

“GIVE ME FISH, NOT FEDERALISM”

Outer Baldonia and Performances of Micronationality

LACHLAN MACKINNON

Concordia University <lachlan.f.mackinnon@gmail.com>

Abstract:

In 1949 Russell Arundel, an American businessman and sport tuna fisherman, asserted the sovereignty of a small island off the south coast of Nova Scotia, Canada. Arundel drafted a Declaration of Independence for the ‘Principality of Outer Baldonia’ and declared the nascent micronation to be a space of recreation, relaxation and tuna-fishing. International newspapers began to cover the story, and a critical letter in the Soviet *Liternaya Gazeta* prompted a flurry of tongue-in-cheek responses from Baldonian ‘citizens’. Although ownership of the island was transferred to the Nova Scotia Bird Society in 1973, the history of Outer Baldonia reveals a great deal about the types of social performances that correspond with declarations of micronational sovereignty. This article explores how the events surrounding the creation of Outer Baldonia reflect mid-20th Century elite attitudes towards nature and wilderness, as well as non-state diplomacy in the Cold War era.

Keywords:

Atlantic Canada, Outer Baldonia, micronation, performance, environment, diplomacy

Introduction

In a recent special theme issue of *Shima* (v8 n1) Philip Hayward defined micronations as “territories that have been declared independent by individuals or groups despite the minimal likelihood of their being recognised as independent by any established nation state or international body” (2014: 1). The majority of modern micronations emerged after the 1960s and 1970s; one well-cited case is that of The Principality of Sealand, a micronation that was declared off the coast of the UK in 1967 as an outgrowth of the Pirate Radio movement (Johns, 2011: 251; Unattributed, 2012: online). Other examples include the Conch Republic, established in Florida in 1982 (see Steinberg and Chapman, 2009) or the 2008 declaration of the Sovereign State of Forvik off the Shetland coast in 2008 (see Grydehøj, 2014). While many of these micronations are established for whimsical or theatrical effect, others are intended as a form of political intervention. A related organisation, the Seasteading Institute, includes under its purview the “develop[ment of] the technology to create permanent, autonomous settlements on the ocean”; arguing that, “freedom of international waters allows for the introduction of new competitors to the governance market” (Friedman and Taylor, 2012: 219).

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality

One micronation, The Principality of Outer Baldonia, pre-dates modern examples by several decades. Established off the south shore of Nova Scotia, Canada by an American businessman in the 1940s, Hayward describes this principality as “the clearest precursor to contemporary micronations” (2014: 6). This paper explores the creation of Outer Baldonia and the actions of its creator as indicative of a broader social performance. This analytical framework might also be useful in the examination of modern micronations. Performances, according to Deborah Kapchan, “are aesthetic practices... whose repetitions situate actors in time and space, structuring individual and group identities” (1995: 479). The development of a micronation presents an opportunity for a number of social meanings to be performed; the history of Outer Baldonia reveals much about contemporary attitudes among North American elites towards nature and wilderness, as well as political sovereignty and diplomacy. These themes are examined within the contexts of the Atlantic Canadian tourism industry in the mid-20th Century, and draw upon international media representations of Outer Baldonia and its creator.

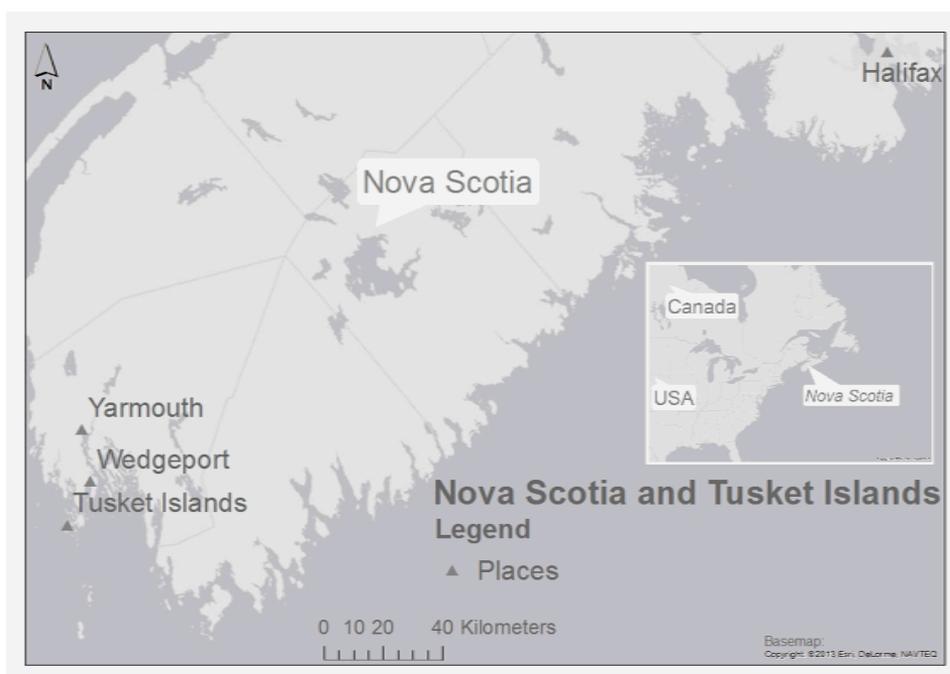


Figure 1 – Nova Scotia and the Tusket islands (map by Nicole Leslie, 2014)

