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Catharine Anne Wilson

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The similarity in the "Protestant cultures" of Ontario and the Maritimes draws our attention to a significant question as to the scope and method of "religious history" in relation to currents within the discipline of Canadian history. Despite the subtle differences which did exist in the religious experience of the two regions, evangelicalism and revivalism created cultures which bore a remarkable resemblance to each other, to the point where the historian can begin to identify elements of a common "Protestant culture" which bound together the disparate regional communities of British North America, divided as they were by geography and the constraints of political economy. Far from seeking admission to the pantheon of "limited identities", the historian of the religious experience attempts to chart a different course. Because "religious history" is concerned, first and foremost, with interpreting the religious experience within its historical context, it supplies a perspective which can integrate private experience and the public values of a particular historical period. And because religious impulses like evangelicalism operated in more than one society, it is the task of religious history somehow to relate the local experience to its counterparts in the common religious culture of the Anglo-American world. Further, "religious history" supplies a vantage point from which the historian can begin to consider and integrate issues of gender, class, ethnicity and region — all of which involve religious dimensions. "Religious history" will thus act as one — and it must be stressed, not the only one — of the focal points by which the "limited identities" of the "new social history" can be synthesized and organized into a broader pattern of cultural meaning, without, in turn contributing to the further fragmentation of the historical discipline.

MICHAEL GAUVREAU

"Outstanding in the Field": Recent Rural History in Canada*

WHILE STUDIES OF RURAL LIFE HAVE traditionally focused on immigration, settlement policy, the grain trade and agrarian movements, their interpretive framework has rested generally within the context of either the staple thesis, metropolitanism, or political history.[1] A few of these studies have become

Importance of Christian Education': Theodore Harding Rand as Educator, 1860-1900", in Wilson, ed., *An Abiding Conviction*, pp. 155-95.

*I would like to thank Terry Crowley, Kris Inwood and Paul Dickson for their helpful comments on this review essay.

1 John Herd Thompson, "Writing About Rural Life and Agriculture", in John Schultz, ed., *Writing About Canada* (Scarborough, Ont., 1990), pp. 99-100.

classics, but most are gradually being abandoned. In their place, a new strain of research, which springs from the social history of the 1960s, has recently gained popularity. Whereas rural historians in the past emphasized macro-economic problems and the role of agriculture within the national and international economy, the new rural history emphasizes grassroots issues, focusing on farm families and the evolving structure of rural communities. It is a hybrid characterized by an interdisciplinary approach, use of hitherto unexplored sources, and innovative methodologies borrowed from the French *Annalistes* and American quantitative social historians. The best examples go beyond purely agrarian issues to address mainstream concerns within the historical profession, particularly the rise and impact of the capitalist economy. This review essay will discuss some of the most sophisticated Canadian books in rural history of the last five years and then concentrate specifically on recent articles on the Maritime region which broaden our understanding of the countryside and its relationship to regionalism.[2]

Allan Greer's *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1985) is arguably the best example of the new rural history in Canada. Using the methods of French social historians and previously neglected or little used sources, such as seigneurial estate records and notarial contracts, Greer creates an innovative, finely crafted analysis of peasant society in the three parishes of Sorel, St. Ours and St. Denis in the Lower Richelieu valley from 1740-1840. Following a pattern which has become fashionable since the translation of Russian economist A.V. Chayanov into English in the 1960s, Greer examines the habitant household and family using a framework of analysis that views the peasant household as an economy distinct unto itself. The goal of the peasant household was not capital accumulation, but the balancing of the family's consumption needs with its productive capacity. Greer finds a community of relative equality where the family farm was kin-based and self-contained, and where agriculture was rational (in a Chayanovian sense) and "subsistence first". Lest we draw too idealistic a picture of an independent habitant class, Greer reminds us that it was subject to the exactions of seigneurs and priests. In fact, at the heart of Greer's argument is his conclusion that feudal dues were much more onerous than historians have allowed. The exactions of priest and seigneur not only prevented the habitants from accumulating capital but also proved to be obstacles to the emergence of a modern capitalist economy. Pressured to make ends meet and settle accounts, habitants entered the market place, selling their wheat and, where agricultural possibilities were limited, working in the fur trade for wages. Their relationship with grain merchants and fur traders, however, only created more obstacles to the emergence

2 Unfortunately many fine articles focusing on regions outside the Maritimes had to be left out of this discussion.

of a modern capitalist economy. Grain merchants, such as Samuel Jacobs, drained habitants of any surpluses the priest and seigneur had missed, and fur-trading companies denied seasonal labourers a "living wage". Thus, the habitant's encounter with the market and its transforming powers only reinforced and perpetuated the exploitation, class antagonism, inequality and economic backwardness that already existed.

