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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Ten Million Acres of Timber: The Remarkable Story of Forest Protection in the Maine Forestry District (1909-1972). By Austin H. Wilkins. (Woolwich, Maine: TBW Books, 1979. Pp. xxii, 312. Illus. Tables. Maps. Hardcover. \$11.25).

What Austin Wilkins has given us is a book-length history of the Maine Forestry District of 1909 which played a significant part in the preservation of Maine timberlands until 1972 when it was replaced by the Maine Tree Growth Law of that year. It is a highly detailed story of one aspect of forest administration in the fight against fire and disease. A lay reader intrigued by a jacket so handsome in depicting the natural beauty of disaster could expect some exciting and dramatic stories behind the enactment of the law. These, however, are left for the historical novelist to weave while searching for authentic detail on which to build his plot. This indeed is a source book – a nuts and bolts account of how the law operated to prevent fire and to suppress it when discovered.

Basic to the Maine Forestry District is the concept that forests are both a public and a private resource whose preservation should be guarded jointly by the state and the private landowners. In essence, it is a very complicated story told by one who was in the continuous service of the Department of Forestry for forty-five years, the last fourteen of which he served as the commissioner. Austin Wilkins was trained in forestry at the University of Maine and at Cornell, with additional study abroad. He combined his training and experience with a temperament well suited for dealing with landowners and other departments of state government in trying to fulfill his responsibility for keeping Maine green at a time when technology, to the dread of the landowners, had greatly increased the hazards of fire.

In brief, the law set up a two-fold division of the state. The Maine Forestry District comprised a vast area of unincorporated townships comprising one million acres. For preservation purposes, this fell under the authority of the forest commissioner and was financed by a mill tax which varied in amount according to the needs of the time. The remaining area of the state, both incorporated and unincorporated, was also the responsibility of the commissioner, but when the cost of forest preservation exceeded the ability of the towns to pay, the money came from the state's General Fund. In this area, forests greatly increased after the turn of the century when hundreds of abandoned farms were allowed to return to woodland. This fact was cruelly brought to light in 1947 when 533 widespread and disastrous fires caused the loss of more than twelve million dollars in the organized townships alone.

All this suggests – who owns Maine? The answer is startling. According to the state accessor's office, one-half of the state is owned by eight thousand timberland owners of whom sixteen are large corporations, chiefly the pulp and paper companies. The Great Northern Paper Company alone owns approximately 2.25 million acres. Also in this group are four large blocks still held by the descendants of the original grantees from the Provincial and District days. Throughout the remainder of the state, an additional 92,000 owners have acquired at least a ten acre woodlot. The public domain now consists of 1,269 acres. While trees have a way of growing, it is still incredible that today, after three hundred years of settlement, the total forest area of Maine is as great as it was in 1660.

The changes which challenged the state in the protection of its forests involved far more than the newer trends in landownership. In 1890, with the disappearance of the public lands, the office of land agent was changed to

that of forest commissioner whose duties largely centered on forest protection. A changing economy had added to the hazards of fire. Now it was more than fire kindled by lightening, by Indians, or by settlers clearing the land. Adding to the dangers were fires carelessly left in lumber camps, on logging drives, and by sportsmen along the rivers and streams. Tourists, heedless of fire, tossed cigarette stubs from cars as they drove along wilderness roads which had been built privately by corporations and generously offered to summer visitors searching for scenery and seclusion. Steam cars also belched smoke and cinders as they traversed the rails.

Early in the century disastrous fires burned uncontrolled. In 1903 an emergency fund of \$10,000 quickly vanished in the fight to control 345 separate fires costing the landowners \$1,000,000, and resulting in the loss of 267,587 acres of woodland. In 1908 another 237 fires reduced a comparable amount of acreage. It was then that the legislature got the message and set up the Maine Forestry District making forest protection the cooperative concern of the state and private landowners. Federal support for the suppression of fires soon came with the passage of the Weeks Act of 1911 which was soon followed by additional legislation. Still later, the Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Agency was established as an interstate program of fire prevention and control.

