

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Letters from New France: The Upper Country, 1686-1783. Translated and edited by Joseph L. Peyser.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3n74c4ts>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 17(1)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Cassel, Jay

Publication Date

1993

DOI

10.17953

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canonist was adopted by Vattel in the nineteenth century . . . the concept which should be adopted today.

What is useful in Las Casas's work is his nearly anthropological observations of the native peoples he encountered, always insisting, however, that they would make ideal Spanish "subjects" if "properly" treated. If Las Casas is read in terms of his being one kind of agent of colonialism, rather than a "defender of the Indians," his writings reveal that soft underbelly of colonialism and imperialism still very much with us today. An observation of the duality of imperialism by the late historian, William Appleman Williams comes to mind:

We Americans . . . have produced very, very few anti-imperialists. Our idiom has been empire, and so the primary division was and remains between the soft and the hard (*Empire as a Way of Life*, 1980).

Las Casas's was perhaps the first "soft" imperialist, the precursor of the modern liberal.

Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz
California State University, Hayward

Letters from New France: The Upper Country, 1686-1783. Translated and edited by Joseph L. Peyser. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992. 248 pages. \$34.95 cloth.

Any collection of original documents is welcome, especially if it makes records in another language available to a wider anglophone audience. One must be grateful to the University of Illinois Press for its decision to publish. This book contains a selection of documents, often just parts of them, relating to the northwest territory of New France, the *pays d'en haut*, which included the lands west of the Ottawa River and around the Great Lakes. (In 1717, the Illinois territory between the Mississippi and Wabash/Ohio valleys was attached to the colony of Louisiana, which covered all land to the south along the Mississippi.) It includes some ninety-two pages of history written by the editor, 108 pages of documents, twenty pages of terse endnotes, eleven pages of tables in appendices, and two pages of bibliography. To put this in perspective, the equivalent of ten to twenty-five pages (UIP format) of documents

relevant to the *pays d'en haut* were generated almost every year during the French regime. In several places (most notably the destruction of the Fox, 1728–38) a lengthy account by the author takes the place of documents.

The collection ostensibly is centered around events at Fort St. Joseph, near present-day Niles, Michigan, just below the southeast end of Lake Michigan, and originates in a project undertaken with the support of the municipal government. It omits documents and discussion of events in much of the Great Lakes basin and many of the key forts—notably Niagara, Detroit, and Michilimackinac—and excludes many of the key Indian players in the region; the title is therefore misleading. If the collection genuinely concentrated on Fort St. Joseph, that might be accepted—although why should one concentrate on this particular fort when so many crucial developments occurred elsewhere? However, the book's coverage of events ranges over a large territory to the east, west and south, including the Fox wars (which began around Fort Detroit and ended near Fort de La Baye on the western side of Lake Michigan) and the Chickasaw wars (which have little to do with the *pays d'en haut*, even though some people from the region did get involved—the Chickasaw lived well to the south, within the bounds of Louisiana). The important “uprising” of 1746–48 is covered in part of one document occupying less than a page. A lot of attention is paid to a few events but little or none to regular activities. Events of many years are excluded. There are six short documents from the 1740s, none for 1755–60, two for Pontiac's uprising, and thereafter only one regarding the transfer of the territory to Spain in 1781. We are promised that through French interpreters of the day, we will hear from Indian chiefs, but we rarely do.

So there are numerous shortcomings, especially from the perspective of historians interested in American Indian culture and the early history of Indian-European contact. Problems of balance are inevitable in a collection focusing on one locality, but several omissions and inclusions are deplorable because of the distorted impression the collection creates. The Miami, in whose lands Fort St. Joseph was built, are absent from large parts of the collection. The great general peace treaty of 1701 is not included. So little is reproduced regarding the role of the Catholic clergy that the reader must wonder about the editor's three-point analysis, which stresses the interrelationship between the military, commerce, and the church. Where, for example, is evidence that the church

"pacified Indians and provided military information" (p. 37)? Lery's unused plan for capturing a "Chickasaw Fort" is reproduced, but there are no documents relating the actual engagements or the peace terms. Lery, in any case, never went to Fort St. Joseph or to the Chickasaw, so why is this document included? Other irrelevant documents are included, such as four dealing with Labrador. Although there were many censuses of the colony of Canada for the period covered, we get only the one for 1718, and it is so general that it tells us nothing about the West.

A whole section is devoted to the large number of deaths among the Miami in 1732. The author presents his theory that these deaths probably resulted from the French poisoning the alcohol that was sold to the Indians; the disaster was then imputed to the English traders. This is intriguing, but the evidence does not persuade me. How was this accomplished? What type of poison might have been used? The commander of Fort St. Joseph treated Indians with opvietan (whose active ingredient is an opiate). How and why did it work . . . if it did? What historian can be allowed to argue that "although hard evidence for intentional poisoning is lacking, sufficient documentary evidence exists to establish a motive for such an act" (p. 144) and to claim that this is enough grounds for a revision of history? The French commander noted that death often occurred overnight, after the individual had drunk brandy, adding that it appeared to be the result of "a poison . . . only taking effect after a rather considerable time" (p. 137). (Like many documents of the period, this is frustratingly vague.) It is not absolutely clear what happened, but the descriptions are consistent with alcohol poisoning.

