well as a showman.

Another talented Wabanaki, a regular at the "Indian Encampment," was Louis Mitchell, who was the Passamaquoddy representative to the Maine State Legislature, where he represented Native American interests by fighting for traditional Wabanaki hunting and fishing rights. He was famous at Mount Desert Island for paddling his birchbark canoe sixty miles around the perimeter of the island in twelve hours.

With these examples of the positive relationship between the rusticators and the Wabanakis in the "Indian Encampment" on Mount Desert Island, the reader cannot help but wonder why and how it all ended. Although part of it was caused by the pressure for land to build

small cottages and hotels, the argument made by the authors was that it was an issue of class, as well as a rise in racism. A new organization, called the Bar Harbor Improvement Association, in 1881 suggested that the authorities should look into the matter of where the “Indian Encampment” should be and called the Wabanakis: “Aboriginies.” Although some Wabanakis continued to bring their baskets to be sold in local shops, they began to look for other seasonal employment including picking blueberries and harvesting potatoes utilizing “woodsplint” potato baskets.

Despite the end of an era and the racism it represented, the authors do present some positive developments. One is the founding of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance in the early 1990s, which holds a yearly festival with the Abbe Museum. Another is the requirement passed by the Maine State Legislature that Maine Native American history and culture be taught in Maine schools, which took effect in 2001. This legislation completes the circle, as it was introduced by Representative Donna Loring, the great-great granddaughter of Frank “Big Thunder” Loring.

Bunny McBride and Harald Prins have provided the reader with a fascinating window into a time and place when the native peoples of Maine lived alongside the descendents of their invaders.

POLLY WELTS KAUFMAN
University of Southern Maine

Jonathan Fisher of Blue Hill, Maine: Commerce, Culture, and Community on the Eastern Frontier. By Kevin D. Murphy. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010. Pp. xvi, 288. Hardcover. \$49.95.)

If time, place, and social status simultaneously converge to provide opportunity for an individual to establish their identity at the apex of their community, one could hardly find a more fitting biographical subject than Jonathan Fisher of Blue Hill, Maine. Raised in Massachusetts and educated at Harvard, a young Fisher took up his life calling as the first minister of this nascent settlement in 1796 and lived there for the remainder of his life. In the 1790s Blue Hill was an emerging community on the eastern frontier of the District of Maine and Fisher would see it come to maturity and undergo the many changes so evident in the District, and, after 1820, the State of Maine in the early national period.

Fisher's pastoral calling would hardly define the sum total of his life. Kevin Murphy marshals his skills as an art historian to bring to the reader's eye the multidimensional life and labors of Jonathan Fisher in a community that was in constant growth and flux economically, politically, religiously, and culturally. Drawing on the artifactual sources evident in Fisher's drawings, restored former home, and the larger village of Blue Hill as the foundation of his "materialist analysis" (4), Murphy has skillfully constructed a micro-history that is simultaneously biographical and cultural. We not only encounter the man Jonathan Fisher, but the community he helped to shape.

To facilitate his analysis, Murphy begins with a cue from Fisher himself. Drawing on the preeminent position that Fisher's house affords in what is his "best-known" (5) painting, *A Morning View of Bluehill Village, Sept. 1824*. In this painting, Murphy focuses on Fisher's house as the center of his world. From his survey of the land, to the drawing, construction, and expansion of the house, to the multitude of functions domestic, agricultural, economic, religious, artistic, and cultural that took place in and around it, Fisher both expressed himself and created his central image in the community. The house thus becomes the "appropriate point of reference for each chapter" (17) of the book. As in the painting so in the presentation in the book, the reader is confronted with the intersection of the individual and the village: Jonathan Fisher and Blue Hill.

As the first settled minister of Blue Hill, Fisher was granted land on which to build a house. This was Fisher's first task and the beginning of the construction of himself in the community at large. It afforded Fisher opportunity to evidence his "specialized skills" (56) as a surveyor and architect, both of which would enable him to gain greater economic advantage in years to come. It also enabled him to use these skills to his own benefit as the house he designed and built would become the central point for future material pursuits and where his place of "prestige" (66) in the community would be forged.