Since World War II, this issue of what happens when a relatively self-sufficient community encounters merchant capital has been a major subject of debate amongst scholars studying both low income countries and American economic history. In Quebec, it has broad implications for the French-Canadian nationalist movement. In contrast to previous historians, Greer concludes that no tragic agricultural crisis or significant new era of commercial prosperity precipitated the nationalist movement. Instead, the habitant increased his buying and selling, while essentially retaining his self-sufficiency amidst exploitation and class antagonism, a pattern that predated the British Conquest.

This book is truly stimulating. Because it renders the particular profoundly relevant to mainstream historiographical debate, Greer's book exhibits all the qualities of the best rural history being written. Equally provocative are its discrepancies. For example, although his argument hinges on how burdensome feudal dues were, in calculating the burden (surplus grain minus rents and tithes) Greer uses only wheat. Surely, as he admits, it is dangerous to focus solely on wheat production. In his discussion of Sorel, for example, he demonstrates that non-cereal crops were important in the marketplace. He also takes no account of non-market subsistence products in the accumulation of capital. In assessing the financial burdens shouldered by the habitant, Greer might have included the deeds of gift by which an heir received family property on the condition that he would also assume financial and other obligations to all his siblings, along with responsibility for the upkeep of his parents. According to Greer, many of these "donations" were annulled after only a year or two because the beneficiary found the obligations too burdensome. It would be interesting to know how these encumbrances compared with dues owed to the clergy and seigneur. Can the family be seen as yet another institution, and maybe even the worst, demanding tribute and obedience? Perhaps the court records (which Greer did not consult) would show more cases of disputes between habitant and habitant than between habitant and seigneur.

Other instances demonstrate Greer's predilection to find class relations oppressive. Has Greer been unduly harsh on the seigneur and merchant while being overly sympathetic to the habitant? He provides ample evidence of the risks Samuel Jacobs took in providing habitants with imported goods, marketing their produce, and extending credit and loans, but since Jacobs grew rich in the process, he unequivocally concludes that Jacobs was just another one of those "parasitic intermediaries" (p. 175). Jacobs, however, was providing a service that few habitants would have risked undertaking. Was it entirely his fault that

habitants overspent at the store or drank too much imported rum? Likewise, Greer focuses on exactions demanded by seigneurs, but neglects to point out that habitants were saved the expense of purchasing property and setting up their own local economic infrastructure. Not all habitants seem to have found life oppressive. Footnotes and graphs indicate that two classes of habitant existed, one that truly lived on the edge of poverty and another that gradually improved its position. The reader comes away with an appreciation of the restraints within which a poor family such as the Allaires had to make everyday decisions, but with little information about the lives of the one third of the population of St. Ours who were left with at least 70 per cent of their surplus after feudal exactions. Judging from the estate inventories of St. Denis, habitants there must have been able to accumulate capital.

The questions that arise from Greer's fascinating study accentuate the need for comparative work in the future. Recent examinations of Upper Canadian farm families identify them as "subsistence first" farmers who marketed only their surplus and were burdened with mortgage payments or rents.[3] Were they also peasants? Just how different were the habitants of St. Ours and St. Denis from Upper Canadian farmers, or how different were the farmer/fur traders of Sorel from the farmer/lumbermen of New Brunswick? Comparative work will help isolate distinctive factors in Quebec's agricultural development.

Paul Voisey's *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988) is also an excellent example of the new rural history in Canada. As the first detailed analysis based on quantitative evidence of farming methods, farm expansion and the diffusion of technology on the prairies, *Vulcan* is a welcome relief from the emphasis on the national policy and agrarian politics that tend to preoccupy students of prairie life. It is also a portrayal of the capitalist farmer and, as such, contrasts with Greer's portrayal of habitants. Through exhaustive research of all the sources available to the local historian, Voisey analyses not only agricultural change but also the social relations and social life of Vulcan, one of the greatest wheat-producing and wheat-shipping areas on the prairies. Voisey traces the development of this typical dry-farming area from 1904 when it was first settled by young, adult, English-speaking Protestants from Ontario and the United States until the mid-1930s. He tests the influence of various factors on frontier development — tradition, the environment, the frontier and the metropolis — and, not surprisingly, concludes that all four forces interacted and that the pioneers themselves consciously influenced