‘Forever Independent’: The Principality of Outer Baldonia

In the 1930s, corresponding with the development of the regional tourism industry in Atlantic Canada, many North Americans began making the trek northward to avail themselves of the region’s hunting and fishing grounds. The small Acadian town of Wedgeport, on the south shore of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, was a key destination for sport fishermen. Towns in the Maritimes were actively marketed as possible tourist destinations; as Colin Howell writes, “Romantic images of northern New

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality

England and the Maritimes as a sportsman's paradise were commonplace in the interwar years, especially in local newspapers which delighted in recounting hunting junkets involving American sporting celebrities" (2002: 257). According to Canadian historians Ian McKay and Robin Bates, these tourist-driven representations of the Maritimes corresponded directly with the growth of the tourist economy and "othered" residents of the region by presenting Nova Scotians as quaint, antimodern "Folk" (McKay and Bates, 2010: 62). One American businessman and sportswriter, Michael Lerner, arrived in Wedgeport in 1935 and caught 23 tuna fish in a period of eight days. Impressed with his success, Lerner returned to Wedgeport in 1937 and established the International Tuna Cup fishing competition. This competition continued for several decades, and attracted the interest of business magnates and celebrities from North America and Europe (Ellis, 2008: 96).

Russell Arundel, a Washington, D.C. lobbyist for Pepsi Co. and the owner of several Pepsi bottling facilities in Virginia, first arrived in Wedgeport in the late 1940s to fish tuna. Arundel had been known around Washington as a man who was fond of wild parties; he was rumoured to have connections to the Truman administration and in 1947 he was implicated in a senate bribery investigation (Oshinsky, 2005: 64). Arundel had offered United States Senator Joseph McCarthy nearly \$20,000 to offset some of the senator's outstanding debts. This gift from a prominent Pepsi businessman corresponded with McCarthy's crusade against the American policy of sugar rationing – a point that was not lost on the American media. Although the \$20,000 dollar cheque was not accepted by McCarthy's banking institution, the entire affair resulted in a minor political scandal (Rovere, 1996 [1959]: 106-107; Unattributed, 1953a: 14).



Figure 2 - The only remnant of the island's earlier usage as fishing camp visible to the author on a visit to the island in 2014 was this small watering hole surrounded by collapsed earth (author's photograph, 2014).

Tuna fishing in Wedgeport during the 1940s occurred in the shoals around the Tusket Islands – a group of small islands located several kilometres offshore. After arriving to

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality

fish, Arundel recognised the logistical difficulties of returning to and from the fishing grounds. In 1948, he purchased Outer Bald Tusk Island, a three acre island that had been used since the early 20th Century as a fishing stopover by local fishermen. Arundel paid nearly \$750 for the island to Wedgeport locals Élie Cottreau and Ida Doucette for the then-undeveloped property. Initially, Arundel intended to build a small structure on the island so that sport fishermen would be able to take brief breaks on land to escape seasickness or to take a short lunch. In a 1953 interview with *Esquire Magazine*, Arundel related, “Back in Washington, the deed in my pocket and a drink in my hand, the Principality of Outer Baldonia began to take shape” (Pizer, 1953: np).

It was in 1949 that Arundel arranged to have several local fishermen aid in the construction of a one-room fishing hut on Outer Bald Tusk Island. These men used beach stones from the island to construct the small structure, and assembled a wooden roof (Unattributed, 1956: 38). This building contained a small fireplace and sitting area, as well as a number of windows overlooking the shoal known as Soldier’s Rip. That summer, Arundel declared himself the ‘Prince of Princes’ on Outer Baldonia and appointed his friend, tax attorney Prew Savoy, as the ‘Prince Regent, Minister of State, and Ambassador to the United States without Portfolio or Credentials’. Savoy, listed as an associate of Arundel in a 1945 newspaper article, was also a well-connected figure in Washington circles (Unattributed, 1945: 12).¹ It was in July of 1949 (or the year “OB1” [Outer Baldonia 1]) by the Baldonian Calendar), that Arundel created a Declaration of Independence for the island. The Declaration reads:

Let these facts be submitted to a candid world. That fishermen are a race alone. That fishermen are endowed with the following inalienable rights: The right of freedom from question, nagging, shaving, interruption, women, taxes, politics, wars, monologues, cant and inhibitions... The right to swear, lie, drink, gamble... The right to sleep all day and stay up all night...

