

Lines Drawn upon the Water: First Nations and the Great Lakes Borders and Borderlands Edited by Karl S. Hele

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area, a natural occurrence in a small colonial society. He associated with many of the important early inhabitants of the colony, from Joseph Brant to powerful merchants such as Robert Hamilton and Richard Cartwright (Richard's cousin), as well opponents such as John Beverley Robinson and Allan MacNab.

Had the author concentrated on Richard's life and struggles, *From Bloody Beginnings* would have provided valuable additional insights into Upper Canada's history. By trying to do so much more—in effect to give a partial history of the American Revolution in Upstate New York and Pennsylvania, and of Upper Canada until 1841, and to provide a portion of the information in imagined dialogue—he distracts from what would have been a more effective work. The dialogue adds little, and is sometimes stilted. The additional information is at times so compressed that it requires a second reading to take it all in.

When Richard is discussing the politics of Upper Canada, it would have been helpful for the author to point out that this description was Richard's view of the situation, and that not everyone agreed with him. Without that explanation, the results of some of the elections do not make sense, as those who shared Richard's reform views

did not win. At times, too, the story seems like one from another era. The Butlers, of Butler's Rangers, for instance, show little of the ferocity which recent scholarship would attribute to them. Trying to cover so much ground also makes it more likely that small errors will creep in. Benedict Arnold was not a Major General in 1776, and did not command the attack on Quebec in 1775. William von Moll Berczy's men did not start the clearing of Yonge Street, which was then finished by the Queen's Rangers, nor was it a wide boulevard. William Warren Baldwin did not agree to be part of a new executive after a successful rebellion in Upper Canada. Tecumseh was not skinned after the battle at Moraviantown, or at least we do not know that he was, as his body was not found by the triumphant Americans. There is much to recommend *From Bloody Beginnings*, but the author seems to have been carried away by his enthusiasm, and tried to do too much.

Ronald Stagg, Ryerson University

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Lines Drawn upon the Water: First Nations and the Great Lakes Borders and Borderlands

Edited by Karl S. Hele

Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008. xxiii + 351 pages. \$85.00
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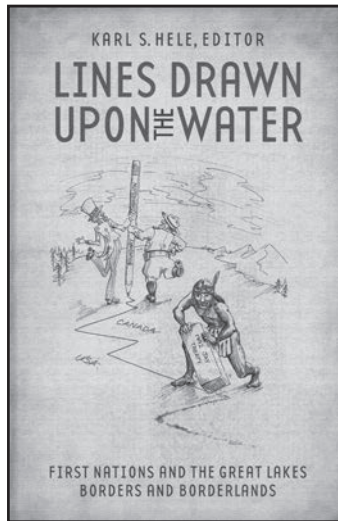
This collection of twelve essays stemmed from a 2005 conference at which scholars shared their ideas on how colonial and national boundaries influenced aboriginal communities in the Great Lakes region. Throughout the book 'borderlands' describes territory—the land—rather than political divisions of state or province. Drawing from

personal experience growing up in Sault Ste Marie and from established theory, Hele contends that borderlands exist as regions within themselves. Most selections relate to Ontario and to the province's Chippewa, Ojibwa and Potawatomi First Nations, collectively known as the Anishinabeg.

The first two essays examine the bor-

derland experience of native groups living in the Great Lakes watershed astride the political boundary. Edmund Danzinger finds that nineteenth-century American and Canadian governments entertained similar plans for their native populations, but exercised different approaches. Groups responded with middle-of-the-road coping strategies, selectively appropriating policies and non-native practices from each side as suited them. In “Cross Border Treaty Signers” Phillip Belfry reports that the several treaties forged during the nineteenth century warranted that each signatory band send its best and brightest members to the table, regardless of which modern country was home. The Americans and British, fully accepting that First Nations wished to demonstrate that their territories took precedence over any line drawn on a map, condoned such Anishinabeg diplomacy. Borders were fluid. Belfry adds that this spirit of cooperation continues to be recognized through such modern cross-border collaborations as the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Great Lakes Declaration of 2004.