3 The following two important articles modify the overriding significance of the wheat staple in Upper Canada, and imply that Upper Canadian farmers were more concerned with security than profit. Marvin McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses in Ontario Farming, 1860", *Social Science History*, 8, 4 (Winter 1984), pp. 395-424; and Douglas McCalla, "The Internal Economy of Upper Canada: New Evidence on Agricultural Marketing Before 1850", *Agricultural History*, 59, 3 (July 1985), pp. 397-416.

the development of this prairie frontier. Nowhere is this better articulated than in his penetrating analysis of why Vulcan settlers remained wheat farmers in the face of a widespread campaign for mixed farming.

Throughout *Vulcan*, Voisey places the prairie west within the broader context of frontier history. His most valuable contribution is in identifying "Progressivism" as an important aspect of the Anglo-American approach to pioneering. Vulcan pioneers approached the "business" of making money in a scientific, rational and efficient manner. In exploring Progressivism's encounter with the frontier, Voisey dismantles several popular conceptions of life on the prairie homestead. Instead of settlers immediately seeking a permanent life on the land, Vulcan settlers were restless transients. They were not the displaced victims of an erring government or railroad, but people who simply wanted to turn a quick profit and had no emotional attachment to the land. Indeed, Voisey provides an excellent analysis of the vicissitudes of the small land speculator. He also contradicts the popular perception that frontier life was lonely and isolated. Instead, there occurred a whirlwind of institutionalized social activity, which Voisey attributes to the Progressive desire to extend efficiency to human affairs and overcome the problems of low population density. More difficult for many historians to accept is Voisey's interpretation of religious sentiment. He refutes the vision of the Prairies as a hotbed of Protestant fundamentalism or the social gospel, finding, in contrast, that religion did not excite local passions, and that it seldom played a vital role in the lives of these secular, rationally-minded people.

Since *Vulcan* benefits from Voisey's wide reading of American literature, it should be read in the context of the historiography of the Western frontier. Yet it is interesting to see the similarities between Vulcaners and the 18th century pioneers in Eastern Canada, or between Vulcaners and 20th century, central Canadian farmers who were also engaged in the "business" of making a profit. It is also tempting to ask to what extent these people were progressives and to what extent they were simply the product of the selective process of migration whereby risk takers are the first to depart for the unknown.

One more local study deserves special attention. W.H. Graham's *Greenbank: Country Matters in 19th Century Ontario* (Peterborough, Ont., Broadview Press, 1988) had its origins in the questions posed by old faded photographs. It is the story of four farms and the people associated with them; the farms lie south of the village of Greenbank, located 47 miles northeast of Toronto. The book has no particular thesis, but is well researched and offers a refreshing perspective. Its value lies in the sensitivity with which Graham writes about these people's lives. Never romanticizing or sensationalizing, he succeeds in recreating flesh and blood characters, and revitalizing a culture that was coarser and harsher than our own. Graham makes reference to "the average farmer", a chimera, for one cannot emerge from reading this book without an awareness of the role individual personality played in determining the material lives of ordinary people. John

Beare was an aggressive and authoritarian man who managed money expertly and created a backwoods empire. In contrast, Timothy E. Cragg, who preferred poetry to farming, never committed himself to improving land or increasing his patrimony. He found his solace not in material wealth, but in the respect and local power he acquired on the basis of his pious moral character. In the process of reconstructing these people's lives, Graham provides many insights into the little explored realm of personal finances, the resolving of marital problems, the difficulties associated with two-family households, and the high degree of tension that existed amongst country people.

Local history is by no means the only way of understanding our rural past. Of several thematic studies now appearing, one of the most interesting is Marjorie Griffin Cohen's *Women's Work: Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988), which is the first overview of Canadian women's work to include a cogent analysis of the significant economic contribution made by farm women. By including women in her analysis of 19th-century rural Ontario, Cohen alters our perception of economic development. Essentially she argues that market-oriented activity, namely wheat exports, long the obsession of the economists, is only part of the picture. Women's subsistence activity — child care, housework and the production of food and clothing — was critical to the wheat economy. Women's non-market activity provided subsistence and hence family security while men were engaged in the risky business of growing wheat for foreign markets. Furthermore, by feeding and clothing their families, women allowed husbands to save earnings from wage labour or production for market and thereby to accumulate capital. Women's work also permitted capital accumulation in the hands of the capitalist class. By maintaining families women released men from the household and supplied timber barons or factory owners with a ready pool of cheap labour.