Now, therefore, We bond ourselves in to a new nation, forever independent of all other nations, and do establish on the islands and waters of Outer Bald Island a new government which shall be forever respected and recognized as the Principality of Outer Baldonia.

Arundel and Savoy immediately began creating a citizenry for the nascent nation; Arundel issued more than 20 letters to “acquaintances of calibre” offering the title of ‘Prince.’ Among those chosen as Outer Baldonian citizenry was reportedly Alben W. Barkley, the Vice President of the United States in the Truman Administration, as well as nearly 70 ‘eight-star admirals’ of the ‘Outer Baldonian Navy’, in reality members of the Wedgeport Tuna Guides Association. Arundel also designed and created a unique currency for the realm, named the ‘Tunar’, and a coat of arms comprising two tuna fish and the crest of a sheep’s head (PAM971.631, 1949: 1-3). The Tunar came in denominations of \$1 coin and \$25,000 bills. The coins read simply, ‘Outer Baldonia’, while the bills bore the image of Arundel underneath a banner of ‘Principality of Outer Baldonia’, and above an inscription reading, ‘War on Poverty’ (Cuhaj and Michael, 2009: 1108).

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality



Figure 3 - As of July 2014, the beach stone building erected in 1949 remains on Outer Bald Tusket Island, although the roof has become detached as the result of a recent hurricane (author's photograph, 2014).

The first form of international attention for Outer Baldonia came in 1950 when, according to the *Bakersfield Californian* newspaper, the Washington Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company “listed the Baldonian ‘legation’ number – actually the number of Arundel’s office in the U.S. capital” (Unattributed, 1953c: 29). Other newspapers at the time reported that Arundel was contacted by the National Geographic Society to provide information on the latitude, longitude, and other aspects of Outer Baldonia (Unattributed, 1953d: 13). The Wedgeport Tuna Museum also holds several letters sent to Arundel from private citizens of several countries. These letters primarily seek information on Outer Baldonian passports and citizenship applications (Clarence Beam to Russell Arundel, 1992). The most recent international contact came on 5 June 1997, when a letter arrived in Wedgeport via Luftpost from Consul Detlef Werner Jonas of the German real estate company Jonas Immobilien. Jonas sought information concerning noble titles and diplomatic positions for Outer Baldonia. He mentions that he read of the country in a brief news release, but that it did not contain extensive information on the “island nation”. While it is unclear whether these individuals were aware of the humorous nature of the principality, they clearly believed that it remained in existence as late as the 1990s.

One of the most well known events surrounding Outer Baldonia occurred in 1952, when a letter to the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* newspaper in Moscow appeared to take issue with Arundel and the nascent micronation (Chernaya, 1952). The *Literaturnaya Gazeta* began as a literary magazine in Moscow during the 19th Century before transitioning into a weekly newspaper for social and political issues. Although it was often used as a propaganda organ of the USSR government, the newspaper was popular among the Soviet intelligentsia. According to Klaus Mehnert, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* could

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality

sometimes reveal shades of dissidence; of the paper in 1975, he writes, “If millions of people in the Soviet Union have some idea of important contemporary Western thinkers... they owe this primarily to the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*” (1975: 218). L. Chernaya, the author of the piece on Outer Baldonia, refers to another article earlier in that year in the German news weekly *Industriekurier*. This earlier article describes the establishment of the principality. Chernaya offers a critique:

Arundel established this ‘dominion’ over the island... [He] has set himself the aim of turning his ‘subjects’ into savages... [He] granted his subjects the ‘unrestricted right’ to tell lies, to be rude... In a word, the ‘right’ not to adhere to the ethical and moral laws which have been established by civilized mankind. (1952: 1)

The author goes on to argue that the story of Outer Baldonia would be of nearly no consequence if it were not for the fact that Arundel’s actions mirror the imperialist impulse of the American business class and the capitalist mode of production. The hyperbolic language used in Chernaya’s screed against Baldonia could reveal a deeper meaning, perhaps as a satire of traditional Soviet propaganda during the 1950s, but this remains ambiguous.

