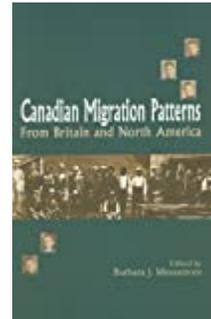


# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



**Barbara J. Messamore, ed.** *Canadian Migration Patterns: From Britain and North America*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004. viii + 294 pp. \$29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-7766-0543-2.



**Reviewed by** Matthew Barlow (Department of History, Concordia University)

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*Canadian Migration Patterns* represents a selection of the papers presented at the 1998 Migration conference held at the Centre of Canadian Studies at the University of Edinburgh, in Scotland. For the most part, these papers can be categorized as being revisionist in nature, as they examine and recast the history of migration to, from, and within Canada, both historically and more contemporaneously, though the result is a somewhat uneven and even disjointed series of articles on the experiences of immigrants and migrants in Canada.

In his contribution, "Americans in Upper Canada, 1791-1812: 'Late Loyalists' or Early Emmigrants," Peter Marshall effectively debunks the question of loyalty amongst these American emigrants to Canada. It was not some ephemeral loyalty to the Crown that brought them north, it was land. Ronald Stagg, for his part, tackles the apparent myth of a massive outflux of emigrants from Upper Canada following Mackenzie's rebellion there in 1837. Stagg finds scant evidence in the sources for this alleged outpouring, concluding rather, that while there was indeed some migration south into the northern United States, it was hardly an outflux. And Bruce Elliott, perhaps the dean of nineteenth-century Canadian immigration history, offers us a glimpse of his current work on pre-Confederation English emigration to Canada. In the most comprehensive article of this pub-

lication, Elliott examines the "Regional Patterns of English Immigration and Settlement in Upper Canada." Elliott, like many historians of today, expresses an interest in rescuing the English in Canada from, to borrow from E. P. Thompson, the "enormous condensation of posterity." [1] To this end, Elliott painstakingly examines reasons for emigration from England to British North America in order to understand from whence the emigrants came and why. Most of them came from the north of England, a part of that country with extant trans-Atlantic migratory connections, and emigrated for what could probably be termed economic reasons: land. He also found that they tended to settle in either the traditional Yorkshire settlements around the New Brunswick/Nova Scotia border, or in southern and southwestern Ontario.

Unfortunately, however, the vast majority of the articles in this book are not as clearly written or as cogently argued as Elliott's. Too many of the papers fail to overcome their conference-paper origins. Most conferences, however, that intend to publish proceedings, tend to allow their authors to submit a full-length article for publication purposes. This does not seem to have been the case here. The result is an uneven collection of short articles (six of the seventeen articles are less than fifteen pages long) that either lack depth or fail to connect the topic to any larger historiographical trends.

As for the sequencing of the articles in *Canadian Migration Patterns*, I found myself somewhat startled by the jump across the twentieth century in the final third of the book. From an article dealing with European immigrants in Toronto between 1890 and 1918, we jump to an article dealing with Irish emigration to Canada in the 1950s (to say nothing about the inclusion of the Irish in a book about British and American immigration into Canada), and end with an article about gay and lesbian refugee claimants, from Mexico, in Canada in the 1990s. Perhaps the editor, Barbara J. Messamore of the University College of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, could have avoided this temporal jump and thus eased this transition, by moving the final two articles, dealing respectively with Atlantic Canadian regionalisms in the twentieth century and songs of migration.

This is not to say that *Canadian Migration Patterns* is devoid of any value. A full one third of the articles focus on English emigration to Canada and in so doing attempt to, at least, recover the experiences of English immigrants in Canada and to move away from the stereotypes of the English in Canada. These micro-histories do also tend to provide the reader with a more personalized account of the hardships and successes of migration and immigration, even if it is left to the reader to connect these personal accounts back to any larger historiographical trends.

Note

[1]. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Vintage, 1966), p. 12.

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