Being a parson on the eastern frontier, Fisher could not expect to have the salary afforded the Congregational ministers in the urban centers of New England. Therefore, in order to increase his material advantage in the Blue Hill community, Fisher needed to use his home as a center of domestic production. This would include goods and services that could be bartered and exchanged within the community and additionally provide saleable materials to increase Fisher's economic status. In exploring the domestic labors Murphy looks not only at Fisher, but the

subtle and significant ways that his wife Dolly, their children, and even boarders assisted in the dizzying array of productive activities in the Fisher homestead. One of the strengths of Murphy's material analysis is to bring to light the centrality of female labor in the home, especially "textile production". (103) If one were to rely solely on Fisher's diary, there would be little to enlighten us as to the primary place Dolly and the female occupants of the home played in the material production of the family. Murphy's skilled eye, however, reveals a complex of activities that enabled Fisher to gain prominence economically and culturally in Blue Hill.

In Murphy's analysis, even the religious life of the Fisher's was centralized in the home. This included the open door policy for visits from friends, neighbors, relatives, and especially parishioners. Murphy recognized that the parson's home and church were "linked functionally." (110) However, Murphy focuses almost exclusively on the Fisher home to the exclusion of the church. While the parsonage is carefully expressed in Murphy's analysis, this is perhaps the one area where his examination of Fisher could have been fuller. While we are presented with a fairly full account of the encroaching of sects like the Baptists and Methodists on Fisher's religious and moral prominence in Blue Hill and even the place church discipline figured in Fisher's life and writings, we do not get much more than a glimpse of the man in the church or during his ministerial activities.

Murphy further looks at the Fisher home, especially Fisher's study, as the center of education and learning. Fisher, like many ministers in New England, was able to use his own collegiate education as a foundation for increased material advantage. Fisher took in boarders who not only helped with the material production of the home, but provided additional sources of income as he prepared them educationally for further pursuits. A number of his students went on to college and several became ministers as well. Murphy also explores how Fisher used his education to the material advantage of his own children as they were able to become teachers through the education provided by their father. This was particularly evident with the Fisher girls as this gave them an opportunity to "teach and earn cash" outside the home; an advantageous opportunity in the "changing world" (176-77) of the early national period.

Lastly, Murphy turns to Fisher's "art making" which, along with his "life-writing" "guaranteed his posthumous reputation." (241) Beginning and ending with discussions of Fisher's paintings nicely frames Murphy's informative and insightful exploration into the life and commu-

nity that Jonathan Fisher constructed for himself on the eastern frontier. While the paintings present a certain stasis, Murphy's materialist analysis reveals much about the man, in changing times and in the community which simultaneously resisted and yet enriched his life and labors.

RON BAINES
University of Maine

Deering: A Social and Architectural History. By William David Barry and Patricia McGraw Anderson. (Portland, ME: Greater Portland Landmarks, 2010. Pp. 216. Hardcover. \$45.00.)

Deering: A Social and Architectural History is an exploration of the changing townscape of Deering, Maine the "inland" community of modern-day Portland, Maine (12). William David Barry and the late Patricia McGraw Anderson bring vast knowledge and experience to this project. Barry is an historian at the Maine Historical Society. Anderson taught art history at the University of Southern Maine and was a long-standing member of the boards of Greater Portland Landmarks (GPL), founded in 1964, and Maine Preservation, founded in 1972.

This unique history of place is prefaced by a portfolio of full-color paintings, photographs, and maps which establishes the depth and breadth of the study. The three sections of the book each contain social and architectural essays written by Barry and Anderson, respectively. Throughout, the authors contextualize Deering's patterns of growth, decline, and rebirth in relation to the region and the state of Maine. After a brief discussion of early exploration and settlement, the study then details the period after 1750 when regional and international trade spurred growth. The first section covers the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to about 1850 with emphasis placed on the establishment of large, ornate dwellings. The second section proceeds from the early nineteenth century until about 1890 when industry and estate growth went hand in hand. The third section details the decline in industry after 1890 as the entire region struggled to remake its economy. Historian Joel W. Eastman offers a concluding essay on the post-World War II era, discussing the development of the Sagamore Village Apartments.