Cohen also contributes to our understanding of gender relations within the farm family. Most scholars realize how important family labour was on the farm, but assume the contributions and rewards of each member were equal since they were mutually dependent and shared the same standard of living. Cohen reminds us of the inequalities within the family economy. Whatever capital was accumulated by women's and children's market and non-market activity became the property of the male household head. In effect, Cohen argues that the husband expropriated the fruits of their non-paid labour. Even as women began to sell the extra homemade goods they had time to produce, their integration into the market was limited by patriarchal relations in the family. Cohen demonstrates this by focusing on the movement of dairying from the farm to the factory. Once dairying, women's work, was deemed to be capital intensive, skilled, market-oriented and profitable, men took it over.

Cohen provides a lucid and fascinating analysis and her work is exciting, but it needs to be more firmly supported by primary documentation. No doubt this

evidentiary weakness will provoke others to test her findings in this relatively unexplored field. Yet this book tells us very little about rural women. Cohen expertly describes women's work within the context of economic forces operating upon agriculture as a whole, but the lives of these women remain abstract, and they, themselves, remain vaguely passive. We learn little about the internal dynamics of the family, especially the decision-making process. The lives of individual women in *Greenbank*, in contrast, illustrate that male dominance varied considerably from household to household. It would be useful to know more about how farm women worked within and against the confines of a patriarchal society. In addition, studies in the future must take into consideration the family life cycle in understanding women's roles and what farm women experienced at different stages in their lives. We need to know which women in the family produced goods for market or worked for wages, the effect farm size and intensive or extensive farming had on women's work, and how women perceived their own experiences.

No discussion of recent rural history would be complete without some mention of the multi-volume series edited by Donald Akenson. The latest publication, *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, Volume 7 (Gananoque, Ont., Langdale Press, 1990) has no unifying theme and is typical of the volumes in this series, as the articles vary greatly in quality and significance, from the purely descriptive to the critical and analytical. This is not necessarily detrimental, as the series mirrors the state of Canadian rural history in its diversity of disciplines, methods, opinions and topics, and aptly captures the intellectual excitement of students of the field.

Without a doubt, every issue has its gems. William N.T. Wylie's fascinating book-length article on the blacksmith in Upper Canada points the way for more studies on pre-industrial rural craftsmen. Wylie provides an exhaustive study of the material culture of the blacksmith by examining his craft, tools, work place and clothing. He then goes further, placing the blacksmith within the social context of Upper Canada, the secondary literature on labour organization and the artisanal traditions of the Old World. The blacksmith emerges as a pre-capitalist or transitional craftsman, as Wylie argues profit and loss were less important than a comfortable lifestyle that included time for leisure and education, while still affording property ownership. This, however, was not a golden age of independence, as the blacksmith was limited by a commercial system dominated by wholesale merchants and government administrators. Equally interesting is Janine Roelens' and Kris Inwood's examination of 100 families in Leeds County, Ontario who were manufacturing cloth at home in 1870. Their quantitative data show that manufacturing cloth at home was common even as late as 1870 and was mostly done by women. Weavers were most apt to be foreign-born, middle-aged, part of a household with an unusually large number of women and living in a marginal agricultural situation. Their findings, particularly interesting in the context of Cohen's discussion of women's work and proto-industrialization,

suggest the need to look at other kinds of home production. Ian MacPherson's well-written article is a welcome addition to the small but growing body of literature on farming in British Columbia. MacPherson draws our attention to the importance of B.C. fruit growers and dairymen as some of the most ardent proponents of controlled marketing in Canada, and possibly the world. Their struggle, resulting in legislation in the early 1930s, was quickly imitated elsewhere and brought stability to agriculture, but not prosperity. Charles M. Johnston's examination of the heterogeneous nature of Ontario farmers in the early 20th century is also essentially a discussion about rural capitalism and organized marketing. Both MacPherson and Johnston identify two layers of farmers, those who "played the market" and those who merely survived. In both British Columbia and Ontario, this diversity made a unified political front difficult to achieve.

