

Hans Rollman. *Labrador Through Moravian Eyes: 250 Years of Art, Photographs and Records.*

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Hans Rollman. *Labrador Through Moravian Eyes: 250 Years of Art, Photographs and Records*. Special Celebrations Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador Inc., Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, St. John's, NL, 2002, ISBN 1-55146-177-3

THIS BOOK DERIVES from a stunningly designed travelling exhibit created for the "Access North — Labrador 2002 Celebrations." Sponsored by the provincial Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, this event was one of a number of theme presentations aimed at promoting cultural awareness and tourism. The focus on Labrador in 2002 was the last venture in the publicity program, and an opportunity to highlight the rich cultural history of this area.

A note on the Labrador event would have been welcome. It included community activities, a symposium on the Moravian presence, and other festivities, in addition to the travelling exhibit of visual images. An appreciation of the context would have helped to clarify whether this book is a printed replica of the display, or a modified version, containing more (or less) information than appeared on the exhibit panels.

Moravian missionaries in northern Labrador had many talents, and this book illustrates the valuable legacy of images which they created between 1752 and the mid-twentieth century. Their skills as artists, cartographers, and photographers provide a unique perspective on aspects of life in the region, and enrich the extraordinary collection of mission documents which has survived.

The main repository for Moravian graphic images and written accounts relating to Labrador is the Unity Archives at Herrnuth, Germany. Visual material was copied in 2000-2001, with financial support from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and a selection from this reserve comprises the book (and exhibit). Microfilm copies of written documents were also made earlier through funding provided by Memorial University of Newfoundland. Both of these archival resources are held at Memorial University's Centre for Newfoundland Studies.

The publication of images from the Herrnuth collection gives the general public a glimpse of materials that could otherwise be seen only by the small number of researchers able to visit this archive. Most of the early images appear in brilliant full colour or sepia tones — and are lovely gems — showing sketches of mission buildings set against the rugged northern landscape, and detailed plans of community structures. The archival photographs are black-and-white images, equally striking for the subtle quality of age which they convey.

Readers frequently focus first on images, and then on captions, before looking at the text. With many of the early drawings, the artist and date are identified, but the captions often do not correspond with titles on the sketches. Subtitles and legends written in German are not translated, and are sometimes illegible in the illustrations. Greater caption clarity would have been an asset, especially for residents

of northern Labrador communities, and for scholars lacking knowledge of the German language but keenly interested in details contained in the illustrations.

Catalogue numbers of the original images in the Herrnhut collection, and additional research on the publication of images, would have contributed useful source information. One example is a map on page 8 with the caption “Mission sites in Labrador. SFG map.” This delightful, illustrated map appeared in the January 1906 issue of *Moravian Missions*, a monthly magazine produced by the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, a Moravian agency in London, England. Other drawings and photographs were printed in the quarterly journal *Periodical Accounts*. A photograph of the choir at Nain on page 63 was printed in the March 1889 issue of this journal; the text indicates that the photographer was Hermann Jannasch, and identifies three of the Inuit in the image.

Captions on photographs generally describe a scene or activity, often with a community location indicated, but not a date (even approximate). A few photographers are identified, but the majority of images are cited as having been provided by an individual missionary or taken by an unknown shutterbug. The author relied solely on reference information provided with the Herrnhut archive images, but given the expense associated with the production of this oversize, glossy book, an investment in research would have paid dividends.

The *Them Days* archives in Happy Valley-Goose Bay has literally thousands of photographs catalogued by community, and has made considerable efforts over the years to identify photographers, places, dates, and the Inuit individuals who appear in these images. This collection contains many of the same photographs as the Herrnhut archives, and a cross-check would have provided details missing in the book’s citations. An Inuit woman in a photograph on the top of page 57 is identified as Clementine; an image of male choir members at Okak on page 64 is credited to an album owned by Adolf Stecker; and a woman and child on page 102 were photographed at Okak by Samuel King Hutton, who was likely the “unknown photographer” of several other images from this community.

While the majority of photographs were undoubtedly taken by Moravian missionaries, some images ended up in the Herrnhut archives from other sources. Camera buffs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries appear to have given away copies of their prints as mementos or examples of local lifestyles, without the modern preoccupation with copyright. Thus the same prints appear in different archival collections and in family photo albums, as well as in existing publications. Photographs appearing on the bottom of pages 46 and 47 were actually taken by Dr. Eliot Curwen during a visit to the Labrador coast in 1893. The first photograph is reproduced, with most of the Inuit servants identified by name, in *A Labrador Odyssey: The Journal and Photographs of Eliot Curwen on the Second Voyage of Wilfred Grenfell, 1893*, edited by Ronald Rompkey (1996, p. 119). The photograph by Hutton mentioned above is printed (but reversed) in *A Labrador Doctor* by Dr. Wilfred Grenfell (1920, facing page 90). Curwen’s original glass plates and numer-

ous albums of photographs taken by Dr. Grenfell and his colleagues are held at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador in St. John's.

Labrador Through Moravian Eyes commemorates the 250th anniversary of the first Moravian expedition to northern Labrador in 1752 and the Herrnhut archival collection, rather than offering 250 years of documentation as its subtitle suggests. Most of the visual images were created in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, and all except one of the photographers had died by 1960. There are no images of contemporary communities or people, and social or economic affairs in the past 50 years are hardly mentioned. During and after World War II the Herrnhut archives ceased being the principal repository for Labrador records, as British clergy replaced German nationals, and the Iron Curtain isolated the traditional Moravian headquarters. The absence of a contemporary perspective could have been remedied by including colour photographs taken by Paul Hettasch's son Siegfried, who was also a gifted and prolific photographer.

The Introduction begins with a description of the disastrous 1752 expedition, followed by a historical overview of Moravian communities in Labrador, and a discussion of the recognition given by Moravian officials to the value of graphic images and photography for promoting the Labrador mission, public education and ties with other Moravian communities. The latter section would have served better, in my opinion, as a separate chapter, in that it lays the foundation for the visual material which follows. A separate chapter on the 1752 expedition would have relieved the incongruity of the log house built at Nisbet Harbour being included in the chapter on communities, considering the site was abandoned about three weeks after the house was constructed.

This book was intended to celebrate the Moravian presence in Labrador, and the brief text is strongly oriented to highlighting the positive aspects of their influence on Inuit society and culture. The primary attention given to Moravian social and religious practices reflects the interests of the author, a professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Memorial University. References to existing literature on the Moravians in Labrador are restricted mostly to documents in the German language, and the author's own English-language articles, along with a citation of two Internet bibliographies. Since this book is aimed at an English audience, and readers may lack Internet access and an ability to select supplementary literature, a list of suggested readings would have been helpful.

Thanks to the Moravians, northern Labrador has the earliest and most continuous record of visual and written documentation of any arctic or sub-arctic region of Canada. This publication deserves praise for introducing the archival resources at Herrnhut, and providing a glimpse of Moravian history that will intrigue readers. Obtaining a copy will require some effort because, as a special publication by a government agency, it is not sold in retail bookstores.

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