

Reaction

by

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L'Ordre de Bon Temps of Port Royal, New France, survived less than one year, 1606-1607, but was of major consequence for the French colonization of North America.

Three aspects of this Order of Good Cheer seem especially deserving of comment: first, that the explorer and colonizer, Samuel de Champlain, conceived such a social affiliation to achieve the serious purposes of claiming the land, appeasing the Indians, establishing a fur trade, and colonizing the continent; second, that a handful of spirited adventurers accepted and supported this first social club established by Caucasians in North America; and third, that The Order provided the colonizer-soldiers good food and good cheer which were essential for the continued existence of this wilderness institution.

As an approach to a better understanding of the need for and success of this short-lived social club, Getzel and Guba's general model of behavior in a social system was used for two analyses: Port Royal as an institution, with The Order of Good Cheer as a sub-order institution. Roles, expectations, and social behaviors were examined; e.g., the ROLE of The Order of Good Cheer was group affiliation. Its EXPECTATIONS were an improved diet, exercise, and a forum of cheer for the men, plus a METHOD of pacifying the natives. The fortnightly banquet was the occasion for SOCIAL BEHAVIOR evidencing the attainment of the expectations.

Each individual at Port Royal interacted with the institution and with his colleagues as he contributed through his personality his skills and wealth for the success of the venture as nobleman, craftsman, or entrepreneur. Need-dispositions were inherent in each of these personalities.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs aided in an examination of the collective needs and dispositions. The basic need was SURVIVAL, i.e., the avoidance of death from enemy, elements, or disease. SAFETY was constantly in mind, with The Order of Good Cheer providing an interlude of freedom from fear when reality was set aside and fantasy ruled. AFFILIATION was shown by the *camaraderie* of the banquet—a microcosm of life in France. Through the ritualistic transfer of the banquet chain of honor from one host to the next, SELF-ESTEEM was enhanced. SELF-ACTUALIZATION was at least partially achieved as the colonists began to identify with success by not dying of scurvy during the winter, seeing their gardens bear fruit, and finding joy in overcoming hardships.

Champlain's Order of Good Cheer served a vital purpose in saving the lives of the men at Port Royal. Where earlier attempts had failed, this stalwart group proved that the colonization of New France was physically and psychologically possible.