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An Ethnohistoric Study of Eastern James Bay Cree Social Organization, 1700-1859. By Toby Morantz./Partners in Furs: A History of the Fur Trade in Eastern James Bay, 1600-1870. By Daniel Francis and Toby Morantz.

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## Reviews

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**An Ethnohistoric Study of Eastern James Bay Cree Social Organization, 1700-1859.** By Toby Morantz. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1983. (National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper No. 88) 199 pp. \$7.00 Paper.

**Partners in Furs: A History of the Fur Trade in Eastern James Bay, 1600-1870.** By Daniel Francis and Toby Morantz. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983. 203 pp. \$25.00 Cloth. \$9.95 Paper.

In 1971 Premier Robert Bourassa of Quebec announced his government's plans to dam or divert all the major rivers flowing into James Bay as part of an enormous hydro-electric development. The Cree Indian residents of this huge territory responded by seeking an injunction to halt the project. By 1975 the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement had been signed—a modern, comprehensive 455-page treaty and the first in a province known historically for its contempt of aboriginal title. The Cree could not stop the James Bay project. They were, however, able to negotiate its impact on their lives.

Two distinct but complimentary works, based largely on the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) Archives and Les Archives des Colonies, demonstrate that similar accommodations have been at work in eastern James Bay for centuries. The Cree were not merely victims of history or the fur trade, nor were the Cree manipulated by Europeans at whim.

The first volume, an ethnohistorical study of Cree social organization, is Toby Morantz's Ph. D. dissertation (University of Toronto 1980). It contains six tables, four maps but no index. Three chapters are devoted to an introduction and discussion of the environment and social setting. The Cree of northern Quebec were primarily subsistence hunters; fur trapping was a secondary

pursuit until quite recently. The beaver were always an important food source, Morantz argues, and were not "catapulted" into prominence by the fur trade. Unlike the situation in northern Ontario, the woodland caribou did not decline in numbers in this region during the early 1800s. Although the Cree were at least indirectly involved in the fur trade as early as the 1500s, a trading post was not established on the shores of James Bay until 1668. In 1670 the Hudson's Bay Company was chartered and these contacts became more frequent, though not regular.

Chapters four through six address the three major topics of this monograph: social organization, territorial organization and leadership patterns. Throughout, Morantz emphasizes the complexity of the Indian population in James Bay during the period 1700-1850. The most basic division was between coasters and inlanders. The former, also known as homeguard, were valued by the Europeans as goose hunters in the spring and fall. They provisioned the posts and were available for casual employment during the summer. For six or seven months in winter they trapped, at most a few days' travel away from a coastal post. The inlanders, or trading Indians, were more self-reliant. They trapped in the interior for eight or nine months and spent perhaps three days at the post after break-up. Coasters and inlanders represented ideal types on a continuum. They could and did intermarry.

Winter hunting groups were found to be smaller than those described by Bishop among the Ojibwe in northern Ontario. In Morantz's area these groups were most often composed of at least two commensal units. Local groups or micro-bands were found to be land-based, using contiguous hunting territories. These were composed of, on average, six hunters (ten to forty-five individuals) who journeyed to the post each spring in a convoy. Morantz's findings of patrilineal bias contradict Leacock, who had posited matrilineal residence. No dramatic change in eastern Cree social organization was required in order to accommodate the fur trade.

Morantz argues convincingly that the eastern Cree had a system of family hunting territories by the 1820s, much earlier than had been thought possible. She refutes most of Leacock's arguments and concludes that all the requirements for such a system were present in the early 1700s. Bishop's contention that coasters did not have family hunting territories is challenged.

Whether or not it was aboriginal, such a system would have been supported (and perhaps strengthened) by the fur trade. Surprisingly, no mention is made of the early and dubious "treaties" by which Europeans claim to have acquired title to portions of eastern James Bay.

Much of our knowledge of trading captains is based on the situation reported at York Factory. Morantz shows that the canoe brigades were considerably smaller on eastern James Bay and that specialized middlemen did not develop as they did further west. Statistical analyses demonstrate how the trading captain system flourished amid intense trading competition. Morantz's findings challenge several previously accepted statements by Service, Leacock, Rogers and others concerning the nature of northern Algonquian leadership. Parallels between the trading captain and today's Band chiefs are noted. I would also suggest comparison of eighteenth century trade roles and rituals with late nineteenth or early twentieth century treaty negotiations in nearby Ontario.

