Dans l'un des chapitres de cette deuxième partie, Jonathan C. Lainey décrit également les couleurs et les motifs des wampums du Musée de la civilisation. Il présente quelques tentatives d'interprétation à la lumière d'informations externes, par exemple les subtils liens diplomatiques entre certaines nations pendant la période coloniale.

En définitive, l'auteur admet qu'il n'est pas possible de proposer une interprétation univoque de la signification des colliers de wampum puisque leur valeur s'est régulièrement reconstruite au contact des réalités du temps. Si ces objets ont été conçus pour « porter des paroles », lesdites paroles sont aujourd'hui muettes : faute d'avoir été consigné à l'époque de leur production, le sens initial des wampums est vraisemblablement perdu à jamais. En présentant ses hypothèses et ses résultats, au demeurant fort bien documentés, Jonathan C. Lainey fait acte d'humilité devant la richesse sémantique d'un objet culturel somme toute énigmatique.

La « Monnaie des Sauvages » comporte cependant une petite lacune au niveau anthropologique. En effet, l'auteur n'a pas cru bon de situer les colliers de wampums dans la famille des pratiques culturelles liées aux valeurs. Bien que la fonction rituelle, économique et politique des wampums iroquoiens soit fort détaillée, il aurait été intéressant de trouver un bref aparté expliquant l'origine de ce type de systèmes de valeur et de leur imbrication dans les systèmes symboliques des sociétés sans écriture, où leur valeur proprement dite se double d'une fonction de support de la mémoire. Malgré cette infime lacune, l'ouvrage de Joathan C. Lainey se veut une contribution imposante à l'étude des wampums. Il permet certes de mieux comprendre la culture matérielle des Hurons de Lorette, mais aussi et surtout d'envisager le parcours culturel et interculturel d'un objet comme une véritable biographie, avec les nombreux errements et rebondissements que cela suppose. De confection soignée, *La « Monnaie des Sauvages »* plonge le lecteur dans une véritable enquête ethnographique, agrémentée d'une soixantaine d'illustrations, d'une vaste bibliographie ainsi que de quelques annexes. Il ne fait pas de doute que cet ouvrage comble une lacune importante dans le domaine des études autochtones canadiennes, tout en offrant une rétrospective détaillée de l'engouement pour le collectionnement au XIX^{e} siècle. L'étude de Jonathan C. Lainey saura donc rejoindre un lectorat d'historiens, d'ethnologues, de muséologues et même de numismates et de passionnés de collections.

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LEE, Robert C. — *The Canada Company and the Huron Tract, 1826–1853: Personalities, Profits and Politics*. Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2004. Pp.304.

For most of the nineteenth century, few residents of what is now Ontario were not familiar with an organization called the Canada Company. From its chartered beginnings in the 1820s the British-based land and colonization company was a swaggering giant in the Upper Canadian wilderness — a million pound corporation, the largest landlord in the colony, and the best customer of the only bank. Its holdings were enormous: some two and a half million acres, a million concentrated in what

was called the Huron Tract, an enormous triangle with its base on Lake Huron and arms stretching towards the German settlements at Waterloo, and the balance made up principally of the the scattered Crown Reserves, one-seventh of lots in each of the surveyed townships of the colony, lands that had been set aside in the late eighteenth century to provide future government revenues. The company bought the land from the Crown for about two shillings, six pence an acre, a bargain at the time. It finally went out of business in the early 1950s, for the best of reasons: it ran out of land to sell. Ironically, its last customer was the Government of Ontario, heir to the original British seller, which purchased a smallish portion of unworkable land for a park.

For most of its long history the Canada Company quietly and successfully conducted its business and returned a good dividend and profits to its shareholders. The period of its origins, however, was very different. Viewed by some as a government god-send that would bring settlers and capital to the wilderness and condemned by others as a foreign fiscal calamity designed to suck and siphon monies away, the company from 1826 to 1853 was hugely controversial. It is this early period upon which Robert Lee concentrates in this capable and absorbing book.