International newspapers soon noticed this controversy; on 31 January 1953, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported on Chernaya’s criticisms. This article enumerates Chernaya’s charges against Outer Baldonia but admits that the language is sometimes more playful than threatening. In the *Citizen* column, the author finds humour in the thought that the principality might be taken seriously by Soviet citizens, but concludes, “Perhaps the Literary Gazette [*Literaturnaya Gazeta*] was having fun too” (Unattributed, 1953e: 35). An article in the 26 January 1953 edition of the Jersey City and New York *Ukrainian Weekly* took the issue more seriously; ‘Ease of Nova Scotia Shangri-La Infuriates Writer in Moscow’, reads the article’s title. The *Ukrainian Weekly*, first published in New Jersey in 1933, included under its mandate “the idea that, as Americans of Ukrainian descent, [readers] are duty-bound to help their kinsmen in [Soviet]-occupied and oppressed Ukraine” (Satzewich, 2002: 119). In this column, Chernaya’s criticism, while misguided, is presented as a legitimate example of Soviet ideological overreach (Unattributed, 1953b: 1). Vernon Pizer, writing for the 1953 edition of *Esquire Magazine*, interviewed Prew Savoy regarding the incident. “We have been able to determine that L. Chernaya, author of the diatribe, is really a woman,” Savoy stated. “We figure that she is bitter towards us because we ban all women from the Principality... We are sending her an invitation to the next Outer Baldonian Tuna Tournament” (1953: np).

Following this incident, attention to Outer Baldonia faded in the international press. In 1967, Nancy Coe published a piece in *Sports Illustrated* magazine describing the “spirit of pure spoof” that the micronation embodied. Although Arundel traveled to the island less often during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Coe was able to interview him for the article. In this interview Arundel describes life on the island and claims that, “Vice-President Barkley, under Truman, wanted to be Secretary of the Outer Baldonia Treasury. [Barkley] wanted to handle a treasury with no money, no assets, no debits, just a blank piece of paper and a few speeches” (Coe, 1967: online). While this claim is unverified, it is clear that Arundel continued to add to the legendry surrounding his micronation well into the 1960s.

In the early 1970s, there are no records of Arundel continuing to visit the island. On 28 December 1973, Arundel transferred ownership of Outer Bald Tusket Island to the Nova

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality

Scotia Bird Society through the intermediaries of The Nature Conservancy of the United States and The Nature Conservancy of Canada. The asking price was \$1 and Arundel added the specification that the new owners would reserve:

the right and privilege of Elie J. Cottreau and Jeanette Cottreau, his wife, Siffroi P. Doucette and Emma M. Doucette, his wife, and Ida Doucette... to pasture a flock of sheep during the lifetime of the said persons, and subject to the condition that the rookeries of the Forster tern on said island shall be forever kept as a sanctuary for said terns (Sale Agreement, 1973: 1-3).

As of July 2014, sheep remained pastured on Outer Bald Tusket Island in and around the remains of Arundel's fishing hut.

After ownership of the island was transferred to the nature conservancy, the island remained largely unchanged. A number of regional interest stories were published documenting the history of Outer Baldonia, and several newspaper articles appeared through the next decades describing the entire saga (Bruce, 1975; Schroeder, 1996; and Nunn, 2004). These accounts are largely whimsical and treat the story as a hoax, a playful prank or an eccentric undertaking by a wealthy American. They also tend to highlight the Soviet response to the creation of the micronation and imply that the Russians were unaware of the nation's fantastical nature.

In 2012, Calgary-based playwright A.J. Demers completed a play based on the story of Arundel and Outer Baldonia which was performed in Calgary, Halifax, Yarmouth and several other Canadian cities. The play was titled 'The Whimsy State or the Principality of Outer Baldonia'; and it included characters portraying Arundel and others associated with the story. 'The Whimsy State' culminates with a Baldonian declaration of war against Russia as the result of the "libelous" Soviet newspaper article. The play received positive reviews in Canadian newspapers and one article in the Halifax *Chronicle Herald* noted that following the play's performance at Th'YARC theatre in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, the crew embarked upon a visit to "the castle" on Outer Bald Tusket Island. (Allen, 2012: online; Barnard, 2012: online; Watson, 2012: online). When asked about his reasons for creating the play in a 2012 interview, Demers explained:

It was about individuals who did something small that affected the world and it questioned the idea of separation. In Alberta the idea of western separation comes up every once in a while and I am opposed to it... I think we need to find a way to approach our differences and live together as Canadians, as humans. After all we all live on one planet that we can't separate from. Plus this is a great tall tale of a fishing story (Allen, 2012: online).

Although Demers frames 'The Whimsy State' around the humorous aspects of Arundel's declaration of independence, the play ultimately rejects the notion of secessionist separation in favour of a more inclusive brand of Canadian nationalism. This reflects an understanding of Canadian national identity popularised in the late 20th Century within anglophone Canada that presents the nation in terms of a multicultural, bi-national society – termed by Jose Igartua the "new Canadian identity" (Igartua, 2006: 223). In a monologue, following the fictional declaration of war within the play, one main character asserts:

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality

Wait!!! We've become what we despised. A government! A real one. We thought that we'd be above corruption but we aren't. Sellin' off fishin; rights, sleepin' with the enemy, bickering. We're no better than Washington, Moscow or Halifax! If power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely then the illusion of power corrupts elusively!! No!! No!! Separation from Canada wasn't the answer... We should break down walls to create a world where we all can live and fish as one... I say give me fish, not federalism. Give me tuna, not trade agreements. Give me rum or give me... rum.