The big step forward was the imposition of a 1.5 mill tax which yielded \$63,945.44 from the landowners, over half of which was allocated for an increase in patrolmen. Before the Maine Forestry District was superceded by the Maine Tree Growth Law in 1972, the tax had been gradually increased to 8.5 mills, producing a revenue of \$1,331,161.69.

Since the establishment of the Maine Forestry District was proudly acclaimed by the author as one of sixteen "firsts" in the long history of the Department of Forestry, a

search might legitimately be made for the originator of the concept. It isn't easy. Forest Commissioner Edgar E. Ring (1900-1910) was in a key position and might be considered a catalyst in its passage. Many factors, however, were at work. Timberland owners were deeply concerned and already had established fire patrols on their own property. In 1905 they encouraged the state's interest in building lookout stations, also claimed to be another "first." Subsequently, an estimated one hundred lookout stations were erected, some of which were later phased out because of increased reliance on air patrols. In 1921 landowners supported the hiring of the state's first entomologist when they realized that disease had become the second most important threat to the state's forest resources. The need for careful forest management had brought to the fore the use of science and technology. In the vanguard of the movement toward scientific forestry was Austin Cary, a native of East Machias, Maine, and a graduate of Bowdoin College. From 1891 until 1910, Cary contributed a number of articles to the biennial reports of the forest commissioner. He also worked as a professional forester for the Berlin Mills Company, and subsequently taught at Harvard.

In keeping with the scientific approach, the University of Maine added its first professor of forestry, S. N. Spring of the Yale School of Forestry, to its faculty in 1903. This was the beginning of the University's ever-improving forestry program which, with the help of the Pulp and Paper Foundation, formed an important training ground for the young men engaged in the development of Maine's most important natural resource. Giving added impetus to this trend were the cries for conservation coming from President Theodore Roosevelt which culminated in the Governor's Conference of 1908, attended by Austin Cary, Commissioner Ring, and Governor Bert M. Fernald who signed the Maine Forestry District Act a year later.

Simply stated, this is the background of an act whose ramifications touched Maine's forest history at many points for sixty-three years. Its provisions extended to the prevention and suppression of fire and disease, reforestation, disposal of timber felled by blows and hurricanes, and to cutting practices. In administration it gave the forest commissioner a free hand in the purchase of equipment, and in matters affecting personnel, the construction of telephone lines, lookout towers, and warden's living quarters. It dealt with pay, categories of titles, changes in the chain of command, and the extent and use of the French-Canadian labor market. In addition to dealing with all of these matters, this book contains the best account of the CCC's role in the fire prevention program, and the use of German prisoners of war captured during Rommel's Africa campaign.

All this is valuable. The problem is to find it readily in this very valuable reference book which, unfortunately, is handicapped by the lack of an index. As one very interested in the subject matter, this reviewer found that the author had compounded the need for an index by his difficulty in organizing and presenting a clear-cut historical study. The lack of chapter headings at the top of each page only added to the frustration of searching for subject matter.

Offsetting these objections, the supporting documentary material, printed in tabular form and as facsimilies, is listed in the table of contents. The twenty-one appendices, comprising seventy-five pages of source material supporting the narrative, are likewise listed. The bibliography is adequate. The inclusion in the text of the location of archival material, such as the Pingree papers in the Essex Institute at Salem, Massachusetts, is helpful, and the printing of source documents in their entirety may serve to excuse the omission of footnotes.

Austin Wilkins is a master of his subject, and the book is a valuable addition to Maine forest history. One of the delights is the modest pleasure the author took in presenting a chapter in which he played a large and influential role. This is a book for the record.

Elizabeth Ring
Portland, Maine

Anthropology Toward History: Culture and Work in a 19th Century Maine Town. By Richard P. Horwitz. (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1978. Pp. xxi, 197. Hardcover. \$14.00).

