

*Unguarded Border: American Émigrés in Canada during the Vietnam War.* By Donald W. Maxwell. (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2023. 276 pp.)

Donald W. Maxwell's *Unguarded Border* skillfully tells the complex, little-known story of the thousands of U.S. citizens who emigrated to Canada to escape military service during the Vietnam War. Drawing on an impressive array of personal reminiscences, government documents, papers of antiwar organizations, and other materials, Maxwell focuses above all on the motives that drove draft-evaders and deserters to seek refuge across the border. Fear of prosecution for failing to submit to the draft unsurprisingly played a role; but so too, argues Maxwell, did the proximity of another society that was culturally familiar, easy to get into, rife with educational and job opportunities, full of sympathizers eager to support the newcomers, and almost certain to allow U.S. émigrés to stay. Canada was, in short, a uniquely attractive escape hatch, even if most draft-evaders never fully embraced a Canadian identity.

Readers interested in U.S.-Canadian relations may be especially interested in Maxwell's explanation of the Ottawa government's willingness to accommodate men who had brazenly broken the law in the United States, Canada's most important ally. One reason, argues Maxwell, was Canadian hostility to the U.S. war in Vietnam. Welcoming draft-resisters was a "uniquely Canadian" way to demonstrate that opposition by capitalizing on the porous 5,500-mile border that separated the two countries, Maxwell writes (p. 93). But the book also notes a broader trend at work in Canada during the 1960s: a surging sense of nationalism that encouraged Canadians to distinguish their country more sharply from their massive neighbor to the south. "Pro-Canadianness" morphed easily into "anti-Americanness" as Canadians cultivated qualities that made them different, writes Maxwell (p. 103).

Although mostly a granular social history of American draft-resistance, *Unguarded Border* also attempts to make two broad interventions in the field of immigration history. First, Maxwell insists that émigrés from the United States, while small in number, deserve the attention of historians who have focused overwhelmingly on immigrants arriving in the country. The experiences of émigrés fleeing war, slavery, or other indignities, argues Maxwell, have often been omitted from historical narratives "out of anger, shame, confusion, or willful attempts to obscure the possibility that the United States is not a city upon a hill for all people" (p. 8). Second, Maxwell argues that the story of American draft-resisters points to nothing less than

a “new paradigm” for understanding immigration in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (p. 8). Like other border-crossers in recent times, he asserts, Americans fleeing the Vietnam War often sought not a new national identity so much as a sense of cosmopolitan belonging in welcoming communities that transcended the nation-state.

Maxwell would have done well to draw these intriguing points more systematically through his densely packed chapters, which sometimes lack clear links to the arguments articulated in the introduction and conclusion. Yet his book succeeds admirably in highlighting an underexplored aspect of the Vietnam War—no small accomplishment given the massive scholarship that the war has inspired—while offering provocative new insights into U.S.-Canadian relations and immigration history.

*University of Texas at Austin*

MARK ATWOOD LAWRENCE

*Fugitive Freedom: The Improbable Lives of Two Impostors in Late Colonial Mexico.* By William B. Taylor. (Oakland, University of California Press, 2023. 224 pp.)

This is a book of questions. Who were the two men living on the edge of society in late colonial Mexico that William Taylor writes about? Can picaresque novels of the period shed light on these elusive characters whose Inquisition records, dense though they be, leave these men as spectral figures? Do we know enough about the religious, economic, political, and social contexts to interpret these men’s disorganized, harmful lives in a way that shines some light on the late colonial and pre-independence periods?

William Taylor’s magisterial contributions to colonial Latin American history are well known. This book is of a piece with his most recent publications that examine religious, social, and cultural history in close detail. In this work, Taylor writes about two late colonial vagabonds whose exploits, in particular impersonating priests, brought them before the Inquisition. Born in 1747 into a poor family from which he became estranged early on, Joseph Aguayo led a rootless life during which he repeatedly came to the Inquisition’s attention for impersonating a priest. Literate, mobile, and lacking any sign of a conscience, his desire for status and respect seems to have driven his serial impersonations. Juan Atondo, born around 1783, seems the more troubled soul, who perhaps suffered from serious mental illness. He nonetheless sought human connection through religion, marriage, even war