The book effectively utilizes primary and secondary sources from

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With a firm historical grounding in subjects ranging from agriculture, maritime trade, transportation, and industry, the book establishes the context for architectural development and then effectively illustrates changes through numerous examples. Major studies of the region are also noted, including *Portland* by Patricia McGraw Anderson and Josephine H. Detmer as well as *Bold Visions: The Development of the Parks in Portland, Maine*, edited by Theo H.B.M. Holtwijk and Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.

Barry and Anderson address social, economic, and political changes and their effects on new residential and public building design. They also illustrate the many modifications made to existing structures throughout the period under study. Particular emphasis is placed on how changes in industry altered existing designs or influenced the creation of new ones. Population increases as well as changes brought by modernity contributed to new architectural additions including supermarkets, gas stations and increased the sizes of hospitals and schools.

Deering: A Social and Architectural History reflects the authors' research into Deering's long-standing African-American population as well as the lives of immigrants including Armenian, Italian, Chinese, and Jewish populations. Significantly, there is also discussion of East Deering's working class neighborhoods. The addition of public housing as a permanent part of the townscape is described in historian Joel W. Eastman's closing essay on the Sagamore Village Apartment complex, constructed initially during World War II. This illustrates how the apartment complex was operated as low income housing by 1950. (194)

Architectural preservation remains a strong theme of the book. The history of the George Tate House, for instance, is examined thoroughly. The home benefited from preservation efforts that saved similar buildings from demolition at the turn of the twentieth century (107). Intriguingly, the authors point out that many early buildings from 1700-1750 are "effectively buried in structures still standing" (53). The final architectural essay by Anderson, covering the period from 1890 to 1950, fittingly illustrates the many house designs that Deering continues to display. Local architectural firms, responding to changing times and community needs, designed many of these homes as well as public buildings.

Deering: A Social and Architectural History provides a comprehensive overview for those wishing to understand the development of a community with both urban and rural attributes. Deering's patterns of development mirror those of other communities throughout New England and the rest of the United States. Consequently, the book outlines the impor-

tance of preserving local heritage and the need for the preservation of historical buildings.

DALE POTTS

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Bethel, Maine: A Brief History. By Stanley Russell Howe. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009. Pp. 156. Paper. \$21.99.)

Dr. Stanley Howe, the recently retired director of the Bethel Historical Society, has produced a gem of a monograph in which he presents an overview of the history of Bethel in a lively, concise, insightful, and affordable volume. Based on impressive research in mostly primary sources and obscure secondary sources, Howe's book is filled with specific details about the key events and influential people in the long history of one of western Maine's most well-known towns. He traces the story of Bethel from the eighteenth century through the early twenty-first century. Scores of fascinating photos liven up the prose, and the combination creates wonderful book that is of interest to students of Maine or New England history as well as residents or former residents of Bethel and the surrounding area.

Howe's study is particularly strong on the political and military events that took place in Bethel or affected the people of the town. He has done a superior job of linking the local story to the broader context of American history, most notably during key events such as the United States Civil War, World War I, and World War II. His examinations of the accomplishments of luminaries such as Nathaniel Segar, Nathaniel True, Gideon Hastings, John Gehring, William Bingham, Margaret Tibbetts, and Leslie Otten are especially useful. Howe also does a very good job of discussing economic development, industry, agriculture, recreation, education, and religion over the centuries under study. In other words *Bethel, Maine: A Brief History* is extremely strong in detailing public history.

