

colonists who founded St. Louis in the 1760s located the town near the great confluence of the Ohio, Missouri, and Mississippi Rivers, ensuring that they could enjoy access to the Atlantic World through New Orleans, while also exploiting expansive Native trade networks to the West. It may be that Detroit is less unique than it is a leading example of the ways in which models of French, British, and American colonization overlapped one another. Nevertheless, *Frontier Seaport* shows us that Motown's story is not uniquely American, if, indeed, it is unique at all.

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Douglas McCalla. *Consumers in the Bush: Shopping in Rural Upper Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015. xv + 296 pp. ISBN 978-0-7735-4500-7, \$34.95 (paper).

Consumers in the Bush: Shopping in Rural Upper Canada is a history of nineteenth-century retail transactions in selected villages of Upper Canada, now Ontario, Canada's most populous province. This is not a history of retailing, stores, or shopping behavior; rather, it is a descriptive analysis of general store account books to identify the commodity purchasing patterns of nineteenth-century rural consumers. The rural consumers of nineteenth-century Upper Canada—farmers, crafters, and laborers—were not self-reliant settlers any more than the pioneers of colonial America. No, quite unlike Robinson Crusoe and Swiss Family Robinson, the settler families of Upper Canada were reliant on purchased goods, largely imported from the United Kingdom in a process of growing international interaction that is described as globalization, although McCalla never invokes this term. Developed in response to settlers' basic needs for imported goods, general stores became an integral part of daily life and household consumption in the village landscapes of Upper Canada.

The body of the book is divided into chapters that describe the principal product categories of rural general stores of the day: dry goods, including textiles; clothing and sewing supplies; groceries dominated by tea, tobacco, and sugar, and in value terms by alcoholic beverages; hardware, such as nails, tools, firearms, and agricultural implements;

local products, such as lumber, flour, and pork; and “other products,” such as tableware and footwear. The detailed inventory of commodity purchases makes this book unique in a settlement history that has tended to emphasize staples production for export with less attention paid to consumption of goods—largely imported goods—essential to meet the needs of the immigrant settlers of Upper Canada (10).

How should one observe and assess the consumption behavior of rural Upper Canadians in the nineteenth century? McCalla uses the daybooks of seven general stores in locations ranging from Yonge Mills to Lakefield (i.e., one hundred to two hundred miles east of Toronto) for different periods ranging from 1808 to 1861. The daybooks provide a detailed record of each transaction, noting the identity of the account holder who was charged, the commodity or service provided, and its value. For each store, a structured sample was drawn to include a manageable number of customers about whom additional data was available in census manuscripts and to reflect the socio-economic variety of consumers in the settler economy.

Perhaps the most important contribution of this book is to remind the reader that the creation of history is critically dependent on the source of primary data and the biases that these sources may impart. For example, textile artifacts are less likely than other more robust materials to survive the ravages of time; and within the textile category, the plain everyday cotton garments are less likely to have remained intact than more valuable, if less commonly worn, garments such as silk dresses (38). Patterned coverlets were treasured as family heirlooms—and still survive—while plain homespun linens were recycled and eventually discarded, leading to a biased impression of what was worn, eaten, and used in everyday life. Thus, the account books describing what people actually purchased provide an important complement to artifactual evidence.

The book opens with a captivating preamble that revives the famous myth of the lost darning needle, a myth that has been repeated in different contexts from the Ottawa Valley (6) to the Oregon Trail, and described in popular compendia of American folklore.¹

In this way, McCalla shows how settlement-era narratives, no matter how charming and persuasive, and no matter the stature of the storyteller, ought to be viewed in a more critical light that may cast doubt on their credibility. This points to the importance of the diligent consideration of documented consumption practices for academic history to advance and differentiate itself from antiquarian storytelling.

1. American Folklore, “Last Darning Needle,” retold by S. E. Schlosser, http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/2009/05/the_last_darning_needle.html

It should be noted that this is a detailed and data-intensive scholarly history that demands much of the reader. Laden with details of transactions of different types of commodities by different consumers, the text is 150 pages long, followed by 66 pages of tables and appendices, 70 pages of notes and the index. Nevertheless, in this work, McCalla establishes a benchmark in the history of consumers in Upper Canada, and he sets a methodological precedent in the use of account books as a primary historical data source. This level of detail is a reminder that to weigh the myths and metaphors of settlement, primary evidence is an essential component of historiography. Second, *Consumers in the Bush* shows that, despite changes in goods consumption, the level of dependence on imported consumer goods changed little from 1808 to 1861, “a finding that invites reflection on stories of a mid-century revolution” (22). Finally, and I think most memorably, this detailed study of the goods that rural people bought shows that the nineteenth-century settlers of Upper Canada were embedded in a globalizing consumer economy.

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Rachel Weber. *From Boom to Bubble: How Finance Built the New Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. 296 pp. ISBN 9780226294483, \$45.00 (cloth).

According to Rachel Weber, from 1998–2008, Chicago experienced a building boom in its central business district that rested atop the artificial foundations of speculative capital, inflating the market with “hot air” and saturating Chicago’s skyline with overbuilt and under-occupied commercial real estate. In her valuable treatment of the subject, *From Boom to Bubble: How Finance Built the New Chicago*, Weber deconstructs the life cycle of commercial property and uses this “Millennial Boom” in downtown Chicago as a case study to illustrate how “financial incentives create capital mobility, new construction, and periodic overbuilding” (4). Weber, borrowing from economist Joseph Schumpeter, describes the process as “creative destruction.” Through the combined roles of complicated financial instruments and easily available capital, the professional norms of financial actors, and