



The Rule of the Admirals: Law, Custom, and Naval Government in Newfoundland, 1699-1832 (Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History)

Jerry Bannister

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Jerry Bannister's *The Rule of the Admirals* examines governance in Newfoundland from the rule of the fishing admirals in 1699 to the establishment of representative government in 1832. It offers the first in-depth account of the rise and fall of the system of naval government that dominated the island for more than a century.

In this provocative look at legal culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Newfoundland, Bannister explores three topics in detail: naval government in St. John's, surrogate courts in the outports, and patterns in the administration of law. He challenges the conventional view that early Newfoundland was a lawless frontier isolated from the rest of the Atlantic world, and argues that an effective system of naval government emerged to meet the needs of those in power.

An original and perceptive work, Bannister's argument demands that we reconsider much of our knowledge of early Newfoundland history. As he re-examines governance prior to an elected assembly and places his analysis firmly within the material conditions of Newfoundland society, Bannister provides a groundbreaking reinterpretation of a critical period in the island's colonial development. Ultimately, *The Rule of the Admirals* sheds light on one of the most misunderstood chapters in Canadian and British colonial history.

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