It is clear that Demers' conception of micronationality differs from that expressed through Arundel's creation of Outer Baldonia. Where Arundel sometimes expressed the creation of Outer Baldonia in terms of an escapist fantasy from the concerns of daily life, Demers uses 'The Whimsy State' as an opportunity to critique the notion of political fragmentation. Importantly, the story of Outer Baldonia is reformulated in 'The Whimsy State' to appeal to 21st Century Canadian audiences. The context in which audiences would understand this play includes the recent political question of sovereignty in Quebec and, as Demers mentions, the spectre of western political separation. In contrast, Arundel's creation of Outer Baldonia can be explored as a performative expression of mid-20th century elite understandings of nature, wilderness, and state or non-state diplomacy.

Nature and Diplomacy: A Performative Analysis

Arundel's purchase of Outer Bald Tusket Island in 1948 reveals a performance of social status and expresses prevailing attitudes towards nature and the environment. David Lowenthal describes the impetus for island-owning as "a delusion that confounds possession with domination... On such an island we become Crusoe's First Man, naming and in a sense creating everything our little world contains" (2007: 206). Such a performance is inseparable from the contexts of regional tourism in Atlantic Canada during the mid-20th Century. Gerald Pocius, writing of the emergence of nature tourism in Newfoundland, argues, "At the beginning of the twentieth century, Americans increasingly felt that their frontier had vanished... The perceived disappearance of the frontier led to a developing cult of the wilderness" (Pocius, 1994: 49-50). In Wedgeport, local 'tuna guides' conformed to this expectation to facilitate the arrival and success of visiting American sports-fishers, who offered an opportunity for the guides to supplement their income from the local fishery.

Outer Baldonia was created upon the twin pillars of nature tourism and the bourgeois-masculine notion of a frontier wilderness experience. In his role as 'Prince', Arundel did not present himself as an American businessman and politico but as a member of the 'race' of fishermen. This is reflective of a broader upper/middle class attitude towards the sports of hunting and angling in the mid-20th Century. Adrian Franklin explains, "these sports were framed in such a way as to engender identity-formation... Thus the angler was not simply someone who enjoyed angling; an angler was someone who rejected the modern world" (1998: 360). Such a rejection is visible in the founding document of Outer Baldonia, wherein Arundel enumerates his various freedoms from the trappings of 'civilised society' - which include politics, taxes, and women.

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality

In anthropological tourism literature, such role-reversals have been termed “ritual inversions” that occur when the tourist experience results in “certain meanings and rules of ‘ordinary behaviour’ [being] changed, held in abeyance, or even reversed” (Graburn, 1983: 21). The creation of Outer Baldonia reveals a dichotomy. Arundel’s social status and wealth allowed for the purchase of the island, which was undertaken in spectacular fashion; however the rights of Baldonian citizenship denote a symbolic rejection of these norms. This ritual is extended through the conveyance of citizenship, which Arundel began to engage in almost immediately following his decision to declare the sovereignty of Outer Baldonia. The majority of those contacted for citizenship were white, upper-class men from the United States or Nova Scotia.²

The association of Outer Baldonia with masculine notions of nature/recreation reveals what Marie Vander Kloet refers to as the 20th Century re-conceptualisation of wilderness. ‘Nature’, by the end of the 19th Century, began to be viewed not as a space to be conquered but to be enjoyed (2010: 210). It is clear that Outer Baldonia was intended not as a space of work but of play; in a 1950s’ fact-sheet on the principality, the author writes that the “principal industry of the peaceful citizens of Outer Baldonia is fishing and grazing.” The document continues to explain, “Deep sea fishing is the main sport of Outer Baldonia... In addition, Outer Baldonia offers croquet, horse racing, shuffle board... all available... after tuna fishing (Unattributed, nd: 1). While it is unlikely that horse racing ever took place on the small island, the purpose of this document is to assert the whimsical nature of the principality and to underscore its association with recreation and enjoyment. These representations prompt a shift in the place-identity of ‘Outer Bald Tusket Island’, a relatively inconsequential space known only in Wedgeport as an infrequent stop-over for local fishermen, to ‘Outer Baldonia’, a micronation designed around elite notions of play and wilderness experience.

