

*To the Outskirts of Habitable Creation: Americans and Canadians transported to Tasmania in the 1840s.* By Stuart D. Scott

*Convict Words: Language in Early Colonial Australia.* By Amanda Laugesen

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graphs, portraits, and diagrams. With its publication it is clear that there is need to redefine the field. We still know little about the timing of acquisition by the company or about the pattern of its holdings on the ground. The whole issue of whether the existence of such large amounts of property in the hands of such a corporation inhibited the development of particular areas, and the extent to which the company made unconscionable profit, is still largely unexplored. (Clarke, pp. 424-42) With the insights provided by Lee and others, it is to these topics that our collective work should now turn.

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## *To the Outskirts of Habitable Creation:*

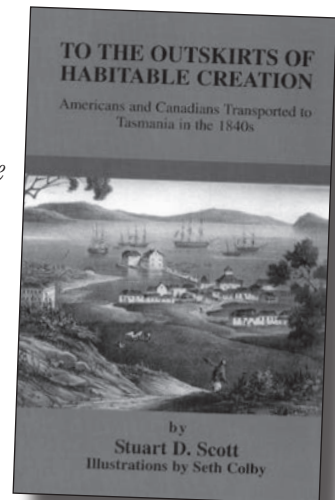
*Americans and Canadians transported to Tasmania in the 1840s.*

By Stuart D. Scott. New York: Universe Inc., 2004. 490 pp. Illustrations. US\$30.95 softcover. ISBN 0-59532412-6.

## *Convict Words:*

*Language in Early Colonial Australia.*

By Amanda Laugesen. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. xxiv + 208 pp. US\$22.95 softcover. ISBN 0-195-51655-9.



The events associated with the 1838 Rebellion (or "Patriot Wars") in Upper Canada and the subsequent transportation of North American political prisoners to Van Diemen's Land occurred over 165 years ago. Even after all this time there is continued interest in this topic from the past, which links Canadian and Australian history. In the last five years

six major works dealing with this aspect of our heritage have been published. The first four – by Douglas, Duquemin, Graves, and Pybus and Maxwell-Stewart – have now been followed by two more that merit reading, and are the focus of this review: Scott's *To the Outskirts of Habitable Creation* and Laugesen's *Convict Words*.

Scott's work is a major contribution

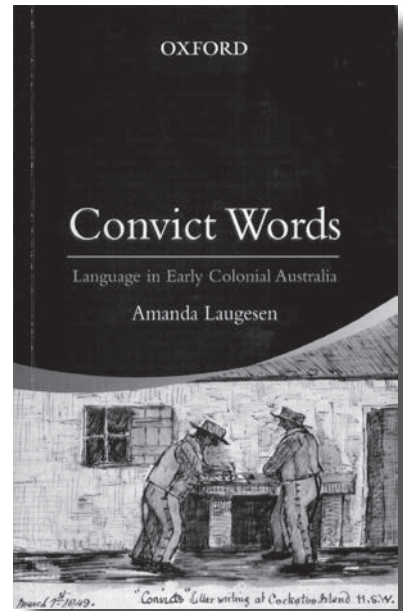
to the study of American and Canadian political prisoners transported to Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) for their part in the 1838 Upper Canada Rebellion. The author, an American archaeologist retired from the State University of New York, has been interested in this topic since the 1960s. He has spent many years conducting research in archives, public record offices, and libraries in Canada, United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom. His massive study is in part dedicated to the early rebellion research done by the late Dr. James A. Gibson, Canadian historian and founding President and Vice-Chancellor of Brock University. Scott credits Gibson for "his inspirational scholarship" in this field of study and acknowledges Gibson for encouragement and support given while working on the completion of this book.

Scott attempts to "bring the subject into a new and sharper focus" by using "naturalistic drawings" by American artist Seth Colby to illustrate the text. The author relies heavily on original sources, which include six autobiographical accounts, two biographies, and one unpublished diary. Scott suggests that his work is one of "non-fictional narration" which explains episodes from the rebellion and its consequences through the words of those who directly participated and lived through these events. In the introductory section on sources he states that such evidence is "the product of both individual memory and where necessary, some filling out for desired literary effect." He regards this body of writing as "captivity narrative," judging it to be in his words "an indispensable guide to the story of the Rebellion and its aftermath." I am not entirely convinced by this argument. These exile journals are often uncritically accepted by the author. One must introduce a note of scepticism about the diaries

as reliable sources. The published journals range between martyrs' tales and eye-witness testimony, and should be regarded as such. Therefore they both demand a more critical analysis rather than an absolute belief.

Scott does provide good introductory material leading up to transportation and puts events of the 1837-38 Upper Canada Rebellion in context. This is an improvement over the minimal comments made in this regard by Pybus and Maxwell-Stewart. Good use of other contemporary source materials through research of period newspapers, journals, periodicals, and unpublished manuscripts adds to the information value of this book. This is enhanced by reference to period works by contemporary English, American, and Australian authors such as A.A. Fry, J. Syme, Thomas Jefferson Sutherland, and Joseph Lycett.

