



Imprinting Britain: Newspapers, Sociability, and the Shaping of British North America (McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Ideas)

Michael Eamon

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Printing presses were instrumental in creating and upholding a sense of community during the eighteenth century. While the importance of print in the development of colonial America and the nascent United States is well-established, *Imprinting Britain* extends the historical discussion northward to explore the dynamic and interrelated world of newspapers, coffee houses, and theatre in the British imperial capitals of Halifax and Quebec City.

Michael Eamon describes how an English-language colonial community coalesced around the printed word, establishing public spaces for colonists to propose, debate, and define their visions of an ideal society. Whereas American newspapers functioned as incubators of republican and revolutionary thought, their British North American counterparts featured a moderate discourse that rejected republicanism, favoured civic engagement, advocated liberty with propriety, extolled democracy under monarchy, promoted reason over superstition, and encouraged social criticism without revolution. The press also safeguarded against the uncertainties of colonial life by providing a steady stream of transatlantic news, literature, and fashion that helped construct a sense of Britishness in an environment rife with mixed loyalties.

Imprinting Britain is the story of communities that turned to the press for a canon of British norms, literary touchstones, and Enlightenment-inspired ideas, which offered a blueprint for colonial growth and a sense of stability in an ever-changing, transatlantic milieu.

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