

tion whatsoever of the wage labour opportunities for First Nations men, a group that for the main are invisible throughout.

On the whole, *On the Edge of Empire* is a powerful and cogent argument that illuminates the strategies used to create a white society in British Columbia during the colonial period. It is absolutely convincing in its portrayal of the region as a tenuous exercise in British imperialist expansion, often dominated by forms of white masculinity that ran counter to the dominant form of British Christian ideals. The huge amount of historical evidence amassed by Perry serves to demonstrate that there was a tremendous gap between imperial theory and ideals and the experience of those who participated in the project of so-called empire-building. Moreover, one of the book's main strengths lies in its discursive analysis, clearly explaining how the entire exploitative imperialist project was supported by dominant ideas of the period, namely, white supremacy, Christianity, anti-miscegenation and capitalism.

The current debate in the teaching of history in public schools has been dominated on the one hand by the traditionalists such as Jack Granatstein, who call for more teaching of the accomplishments of nation-building, and on the other hand, the social historians like Ken Osborne, who want a history taught that includes those who have been mostly silenced throughout history. Adele Perry's book suggests that there may be a third perspective on the matter, one that incorporates discursive analysis and the effects of these powerful discourses in creating and maintaining hegemony for only a very few, as the Other underwent social processes that resulted in all of them being gendered and racialized to different locations in the social hierarchies of the day.

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Allan Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

Expanding his influential earlier work on the interchange between economic conditions and demographic realities in the development of southern cultures in the Chesapeake, Allan Kulikoff has produced an ambitious and richly detailed agrarian history of the mainland Anglo-American colonies. The first of two projected books on the American small farm economy in the period before the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers* examines patterns of European migration and settlement in America, the evolution of relationships of production, and the co-development of markets and neighbourly exchange. A immense array of literature is called

upon here to recover the history of farms and families who by the middle of the eighteenth-century participated in, but were not dominated by, a world of goods and markets. The forthcoming partner volume, titled *The Making of the American Yeoman Class*, will then deal with the class identity and mentalité of this group, though in places the important contributions of the present book would have been strengthened by the inclusion here of some of that material. This is particularly true when overly bold claims about the self-awareness and expectations of these farmers repeatedly strain the demonstrated evidence. Kulikoff self-consciously presents *Colonial American Farmers* as a new master narrative of early American development, and like all such projects there is much put aside in the interest of grand synthesis. Still, he succeeds admirably in reasserting the centrality of farms in colonial America, and in positioning the farm household as the fundamental component and shared aspiration of white American society in his period.

Kulikoff begins with a broad study of two centuries of English rural economic and social change in the period prior to English colonization of the New World. This chapter grounds Kulikoff's central argument that there existed a direct relationship between what he terms the dispossession of European peasantry and persistent migration to America – although the cyclical connections between the two are made somewhat more explicit for eighteenth century patterns of Scots, Irish, English and German migration in a later chapter. This account accentuates the manner by which agrarian capitalists “stole peasant land” (2), reduced many farmers to tenants and wage labourers, and drove the reduction of the landownership rate of England's rural population from more than two-thirds of heads of households in 1500 to under two-fifths in the course of three hundred years of displacement (166). The author is particularly effective in evoking the results of the enclosure of open fields and commons, which in this account disrupted both family organization and local customs, increased rural mobility, created episodes of social disorder, and decreased the standard of living of England's peasantry. To these fundamental economic and demographic changes, and to the many distresses of the English Civil War, Kulikoff also attributes the erosion of patriarchal power within the English household and the creation of conceptions of secular contractual marriage and gendered public and private spheres. There is much in this chapter which is more debatable than even Kulikoff's honest notes suggest. His emphasis on sixteenth century enclosures as the wholly non-consensual imperatives of agrarian capitalism, which exacerbated class antagonism and impelled migration, is not supported by the weight of current scholarship and at any rate is weakened by his own data (18).

This background of rural dispossession provides the basis for the author's argument that virtually all European migration to the mainland American colonies can be attributed to a driving hunger for land and for the communal

rights and self-sufficiencies believed to come from widespread landownership. Kulikoff energetically describes the processes of settler recruitment, financing, transportation, and dispersal into the New World and argues that, despite some cyclical and personal differences in motivation, economic factors underlay every settler's decision to migrate and that "all male migrants did expect some kind of secure land tenure" (71). Farm building in the coastal plains and river valleys depended on the dispossession of Indians, a process repeated on the moving frontier as new immigrants arrived and as older regions matured and filled. He is particularly effective in building regional pictures of a common experience of population pressure, and farm size reduction as family fertility grew, sending younger children to the west in search of cheap land and available credit. But despite the tendencies of recent scholarship, in Kulikoff's account, Indians and slaves had remarkably little to contribute to colonial agricultural developments. Beyond assertions about the strength of the patriarchal household, there is little here on how labour relations that could encompass the ownership of humans as property, and the incorporation of children and orphans as bound labourers, may have complicated colonial farmers' understanding of the independency believed to reside in property.