While this excellent work by Howe is especially enlightening on public affairs, it is not quite as strong on intimate daily affairs. For example, it would be helpful to know a bit about the social history of everyday Bethel women in the 1800s. How were children delivered in the early nineteenth century? Were there midwives? If so, did the midwives benefit from the knowledge of local Native American women such as Molly-

ocket? Similarly, a few more stories about women's social history in the twentieth century would be enlightening. How did a woman like longtime schoolteacher Melva Willard manage to be very active in the community while raising her seven children, who all graduated from Gould Academy and earned at least bachelor's degrees from four-year universities? In spite of this lack of women's social history, Howe's examination of Bethel's story serves as a model of effective local history put into a broad context, and should be widely read for many decades.

ANDY DEROCHE

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Seated by the Sea: The Maritime History of Portland, Maine, and Its Irish Longshoremen. By Michael C. Connolly. (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010. Pp. xxiv, 280. Hardcover. \$65.00.)

In *Seated by the Sea*, Michael C. Connolly chronicles the labor struggles of the longshoremen working in the port of Portland, Maine, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A social history, Connolly's study is an important contribution to the historiography of shore-side maritime labor in Maine and New England. Focusing on the majority Irish longshoremen during the years 1880 to 1923, Connolly argues that a study of this group provides insight into contemporary racial, ethnic, labor, business, and maritime issues while also illuminating the unique opportunities and challenges of Portland's proximity to the Canadian border. Due to a combination of shortsightedness on the part of Portland businessmen, national labor relations, technological innovation, and international politics, Irish longshoremen have experienced an overall decline in their industry since 1923, but, nevertheless, represent a significant and understudied population in Portland's history.

Connolly begins his study with a brief overview of the history of Portland from the seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century. His second chapter delves into the nature of labor on Portland's nineteenth-century waterfront and its two dominant ethnic groups: African-Americans and Irish immigrants. Dock work was back-breaking labor, and those on the lowest rungs of the social ladder competed for jobs loading and unloading the cargo vessels docking in Portland. By mid-

century, the Irish had succeeded in pushing black longshoremen off the waterfront through a combination of the decline in the West Indies molasses trade, racism, and an increase in the numbers of Irish immigrants as a result of the Irish Famine. Dock work increased after 1853 when Montreal began shipping Canadian grain directly to Portland via rail to be loaded onto ships by the longshoremen. In 1880, the now predominantly Irish workforce established the Portland Longshoremen's Benevolent Society (PLSBS).

In his third chapter, Connolly describes the turn of the twentieth century as a time of "mixed blessings" for Portland and its longshoremen. While the demand for longshoremen's labor increased in the short term, Portland's importance as a port began to decline. The switch from sail to steam eliminated Portland's advantage as the closest port to Europe, and the lack of an import trade was an impediment to growth. The next chapter focuses on labor unrest and union affiliation during the early twentieth century. Connolly employs one of his most impressive sources, the records of the PLSBS, to illuminate the society's struggles against business interests. In the first decade of the twentieth century, PLSBS membership decreased along with the amount of waterfront work. In 1911, longshoremen struck over gang size, wages, and the sling load. The strike was ultimately unsuccessful, and a second strike took place in 1913. Although ostensibly over a raise of a few cents, Connolly contends that the real significance of this strike was its indication of the PLSBS's growing awareness of the importance of large-scale labor organization. Just one year later, they affiliated with the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA).

Connolly organized his fifth chapter around the involvement of Portland's Catholic bishops in labor relations during the first half of the twentieth century, contending that the field of labor saw the intersection of Church and ethnicity. In general, the Catholic Church supported employers, and the three bishops in power during this period adhered to this official position to differing degrees. During the tenure of Bishop Walsh (1906-1924), who approved of unions but was anti-Socialist, PLSBS membership peaked at 1,366 in 1919. During the early 1920s, employers challenged earlier labor victories with accusations of Bolshevism and calls to reduce wages to reflect the post-war economy. PLSBS members countered employers' efforts with a strike in 1921, and ultimately Bishop Walsh played a pivotal role in convincing the union to make concessions on both wages and working conditions. The year 1923 was a pivotal one for Portland's longshoremen, as it saw a sudden de-

cline in the shipment of Canadian grain from Montreal to Portland. Canadian grain had been the primary bulk export for seventy years, and its loss, due to the development of the ports of Saint John and Halifax and their appeal to Canadian nationalism, signaled the beginning of the decline of Portland's longshore industry.