Other articles include Ian Clarke's depiction of the Social Credit's failed attempt to intervene in depression-hit Alberta, Wendy Cameron's discussion of how the Trent-Severn Waterway took shape under its first engineer, William Marr's statistical analysis of the 1851 Ontario census for evidence on family-size limitation, Ruth-Ann Harris's sensitive study of seasonal migration between Ireland and England and Akenson's own article which is part of his continuing rejection of Kirby Miller's interpretation of the Irish in the New World. Finally, there is Colin Duncan's fascinating and controversial review of the literature on the English Agricultural Revolution, which contains some profound insights which Canadian historians, particularly those who implicitly or explicitly use modernization theory, should consider. Duncan argues that we should stop assuming that modernization leads us away from an agrarian to an industrial society, and learn to say the words "modern" and "agrarian" in the same breath. It is time to envision, he suggests, a thoroughly modern agrarian society, one that is not just a prologue to industry or subordinate to it, but one in which rural society is sufficient unto itself.

Rural history in the Maritimes is still awaiting a study of the same magnitude and detail as Voisey's *Vulcan* or Greer's *Peasant, Lord and Merchant*. Nevertheless, many very significant articles have appeared recently that challenge the traditional perception of the region's agriculture and demonstrate the crucial role the countryside has played in the development and character of the Maritimes. Much of the Maritime literature on farming grapples with the place of agriculture in the historical origins of regional inequality and underdevelopment. There are essentially two traditional perspectives which have recently been represented by Anthony Winson and Julian Gwyn.[4] Arguing from a staples perspective, Winson reiterates John McCallum's thesis, that, in Ontario, economic expansion can be

4 Anthony Winson, "The Uneven Development of Canadian Agriculture: Farming in the Maritimes and Ontario", *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 10, 4 (1985), pp. 411-38; Julian Gwyn,

directly tied to the high cash income from wheat which created a prosperous farming sector and attracted immigrants.[5] A profitable home market developed in Ontario, which supported a diversified industrial sector and the growth of cities, which, in turn, provided Ontario farmers with a vital and growing domestic market. In contrast, wheat was difficult to grow in the Maritimes. Large merchants bypassed local farmers by importing cheaper foodstuffs and deprived the region of a viable local market. Winson's article is distinctive, as he actually turns the staple thesis on its head and argues that the region's agricultural staple suffered from weak urban markets. Disadvantaged at an early stage, the Maritimes were unable to compete with central Canada in the early 20th century, when severe industrial competition decimated the region's work force. Instead of stressing the inadequacies of the region's wheat staple and internal markets, Gwyn interprets Maritime agricultural problems from a structural perspective and emphasizes independent obstacles to growth. By placing Nova Scotian agriculture from 1812-1853 firmly within the context of North America, Gwyn depicts a province unable to acquire control over an economy at the mercy of depressions, wars, treaties and tariffs not of its own making. Using trade volumes, Gwyn estimates that by 1850 the province was no closer to self-sufficiency than it had been in 1815. The result was a shortage of capital, skilled labour, financial institutions and domestic markets necessary for economic growth. Until we know more about the value as well as the volume of goods and the development of domestic markets, such views cannot be accepted with any certainty.

While some scholars attempt to explain regional underdevelopment, other scholars are finding evidence of agricultural activity that contradicts the traditional perception of Maritime agriculturalists as unprogressive, subsistence farmers who, in the absence of local markets, lived a highly parochial life within communities of relative homogeneity. This characterization is in keeping with the general stereotype of the Maritimes as a bastion of conservatism, which is now being subjected to critical analysis on a number of fronts.[6] From the recent rural literature a new image emerges. Graeme Wynn makes it abundantly clear that there is no such thing as a typical rural Maritime community, but that a great diversity of experience has characterized the region since the mid-18th century.[7] Also, several case studies conclude that as early as the mid-1700s

"'A Little Province Like This': The Economy of Nova Scotia Under Stress, 1812-1853", *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, 6 (1988), pp. 192-225; and Kris Inwood, "Industrial Growth in the Maritimes, 1870-1910", *Acadiensis*, 21, 1 (forthcoming).

5 John McCallum, *Unequal Beginnings: Agriculture and Economic Development in Quebec and Ontario until 1870* (Toronto, 1980).

