

Canada's occupied territory

The hapless residents of Maine-occupied Canada discuss their Manifest Destiny

by Alex Roslin
Canadian University Press

Eerie things are happening on the frontiers of Canada.

Governor Brian Mulroney caved in to pressure from the U.S. Navy last week and gave away part of British Columbia to Alaska. It seems the U.S. Navy isn't happy with having the run of all the oceans. They want to run U.S. nuclear-powered submarines through a small straight off the coast of B.C. called the Dixon Entrance.

The salmon-rich waters, previously claimed by both the U.S. and Canada, will fall into the clutches of a people known for their pissy beer. Is this just the beginning?

It seems yet another small piece of Canada will fall into the clutches of a people known for their pissy beer. Is this just the beginning?

I recently discovered that, no, it is part of a long trend. You won't find mention of it in the history books — probably because they're written by American beer company executives — but the northern half of Maine once was part of Canada, too. American troops marched into the area in 1842 and after a few skirmishes with Canadian militia added it to the state of Maine.

What has become of the hapless people of Maine-occupied Canada? I called up some ordinary townsfolk in the once-mighty jewels of this forgotten land — rustic villages like Presque Isle, Dickey, Bridgeton — to see what was what.

My investigations revealed the startling story of a people broken by years of indoctrination into American values and brands of beer.

James Langley, who has lived in northern Maine all his life, said he knew the area was forcibly incorporated into the U.S., but that he "never really thought about it."

"I'm kind of indifferent about it, I guess," said Langley, who works at the Presque Isle Bottle Redemption Centre and pronounces the name of his town with a distinct American lilt: "Presk Aisle."

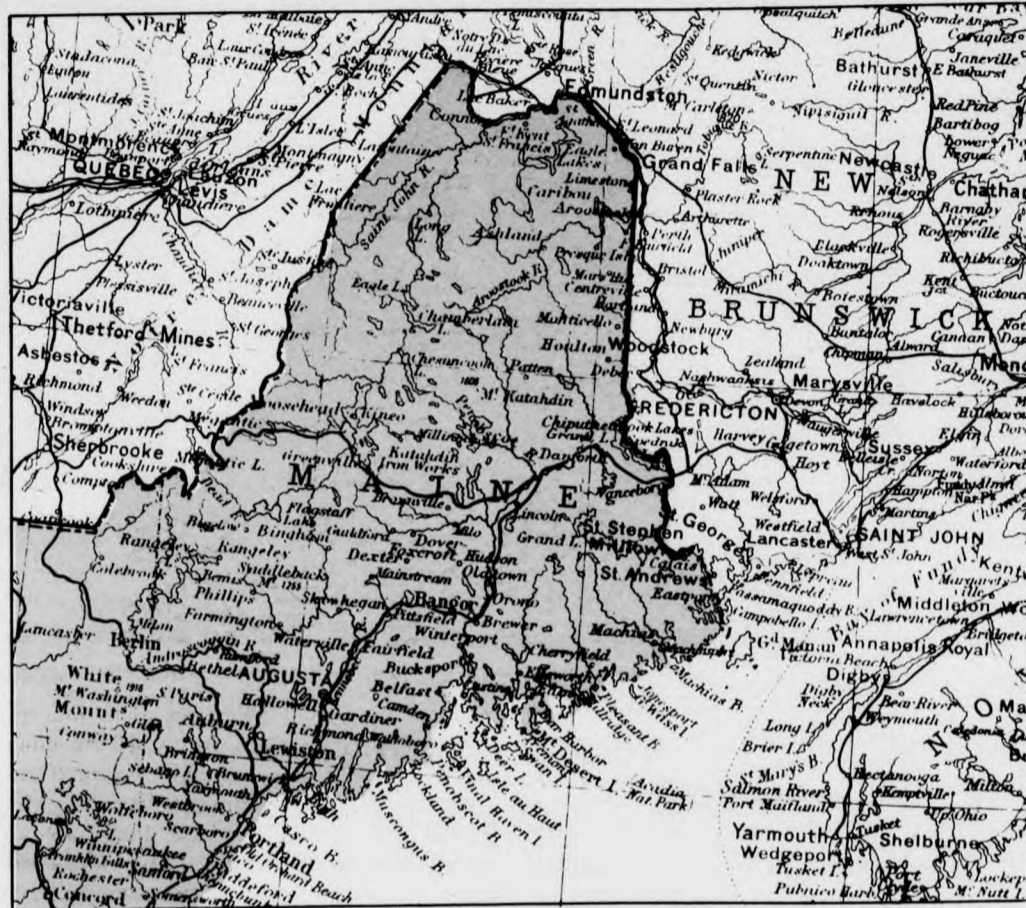
Langley said he didn't think about politics very much because "it's too much of a bother."

Did he resent the American occupation? "I haven't got an opinion about it," said the poor lad Langley.

Jane Rich, the County registrar of deeds for the town of Sweden, Maine, agreed. "I certainly don't resent being part of the states."

She said the French language has been preserved beautifully in this formerly francophone area. "There's no French-language school as far as I know, but the Acadian Society puts on a show every year of ethnic music," she said. "That's always interesting to go to."

