GRAEME WYNN. — *Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth-Century New Brunswick*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1981. Pp *xiv*, 224.

Bypassed by the St Lawrence route to the interior and lacking Nova Scotia's foreland location, New Brunswick at the beginning of the nineteenth century was little more than a remote land of forests. As the century advanced, it was these forests which were to provide the staple, timber, that would connect the backwater colony to the North Atlantic world. *Timber Province* is a study in the historical geography of the development of the timber trade in New Brunswick between 1800 and 1850.

New Brunswick was ideally suited for the timber trade in terms of the technology of the time. Its slopes were moderate, its summer temperatures adequate for growth, its precipitation reliable, its long snowy winters enabled logs to be pulled to the banks of its numerous streams, and its dependable spring freshets provided the means for getting the logs down to the coast for export. These same streams provided the waterpower for hundreds of mills in the days before steam.

Although thousands were drawn into lumbering, it was never the dominant occupation. Even in 1851, farmers accounted for more than half of those whose occupations were listed by the New Brunswick census. Labourers and "mechanics" were the next most important group. But it was timber that tied New Brunswick to the outside world and, in particular, to the British business cycle. The colony shared in the industrial expansion of the mother country but it also suffered with it in difficult times such as came with the collapse of the railway boom. As the mother country moved towards free trade in the 1830s, even the hint of a change in tariffs could cause a downturn in the New Brunswick economy. The 1840s brought several reductions in tariffs on foreign timber and, finally, in 1866 wood was allowed into Britain free of duty. Fortunately, trade with the United States was on the increase at the time.

In terms of the common criteria of progress — population, bustling towns, cleared land, well established farms — New Brunswick lagged behind neighbouring territories, yet its growth was impressive. In the forty-five years after 1805, its population grew from 25,000 to 190,000. Much of this increase came as part of the "return haul" on timber ships. Between 1834 and 1843, 6,000 to 8,000 arrived each year. Despite a steady drift of these newcomers to the United States, twenty percent of the population enumerated in the 1851 census was born in Great Britain.

As in other colonies where land was abundant and cheap, and economic connections remote, the migrant joined an egalitarian and predominantly subsistent society. To supplement one's income it was often possible to combine farming with forestry — at first in part-time timber-making and later in logging and milling. In the first three decades, hundreds of small sawmills sprang up along streams throughout the province, only to be abandoned in the 1840s as new mills with greatly increased capacity were built. Steam began to replace water, thus enabling mills to be located at tidewater rather than at the heads of rivers. No longer was the miller dependent on suitable weather or sufficient water. Now the mill hands could be kept at work operating the multiple saws without interruption. The new technology with its accompanying economy of scale and capital necessities drew the lines between employer and employee far more clearly than they had existed at the beginning of the century. It enabled a few wealthy merchants, traders and millowners to rise to dominance in a number of communities, and allowed the growth of a body of wage labourers whose prospects of escaping

this position were diminishing. Many of the latter were Irish and in many respects their circumstances were not all that different from those of their relatives who had migrated to the industrial towns of England.

Social historians may wish for greater detail on day-to-day life in the rapidly changing society of the timber province than is provided here. However, the author is a historical geographer and his central purpose is the elucidation of the relationship between people and place. The fact that he occasionally strays outside the province for the social material that he does include, probably also indicates a shortage of material from which to work. This is not surprising in a province which, until recently, left so many of its documents from the past strewn about — like so much slash in a cut-over area — exposed to the ravages of decay, fire and flood. Since the opening of the provincial archives in 1967, the situation has improved greatly. Still, Professor Wynn is to be congratulated for producing his fine study under somewhat trying circumstances and in spite of the dictum of one of New Brunswick's greatest scholars, W. F. Ganong, whom Wynn quotes in his preface as having concluded that his province's past offered "no hold for an attempt ... to make New Brunswick history of interest beyond its own borders".

By placing New Brunswick in the wider perspective of the early expansion overseas of industrial Britain, Wynn has succeeded in producing a book of considerable interest to those outside the boundaries of the province. His work is well-illustrated with many excellent maps, diagrams, figures and carefully chosen pictures. A glossary of familiar terms used in the lumber industry would have been helpful.

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DONALD H. AKENSON, ed. — *Canadian Papers in Rural History*. Gananoque, Ont.: Langdale Press, 1982. Pp. 256.

This volume contains nine articles, all supposedly devoted to "rural" history. That by John Mannion, "The Waterford Merchants and the Irish-Newfoundland Provisions Trade, 1770-1820", however, belongs where it began, in a book of essays on commerce and industry. And, title notwithstanding, it says relatively little about the Newfoundland trade.

The other articles are more clearly rural. Alan Skeoch details the developments in ploughs used in Canada in the nineteenth century, demonstrating that ploughs tended to improve, thanks mostly to American invention. Bruce Batchelor provides an examination of the Saskatchewan Land and Homestead Company, hinting at large themes, though his article is too short to develop them. Darrell Norris and Victor Konrad survey farmhouses in Ontario's Euphrasia Township and propose a useful typology of them. The authors have traced the ownership of those houses back through time, discovering that "the brick-built central gable house was definitely an earmark of above average prosperity" (p. 75), while the opposite was true of single-storey houses. Their high-powered methodology and dense prose often mask the obvious.