6 E.R. Forbes, "In Search of a Post-Confederation Maritime Historiography, 1900-1967", in Carl Berger, ed., *Contemporary Approaches to Canadian History* (Toronto, 1987), pp. 13-27; and Phillip Buckner, "'Limited Identities' and Canadian Historical Scholarship: An Atlantic Provinces Perspective", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 23 (Spring/Summer, 1988), pp. 177-98.

7 Graeme Wynn, "A Region of Scattered Settlements and Bounded Possibilities: Northeastern

agricultural communities were not homogeneous but stratified, that some farmers were highly acquisitive and market-oriented, and that, in general, rational thinking, not conservatism or lethargy, can account for agricultural behaviour.

Debra McNabb shows how social differentiation in Horton Township, Nova Scotia, began within the first generation of settlement.[8] In examining the pre-loyalist era when prosperous settlers from Connecticut arrived in the wake of Acadian deportations and settled in the Minas Basin area on some of the best agricultural land in Nova Scotia, McNabb traces the land speculation that ensued. Eighty per cent of the grantees indulged in a flurry of trading for immediate profit, equalling the activity levels of Voisey's Vulcan pioneers. In the process, land prices rose out of the reach of so many that the number of tenants and landless labourers increased, and property became concentrated in the hands of a few absentee owners. McNabb concludes that underdeveloped agriculture in Horton was as much a result of economic differentiation as the scarcity of markets. In Rusty Bittermann's perceptive study of Middle River, Cape Breton, the immigrants and chronology of settlement are different, but the social structure that emerges is remarkably similar to that of Horton Township.[9] Contrary to the cultural stereotype that Highlanders were uninterested in material progress and enjoyed a homogeneous social existence, Bittermann identifies inequalities in the initial distribution of land and timing of arrival that laid the basis for enduring socio-economic divisions. Because markets for agricultural products, land and labour did exist, and some Highlanders were interested in material progress, these inequalities were exacerbated over time. The result was that by 1860 one-quarter of the population were prosperous commercial farmers who hired labour and invested in industry, and one-half were families confined to marginal land and forced to take up supplementary employment to make ends meet.

Two important arguments emerge from these and other studies. The first is that Maritimers were not backward or indifferent, but responded rationally to their situation. This is ably demonstrated by Alan R. MacNeil in his study of cultural stereotypes and Highland farming in Nova Scotia.[10] MacNeil found

America 1775-1800", *The Canadian Geographer*, 31, 4 (1987), pp. 319-38; also "The Geography of the Maritime Colonies in 1800: Patterns and Questions", in Margaret Conrad, ed., *They Planted Well: New England Planters in Maritime Canada* (Fredericton, Acadiensis Press, 1988), pp. 138-50; and Robert MacKinnon and Graeme Wynn, "Nova Scotian Agriculture in the "Golden Age": A New Look", in Douglas Day, ed., *Geographical Perspectives on the Maritime Provinces* (Halifax, Nova Scotia, Saint Mary's University, 1988), pp. 47-60.

8 Debra McNabb, "The Role of the Land in the Development of Horton Township 1760-1775", in Conrad, ed., *They Planted Well*, pp. 151-60.

9 Rusty Bittermann, "The Hierarchy of the Soil: Land and Labour in a 19th Century Cape Breton Community", *Acadiensis*, XVIII, 1 (Autumn 1988), pp. 33-55.

10 Alan R. MacNeil, "Cultural Stereotypes and Highland Farming in Eastern Nova Scotia,

that, according to the censuses for 1827 and 1861, Highland Catholic farmers in Antigonish, usually considered as unprogressive, were by no means more backward or less efficient than their Presbyterian counterparts in Pictou. They practised a different kind of agriculture simply in response to different local conditions. In the case of Pictou, a superb harbour provided better access to external markets and coal mining led to some diversification in the economy, providing farmers with a small local market. Owing to these opportunities, a mixed agricultural economy was possible. In contrast, lack of a good harbour or local market made livestock raising more important in Antigonish. It is worth noting that very little difference existed between the gross value of production per acre in Pictou and Antigonish, despite Pictou's emphasis on grains and access to external markets.