The second major performative aspect of Arundel’s creation of Outer Baldonia is made visible in the extensive mimicry of state diplomacy during the early 1950s. Fiona McConnell, Terri Moreau, and Jason Dittmer (2012) argue that, aside from its usual definition as contact between two state-actors, diplomacy must also be considered as a discourse of recognition and an assertion of power and authority. Micronational performances of diplomacy cause “forms of humor and seriousness [to] intertwine... [and] to allow for critical [mimetic] approaches to sovereignty” (ibid: 810). Humour plays a large role in the assertion of Baldonian sovereignty. Mahadev Apte argues that humour permits the release of pent-up energy or suppressed impulse, which proves beneficial for relaxation and release from strain (1992: 67-68). Outer Baldonia, which had been re-imagined by Arundel into a space of recreation and enjoyment, was the perfect location for playful mimicry of the state apparatus.

Aside from declaring the existence of the Principality of Outer Baldonia and naming himself the ‘Prince of Princes’, Arundel performed the rituals of non-state diplomacy in several ways. The Baldonian Declaration of Independence, as well as each letter sent to prospective citizens, were printed on parchment paper, signed, and sealed with an official ‘Royal Seal’ of the principality. With the Baldonian legation listed in the Washington phonebook, Arundel received several letters and contacts from official organisations seeking information on the ‘nation’ of Outer Baldonia. According to McConnell et al., this type of mimetic performance - common among several micronations in later decades - “challenges and questions taken-for-granted geopolitical constructions” (2012: 811). Nancy Coe reported in 1967 that the Nova Scotia legislature had actually officially recognised Outer Baldonia following Chernaya’s critique in the 1950s, with the provision “Baldonians must continue to pay the

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality

equivalent of their real-estate taxes into the Nova Scotia treasury each year” (1967: online). While this claim has not been verified, it lends credence to the notion that provincial legislators were willing to support Arundel’s humorous assertions of sovereignty – as long as they came at the expense of the Soviet Union.

The Cold War context of this diplomatic performance must also be taken into consideration, especially when exploring the interactions between Outer Baldonia and the foreign press. Walter Hixton writes that the late 1940s in the United States was fraught with cultural propaganda against the perceived menace of the Soviet Union (1997). Arundel, with extensive political and business connections in Washington, would have been aware of these cultural and social divisions. When Chernaya’s critique of Outer Baldonia was brought to Arundel’s attention, he responded by sending a letter of concern to the Russian Embassy in Washington. In the letter, Arundel threatened to break off diplomatic ties with the USSR. if they did not facilitate an immediate end to the “libelous” comments in the Russian press (Unattributed, 1956: 9).

Upon relinquishing control over Outer Bald Tusket Island in 1973, it appeared that Arundel’s decades-long performance had come to an end. In some ways, this gift represents an extension of prevailing attitudes towards nature and the environment. The publication of Rachael Carson’s 1962 book *Silent Spring* popularised environmentalism and conservation among the American middle-class in the 1960s. The 1970s witnessed the first Earth Day, the birth of American environmental regulatory agencies and the popularisation of grassroots environmental movements (Montrie, 2011). Arundel’s gift, named the Earl Arundel Breeding Bird Sanctuary, continued to reflect contemporary notions of conservation and responsible environmentalism. Arundel passed away in Virginia in 1978 at the age of 76.

Conclusion

Outer Baldonia, as an early example of the modern phenomenon of micronations, was a largely humorous undertaking. It lacked the overt political ideologies that are present in many of the later micronations. Arundel did not have a grand political message behind his establishment of the principality. Rather, it presented the opportunity to engage in social performance; the audience for this performance, particularly those upper-middle class and elite tourists drawn to Wedgeport for the sport tuna fishery, were assumed to be ‘in’ on the joke. Richard Schechner points out that “play is a manifold and subversive set of strategies, including trickery, parody, satire, and irony, that confers ontological status to lying” (1992: 279). Through various forms of play and performance, humans often create unreal worlds in a variety of genres, particularly using play communities such as theatre, ritual or dance (Huizinga, 1944: 14-15). These subversive play/performance strategies are visible in the creation of Outer Baldonia. Arundel steps outside of ‘real-life’ to create a utopian island nation in the North Atlantic. His play community is the elite and upper-middle class tourists who experience an imagined, idyllic Nova Scotia to escape the world of work

Arundel’s re-imagining of Outer Baldonia as a place free of the trappings of modern civilisation, while exaggerated, was reflective of the prevailing attitudes among other bourgeois-masculine anglers and sportsmen towards nature and wilderness. Similarly, the offer of citizenship to dozens of his acquaintances in Canada and the United States is a form of political theatre. These theatrics were made all the more appealing to those involved when Outer Baldonia was referred to in the pages of a Soviet newspaper.

MacKinnon – Outer Baldonia and Micronationality

Despite the hyperbolic – perhaps satirical - nature of Chernaya’s article, the perceived inability of the Russian press to recognise Baldonia as a farce became ripe ground for mockery, especially in the context of the early Cold War. In this sense, Arundel acted as an “unofficial diplomat;” through his actions, he “blur[red] the definitions of state and non-state players” and playfully called into question the pomp and circumstance surrounding official sovereignty and statehood (McConnell et. al, 2012: 812).