In chapter six, Connolly identifies multiple factors contributing to this decline, including the loss of the Canadian grain contract, increasing immigration tension, growing power of management, conservatism and corruption at the national level of the ILA, the Depression, the Red Scare, the adoption of oil as one of Portland's primary exports, and the switch to containers for carrying bulk cargo. In his conclusion, Connolly discusses recent efforts by the longshore industry and the city of Portland to maintain maritime industrial service along a waterfront increasingly dominated by commercial and tourism concerns. In the face of budget cuts and a downswing in the pulp and paper industry, Portland has struggled to hold onto contracts for container shipping, but there is still hope that, with the implementation of the three port strategy, Portland's longshoremen, now numbering less than 200, can continue to be a fixture of the waterfront.

Connolly's study is an important contribution to Portland's maritime history and the history of shore-side laborers in New England. As a social history, it focuses more on the PLSBS than on the longshoremen themselves. There is only a brief, but interesting, section on the culture of the longshoremen that includes reminiscences of retirees recorded in the early 1980s. This appears in chapter six; it would likely be more effective if it were expanded and placed earlier in the book as it gives the reader a better sense of the study's primary subjects. Along these lines, an extensive list of longshore nicknames is included as Appendix E, but such cultural details are not mentioned in the text. With the richness of the PLSBS source material, it seems a more cultural approach could add depth and help the reader understand the significance of the broader developments Connolly chronicles to the longshoremen. There could also be more detail on how the PLSBS came together, how the Irish longshoremen became class conscious, and how recently-arrived immigrants were integrated into the society. Further, the ways that advances in technology changed the nature and meaning of work on the docks could be explored in greater depth.

Finally, Connolly asserts, "a central theme of this book is that the sacrifices of the first-generation Irish longshoremen allowed the second and subsequent generations these occupational options, thus a recurring

theme for this book, ‘the dreams of the first generation are lived by the second’” (184). But this theme does not seem to feature in a central role. Where it does appear, in the brief section on longshore culture, the implications of the featured quotes suggest more than a hope for the next generation’s prosperity. In a discussion of the casual nature of longshore work, several retired longshoremen asserted that workers got used to the unpredictable schedule and preferred it over steady work. One man claimed that “no longshoreman ever wanted his kids to go down there in the later years. They’d get independent and wouldn’t want to work anywhere else” (144-145). Connolly interprets this as the men wishing for more for their children, and that is probably partly correct, but this also may represent a rejection of the factory-style regular work hours and an assertion of worker autonomy. Overall, Connolly’s work is an impressive analysis of the development of the PLSBS and its struggles over two turbulent centuries at both the local and national levels. And, as much good scholarship does, *Seated by the Sea* opens many doors for future scholars to explore the experience of Irish longshoremen on Portland’s working waterfront.

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Mr. Speaker! The Life and Times of Thomas B. Reed. By James Grant. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2011. Pp. xvii, 426. Paper. \$16.00.)

Thomas B. Reed was first elected as a Republican member of Maine’s delegation to the House of Representatives in 1876. He was reelected for eleven consecutive terms. Reed resigned from his seat in 1899 in protest of the imperial policies of the McKinley administration. Reed was elected to the position of Speaker of the House on three occasions, first in 1889 and twice more during the following decade.

The author, James Grant, is a journalist who edits his own newsletter devoted to financial analysis, where he advocates a return to the gold standard. Grant has written seven books, including one on Bernard Baruch and another on John Adams.

Among the strengths of this book is Grant’s considerable ability to elucidate the intricacies of Gilded Age monetary and fiscal matters.

From Greenback heresies, to Gresham's Law regarding bi-metallism, the author is clear and informative, although not always as concise as one might wish.

