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A Rural Community in Nineteenth-Century America

by Yasuo OKADA

This is a community study of a particular kind, as the community is viewed from a perspective of a single individual, and its boundary is defined by his economic activity. The setting of this study is rural New York in the nineteenth century, and the leading man is Philip Lott, a local farmer. However, the attention in this study is focused not on the geographical area, but the group of people with whom Lott had business transactions in his daily life. The community in this paper is the world where he earned and spent his money, the world where he knew everybody and everyone knew him. Needless to say, his world was not static. Changing relationship within the locality and changing boundaries of relationship are traced, centering upon the economic activity of Philip Lott.