

THE SUBARCTIC FUR TRADE



Native Social and Economic Adaptations

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SUB

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In his epilogue to the Third North American Fur Trade Symposium, Williams (1980:315), former general editor of the *Journal of the Fur Trade Society* and a noted historian, summarized his impression of the conference and identified several productive directions for future research. One suggestion that he made was for greater collaboration between anthropologists and historians (and geographers), perhaps focusing on the interests in economic history and in the methodology of ethnohistory. Williams also suggested, quite rightly, the immediate need for research on the period that begins in the late nineteenth century, a period for which the records of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives have been invaluable. He thought that the "most notable advances" were likely to come from the analysis of these records.

The six papers that follow in this volume were presented at a symposium at the 1981 annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory. They are concerned in large part with native economic and social history, and especially with the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period. The authors are linked in a number of ways, especially in their common interest in economic and social adaptations in the context of the fur trade. The authors, who write from the vantage points of three disciplines—anthropology, geography, and history—are all versed in ethnohistorical methods and materials, and they describe and to analyse, perhaps through time, a society and culture, and as a way to make sense of the historical record. Some of the authors are interested in the use of ethnohistorical techniques to shed light on native economic and social history, and to report on these here and elsewhere. This collection of papers is intended to address the needs identified by Williams. The individual papers offer a range of approaches to native economic and social history; it is hoped that they will provoke scholars to look more deeply into the issues which they raise, as well as to explore new avenues for further research.

Moreover, most of the authors in this volume are