Kulikoff's master narrative is particularly welcome for its emphasis on gender relations and household organization. He draws on what is now a large body of work on a multitude of topics in colonial family history to describe common colonial patterns of young marriages of companionate form, large families, and farm labour organized around notions of the patriarchal household, even when those households often included servants or slaves. Here quaint notions of farmer self-sufficiency are dismissed by Kulikoff's rich evidence of the neighbourly exchange networks which sustained the farm economy and which prevented the majority of small farmers from being engulfed by either local grandees or international markets. In the absence of a sustained comparison with European developments many readers will wonder, though, how unique to the small farmer class really was the evolution in household relations he describes. One wants to hear more about the craft persons and merchants - especially the rural shopkeepers - and to hear the stories of those who turned from the farmer's toil toward the urban centres. To what degree were American developments related to early modern experiences of consumerism, secularism, political change, and urban growth shared across the Atlantic world? What effect did pervasive cultural and kinship contacts between old and new worlds have in shaping his farmers' world views and aspirations? Kulikoff repeatedly asserts that "only landownership could bring" economic security, yet his discussion of divorce rates indicates women from the merchant, trade and artisanal classes were far more likely than farm women to imagine the possibility of alternative lives (236). In light of American patterns of rural mobility, population density, and ecological challenge, one wonders whether small

farmer's participation in commerce may have become more of a measure of their own success than Kulikoff suggests.

In building his narrative, Kulikoff deploys the expected interlocutors from Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, though on the matter of the easy acquisition of land by peasant immigrants each seems a somewhat conflicted witness. They are used in support a dominant vision of an agrarian republic, but there is little sense here of the manner in which gentry agrarian discourse in the second half of the eighteenth century may have served a hegemonic function, disguising the fault lines created by possessive individualism and the halting achievements of yeoman popular democracy (and despite the author's own cautions regarding the earlier English agricultural improvement literature as well as the fictions of the colonial promotional literature). Nonetheless, the reader is presented with a rewarding variety of voices judiciously culled from Kulikoff's deep reading of the literature on small farmers, bringing impressive detail to his account, and supporting his assertion that for a majority of white settlers "land meant everything" (74). By the time of the upheavals of the 1770s, landownership rates in vast areas of the thirteen colonies approached or exceeded two-thirds of heads of households, far surpassing European levels, and forming the basis of a democratic citizenry and sustaining the small farmer economy.

The book concludes with a novel reconsideration of the American Revolution as a farmer's war, an account which foregrounds the pervasive experience of violence and the near catastrophic failure of the farm economy during the war. The collapse of markets and massive loss of labour are vividly told, but there is nothing here on the yeomanry's relationship to longstanding political and economic grievances, and his reckoning of the decisions farmers made about participating in the war is unconvincingly tied only to loyalty to local gentry. This limited account of the Revolutionary years likely will not satisfy many readers, and Kulikoff moves far too swiftly from the communal and patriarchal attributes of his yeoman popular democracy to the latter's "defeat" in the political dispensations following the war (289-292). Like his smallholder subjects, the author's vision of American exceptionalism is fixed on the compelling household near-independence believed to reside in landholding, and in the possibilities inherent in westward migration. Land acquisitions and speculation following the Revolution renewed the cycle of Indian dispossession, settlement, and farm building by families who rejected (or were rejected by) the increasingly commercial and manufacturing imperatives of the old settled regions. On the frontier the small-farmer class preserved through the nineteenth century an older agrarian culture based on "energetic labor by the entire family, subsistence production, neighborly exchange, sale of surpluses, and movement to new lands." Here families created an "empire of freeholders" that moved ever westward, turning "potential wage laborers into independent farmers" (292).

It is a great pity that the extraordinary richness of the text was not accompanied by more suitable maps and tables, as the four included maps are not tremendously valuable and the great quantity of data presented in the text is somewhat harder to digest than should have been the case. The changing rates of landownership and farm size described here lend themselves to graphic presentation, and in this form might well have invited comparison with Euro-American experiences beyond Kulikoff's disappointing exclusion of all but the canonical thirteen mainland colonies. As a master narrative, *Colonial American Farmers* succeeds in elegantly synthesizing a massive body of literature, probing the relationships between economy, demography and society, and in vigorously shaping and inspiring debate on the formation of American society for years to come.

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Daniel A. Coleman. *The Anarchist: A Novel* (Chapel Hill, NC: Willowbrook Press, 2001).

The assassination of Pres. William McKinley in September 1901 seriously shook the bubble of comfort and optimism that had developed within the American middle class. The depression of the 1890s was well behind them; increasing wealth was apparent in the cities and on the farms. The U.S. had won its "splendid little war" against Spain in 1898, and found itself a newly imperial power, stretching across the Pacific and the Caribbean.

Two things at the turn-of-the-century epitomized this confidence. The first was McKinley's reelection in 1900. He seemed to represent the new, expanding, industrial and commercial America, unified and stable; while his opponent, as in 1896, was William Jennings Bryan, echoing the pre-industrial past and a discordant society. McKinley and his Republican Party were definitely in control.

Second, nothing seemed to better express America's new-found leadership in commerce, science, and world affairs than the place where McKinley was shot – the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, an ebullient exhibit of industrial development and American wealth, and the greatest display of the power of electricity anyone had ever seen.

There was, of course, a darker side, which middle class America tried to ignore but which tended to intrude at regular intervals. Wealth in the new America was hardly general: the new urban working class, largely immigrant, was consistently exploited and many led lives of true desperation. That, in turn,