He does a good job of positioning Reed relative to those financial matters. Unremarkable for a partisan Republican, Reed was a consistent supporter of the protective tariff and almost as consistent in his support for the gold standard. These issues were hotly debated during the period. Grant also documents Reed's support of women's suffrage, even while his wife, but not his daughter, dared to differ.

It was Reed's skills as a parliamentarian, however, which loom as most important in Grant's narrative of the rotund politician. His chronicle of Reed's political career reads as one long prelude to his election as Speaker of the House in 1889 when he changed that chamber's rules as they pertained to a quorum.

Prior to Reed enforcing his new rule on the quorum, House members, although present on the floor, could refuse to answer the roll call and were thereby not counted toward a quorum. As Speaker, Reed refused to honor this rule and counted as present any member who was physically in attendance. This dramatically diminished the ability of the minority party to obstruct legislation and "Czar Reed," as he was derisively termed by Democrats and other opponents, went on to oversee one of the most activist congressional sessions of the late nineteenth century.

According to the author, Reed was attempting to modernize a branch of government which he thought had not kept pace with American society. Ironically for the Speaker, and perhaps for the rest of us, the very government he sought to strengthen almost immediately had its revenge in 1898 as the country embarked on an imperial path, beginning with the Spanish-American War. Reed could not accept the United States constructing an empire during his tenure and resigned from the House the following year in protest.

If this book has its strengths, it also has weaknesses. First, Grant's research is spotty. While he has consulted a good number of manuscript collections, including Reed's papers at Bowdoin College, his book relies heavily on dated secondary sources. The historiography of the Gilded Age is rich, but Grant appears not to have consulted any of the recent scholarship. Secondly, the author well-documents Reed's legendary wit and sarcasm. Unfortunately, Grant tries to emulate his subject and the book is replete with glib asides that, while occasionally humorous, become tedious in their repetition.

Thirdly, the tumult of the Gilded Age, including the Populist revolt, the violent strikes of urban workers, and the enormous changes wrought by industrialization and urbanization, are treated almost as marginal rather than as the central phenomena they were. As a result, the picture which emerges of Reed lacks full historical context.

Finally, there is the issue of James G. Blaine, and other Maine politicians for that matter. While Blaine is not absent from Grant's account, we do not get much substance about him or the differences between him and Reed other than that the latter saw Blaine as his "nemesis" and believed the Plumed Knight was corrupt. There is next to nothing in the book, for example, about Blaine's considerable role in foreign policy. Perhaps Reed was silent on those matters, but they are barely mentioned. Did he comment on Blaine's 1881 and 1889 Pan American initiatives? These are particularly important in light of Reed's subsequent dissent over imperialism. A long list of omissions could be compiled.

Although this book sheds some welcome light on an important, but largely forgotten Mainer, it is, on balance, a disappointment.

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Rural Unwed Mothers: An American Experience, 1870-1950. By Mazie Hough. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010. Pp. vi, 235. Cloth. \$99.00.)

Comparative histories that examine women's lives illuminate the nuances of their experiences. In this book, historian Mazie Hough focuses on unwed mothers in Maine and Tennessee, and examines the transition from local to state assistance for their support. She notes that in the late nineteenth century, unwed mothers were encouraged to raise their children with the promise that community support would be provided. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the very rules behind pregnancy stated that a woman was not pregnant until the "quickening," when she could feel the baby kick inside of her. Pregnancy was often seen as part of regular courtship en route to marriage. In rural communities, children were seen as eventual workers, desperately needed by farming families. By the 1950s however, the state imposed different rules, stating that a woman was pregnant upon conception and

encouraged unmarried pregnant women to give up their children for adoption and forgo any contact thereafter. Her study then charts this transition and what it meant for poor women without resources and the children they relinquished to the state. In short, this history provides a platform to examine the coming-of-age anxieties in a patriarchal society as imprinted on women's bodies and availability of choices.