The author provides a useful synopsis of the complex legal issues related to the rebellion and transportation. He builds upon work begun by James Gibson and continued by University of British Columbia historian Barry Wright. Extensive descriptive endnotes are useful and informative and connect to other reference sources which expand upon material in the written



text. Eighteen pages of bibliography indicate the in-depth research that Scott has undertaken. These references also allow readers to pursue specific topics that are tangential to the author's main thesis.

Books of this length invariably contain some editing problems. Wolverhampton is misspelled (p. 131); the date for the departure of H.M.S. Buffalo from Quebec City is incorrect (p. 190); the reference (p. 121) stating that the Liverpool gaol was constructed in 1786 to house prisoners of war from the Napoleonic Wars is factually incorrect. These are minor matters. A more serious shortcoming is the poor quality of reproduction and size of maps, their physical placement and missing information. The map on p. xxi should include Pelee Island. On p. 251 all locations of probation stations and road stations at which North American political prisoners were housed or worked should be included. Some additions include Seven Mile Creek, Victoria Valley, Jericho, Jerusalem and New Town Bay. Maps related to specific incursions into Upper Canada should be located with the relevant descriptions: Shot Hills on p. 66 and the Battle of Windsor on p. 72. Good quality maps can be an effective way of supporting information in the written text, as demonstrated in John Thompson's *A Road in Van Diemen's Land* (2004). While Scott takes a position on his preference not to use period images, I feel that inclusion of more contemporary graphics would have added to the utility of this publication and enhanced the text. Examples include images of Prescott, Fort Henry, Quebec City, Rio de Janeiro Harbour, and Port Arthur. The addition of current photos of Ashgrove, Oatlands, Somercotes, Mona Vale, and remains of probation and road stations would also be useful.

Aside from the comments written above, Stuart Scott has created a readable narrative with scholarly underpinnings. His work provides an intriguingly different perspective to the literature about the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1838, and is a useful summary of what happened to the North American political prisoners transported to Van Diemen's Land as a result of their involvement in the unrest of the day.

Laugesen's publication is an amazing piece of research. It is the first dictionary to document words that shaped a new language created by the thousands of transported convicts who settled in Australia. Material for this book was gathered from the database of Australian English at the Australian National Dictionary Centre in Canberra, and from the Australian National Dictionary. Various collections from the National Library of Australia and the Australian National University provided further important source material.

Historian Laugesen introduces her book by noting that the language of Australian convictism reveals the complex nature of a fundamental period in Australian history. The purpose of the book is spelled out in a well-written and fully documented introduction. Words are then listed alphabetically, being located in hundreds of contemporary sources dating from 1788 to 1860, augmented by other current sources. The use of newspapers, government reports, travelogues, narratives, journals, and memoirs makes for informative reading. The book is divided into two time periods, 1788-1820 and 1820-1860, accompanied by a written introduction to the systematic study of the meanings of words used in the convict era. Of special interest to Canadian readers is the second period. It is during this time that North American political prisoners were transported and became

an integral part of Australian convictism. Words used in narrative accounts written by four of these prisoners (Linus Miller, William Gates, Benjamin Wait, and Robert Marsh) are included in thirteen references. A selected bibliography of fifteen relatively current reference sources is provided at the start of the dictionary. One shortcoming is that there is no comprehensive bibliography of all resources used in compiling this book.

*Convict Words* is an essential reference work for all those interested in the broad study of Australian convictism. It is also a useful publication for Canadian historians and genealogists researching the episode of North American political prisoners who play a part in this bi-continental history. Along with *To the Outskirts*, both books are welcome new resources related to the 1838 Upper Canada Rebellion, North American political prison-

ers, transportation and convictism. They are worthwhile additions to your library.

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Pybus, Cassandra, and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart. *American Citizens, British Slaves: Yankee political prisoners in an Australian penal colony, 1839-1850*. (Carlton South, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2002).

## *Life along the Opeongo Line: the Story of a Canadian Colonization Road.*

By Joan Finnigan. Manotick, Ontario: Penumbra Press, 2004. xvi + 271 pp. Illustrations. \$40.00 softcover. ISBN 1-894131-63-0.

In the 1850s the dramatic net-like grid of colonization roads that was laid down by the provincial government on the northeastern part of Canada West (formerly Upper Canada and subsequently southern Ontario) was an encouraging harbinger of settlements and farms throughout this large, relatively empty part of the province. One of the longest of these planned roads was that from Farrell's Landing on the Ottawa River near the village of Renfrew, thrusting westwards across the height of the Algonquin Upland towards Lake Opeongo.

Joan Finnigan has drawn on myriad

sources with painstaking research over many years to assemble the history of not only the Opeongo Road proper but also of the roughly parallel routes oriented in the same general direction both by land and by water. The book is focused on the years from the middle to the late nineteenth century, in the era of the construction of the colonization roads. But Finnigan provides a grand context for this specific episode by casting her research net broadly in both a regional and historical sense.

The story of the road is divided into three roughly equal sections of four chapters each. The first relates to the era before