The appearance and performance of ‘The Whimsy State’ in 2012 is an important coda to the history of Outer Baldonia, as it takes Arundel’s social performance and places it onstage as part of an explicit theatrical production. Demers’ play re-formulates the history of this micronation within a new set of meanings and relationships; he takes the context of Arundel’s creation and shapes it to appeal to modern audiences. Richard Bauman argues that through theatrical performances, “the act of communication is put on display, objectified, lifted out to a degree from its contextual surroundings, and opened up to scrutiny by a [new] audience” (1992: 44). The story of Outer Baldonia has been ascribed another set of meanings; rather than juxtaposing the jovial actions of an American businessman with the overbearing nature of the Soviet Union, as Arundel did, Demers reformulates the story to express insight into modern concerns over sovereignty and separation. Micronations, when examined through the framework of performance, express the political and social circumstances of their creation; the rise and fall of Outer Baldonia offers insight into one of the earliest of these “notional entities” (Hayward, 2014: 1).

The author would like to express his sincere thanks to Lucien LeBlanc, without whom travel to Outer Bald Tusket Island would have been impossible. Donnie Jacquard’s insight into the history of Wedgeport, Nova Scotia and Outer Baldonia has also been indispensable. Thanks, too, to A.J. Demers for providing access to material on ‘The Whimsy State.’

Endnotes

¹ Savoy and Arundel were acquainted as early as 1945, when it was reported that Arundel covered a \$75,000 tab for a party in Chesapeake Bay which was dedicated to James Barnes, an executive assistant in the Truman White House. Savoy went on record defending the expense, arguing: “It was for a small informal affair, and there was no thought that the President would attend.” Others were sceptical; the state representative for Michigan asked, “whether President Truman is aware of the activities and the character of [Arundel]?” (Unattributed, 1945: 12)

² Some sources indicate that there was at least one woman who received Baldonian citizenship; Florence McGinnis, Arundel’s secretary, was name ‘Princess’ of Outer Baldonia. It is unclear whether McGinnis ever traveled to Outer Bald Tusket Island (Coe, 1967: online).

Bibliography

Allen, C (2012) ‘Play based on Outer Bald Tusket Island at Th’YARC May 17, 18, and 19’, *Yarmouth County Vanguard* May 15th, online: www.thevanguard.ca/Living/2012-05-14/article-2978758/Play-based-on-Outer-Bald-Tusket-Island-at-Th’YARC,-May-17,-18-and-19/1 - accessed August 2014

Apte, M.L (1992) 'Humor', in Bauman, R (ed) *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 67-75

Bauman, R (1992) 'Performance', in Bauman, R (ed) *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 41-49

Barnard, E (2012) 'Outlandish Tale of Nova Scotia History a Must-See', *Chronicle Herald* May 11th, online: thechronicleherald.ca/artslife/95189-outlandish-tale-of-nova-scotia-history-a-must-see - accessed August 2014

Beam, C to Arundel, R (correspondence) (1992) (document archived at the Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum, Wedgeport, Nova Scotia)

Bruce, H (1975) 'The Outer Baldonia Incident,' *Winnipeg Free Press* March 29th: 121

Chernaya, L (1952) 'The State of Baldonia' (translation by Canadian Embassy to USSR), *Literaturnaya Gazeta* October 25th (document archived at the Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum, Wedgeport, Nova Scotia).

Beam, C to Arundel, R (correspondence) (1992) (document archived at the Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum, Wedgeport, Nova Scotia)

Coe, N (1967) 'Outer Baldonia struggles for its fishy place as a somewhat emergent nation', *Sports Illustrated* September 18th, online: www.si.com/vault/1967/09/18/613007/outer-baldonia-struggles-for-its-fishy-place-as-a-somewhat-emergent-nation - accessed August 2014

Cuhaj, G.S and Michael, T (2009) *Standard Catalogue of World Gold Coins*, Iola: Krause Publications

Demers, A.J (2012) 'The Whimsy State or the Principality of Outer Baldonia', script archived online at: <https://aj-demers.squarespace.com/s/Whumsy-State-Sample.pdf> - accessed September 2014

Franklin, A (1998) 'Naturalizing Sports: Hunting and angling in modern environments', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* v33n4: 355-366

Graburn, N.H.H (1983) 'The Anthropology of Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, v10n1: 9-33

Igartua, J.E (2006) *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-1971*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press

Immobilien, J to Arundel, R (correspondence) (1992) (document archived at the Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum, Wedgeport, Nova Scotia).

