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"The Last European Landscape to be Colonised: A Case Study of Land-Use Change in the Far North of Sweden 1850–1930"

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Andersson, Rikard, Lars Östlund, and Erik Törnlund. "The Last European Landscape to be Colonised: A Case Study of Land-Use Change in the Far North of Sweden 1850–1930." *Environment and History* 11, no. 3 (Aug., 2005): 293–318. doi:10.3197/096734005774434520 . The agricultural colonisation of the interior of northern Sweden in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be regarded as Europe's last colonising venture supported by an economy based on self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, nomadic Sami people have practised basic economic approaches to resources and environment in this region for thousands of years. The aim of this study was to analyse the swift land-use transition, from nomadic to agricultural, in the last colonised landscape of northern Sweden. Using historical documents and maps together with modern maps and a field survey, the authors wanted to link land-use patterns as strongly as possible to landscape features and ecosystems. Resource use of farmers and the native Samis showed many similarities with some important exceptions. Some obvious disparities seem to have evolved, mainly connected to the animal species that were domesticated. With the Sami people involved and interfering with the colonisation process, their use of resources contributed significantly to local economy and land use therefore became intensified. Interestingly, in the studied area the main driving force for establishment of new settlements was commercial forestry. However, in the last colonised landscape, forestry reached its physical limits, leaving mountain birch forests with evidence of traditional Sami land use and Sami historical traces. All rights reserved. © 2005 The White Horse Press

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