Following essays flesh out the analyses by Danzinger and Belfry. Mark Meuwese examines the diplomacy of the Mohawk leader Canaquees (fl. 1650s-1680s), who functioned as a messenger and negotiator between the Iroquois and the colonies of New York and New France. Meuwese demonstrates how shifts in balance of imperial power—in this case increased aggression of New France—compromised Mohawk security and autonomy. In one of the strongest essays of the collection, Hele examines the Sault Ste. Marie borderlands in the pre-1870’s era. Despite the presence of a physical line—the St Mary’s River—Anishinabeg, Métis and Europeans were a thriv-



ing community astride the river. Their socio-cultural agendas were often designed to subvert international border policies. Co-authors Janet Chute and Alan Knight challenge the thesis that the Métis settlement at Sault Ste Marie died out after the War of 1812 because it was no longer needed as an intermediary between imperial powers and other aboriginal communities. Rather, the community thrived. Told mostly through biographical sketches, Chute and Knight

attribute this success to the importance of strong female partnerships, lasting kinship ties and an established sense of Métis culture and heritage.

A substantial part of *Lines Drawn upon the Water* focuses on Walpole Island and its Lake St Clair environs, a southern Ontario borderland. David McNab examines the journals of the missionary and teacher Ezhaaswe (William A Elias, 1856-1929) for instances of trespass and larceny. Using current turns of phrase, McNab speaks of Americans who slipped across the line and robbed and pillaged Walpole residents as terrorists; he describes Canadian and Native policing as examples of homeland security.

Co-authors Lisa Philips and Allan McDougall examine changes in physical and epistemological boundaries in their study of the so-called Baldoon mysteries. Baldoon was an agricultural settlement established in 1804 by Lord Selkirk near the Walpole Island reserve. By the early 1820s Baldoon farmers were encroaching on the reserve, and residents started reporting mysterious happenings: stones flying through the air, random and inexplicable fires, and so on. These “Baldoon mysteries” became the stuff of folklore. Philips and McDougall conclude

that, through the years, storytellers reshaped the facts to suit the ears of the dominant population; the Aboriginal agency steadily diminished. In a second Baldoon essay, Rick Fehr uses the failure of the settlement's "utopian vision" to drain the wetlands as a basis for rethinking environmental sustainability in the Lake St Clair region in the twenty-first century. Fehr believes these borderlands would function best by blending Aboriginal notions of sustainability with traditional European land-use knowledge.

The last four chapters take up intangible borderlands. Catherine Murton Stoehr speaks of borderlands of spirituality, wherein southern Ontario First Nations were able to blend comfortably the millenarian teachings of Anishinabeg religious leaders with the penitential and redemptive preachings of Methodism. Michelle Hamilton explains how Pauline Johnson, her sister Evelyn, and the Brant-Sero family functioned on the academic borderlands as anthropologists, chronicling the history of their communities. They chose to preserve the artifacts and stories of their past through the institutions and methodologies of white society. Norman Shields argues that federal legislation restricting native status, dating from the Confederation era, continued to affect Ontario natives' lives until at least 1985. These laws not only led to an ideological split between the Six Nations and the Anishinabeg, but also caused rifts among the latter communi-

ties themselves over issues of matrilineality and marriage to non-status and non-Canadian native people. Ute Lische's examination of the works of Cree-Métis writer Louise Erdrich (born 1954) forms the final chapter of *Lines Drawn upon the Water* and allows the reader to review contemporary examples of the aboriginal experience with the international border. Like the Sault communities discussed by Hele, and Chute and Knight, Erdrich's words reveal a sense of identity and cultural solidarity that transcends the artifice of boundaries.

Hele hoped that these essays would encourage American and Canadian scholars to consider the international border "not as a barrier but as a crucible where conflicting currents of identity, history and culture shape local and national communities." (p. xiii) The two introductory chapters and the subsequent essays on the Sault Ste Marie area lend themselves most strongly to this mandate. The works on the metaphysical and epistemological concepts of borders are awkward additions and would work better in a separate volume. But even if *Lines Drawn upon the Water* does not offer seamless reading from beginning to end, the majority of the chapters are well crafted and of scholarly merit. Readers will also benefit from the sizable bibliography appended to the collection.

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Lake Erie Stories: Struggle and Survival on a Freshwater Ocean

By Chad Fraser.

Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008. 227 pages. \$24.99 softcover. ISBN 978-1-55002-782-2 (www.dundurn.com)

Chad Fraser has been immersed in his subject since the early 1980s, when, as he says, "my late father introduced me to Lake Erie in the only way fathers of the time

knew how—by nudging me into its warm waters one summer afternoon at the government dock in Kingsville, Ontario." (p. 203) It is clear from the book that the lake has quite