The purpose of this book is two-fold: it is an attempt, first, to argue for the application of a certain type of anthropological analysis – the “folk” or “emic” approach – to historical data, and, secondly, to demonstrate the usefulness of such an approach by giving the reader its results in a description of occupational categories in Winthrop, Maine, during the period 1820-1850. In anthropology, the description generated by a folk (or “emic”) perspective is presumably that of the members of the group under observation – it is their set of cognitive categories or world view, rather than that imposed upon them by the observer (the latter is, in anthropological jargon, the “etic” or analytical view). Horowitz gives a good, concise review of the benefits and shortcomings of each perspective, which I shall not repeat here. Suffice it to say that the two approaches imply different types of analyses – the folk perspective is more narrowly confined to providing *description* while the analytical allows for a comparative framework and is, in my view, more fruitful for seeking *explanations*.

If history is the search for explanations of *why* things happened, then I do not see the value of Horowitz's approach. If, however, the historian is interested in the description of a society, then a folk taxonomy approach as demonstrated in the book might indeed be useful, *if* the description sought is one which the historian feels should conform to the participants' own views of their society. Horowitz's methodology allows the data (historical sources, preferably primary) to suggest the categories, in this case the occupational divisions. The rigor of the methodology does offer some control over the historian's preconceived biases that might not exist in a more impressionistic account. It does not, of course, eliminate the bias of selectivity in the data itself.

Obviously lacking in the description of Winthrop are sources by and about some industrial occupations, hired hands, and women. Naturally, it is impossible to obtain the insider's perspective of groups who leave no written record of themselves, but if one is presenting a folk view, this lack of balance must be clearly pointed out. From the footnotes it seems that a large part of the folk perspective comes from the newspaper *Maine Farmer*, which Horowitz admits excluded certain subjects and did not receive much participation from industrial workers. Thus it is questionable whether the folk perspective presented here was subscribed to by more than one or two sectors of the community, thus further limiting the value of such a description. Also, the emphasis on types or classes (inherent in any such taxonomic approach) tends to obscure the range of variation that might have existed in the folk view. Except where there is striking ambiguity in the definitions (such as with "teacher" or "factory girl") the reader knows nothing about the degree of conformity among the sources. Horowitz has chosen, as he puts it,

“the more traditional route of illustrating with evocative quotations”; do they illustrate 50 percent agreement, 20 percent, 99 percent? The reader has no way of knowing.

Horowitz states that most of his conclusions about Winthrop are “intuitively obvious,” meaning, I presume, that a less rigorous and more impressionistic approach would result in a similar description. However, the folk depiction of one aspect of Winthrop society is only one of Horowitz’ goals; the other is to present the emic methodology to the reader for consideration, and to suggest it as a new and fruitful approach to historical analysis. Herein lies, in my opinion, the major failure of the work. Since the conclusions about Winthrop are not illuminating, the promise of the book lies in providing a manual, an explanation of how to construct a psychologically valid emic ethnography of the past.

It would be a much more valuable piece of work if it were to demonstrate by example (perhaps even via an appendix) the *process* of the methodology, listing the number and types of sources for the various occupational terms and their significant features, the construction of the taxonomy, the abstraction of the general principle of social organization implied in the definitions, etc. In other words, it should provide the reader with a carefully detailed walk-through of his seven procedural steps (or even his short-cut version). Without this information, the reader has no way of evaluating the usefulness of the new approach, other than the fact that in this particular application it confirms the intuitively obvious – hardly a stimulating reason for its adoption.

I have reacted to this book as an anthropologist with an admitted bias toward the analytical or etic perspective, because it seems to better handle the questions with which I am most concerned. However, I can well see the usefulness of the folk perspective for other kinds of

questions, and I welcome Horowitz's attempt to provide a more rigorous framework for the analysis of this type of historical data. I only wish for the sake of those historians who might find this approach useful, that Horowitz had given the reader even a small example of how the methodology is applied.