During the transition from rural oversight to professional oversight, Hough points out that newly-established maternity homes, in place by the late 1800s and early 1900s, often replicated some of the "down home" characteristics of days gone by. The women that ran the maternity homes created their own kind of community, similar to that of the rural areas from which the unwed mothers lived, they nurtured the women during pregnancy, stood by their side during delivery, and helped them find employment afterwards. This system translated into positive choices for the women and their babies.

By the 1950s, the welfare state was solidified and professionalized. The schools of social work, established at the University of Chicago and Harvard in the early 1900s, set the example for many other programs around the nation, training a new generation of female social workers. Social services became an entry point for educated women to work at the socio-political level outside the bounds of the traditional marriage framework. Women of education and higher social class could now care for poor, rural women who came to them for help, but they did not necessarily bridge the socio-economic divide. Now, social workers, as well as government officials, courts, male doctors, and reformers all had a say in a rural unwed mother's life. After World War II, the completed family unit of father, mother and children, became a priority in the perceived stability of the nation. An unwed mother faced a world of strangers who regulated her life and that of her unborn fetus, and were closeted away from the public and often shuttled to another town to wait out their pregnancy, give birth, and return home empty-handed. All of this, however, often pertained mostly to the white community. Minority women, who found themselves pregnant out of wedlock, were less likely to be served by such organizations.

Hough explains that rural women's experience was different, depending on the organization of state politics. For example, there existed "two Maines:" an urban south connected to Greater Boston, and a rural center in the northern part of the state. Much of Maine lacked a truly urban base, which meant that changes to the maternity home and adoption services came later than in other states. Through intergenerational

communities, unwed mothers had a place in society. They could rely on extensive family networks as well as community support. In the late nineteenth century, Maine consisted of what were called “island communities” that sent town representatives to state government. Infringing consumerism, urban ideas, and the Great Depression shattered closed communities, leaving unwed mothers to look for support from the state. Maine established bastardy laws that enabled the pregnant woman to name the father and receive some financial support. Still, most people in Maine lived with the same economic resources and wealth was spread out.

Such was not the case in Tennessee, which had a history of slavery and debt peonage, creating a large class of tenant farmers with no hope of land ownership or economic independence. The state had also been devastated by the Civil War, resulting in a much smaller population of white males in the late nineteenth century. In Tennessee, county representatives, usually from the upper class, worked in the state government, thus taking away the crucial element of understanding one’s own constituents and their culture. This disparity of wealth, then, created a gendered economic upper class that rigidly controlled governmental offices and societal rules. On top of this, in Tennessee, which had a much larger African-American population than Maine, control over white women’s bodies and their families’ reputation took on special urgency in a racially stratified South. This created an atmosphere in which women were more likely to give their babies up for adoption through coercion and shady record-keeping practices.

Hough sought out personal stories of both the women organizing maternity homes and those who came to them for help. In political and social arenas, poor women’s bodies were the terrain of battles for control between elite, professional women and men. Despite this, impoverished pregnant women did hold some agency by learning the emerging laws of the state and appealing to maternity homes for help with employment and other needs, though not necessarily fully adopting the good, clean Christian living that was proposed by their supposed betters.

Hough echoes historian Jeanette Keith, who called for a “rural-urban dialogue.” Place matters, Hough says, in determining how single, pregnant women will be viewed in society. She gets at the heart of communities in order to determine the unspoken cultural expectations as well as the codified laws. Hough argues that rural women had more control over their lives and their pregnancies while living in a rural environment. With increasing modernization and urban living, unwed mothers

became a target, because they were seen as an unstable force that needed supervision. The maternity home became an expensive, regulated place of strangers geared towards quick turnover of its occupants. The communal aspects of the early maternity homes were lost. The very institutions once established to help them no longer served poor, pregnant women without resources. Hough has thoroughly researched this topic. She consulted archives in both states, and utilized a variety of documents including records from state governments, courts, adoption services, and maternity homes, as well as oral histories. This excellent work would appeal to anyone interested in women's history, and more specifically, rural-urban dialogue, women's health, and reproductive justice.

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