Lee's book has been a long time in gestation. Like many others it started as an academic treatise, in this case a 1967 master's thesis under Donald Masters at the University of Guelph. Nearly 40 years were to go by before it was transformed into a book. In the meantime, Lee pursued a career in government, as a diplomat and trade commissioner with the Canadian Foreign Service with frequent overseas postings. In 2002 he was asked if copies of the thesis might be made and placed in libraries throughout the Huron Tract, the focus both of his thesis and of so much of the Canada Company's activities. That idea grew into a larger one — conversion into a book — and once more Lee was plunged into primary research and writing. The result is that a good piece of work has been turned into a better one.

The reviewer has a little history with this subject — and Lee's old and new work — as well. I had begun work at the Archives of Ontario in 1969 and was most impressed with the Canada Company collection. Here were the original huge folio-size leather volumes — the Minutes of the Court of Directors, of the Committees of Correspondence, of the Canadian Commissioners, and many others — all on thick, heavy rag paper, radiating good penmanship. As well there were the land records, some bound in the same handsome leather, others clearly the eccentric field-books of surveyors, still others loose in hundreds and hundreds of files. A fascinating trans-Atlantic tale, as much social as economic history, as much a record of diplomacy as an exercise of hard business sense. I thought the tale — particularly from the imperial angle — would make a good doctoral topic, and I was right; I happily pursued it to completion in Cambridge by 1973. My guide to this mass of materials came with my fortunate discovery of Lee's pioneering master's work at Guelph — the waters might not, as I discovered, have been meticulously mapped, but there was a splendid and more than rudimentary chart showing shoals and reefs to be avoided. I had often wondered what had become of the author, who certainly had the talent to be a fine historian, and was pleased to receive a note from him asking advice regarding some few trifling points when he was doing revisions for this book. It was a minor pay-back, and I was glad to make it.

Is this volume the final word on the Canada Company? No, far from it. The book lacks the imperial focus the story needs to be complete. It is impossible to understand fully the birth and apprenticeship of the company without comprehensively addressing the London financial community and the intricacies of imperial policy at the time. As well, too little is made of the complex needs of settling the company's contract with London and the British shareholders. The book's strength lies in the company in Canada in the early period and especially in the settlement of the tract. Lee is particularly good with local issues and personalities — fitting, for Lee is himself a descendant of an early Canada Company Huron settler and spent boyhood summers with relatives in Goderich. Squabbles over land, company direction, and local politics grew to large dimensions in the wilderness, especially when animated by characters such as John Galt, the Scottish novelist who dreamt of being a man of affairs and influence and who was (disastrously) the first commissioner, or William "Tiger" Dunlop, the Blackwoodian backwoodsman, who gloried in the grand title "Warden of the Woods and Forests". Lee chronicles them all and effectively analyses company policy in establishing "hothouse" settlements in places like Guelph, Stratford, and St. Mary's.

A close student of the Canada Company will have cavils. More might have been made of the impact of the Rebellions of 1837–1838 on the company, more on the impact of the Durham Report and why it sidestepped the company's influence in the colony, more on regions other than the Huron to balance out the company's influence. There are also slips, but mostly small ones, except for one clanger in which the writer consistently misidentifies the author of a Commission of Enquiry into the company's affairs as the influential Judge Jonas Jones instead of the insignificant army lieutenant who was mysteriously called back to Britain before his final report, J. T. W. Jones.

In conclusion, the full story of the company still remains to be told. After all, that story went on for more than a century after the period with which Lee is concerned, and there are plenty more boxes, folios, and files to be consulted in numerous archives. But, more than ever, Lee is still a good guide.

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LITTLE, J. I. — *Borderland Religion: The Emergence of an English-Canadian Identity, 1792–1852*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004. Pp. 386.

What role has religion played in the making of individual and collective identity in Canada? In *Borderland Religion,* J. I. Little addresses this question by examining popular religious culture in Lower Canada's Eastern Townships as revealed in church records, especially the letters and reports of Protestant missionaries. The main title of the book refers to the ways in which this region evolved under both British and American influence, while the sub-title, *The Emergence of an English-Canadian Identity,*