Judy Tizon
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A Long Deep Furrow: Three Centuries of Farming in New England. By Howard S. Russell. (Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England, 1976. Pp. xvi, 672. Hardcover. \$20.00).

A Long Deep Furrow by Howard S. Russell is a documented history spanning three centuries of New England agriculture. Since agricultural history is a much neglected subject of research, and New England's farming heritage is seldom probed, Mr. Russell is plowing virgin soil. The task is a difficult one for the topic is broad, the sources are scattered, and the facts must be rooted out of biographies, letters, collections, diaries, statistics, local histories and the like. The author is at his best when his information comes from these sources rather than from secondary accounts. *A Long Deep Furrow* breaks new ground and is strongest in the earliest time period.

Author Russell's analysis of colonial New England agriculture interested me the most. While corn was the Indians staple (and the salvation of the earliest colonizers), livestock became the key to permanent self-sufficient agricultural settlements from Massachusetts Bay to the Maine coast. According to Russell, the availability of marsh hay dictated the location of settlements as the neophyte farmers filled in the coastal areas. Grain was harvested,

hogs ran wild, vegetables from both the old and new world were grown, butter and cheese became common, horses grew in importance, and flax and wool made wheels spin until by 1640 the real assets were available in timber, fish livestock, and agricultural produce. Now the farmer was ready to go to market. The book abounds in detail on the introduction of specific crops and livestock as well as descriptions of the early crude tools and their constant improvement.

Russell's book is divided chronologically based on political and economic conditions with each section culminating in a social history description of life on the farm and the farm family. New England agricultural roots extend until 1875; the problems of the war and trade effect farming until 1800; the farmers renew their progress until 1825; they prosper until the ante-bellum period; they try to cope with the Civil War and struggle against decline as population moves west and to the urban areas; and the embattled New England farmers attempt to adjust to changing economic tides in the twentieth century. In the final sections of the book, the author nods to the continuing economic problems of northeastern farmers and their organizations, cooperatives, granges, societies, fairs, experiment stations, and state universities that try to educate and improve their lot and help them compete with industry and other agricultural areas of the country.

The scope of the book is so large that the author's task becomes more and more difficult as the centuries unfold. With some specialized exceptions, New England farmers have always been involved in other occupations. Logging both timber and wood occupied much of their time, as did fishing, roadbuilding, and all of the trades. My own family who farmed the homestead since 1716 derived much of their income from a sawmill on a brook, and my father, Lewis C. Guptill, was first a lumberman and then a farmer

in spite of his listing in *Who's Who in Agriculture*. If my Dad and his predecessors are typical, they create an interesting enigma for the agricultural historian to unravel. It is safe to suspect that the story of farming would be quite different in each of the New England states. Unquestionably, agricultural development came about quite differently in Maine in York County than it did in "The County," Aroostook, and in between. Mr. Russell has paid his dues to political implications, struggled with economic problems, and achieved more success with his social descriptions.

Perhaps because the book covers all of New England, it is necessary to note that some of the Maine sources seem to be lacking. For example, the text relies heavily on Clarence Day's *A History of Maine Agriculture, 1604-1860* and *Farming in Maine, 1869-1940* for most of its information on the Pine Tree State. For the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, two excellent sources for Maine agriculture, *The Maine Farmer* and the *Reports of the Maine Board of Agriculture* are glaring omissions. Primary sources on Massachusetts appear to be better represented.

While it would seem that *A Long Deep Furrow* tries to cover too long a span, the book is very worthwhile for it makes a beginning in a barren area of research. The change in farming from pioneer type to self-sufficient farms is fairly well told, but the equally important change from self-sufficient farming to scientific family type farms is not. Historians will find it useful, and in a time when many people are seeking their roots and getting back to the soil, many non-professional readers will enjoy Mr. Russell's labors. He has broken the ground, and now perhaps others will apply the harrow and the cultivator to the furrows he has plowed.