Once competition ended, the trading captain system quickly came to an end. As Morantz states, this had been merely an overlay and its demise did not seriously affect Cree social structure. The Indians' bargaining position was altered by monopoly conditions. Their relationship with Europeans was an unbalanced one; they were not equal partners in the fur trade.

The Mercury Series is intended to rapidly disseminate important research, so minor editorial lapses must be excused. Morantz perpetuates notions of folk biology by using the term "mixed blood" to refer to descendents of fur traders and Native women; this was acceptable in 1980 when the manuscript was written. In briefly discussing the *witiko* phenomenon, she ought to have mentioned the eastern Cree word *atoush*. It would also have been useful to translate as many of the Indian names as possible into English—e.g. *Makaish* (Fox), *Minnequogan* (Drinking Vessel), *Shewaupo* (Salt Water).

Morantz claims that the eastern James Bay Indians were first called "Cree" in 1853 by E. A. Watkins of the Church Missionary Society. Missionaries were actually writing this word a decade earlier and were not necessarily the first to use it in reference to this region. In writing their journals or correspondence it would have usually been sufficient for HBC men to simply speak of "Indians." Morantz is wrong to assume that HBC men never used the word "Cree" because they never wrote it. One wonders also

if *iyyuu* (people or, in the 1980s, Indians) might have been an indigenous equivalent to "Cree."

These quibbles aside, Morantz's work is an important contribution to a growing body of literature which challenges previously held notions of Indian dependency and subservience in the fur trade. The same can be said of *Partners in Furs*, co-authored by anthropologist Morantz (now an associate in the Anthropology of Development, McGill University) and freelance researcher Daniel Francis. It is a regional history of the people of eastern James Bay and the fur trade, focusing on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The book is divided into thirteen chapters, organized chronologically. It contains nine tables, eight maps, fifteen photos, nine figures and an index.

The first three chapters provide an introduction to the region and its people, early contacts with Europeans (and other Natives) and the early French-English hostilities. Subsequent chapters deal with eighteenth century trade in eastern James Bay, daily life at Eastmain, Big River (Fort George), the Richmond Gulf, exploration of the interior and the establishment of inland posts. In 1821 the HBC absorbed its arch rival, the North West Company, ushering in "a new relationship" under monopoly conditions. Final chapters discuss the Inuit and nineteenth century Rupert House.

*Partners in Furs* differs from Morantz's anthropological monograph in several ways, although it also discusses trading captains, family hunting territories and Cree social organization. The Francis and Morantz volume has a broader geographical scope, reaching north to Hudson Bay. It includes some discussion of the Inuit and extends the time frame by two decades. In this book we gain a deeper understanding of what it meant to live at, or trade with, each of the major posts. We also become better acquainted with many personalities—hunters, Europeans and fur trade company families ("mixed bloods")—and their roles in the history of the region. The role of missionaries, who were just beginning to penetrate the territory by mid-nineteenth century, is also briefly discussed.

The effects of the fur trade in eastern James Bay, apparently, were not as catastrophic as Bishop found in northern Ontario. As Morantz has stated elsewhere, the fur trade was not monolithic. It differed from region to region and within regions.

One major documentary source neglected in these studies, por-

tions of Thomas Gorst's journal (from the 1670s), is located in the Guildhall Library, London. More archeological research should help answer some of the questions posed in these volumes: e.g., whether there were coasters before the arrival of Europeans, or whether the Cree were newcomers to the region (perhaps pushed north by Iroquois).

The authors recognize that Cree oral history must be reckoned with but were unable to attempt such a project in the present volume. Documents tell us nothing about life in the bush where most Cree spent most of their lives. Cree narratives can also add a new dimension to written sources. For example, the Cree claim that early traders required them to pile furs as high as the height of the gun they wanted, a practise which is apparently not recorded in documents. These accounts cannot be dismissed as myth. Whether they are accepted literally or as moral statements, they will have to be integrated with this history based on records written by non-Natives. Fortunately, Morantz is now engaged in such a project.

*Partners in Furs* is important as the first history of eastern James Bay. We are indebted to the Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, Quebec for supporting the research for this book and Morantz's monograph. These need to be followed geographically by a comprehensive history of western James Bay, for anthropologists are now becoming aware of important differences between these two groups of Cree.

Chronologically, they should be followed by a history of the post-1870 years of church-government influence.

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**The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos.** By Richard White. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983. xix & 433 pp. \$26.50 Cloth.

From its inception the field of Indian/White relations has been plagued by reductionism. Too often the complicated story of the synergistic interaction between the cultural, political, economic and philosophical dynamics of very different societies has either