At Home in the Adirondacks: A Regional History of Indigenous and Euroamerican Interactions, 1776 - 1920

Title:
At Home in the Adirondacks: A Regional History of Indigenous and Euroamerican Interactions, 1776 - 1920

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Abstract (summary):
This dissertation is a social history of Algonquian and Iroquoian people in the Adirondacks of New York State, a rural, borderlands region that shares geography and history with parts of Canada. My study is a microhistory that brings a local history into a larger national dialogue and debates about Indigenous people in colonial and nineteenth century North American history. It argues the Adirondacks have always been an indigenous homeland to Iroquoian and Algonquian peoples and that they contributed to the fabric of its culture there. It also examines and complicates the history of landscapes known as hunting territories or, as I have also called them, locations of exchange, defined as "a purposeful and occupied place where reciprocal acts occur, creating opportunities for entangled exchanges between people and the land." These themes run throughout the thesis. My dissertation briefly investigates the pre-colonial relationship between Algonquian and Iroquoian-speaking people with this place and then focuses on the entangled relationships that formed post-contact, over time, between Indigenous people and Euroamerican Adirondackers, as well as visiting urban sportsmen and tourists. My work examines nineteenth century relationships in the Northeast between men and women in both social and economic endeavours; it is also a history about labour, including performance. In addition to ethnicity, gender, and class, this study examines the nature of rural society in this time and place, to further complicate our understanding of Indigenous histories. I suggest that class relations and rural society are important lenses to view contact history during the nineteenth century and later, especially in the East where contact was longer and the trope of the "vanishing Indian" was privileged. Moreover, my dissertation demonstrates the ability and need to extend Native peoples' history past the contact period in any historical narrative about place or culture in North America.

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The cultural assimilation of Native Americans was an assimilation effort by the United States to transform Native American culture to European–American culture between the years of 1790 and 1920. George Washington and Henry Knox were first to propose, in an American context, the cultural transformation of Native Americans. They formulated a policy to encourage the civilizing process. With increased waves of immigration from Europe, there was growing public support for education to encourage a standard Thesis: “At Home in the Adirondacks: A Regional History of Indigenous and European Interactions, 1776 – 1920”. Thesis · Nov 2013. Melissa Otis. I am a historian of Iroquoian & Algonquian peoples’ interactions with & within Euroamerican society’s social & cultural surroundings & communities during the long 19th century up to 1940. I am a social & cultural historian who uses ethnohistory, including material culture & oral histories, as well as traditional historical practices. I take a microhistory approach including biography to discover hidden narratives. My work includes both United States & Canadian resources to tell these histories. Local and Indigenous Communities. Series: Studies in Polar Law, Volume: 1. The book presents a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective to which the Arctic is placed as referent, and special attention is paid to the viewpoint of local and indigenous communities. Overarching topics of human and societal security are touched upon from various angles and disciplinary approaches, The discussions are framed in the broader context of security studies. The volume specifically addresses the challenges facing the Arctic population which are important to be looked at from human security perspectives.