S. Carlton Guptill
Berwick, Maine

Henry: Man of Aroostook County, Maine. By Milton T. Lufkin. (Freeport, Maine: Bond Wheelwright Co., 1976. Pp. xiv, 274. Hardcover. \$10.00).

Have you met Henry yet? No? Well, let me introduce you to a real “Man of Aroostook” – come to that, “Man of the Frontier.” You are in for a real treat. Actually, it was Henry’s son, the late Milton Teague Lufkin, who wrote the text of this delightful book which was published after Milton’s death in 1975 (aged 93) by the Caribou Historical Society as a Bicentennial project. It is Milton’s biographical memoir of his father, Henry Horace Lufkin, based upon Henry’s oft-repeated tales of his early years, bolstered by recollections of other people who had known Henry Lufkin and shared his experiences.

The title is slightly misleading since Henry’s own father, Emery Eliphalet Lufkin is the early hero of the story in Henry’s eyes, and thus in Milton’s book. For it was Em Lufkin and his quietly beloved wife Mary who led the family from Rumford Falls to Aroostook in 1854. This was about a decade after the Webster-Ashburton Treaty had finally determined the Maine-New Brunswick boundary. The territory on the Aroostook River was fully opened to settlement, and there were now roads by which overland settlers could drive their teams with covered wagons to that frontier, the last in New England.

Emery Lufkin’s need to go to the frontier because of the scarcity of fertile land for young farmers in the older parts of the state is made clear. If true for Em, how much more true it would have been for his several sons. Irving was already ten and Henry was nine when the family made the three-week trek. A friend had located for them a promising lot of 120 acres with a fine ridge of “the cleanest birch and maple” in the young settlement becoming known as “Caribou.”

The strenuousness of the overland journey in those prerailroad days is clearly depicted, hardest for the perennially pregnant Mary. Was Henry, himself, as articulate as this when he recited his recollections of that journey? Or is it the journalistic skills of Milton which fleshed out the memories? There is dialogue, for instance, making the line between fact and fiction hard to trace. The writing is indeed very effective. My final judgment for this, as for later parts of the book, is that Milton Lufkin handled the recollections of his father, and of others, realistically even when he had no "documentary evidence." Authentic, it is.

Arriving at the settlement of Caribou where many people would live in log cabins for years to come, Em and his family were amazed at how much had been done in so few years – at how big some fields were and how many families already had frame houses. Almost every aspect of frontier experience of Aroostook is recorded at some period in Henry's path to maturity. The task of clearing the land came first. Surely nobody ever did it better than Harve Collin who set up the "drive" by which Emery's ridge was cleared. An entire hillside was prepared by undercutting, then the trees at the crest were downed to set up a domino wave of trees tumbling down the slope. How often this was practiced, one wonders. Also discussed are the use of hand-shaved shingles in barter, and the seasons spent in the woods for a lumber outfit, an experience shared by most Aroostook men, at least once.

All phases of Henry's life are told realistically, empathically, believably. As reader, you see it all, believe it, feel it. The westward movement to new timber frontiers lured away both Irving and Henry, though Henry later returned to Caribou. The Civil War experience is there as Henry enlisted over his mother's opposition, and was reconciled to her only shortly before her death. Henry

never worked with the cattle drives, but he did work briefly as a teamster on the road to Bangor. Several years in a store ultimately led to his goal of owning a store of his own.

Henry's youthful enchantment with a lovely girl who had come to visit a neighbor, his occasional glimpses of her later, and his marriage to her after she had been married and tragically widowed are charmingly portrayed. Something of the religious attitudes of the times is also revealed, partly through Henry's disenchantment with a pulpit thumping uncle.

Milton Teague Lufkin was well known to many older readers in Maine for his frequent articles in Lewiston, Portland, and Aroostook newspapers and in *Down East Magazine*. *Henry*, a biographical memoir of his father's life and times, is effectively written. Milton should have tried his hand at full scale fiction; northern Maine has always been short on writers.