Outer Baldonia (1949) 'Declaration of Independence... of Outer Baldonia' (document archived at the Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum, Wedgeport, Nova Scotia)

Ellis, R (2008) *Tuna: A Love Story*, New York: Random House

Friedman, T and Taylor, B (2012) 'Seasteading: Competitive Governments on the Ocean', *Kyklos: International Review for Social Sciences* v65n2: 218-235

Grydehøj, A (2014) 'Captain Calamity's Sovereign State of Forvik: Micronations and the Failure of Cultural Nationalism', *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures* v8n1: 34-48.

Kapchan, D (1995) 'Performance', *Journal of American Folklore* v108n430: 479-508

Johns, A (2011) *Death of a Pirate: British Radio and the Making of the Information Age*, New York: W.W. Norton

Hayward, P (2014) 'Islands and Micronationality: An Introduction', *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures* v8n1: 1-8

Hixton, W.L (1997) *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-67*, New York: St. Martin's Press

Howell, C (2002) 'Borderlands, Baselines, and Bearhunters: Conceptualizing the Northeast as a Sporting Region in the Interwar Period', *Journal of Sport History* v29n2: 251-270

Huizinga, J (1950[1944]) *Homo ludens: a study of the play element in culture*, Boston: The Beacon Press

Lowenthal, D (2007) 'Islands, Lovers, and Others', *The Geographical Review*, v97n2: 202-229

McConnell, F, Moreau, T, and Dittmer, J (2012) 'Mimicking state-diplomacy: the legitimizing strategies of unofficial diplomacies', *Geoforum* v43n4: 804-814

McKay, I and Bates, R (2010) *In the Province of History The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press

Mehnert, K (1975) *Moscow and the New Left*, Berkeley: University of California Press

Montrie, C (2011) *A People's History of Environmentalism in the United States*, New York: Bloomsbury Academic

Nunn, B (2004) *Nova Scotia's Curious Connections to the Remarkable, the World-Famous, and the Strange*, Halifax: Nimbus Publishing

Oshinsky, D.M (2005) *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

PAM971.631 (1949) 'Tunar' (document archived at the Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum, Wedgeport, Nova Scotia)

Pizer, V (1953) 'Mirth of a Nation: A three-acre Principality gives U.S.S.R. the raspberry', *Esquire* (cutting archived at the Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum, Wedgeport, Nova Scotia)

Pocius, G.L (1994) 'Tourists, Health Seekers and Sportsmen: Luring Americans to Newfoundland in the Early Twentieth Century', in Hiller, J and Neary, P (eds) *Twentieth-Century Newfoundland Explorations*, Saint John's: Breakwater: 47-77

Rovere, R.H (1996 [1959]) *Senator Joe McCarthy*, Berkeley: University of California Press

Sale Agreement, Russell Arundel and The Nature Conservancy (1973) (document archived at the Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum, Wedgeport, Nova Scotia)

Satzewich, V (2002) *The Ukrainian Diaspora*, London and New York: Routledge

Schechner, R (1992) 'Drama Performance,' in Bauman, R (ed) *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 272-281

Schroeder, A (1996) *Scams, Scandals and Skullduggery: A Selection of the World's Most Outrageous Frauds*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart

Steinberg, P.E and Chapman, T.E (2009) 'Key West's Conch Republic: Building Sovereignties of Connection', *Political Geography* v28n5: 283-295

Unattributed (1945) 'Truman Outing Draws Hot Fire: Solon is Critical of 'Lobbyist' He Says Picked Up Check', *Spokesman-Review* October 23rd: 12

Unattributed (1953a) 'Company Head Declines Loan to McCarthy', *Daytona Beach Morning Journal* May 7th: 14

Unattributed (1953b) 'Ease of Nova Scotia Shangri-La Infuriates Writer in Moscow', *Ukrainian Weekly* January 26th: 1

Unattributed (1953c) 'Outer Baldonia Invites Russ Critic for Visit', *Bakersfield Californian* December 14th: 29

Unattributed (1953d) 'Red Invited to Men-Only Isle', *San Bernardino County Sun* December 15th: 13

Unattributed (1953e) 'Russia Finds 'Savagery' on N.S. Fishing Club Island,' *Ottawa Citizen* January 21st: 35

Unattributed (nd) Industries of Outer Baldonia Fact Sheet (document archived at the Wedgeport Sport Tuna Fishing Museum, Wedgeport, Nova Scotia)

Unattributed (2012) 'Self declared prince of sovereign principality of Sealand dies aged 91,' *The Guardian* October 10th, online: www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/oct/10/prince-sealand-dies - accessed August 2014

Vander Kloet, M.A (2010) 'Cataloguing Wilderness: Whiteness, Masculinity, and Responsible Citizenship in Canadian Outdoor Recreation Texts,' (unpublished) PhD thesis, University of Toronto

Watson, K (2012) 'History and Whimsy United in The Whimsy State,' *The Coast* May 10th, online: www.thecoast.ca/ArtAttack/archives/2012/05/10/history-and-whimsy-unite-in-the-whimsy-state - accessed August 2014