The second argument is that economic gains could be made despite the absence of urban or foreign markets, particularly in the local land market or through intra-regional trade. McNabb showed how, in a cash-short economy, land was viewed as a commodity of exchange. Of even greater consequence is the existence of intra-regional trade that some scholars are now examining. MacNeil, both in his *Histoire sociale/Social History* article and in a more recent piece focusing on early Fundy communities, argues that more attention should be given to Eastern Nova Scotia's live animal trade with the Gulf markets.[11] Writers have generally ignored livestock raising and dairy production because of the emphasis placed on the wheat staple in Canadian history. In Annapolis and Amherst Townships, farmers successfully adapted to the problems of distant markets, high shipping costs and a poor climate for wheat growing by concentrating on animal husbandry. Within a few years of settling, many families had established a productive, market-oriented agriculture by driving animals to Halifax and selling or leasing animals to newcomers. Other scholars are turning their attention to animal husbandry and regional markets. Graeme Wynn, for example, provides a unique glimpse into the intra-provincial movement of cattle and agricultural products in 19th century New Brunswick.[12] Because he could acquire data for only three months in 1848, we are still at a loss to estimate the full extent of trade, but his findings suggest that livestock was important in New Brunswick too. Rusty Bittermann finds that the largest market for Middle River at mid-century was Newfoundland, and the most important product was the cow. In fact, the cow, he argues, was more important to Middle River in 1840 than wheat was to Upper Canada. Bittermann goes further to show how Maritime agriculture was not an obstacle to capitalist growth. In Middle River, the need to market surplus agricultural produce increased the demand for shipbuilding. Meanwhile, a

1827-1861", *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 19, 37 (May 1986), pp. 39-56.

11 Alan R. MacNeil, "Early American Communities on the Fundy: A Case Study of Annapolis and Amherst Townships, 1767-1827", *Agricultural History*, 62, 3 (Spring 1989), pp. 101-19.

12 Graeme Wynn, "Moving Goods and People in Mid-Nineteenth Century New Brunswick", *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, 6 (1988), pp. 226-39.

substantial segment of the rural population was looking for wage work, and this availability of cheap labour spurred those with capital to invest in such enterprises as shipbuilding and milling.

The connection between agriculture and industrialization is further observed by investigating the nature of occupational pluralism in the countryside. No other region in Canada has become so associated with occupational pluralism as the Maritimes, where the part-time farmer has become a regional stereotype. In a fascinating article, L.D. McCann traces the roots of Maritime occupational pluralism back generations to England, Scotland and Ireland where this particular work pattern was a strategy for surviving in a marginal rural environment.[13] As the Maritimes became industrialized, occupational pluralism continued to be necessary since industry remained tied to its staple resource base and external markets. Work in these industries was vulnerable to seasonal lay-offs and prolonged downturns. In an era of no unemployment insurance, workers retained possession of some land for the sense of security it gave. Thus, the seasonal round of farming, fishing and lumbering came to include work in the mines or a fish packing plant. McCann argues that this practice of working at part-time or permanent jobs in urban areas while living in the countryside may be responsible for an urban system that is fragmented, poorly integrated and underdeveloped. Even industrialists were subject, in some degree, to the long-standing tradition of pluralism. Focusing on Weymouth, Nova Scotia in the mid-19th century, McCann explains that industrialists planned the shipbuilding season to accommodate the farmers' desire to be on the land by mid-May, and that work ceased again during the fall harvest.

Janine Grant and Kris Inwood, in their study of Maritime cloth production, also raise interesting questions about the relationship between marginal agriculture and industry.[14] Their data, collected from the unpublished 1871 manuscript Census of Manufacturers, is consistent with the notion that the Maritimes lagged behind the rest of Canada; they had fewer factories, and farm families continued to produce cloth at home to a much greater extent than in central Canada. Grant and Inwood, however, argue that this was not an indication of indifference, but a rational economic response in regions or on particular farms where agriculture was comparatively weak and where families lived a considerable distance from large urban centres. In such cases farmers sought security of income by engaging in domestic production. The extent of home production has interesting implications for the development of the Maritime textile industry which will need to be explored.

13 L.D. McCann, "'Living a double life': Town and Country in the Industrialization of the Maritimes", in Day, ed., *Geographical Perspectives on the Maritime Provinces*, pp. 93-113.

14 Janine Grant and Kris Inwood, "Gender and Organization in the Canadian Cloth Industry, 1870", in Peter Baskerville, ed., *Canadian Papers in Business History*, I (1989), pp. 17-31.