Laddy Patterson, who works in the Bridgetown Chamber of Commerce, said she didn't know northern Maine is occupied land. "But even if it was forcibly incorporated, I still support being part of the United



States." Patterson did acknowledge that there were some advantages to being a Canadian. "There

are pros and cons," she said. "The health plans and social services are better in Canada, but the taxes are too high."

But when it came to the brand of beer Patterson preferred, she was surprisingly tight-lipped. Did she like the unusual smoothness of St. Ambrose or the friendly kick of Upper Canada Lager?

feature

"No comment," Patterson said, almost in a shudder. This reporter could sense that the conversation was almost over.

Who would she vote for in the next federal election?

"Brian Mulroney," she said, lightening up a bit. "I like the fact that he supports American foreign policy."

Would she ever vote for the socialists?

"Not in any shape or form."

Was there any connection between the occupation of Maine and the takeover of the Dixon Entrance?

"Not at all. They seem to be two completely different incidents. There's not a trend."

Enough said, eh?

Grave situation for women who report sexual abuse

by Dawn Mitchell
Canadian University Press

HALIFAX — The RCMP has launched an internal investigation following a public statement by a woman who was charged with mischief after reporting a sexual assault.

The University College of Cape Breton student's statement condemns the officer who heard her complaint that three men had sexually assaulted her.

"I am greatly concerned about the conduct of the RCMP and in particular the conduct of one officer," she said in the statement.

The 18-year-old was questioned extensively on two occasions, following a report that she had been raped in a campus residence in September.

Police charged her with mischief after she changed her statement during the second interview. The charges were later dropped for lack of evidence.

The Cape Breton feminist community have since been spurred into action.

"I'm utterly concerned for the physical safety of women out there," said Barbara MacDonald, fieldworker for the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The survivor said the officer who conducted the second interview repeatedly told her she had not been sexually assaulted.

"He used words like 'baloney' and 'bull' when I tried to explain what happened," she said.

She said the officer also fingerprinted her, photographed her, and

implied she was carrying drugs in her purse.

"He threatened to humiliate me further if I did not cooperate by changing my story," she said.

RCMP superintendent George Timko said an internal investigation will follow a review of the criminal charges.

"We want to determine that every aspect (of the case) has been addressed and that nothing was overlooked during the initial investigation."

The subsequent media attention, the university administration's handling of the case and the actions of the local RCMP detachment demonstrated the need for support services for victims of sexual assault, MacDonald said.

"It's the most negative scenario in terms of how the situation was handled in the university and seen in the broader community," said MacDonald. "It will prevent women from coming forward, and other sexual assaults will go unreported. It's a very grave situation."

MacDonald said there are four to five assaults reported throughout Cape Breton every week.

Dale Hall, a councillor at the Sexual Harassment Education and Complaint Centre at York said that the situation has been compounded by the Supreme Court of Canada's decision to repeal the "rape-shield" law.

"Because of the rape-shield law being knocked down, if the men are charged [the woman's] entire sexual history can be laid out even though it is irrelevant."

The woman's lawyer said it is possible the men will be charged if

the new investigation determines the evidence supports the woman's story.

The student wants the men expelled.

"I believe their continued presence on the campus, while I have been absent from the university, sends very negative messages to other students and to the community at large," her statement said.

She has returned home to her family in Newfoundland.

UCCB president Peter Hill said he was advised the university could not take action against the men. Hall noted that this makes sense since, under the law, the men are innocent until proven guilty.

But a second legal opinion said the men could be brought before a judicial committee if criminal charges are not laid against them. The committee — composed of students, faculty and administrators — hears cases of a non-academic nature.

The committee can recommend penalties ranging from fines to expulsion, but the president makes the final decision.

Hill said he is waiting for the outcome of the new investigation before deciding on a course of action.

A few weeks ago, Hill told the media the woman asked the men for sex.

"It was in my opinion unfair of President Hill to release a version of the incident which casts doubt on my character and integrity and plays down the seriousness of the incident as an assault," said the student.

"I note that Dr. Hill had spoken to the three perpetrators, but has never spoken directly to me."

Hall said police and security guards need to be better trained at dealing with victims of sexual assault. "The interviewers have to know the psychological effects that trauma can have on memory," she said.

But Hall also had a positive outlook on York Security and the regional police force.

"I think it has improved tremendously within the police force and security but we still have a long way to go. We can't stop. Education has to be ongoing."

A coalition of women's groups has formed to tackle the problem. It includes the Elizabeth Fry Society, the Nova Scotia Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, Cape Breton Transition House, a representative of the UCCB female faculty and staff, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

The group wants to establish a sexual assault service and a rape crisis line. If the coalition is successful, it will be the second location in the province where these services are offered.

Coalition members have asked UCCB to remove from residence the three men who were investigated in the September incident.

"At other universities, students charged with animal abuse have been dismissed from the university," MacDonald said. "We are secure in our knowledge that there is at least enough evidence to prove gross misconduct."

Police did not charge the three male students and the university has not reprimanded them.