The book itself, left in manuscript and not ready for publication, has its only real disappointment in not continuing into Henry's later years. It does not tell how Henry's business may have prospered, how his son and stepson fared in the full consequences of the railroad era which ushered in the beginnings of the potato industry. Milton only briefly tells us that Henry loaded the first potatoes in a New Brunswick railroad car, little guessing how important potatoes would become for Caribou and all of Aroostook after the construction of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad.

Without specifically intending, Mr. Lufkin revealed a great deal about the historical development of Aroostook. As historian, I was disappointed that he never clearly mentioned the many social and economic cross-border connections between Aroostook towns and the nearby New Brunswick communities. While consciously watching

for them, I found only a few offhanded and oblique references. As so many of us do in Aroostook, he took those for granted and did not point them out.

The book would have been materially improved if Milton Lufkin had personally prepared the manuscript for publication, giving us a bit more information about Henry's later years, his son and stepson, and also about his ancestry. Where did the Lufkins come from prior to their settlement in Rumford? Milton is described as "tall, rangy, plain-faced and plain-spoken"; according to the photographs, so was Henry.

The book is well illustrated with both photographs and drawings; it is also well printed without major errors. A valuable glossary of unfamiliar terms is provided, but there is no index. The Caribou Historical Society has made available a worthwhile and enjoyable book for all those interested in Maine, especially in "The County," and how it came to be what it is today.

Charlotte Lenentine Melvin
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Waterford, Maine, 1875-1976. Edited by Bertram F. Wentworth. (Somersworth, New Hampshire: New Hampshire Publishers for the Waterford Historical Society, 1976. Pp. xi, 308. Hardcover. \$10.00).

Waterford, Maine, 1875-1976, is a continuation of the town's centennial history* which was published in 1879. While it brings the reader up to date, he is left very much in ignorance of the first hundred years of the town's development. Even though the first chapter contains a smattering of history dealing with the first century, it is of

little value in understanding the origin of Waterford and the course of its early years. This deficiency can only be corrected by reading the earlier volume, if a copy can be located.

It is obvious that current events will become history in time, and will have future worth, thus making their inclusion reasonable. To people not seriously interested in the remote facts of the past, the living story of the people and places with which they are familiar will be very satisfying. Yet, being more interested in what is already history, I feel somewhat cheated by the shadowy specter of what is missing – a feeling that can only be salved by finding and reading that missing first volume.

In pictures and writing, much of the life of Waterford has been well presented. The harvesting of ice for refrigeration, the use of snow rollers instead of plows, and logging with axes and horses rather than with chain saws and skidders are familiar activities to senior citizens, but not to the younger generation. Crude oil passing under the town in steel pipes on its way to distant Canada, machines that lay wide ribbons of highway in a single pass, and wires carrying the electricity needed for all manner of household chores and functions are all topics unknown to the ancestors of the present residents of Waterford. Such insights are the meat of this book.

It is always difficult to generalize about what should or should not be included in a town history. That is for the author to decide. If the history is intended for present residents, the pictures of individual pupils in the elementary schools and the lists of town officers are important, but, if intended for a wider audience, these things could be omitted. Yet, there is something for everyone in this coverage of Waterford, and being well done, it is worthy of inclusion in the library of everyone interested in town and local history.

Waterford, as other Maine towns, had a fair quota of enterprising and ingenious citizens who established a multitude of varied industries and businesses in the more self-sufficient days of yesteryear. Many of these enterprises have been lost through obsolescence, fire, or the simple lack of desire to continue. Since almost anything can be shipped into town on short notice, Waterford has become essentially a rural, residential community whose businesses and industries serve only the local area.

Waterford is now in its third century, and it remains for the coming generations to provide the basis for the history of this era.

Ernest H. Knight
Raymond, Maine

**The History of Waterford, Oxford County, Maine, Comprising Historical Address, by Henry P. Warren; Record of Families, by Rev. William Warren, D.D.; Centennial Proceedings, by Samuel Warren, Esq. (Portland, Maine: Hoyt, Fogg & Donham, 1879).*