Whereas McCann, Grant and Inwood look at the impact marginal agriculture had on industrialization, Beatrice Craig studies what happened to an established farming community in New Brunswick when the lumber industry moved into the area in 1824, forty years after initial settlement.[15] Historians usually assume that in an agro-forestry system occupational pluralism became the norm and hence agriculture was neglected and underdeveloped. In this case, families who were in possession of the best land deliberately began producing large surpluses for the local lumber industry and became prosperous commercial farmers. Meanwhile, the lumber industry reduced out-migration by increasing the range of local opportunities available once land became scarce. As a result, an increasing number of non-inheriting heirs and immigrants became part-time farmer/ labourers. The topic of occupational pluralism is worthy of further study, particularly in other parts of Canada.

Although the Maritime provinces still await a study comparable to that written by Greer or Voisey, their literature sets an example of how to include rural history within the larger framework of regional development, which historians of other regions would do well to consider. Some topics in Maritime agriculture call out for further attention. More case studies need to be done to trace the relationships and obligations between families, detail everyday life and non-market activity, outline more carefully the sphere of economic interaction and pay more attention to demographic factors such as fertility rates and family size in determining wealth. We still know very little about tenancy, which McNabb and MacNeil point out had become a very important facet of the Nova Scotian social structure by 1800, and had always been important on Prince Edward Island. Indeed, it is surprising how few studies have examined 19th century P.E.I., the most vigorous rural economy in the Maritimes. Comparative work with other parts of Canada would be useful in isolating important factors in development. More such work needs to be done before any national synthesis can emerge.

As a synthesis still seems a long way down the road, some scholars consider that we must first have a unifying conceptual framework. The success or failure of an area in cultivating the wheat staple has been one common theme, but the importance of wheat exports in the process of capital accumulation is being challenged by evidence that suggests production for domestic markets, non-market production and reliable networks of credit were also important. John Herd Thompson has suggested that we need to embrace "modernization" theory as a conceptual framework and that it is possible to create a national synthesis based on the transition from self-sufficiency to commercialized agriculture and the social and political ramifications of this "great disjuncture".[16] Yet some of

15 Beatrice Craig, "Agriculture and the Lumberman's Frontier in the Upper St. John Valley 1800-1870", *Journal of Forest History*, 32 (July 1988), pp.125-37.

16 Thompson, "Writing about Rural Life", p. 111.

the most innovative literature, within Canada and beyond, would suggest that it is time to step outside the modernization framework. The Maritime literature, alone, indicates that modernization theory may not be applicable to a region where it was never simply a matter of a self-sufficient, independent, homogeneous, peasant society being transformed into a market-oriented, specialized, urban dominated, highly stratified, capitalist agricultural society. If rural history proves to be as fruitful and stimulating over the next five years as it has been in the past five years, we will see more innovative approaches and new topics being explored as we attempt to understand our rural past.

CATHARINE ANNE WILSON

The Geography of Centralization

FOR CANADIANS THERE has always been a kind of redemption in geography. As Carl Berger has observed, the early poets of the Dominion were often fearful of the themes that might divide Canadians and took inspiration instead from the surrounding physical geography. The tradition was carried on into the 20th century, not least among the artists who painted the Canadian landscape with little reference to its inhabitants. By the 1950s modernist poets were likely to draw striking contrasts, as Irving Layton did in his ironic "Colony to Nation": "A dull people,/but the rivers of this country/are wide and beautiful,/A dull people/enamoured of childish games,/but food is easily come by/ and plentiful".[1]

Historians have also looked to the certainties of geography. Since the days of Harold Innis students have been boldly instructed in the natural origins of the Canadian state, best summarized in the most quoted sentence of *The Fur Trade in Canada*: "The present Dominion emerged not in spite of geography but because of it".[2] Few people were prepared to listen to heretics such as Frank Underhill, who not only claimed that, in the Canadian case, history and geography were often opposed to each other, but also warned that much of the nation-building rhetoric favoured by historians spoke for the narrow interests of a governing class and at the expense of the hinterlands and underclasses of Canadian history. Until recently, most historians distrusted the realities of class and region and scarcely recognized those of ethnicity and gender. It was believed that these sectional identities could play little part in the construction of a Canadian identity. At best they advanced local interests of little relevance to the future of

1 Carl Berger, "The True North Strong and Free", in Peter Russell, ed., *Nationalism in Canada* (Toronto, 1966), pp. 3-26; F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith, eds., *The Blasted Pine* (Toronto, 1967), p. 3.

2 Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* ([1930], Toronto, 1962), p. 393.