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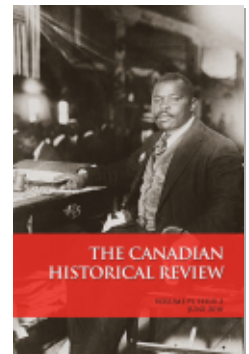
*Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists: The Rise of a
Market Culture in Eastern Canada* (review)

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The Canadian Historical Review, Volume 91, Number 2, June 2010, pp.
352-355 (Review)

Published by University of Toronto Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/can.0.0296>



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the advantages and limitations of this initiative. It is to be lauded for its efforts to extend access to quality scholarship. At the same time, it tends to promote an unwieldiness in the printed version, which in this case amounts to, in addition to almost one hundred pages of footnotes, a glossary of terms that are already (or could be easily) explained in the body of the text, a 'case file archive' of typescript court records and correspondence, and a second appendix that returns to a discussion of issues in historiography, much of which already appears in the first chapter. Since the book version reviewed here occupies a liminal space between the conventional monograph, the PhD dissertation, and the e-book (the last includes images of primary sources embedded within the text, as well as additional appendices, Web links, and audio supplements, including oral histories), consulting the parallel published and online versions can be both enriching and frustrating, not least because readers wrestle with different pagination. The e-book concept is evolving, and it would be unfair to place Keough's study in the crosshairs on account of issues associated with the noble effort to lay bare source material and democratize scholarship. However, there is still much to be said in favour of the disciplined, analytic distillation required for the production of a conventional monograph. This is an altogether different enterprise. In the spirit of both broadening access to (and greatly reducing the expense of) such publications, prospective readers of this valuable study are encouraged to print the book from the website and thereby spare themselves the cost of purchasing the printed copy.

KEVIN J. JAMES *University of Guelph*

Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists: The Rise of a Market Culture in Eastern Canada. BÉATRICE CRAIG. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. Pp. 320, \$75.00

Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists examines the history of rural life in the Madawaska region of the Upper Saint John River Valley from early non-Indigenous settlement in the 1780s to the closing years of the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Thus, although the title suggests otherwise, it is a story that unfolds primarily within the history of British North America and the United States rather than the new Canadian nation-state. Although cast in large part as an exploration of questions raised by a literature concerning the presence or absence of capitalism in rural North America, Craig's study offers valuable insights to those who have little patience

with the transition debate and who believe that wading into that quagmire simply generates more mud(dle).

Craig's analysis of the emergence of European settlement in Madawaska highlights continuities with an earlier regional history. Some of the first settlers in the district were Acadians who sold their lands farther down the Saint John River Valley and relocated above Grand Falls after Loyalists settled in the lower reaches of the valley. Others were French Canadians, many of whom had Acadian relatives, who moved to the region using long-established St Lawrence / Saint John portage routes. In time, the 'charter families' of this early immigration, who had the advantage of acquiring the pick of good river valley land, were joined by yet more francophone migrants as well as by a scattering of Anglo-Protestant immigrants from New England and from elsewhere in New Brunswick. Craig also offers fleeting glimpses of pre-existent Aboriginal communities and of a continuing Aboriginal presence in the region, though for the most part Aboriginal people are invisible in her study.

Craig reminds readers that in the context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Madawaska was an attractive place for neo-European settlement. In the years after the American Revolution, Madawaska was a crucial region linking the Atlantic and Laurentian portions of British North America. By the standards of northeastern North America, it had significant tracts of good soil. As well, it had abundant timber resources, numerous sites suitable for water-powered mills, and reasonably good transportation links, by water (and portage), to the St Lawrence and down the Saint John River Valley. Thus, there were many reasons why settlers might be attracted to the region.

The main focus of Craig's work concerns the economic behaviour of these immigrants. What were their goals? What strategies did they use to achieve them? And what were the consequences of the choices they made? These questions draw Craig into an analysis of facets of the district's forest industries, ranging from the early production of squared timber for the British market to the rise of a sawmill industry increasingly focused on nearer markets. Craig also provides an insightful, nuanced analysis of farming in the Madawaska district. Her treatment of economic life within farm households includes analysis of handloom weaving for domestic consumption as well as for sale, a practice that for the most part involved combining local wool with imported spun cotton. Rural demand for imported cotton warp was part of a much broader set of rural demands for goods, and one of the strengths of Craig's work is that she gives close atten-

tion to rural patterns of consumption as well as to rural patterns of production.

