

Working at the crossroads: Statute Labour, Manliness, and the Electoral Franchise on Victorian Prince Edward Island [1]

[Record]

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Abstract



This essay considers how conceptions of manliness shaped the electoral franchise on Victorian Prince Edward Island. Soon after its institution of responsible government, Prince Edward Island shifted away from a property-based franchise to one grounded in the performance of statute labour. Instead of heralding the male property owner, this new law championed the man who used his labour to faithfully serve and improve his community. Because of limited land distribution, bourgeois ideals of manliness based upon property ownership fit the conditions of the colony poorly. A statute

labour franchise better reflected the gender ideals upheld by the Island's unpropertied majority. Like all gender ideals, these standards were not accepted across Prince Edward Island unopposed.

Résumé

Cet article étudie la façon dont les différentes conceptions de la masculinité ont façonné la franchise électorale à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard à l'époque victorienne. Peu de temps après l'avènement de la responsabilité ministérielle, le gouvernement de la colonie a délaissé la franchise basée sur la propriété au profit d'une franchise basée sur la participation des hommes à la corvée. Plutôt que de mettre à l'honneur l'homme-proprétaire, la nouvelle législation privilégiait l'homme qui mettait son travail au service de sa communauté. Étant donné la distribution limitée de la propriété sur l'île, les idéaux bourgeois entourant la masculinité, fondés sur la notion de propriété, ne correspondaient pas à la réalité sociale de la colonie. La franchise basée sur la corvée reflétait davantage les idéaux concernant le genre entretenus par la majorité de la population.

Biographical note

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Biographical note

COLIN GRITTNER est candidat au doctorat en histoire à l'Université McGill.

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