

STEPHEN, Scott P. – *Masters and Servants: The Hudson's Bay Company and Its North American Workforce, 1668–1786*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2019. 448 p.

The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) has meant many things to historians over the years. To late-nineteenth-century writers, it was a bulwark of Britishness and benevolence in the Canadian wilderness. To scholars in the 1950s and 1960s, it was principally a business organization, driven by its careful management of account books and protection of its charter privileges. Since the 1970s, historians have emphasized the role the Company's posts played as centres of a vaguely defined "fur trade society," influencing, and being influenced by, a mixture of British, First Nations, and Métis social patterns. More recently, histories have taken something of a cultural turn, with Adele Perry, Ted Binnema, and Michael Chan Smith portraying the Company as a cultural artifact of its British, transnational, and imperial context.

Scott Stephen's study of labour recruitment and management in the HBC before the 1790s fits somewhere between the newer cultural histories and the social history approaches. Focusing on labour management during its first hundred years of operations, the book explores not so much the social patterns of the company, but the culture that shaped the lives of its servants. The cornerstone of Stephen's argument is that the company's bayside factories were neither as stratified by class and rank as earlier historians have suggested nor as internally bound by an imperial-nationalism as nineteenth-century observers assumed. Rather, Stephen insists these fur trade posts were "household factories" (p. xxv) modelled on the countryside estates of early modern England with senior post officers playing the role of "estate stewards" (p. xxviii) for the company's shareholders in London. Although the book sometimes wanders from its central focus, missing opportunities for more substantive contextualization and explanation, it provides a wonderfully nuanced understanding of labour relations in the fur trade. It also offers hints at how the HBC, and by extension the fur trade, fit—and was unique from—the wider patterns of early modern British imperial culture.

The book's introduction is structured by the claim that although there is a push in recent scholarship to frame chartered companies (especially the East India Company) as forerunners of modern corporations, the HBC's early history was relatively pre-industrial and early-modern in its corporate culture, especially when it came to labour relations. The book's chapters proceed from there, exploring how the informal model of the household factory came to be used by the HBC, and how it was retained and adjusted over the years. The opening two chapters provide general context about the company's operations and why the household factory model was adapted to the bayside factories. The next four chapters discuss the way labourers were recruited in Britain and how officers and the leadership in London subsequently evaluated these labourers during their employment with the company. Two final chapters address the ways rhetorical practices and rewards (especially alcohol) were used to ensure the social cohesion of the household factory in such a way that the company retained authority even as servants found ways to realize their own needs within the household framework.

Stephen's emphasis on the familial and negotiated nature of the post community is the book's most important historiographical contribution. His analysis upends older Marxist-informed studies of labour in the fur trade that tended to highlight the classed and ranked nature of the posts. Although Stephen does not deny the influence of hierarchy, he places more emphasis on the bonds of reciprocity between master and servant, seeing the posts as family-like spaces governed by the senior officer and bound by a common sense of loyalty to the estate owner (the London shareholders). This interpretation also helps us better appreciate the dynamics informing sexual relations between HBC men and Indigenous women. Historians of fur trade marriage have long argued that the company's policy on marriage before the 1800s was unevenly applied and seemingly left to the discretion of the individual post factors. Stephen's approach brings greater clarity to these arguments. As he points out, only the patriarch and his wife could have long-term sexual relations and marriages in the English estate system; servants of the household could only marry if they also agreed to leave the household. He argues that this was the model of sexual relations that took shape in the bayside posts of the early modern fur trade. Thus, the senior officer, leveraging his position as the patriarch, could have an open relationship with an Indigenous woman (and even take a wife) while simultaneously prohibiting his servants from doing likewise, all without risking unrest amongst the servants of the post who would (at least rhetorically) accept this seemingly hypocritical stance as part of the culture of the household factory. If anything, Stephen could have gone further with this line of cultural analysis, underlining how the cultural framework of English masculinity at work here, as much as economic and social forces, shaped the patterns of fur trade marriage.

A novel, although speculative, contribution of the book is what it suggests about the HBC in comparison to other mercantile outfits in the British empire, especially the East India and Royal Africa Companies. While these other companies built quasi-military outposts in India and Africa, and recruited men within a militarized model, Stephen insists the HBC was different: it looked for servants with "soft skills" (p. xvi) and built its forts as household factories, not military outposts (even though these households were sometimes asked to fend off French attacks, Stephen suggests this defence was understood as defending the household rather than the empire). Again, Stephen could have looked more closely at these differences. The work of Philip Sterns describing the East India Company as a Company-State, for one, suggests a deep contrast between the militarized, corporate, and large-scale EIC and the familial, household, small-scale HBC that could have been more closely examined. If the familial nature of the HBC was unique, what does that mean for our understanding of the fur trade within the early modern empire? Were the "many tender ties" that bound fur traders to Indigenous communities in part a result of this unique corporate culture?

The book does struggle in its attribution of causation. Causation is always hard for historians to prove, especially when they take a cultural turn: it is easier to show a culture than to explain why it exists. Stephen falters in explaining exactly why, how, and when the decision to use the household model was taken, and why it was maintained. It is likely that this sort of information does not exist: the way

people make their worlds is usually more subconscious than articulated. Likewise, much of the book's argumentation is based on correspondence between officers and the company's London authorities. We learn about how the upper echelons of the household/company—the "estate owners" and the "estate Stewarts"—wanted the culture to operate, but not how the rank-and-file servant lived their life in the household factory. In the end, we are left with something like a photographic negative of these servants, seeing the framework in which they were asked to live, and shadows of how they may have managed to inhabit these spaces, but not their own feelings about the household/company they lived in/served. Filling in these voices and experiences, perhaps by a return to the social history approaches of the 1970s and 1980s, is one way to continue exploring the premise that Stephen has laid out here. As the most important British imperial force in western Canada before 1870, there is certainly a need to pick up these and other lines of enquiry so that we can better know this company and the central role it played in Canadian history.

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BIRN, Anne-Emanuelle and Raúl Necochea LÓPEZ, eds. – *Peripheral Nerve: Health and Medicine in Cold War Latin America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020. 376 p.

Peripheral Nerve is an important contribution to the historiography of the Latin American Cold War, a field that has experienced a major transformation in the last two decades. A foreword by Gilbert Joseph and an introduction and epilogue from the book's editors provide the theoretical and methodological framework to nine case studies, divided in three sections that correspond to different sub-periods—early, mature, and late years. The point of departure is that health and medicine represent another major arena in which the Cold War was fought in the region. Latin American health and medical actors operated in a postwar context characterized by contending forces of reform and revolution, shaped by the imperatives of economic development and modernization and the impact of the bipolar conflict. Those actors moved across fluid boundaries and in multi-layered networks at domestic, regional, and transnational levels. Health and medicine were not only specific areas of professional expertise, but also sites for struggles around political, social, and cultural power.

From these premises, the book relates to recent scholarship on the Cold War that reframes its temporal, spatial, and methodological boundaries. In terms of chronology, the chapters indicate that the Cold War did not just start in 1947 but had deeper historical roots in the preceding decades, as argued by Joseph in his foreword and suggested by Anne-Emanuelle Birn in her introduction. This can be seen, for example, in Birn's exploration of the life of the Dutch American nurse Lini de Vries and her international, antifascist past from the 1930s and early 1940s; Jennifer Lynn