

## Mark R. Leeming, In Defence of Home Places: Environmental Activism in Nova Scotia

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Sethna and Hewitt made extensive use of the Canadian Access to Information Act to obtain previously classified records about the RCMP and state surveillance of the women's liberation movement in Canada. In addition to declassified records, the authors incorporated archival materials from Simon Fraser University, the University of Pittsburgh, and the Canadian Women's Movement Archives at the University of Ottawa. Sethna and Hewitt also conducted a limited number of interviews, examined published government documents and reports, and read a range of secondary sources to investigate and understand their topic. Nevertheless, the authors acknowledge the limitations of their source base. As explained in the book's penultimate chapter, "The Paradox of the Mountie Bounty," researchers must treat surveillance records "as archival productions of a national security state, recognizing that their fractured nature means that our rendition of the stories they tell are, if not fictitious, then fragile." (170)

Despite the fragmentary and deceptive nature of state-produced security files, Sethna and Hewitt skillfully navigate the evidentiary record and offer a thorough study about the political anxieties that perpetuated the unjust surveillance of the women's liberation movement in Canada. Rather than explain how the RCMP monitored women labeled as subversive, the authors concentrate on the motivations behind the surveillance of feminist groups, individuals, and activities. They analyze domestic surveillance in the context of second-wave feminism, offering a fresh perspective that will appeal to scholars interested in Cold War surveillance, the Canadian security state, and systemic issues of gender inequity in government and police agencies around the world. Institutionalized discrimination has a long and entrenched history in Western democratic nation-states, and

*Just Watch Us* is another important reminder of the RCMP's complicated legacy in Canada. Sethna and Hewitt deserve credit for accessing declassified government files and unearthing records that will support future research in Canadian history, security and surveillance scholarship, and women and gender studies.

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Mark R. Leeming, *In Defence of Home Places: Environmental Activism in Nova Scotia*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 2017)

MARK LEEMING'S book is about environmental activism in Nova Scotia in the 1960s to 1980s period, and focuses on the issues of nuclear power, chemical forestry, and uranium mining. The emerging environmental movement in the region was influenced by contemporary ideas such as the "limits to growth" and sought to raise issues concerning the relationship of people to nature, which implied changing the political culture. As politicians were not "consultative," the struggle for change by the 1980s resulted in different tactics and priorities by participants within the growing environmental movement; some focused on government and small gains and others retained their belief in substantive change in Nova Scotia society in harmony with the environment.

Diverse groups of people working at different jobs increasingly reacted against new industrialized projects politicians tried to attract to their communities. The companies had no notion of environmental standards and the government was not interested in enforcing any, so activist groups emerged to protect their communities and older industries like the fisheries.

The first chapter begins with the opposition of people in Lunenburg County

to the damming of Gold River for hydro-electric power. The context is growing environmental awareness resulting from 1960s activism, increasing environmental degradation partly revealed by Rachel Carson's classic book *Silent Spring* (1962), the growth of an anti-capitalist counter-culture, and the past destructiveness of small and large dams to water quality in Nova Scotia. As a result, local people supported by sports fishers successfully opposed the Gold River project which would have destroyed the salmon fishing industry. Elsewhere in the province, opposition to other projects that would adversely affect water and air quality involved women, youth, Mi'kmaq, and workers, who through various organizations articulated their concerns through the media. They were faced with recalcitrant politicians who practiced central economic development and sought to preserve government policy prerogatives. As such intransigence stimulated local environmental activism in the 1970s, the government's response was to try to control environmental issues by defining "pollution" narrowly and co-opting some environmentalists.

Chapter 2 concerns the emergence of anti-nuclear environmentalists in Nova Scotia who opposed the provincial government's plan to permit an American company to build a large nuclear power plant on the south shore to generate electricity for the United States. In the 1970s activists succeeded in preventing this nuclear installation on Stoddard Island and were in contact with other anti-nuclear activists and organizations in Canada. Gradually some activists, often urban and economically more conservative, focused on research and interaction with government authorities while other usually local people remained social activists imbued with the limits of growth ideas of that era, concern about the Three Mile

Island disaster, and interest in renewable energy.