So what does analysis of the economic life of Madawaska reveal? According to Craig, who casts her book as a study of 'the relationship of rural people and their markets' (3), it reveals a complex of economic activities that are best understood in terms of how they fit within three different levels of exchange: those governing 'international' trade, local and regional trade, and 'neighbourhood barter.' She acknowledges, though, that the last 'may have already been in decline' in the period she studied and 'left few documentary traces' (222). Thus, her study focuses primarily on residents' engagement with local and regional trade on one hand and 'international' trade on the other, which for most of the period under consideration is a story of trade between Madawaska and distant parts of the British Empire rather than between sellers and buyers in different nations. Although returns from participation in the imperial timber trade played a central role in bringing money and credit into Madawaska, Craig echoes contemporary critics in arguing that the timber trade with its boom and bust cycles was too erratic and unpredictable to support regional economic development. The economic growth that would eventually sustain the residents of Madawaska came from the incremental expansion of agricultural productivity – undertaken by farmers who for the most part were 'not capitalists' (18) – and from the dynamism of local and regional trade in agricultural goods and forest products. It was at this level, and not among the entrepreneurs focused on international trade, that the region's 'capitalists emerged' (222).

Craig's emphasis on the importance of local and regional trade meshes with an analysis that explains the patterns of development in Madawaska in terms of 'endogenous forces' and the local agency of rural producers and consumers. According to Craig, the economy of Madawaska was 'an extension of the household, not the other way around' (227). Craig argues that over the first nine decades of neo-European settlement in Madawaska these local developments engendered 'new ways of viewing economic activities and market transactions' (227). These included a gradual shift away from an eighteenth-century world in which 'politics, not the laws of the market ... determined access to resources' and from an old order in which 'retail was based on a chain of credit' to a new world of 'fixed prices and cash payments' (231). Craig sees these changes as evidence of 'the rise of a market culture' in Madawaska.

Craig's overarching arguments concerning the nature of economic change in Madawaska – arguments that arise out of her engagement

with staples theory and the transition debate – are not entirely persuasive. I doubt, for instance, that the major economic players in New Brunswick today recognize that the world where politics determined access to resources ended nearly two centuries ago. And I am grateful that many of the local suppliers whom I relied upon to build my first house in the Maritimes did not realize that the world of credit and flexible pricing based on fair dealing was a thing of the distant past.

The strengths of Craig's study are to be found in her solid understanding of the fundamental details of rural life: soils, crops, weather, harvesting, the seasonality of work, etc. These 'details' are foundational for the construction of good rural history, and Craig's grasp of them is impressive. In this regard, *Backwoods Consumers and Home-spun Capitalists* represents a valuable contribution to the rural history of northeastern North America.

RUSTY BITTERMANN *St Thomas University*

Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada. J.R. MILLER. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. Pp. 448, \$85.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper

The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest. Edited by ALEXANDRA HARMON. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008. Pp. 384, us\$65 cloth, us\$28.95 paper

For almost four hundred years, the treaty relationship has been an important framework for Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations in the territories that became Canada and the United States – a fact never widely appreciated in either nation. The continued relevance of historic treaties has perhaps drawn even less regard than the agreements themselves. In different ways, two new books – one a survey of the Canadian treaty-making experience, the other a more directed study of treaties concluded in Washington State in the 1850s – address these broad challenges of awareness and appreciation of 'Indian' treaties.

'We are all treaty people.' The words are those of former governor general Adrienne Clarkson, but the statement, which appears in both the preface and as the title of the final chapter, succinctly conveys both the theme and purpose of J.R. Miller's *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada*. Miller, a Canada Research Chair and professor of history at the University of Saskatchewan, forcefully argues that 'Indian' treaties are matters of concern for all Canadians and ought to be recognized as such. Treaties, he contends, establish