At this time, the Miami were allies of the French. The English often shifted between winning Indians over through trade and eliminating them outright (e. g., the Abenaki). Intentionally or unintentionally, English traders may have made it possible for the Miami to poison themselves with alcohol. The Miami did return from Fort Oswego with a whopping four hundred casks of brandy. Indians are known to have a limited ability to metabolize alcohol (there is little alcohol dehydrogenase in their bodies). Peyser's hypothesis is not convincing, and his survey of motives and actions is not complete.

The editor clearly wants to adjust the impression that the French treated the Indians much better than the English did. To be sure, such a correction is in order (one need only think of the genocidal wars against the Natchez, the Fox, and the Chickasaw), but this collection does it badly. It simply presents all the dirt and little of

the evidence for French success with the Indians. It also makes little note of what the English were doing. Thus there is a marked bias in the selection of documents and in the description of events. Among the misleading features of the collection are melodramatic titles for sections such as "The French Are Crushed by the Chickasaws, 1736" (p. 159). This was simply not the case: D'Artaguiette and half of the 137 French with him were killed when their Indian allies fled in the face of a much larger force. Meanwhile, a larger expedition headed by Bienville, governor of Louisiana, was mauled but retreated intact and returned in 1739. Someone who is "crushed" cannot do that. The title and editorial essay suggest that the fate of the Fox in 1731-32 was largely a consequence of "the new governor general's treachery." Motivations for Beauharnois's action are not thoroughly discussed. Instances of the Fox's disregarding agreements are treated much more gently or are simply omitted, while the motivations of other Indians involved are barely discussed.

The contrast between the handling of information about the Indians and about the French suggests a difference in editorial concern regarding the facts of French life and those of the Indians in whose lands the French operated. Eurocentrism is evident in the notes and appendices. Every detail of French life is explained, and we have long lists of kings, ministers, governors, commanders, and missionaries but nothing on Indian tribes. There are maps relating French activities but none about Indians. Peyser puts some Indian names in modern form and leaves others in the original French form. The editor's own writing about Indian politics and life is very much from a European perspective. The following two lines about warfare provide a good example: In 1689, "the Iroquois, no longer restrained by the English from attacking New France," went on the warpath (p. 45); the French expedition against the Chickasaw in 1736 was "cut to pieces by their enemy's crossfire, planned and directed by the English" (p. 160). Neither statement is valid. Peyser reproduces a letter under the title "Father Guignas Talks His Captors into Deserting the Foxes, 1728," whereas the contents of the letter reveal that the Fox themselves alienated neighboring tribes, whom the priest and others then tried to influence, and the actual decision was taken by the Kickapoo chief Mainoumba. Peyser has not learned much from ethnohistorians such as Daniel K. Richter. Although we have to rely on European documents, there are ways to correct the balance of the account.

The listing of secondary sources in the notes and bibliography has serious shortcomings. The author omits much recent Canadian scholarship, while referring to dated Ph. D. dissertations from Illinois in the 1940s and 1950s. Given his attention to events between 1701 and 1748 and to the governors general of New France, it is inexcusable that Peyser does not refer to Y. F. Zoltvany's biography of Vaudreuil (1974) or S. D. Standen's of Beauharnois (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1975), or, for that matter, D. J. Horton's study of Intendant Hocquart (Ph. D. dissertation, McGill University, 1975). As a result, the broader policy toward the *pays d'en haut* is not well handled. Peyser is prepared to rely on Louise Phelps Kellogg (1908, 1925) but never mentions the Smithsonian's multivolume *Handbook of North American Indians*.

There are interesting documents and some good scholarship in these pages, but there also are very significant shortcomings. The collection is undoubtedly necessary but not necessarily good.

Jay Cassel

York University, Toronto, Ontario

Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy. By Sarah Carter. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. 323 pages. \$34.95 (Canadian) cloth.

Northern Plains Indian agricultural adaptations during the first phases of placement upon Canadian prairie reserves have long been perceived a failure because self-sufficiency was never attained. These Indians were often described as having no interest in farming or not having the aptitude to succeed. In this important monograph, Sarah Carter describes a very different disposition. Many reserve residents, eager to fulfill the promises they made in the numbered treaties, actively sought the skills for farming and applied considerable energies to cultivation. Carter systematically demonstrates that it was fluctuating Canadian government Indian policies, however, that provided the most significant obstacles undermining the efforts of these new Indian farmers.

In the opening chapter, Carter discusses the literature about many Indians as horticulturalists in North America and specifically on the Northern Plains. In this discussion, she distinguishes between the prevailing myth that all Plains Indians were wandering nomads and the fact that specific groups were occasionally