What is very clear is that the politicians in Nova Scotia (and the Maritimes) were accustomed to making decisions without public consultation between elections. They were unwilling to change and instead set up policy groups to divert the activists. In Nova Scotia the environmentalists did not influence policy as greatly as in Ontario where the government adjusted to a more consultative approach, particularly with preservationists concerned about the provincial parks system.

Nova Scotia environmentalists discussed in Chapter 3 effectively used political pressure tactics to raise their concerns about the issue of aerial spraying forests to try to reduce spruce budworm. Although foresters themselves were divided, the government allied with the industry, which wanted to spray. A broad coalition opposed spraying in a contest where Elizabeth May, now leader of the Green Party and a member of Parliament, emerged publicly as a key environmental leader. As the number and range of sprays increased, the issue went to court resulting in an unsuccessful herbicide trial in 1983. The government with the support of large companies like Dow Chemical won the case against the environmentalists. The case bankrupted and divided them. Public support continued but industry portrayed environmentalism as anti-business and its alliance with government meant continued spraying. The court case further divided the movement as the government co-opted some activists and in the process reshaped the environmental movement in this province.

Chapter 4 concerns the campaign to prevent uranium mining in Nova Scotia. It was a success but fractured the environmentalists because of urban/rural conflicts and their ideological differences. As in earlier chapters the author portrays

the division between local grassroots activism (in for example the Women's Institutes) and more bureaucratic, centralized activism in the Environmental Action Centre (EAC). A moratorium on uranium mining in Nova Scotia lasted for years, but by then there were two distinct approaches to environmentalism.

Chapter 5 focuses on the divisions among environmentalists in the 1980s over issues including the cleanup of the Sydney tar ponds and the effort to save Kelly's Mountain. The defense of home places emerged often and consistently drove environmental issues in the 1970s and 80s in Nova Scotia. Although the radicals and modernists could unite around issues, by the end of the 1980s they tended to live in different regions and they had different priorities. They disagreed on what their relationship to government should be, and they did not succeed when they had to deal with legal infrastructure. Elsewhere environmentalists frequently did make gains through court cases and environmental law became an important new field. In Nova Scotia, environmentalism was a complex response to their own particular political culture and the government's economic strategies as well as to growing environmental pressures everywhere but there, local reactions to environmental challenges were strong and unique.

The book contains a foreword by Graeme Wynne, the general editor of UBC Press' environmental books. The "Forward" is 17 pages long and is an additional scholarly essay. Its portraits of several Maritime environmental activists are informative, but its detail upstages the author's analysis and the main thrust of the book.

Overall, Mark Leeming has produced a dense, well researched and well written scholarly monograph which includes considerable new research, particularly on nuclear issues. His work compliments

and adds to other similar work in Canada's diverse regions.

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Matthew Hild, *Arkansas's Gilded Age: The Rise, Decline, and Legacy of Populism and Working-Class Protest* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press 2018)

AMONG THE POOREST states in the United States, with a sparse population, Arkansas saw the passage of the first US "right to work" law during World War II. The anti-labour stance of president Bill Clinton in the 1990s can be traced back to his time as state governor a decade earlier. Thousands of poor Arkansans have lost Medicaid coverage under the current governor, Asa Hutchinson. Union rights are a dead letter among homegrown liberals.

In *Arkansas's Gilded Age*, Matthew Hild shows how a vibrant working-class movement reached its height there during the last third of the 19th century. He argues that activists from agricultural, transport, and extractive labour sectors embraced the ideology of "producerism" and mounted a "third-party challenge" against the Arkansas Democratic Party. (4) An often-tenuous coalition of farmers and skilled workers influenced later homegrown working-class movements.

In the 1870s, Democratic redeemers offered less to working-class Arkansans than did the reconstructionist regime established during the Civil War. Although claiming they wanted to cut spending, redeemers increased the state debt. The National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry found support in 1872 for opposing the system of "anaconda mortgages" for small landowners; this version of the crop-lien system became prevalent when the Republicans dominated state