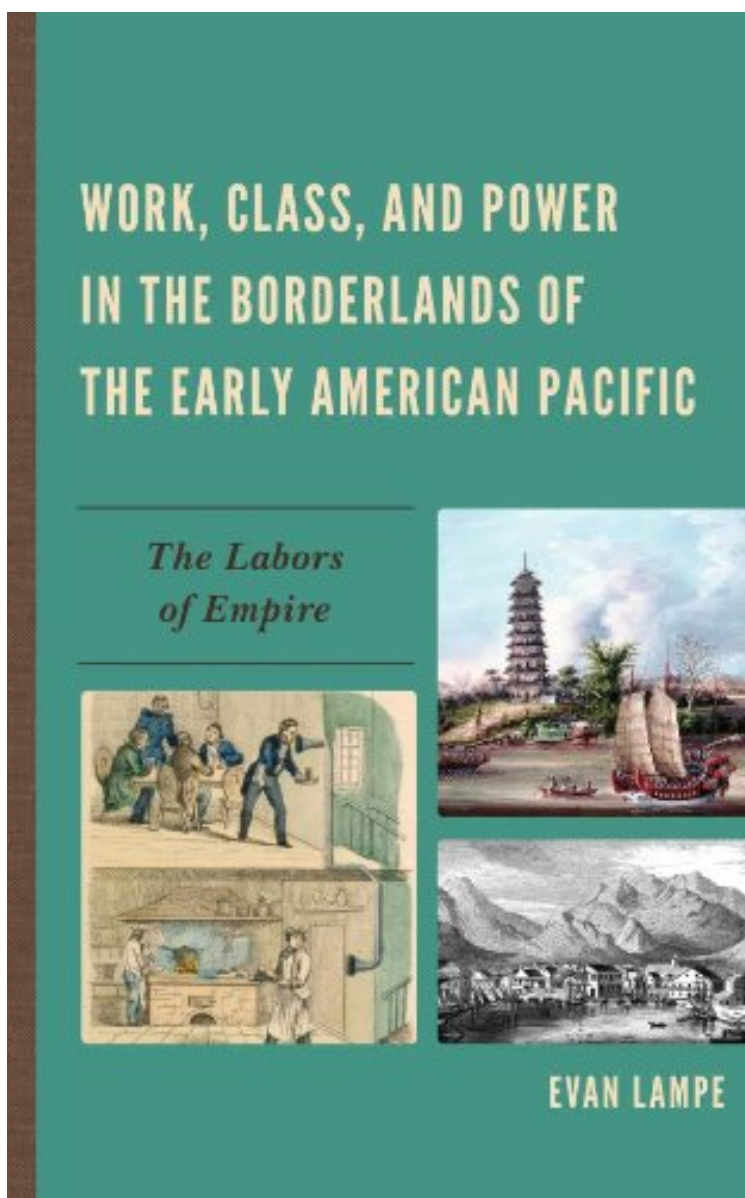


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Work, Class, and Power in the Borderlands of the Early American Pacific: The Labors of Empire

Evan Lampe

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Evan Lampe : Work, Class, and Power in the Borderlands of the Early American Pacific: The Labors of Empire before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Work, Class,

and Power in the Borderlands of the Early American Pacific: The Labors of Empire:

This book traces the history of working people who helped established the foundation of the American empire in the Pacific from its origins after the American Revolution to its coming of age in the 1840s and 1850s. Beginning with the expeditions of the *Columbia* and the *Lady Washington*, Lampe argues that the early American Pacific can best be considered through the interaction of four major locations, connected through the networks of trade: the merchant ship, the Northwest Coast, Honolulu, and Canton (Guangzhou). In each of these locations, the labors of a diverse population of working people was harnessed in the critical labors of empire building, including the transportation of goods. The central question that the consideration of working people in the Pacific economy during this period is, Lampe argues, the role of power applied on these laborers by an international capitalist class, emerging alongside the Pacific commercial empires. Lampe also finds that this power was not uncontested and emerged in response to the activities of labor. Working people, on the ship and in the port cities, found ways to secure their piece of the profitable trade, often through illicit means.

Lampe is to be commended. . . . [R]esearchers and historians of early American commerce in the Pacific . . . need to read this work, as it succeeds admirably in laying out the scope of its thesis and the issues of working people engaged in the enterprise. (*International Journal of Maritime History*) [A] valuable contribution to maritime history, labor history, and the still-burgeoning field of Pacific studies. (*Journal of American History*) Evan Lampe's compelling *Labors of Empire* describes another "triangle traders" that enriches our understanding in at least two vital ways. First, he shows how densely the economic relations of the Northeast United States, the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the Pacific Coast, Honolulu, and China were linked in the first half of the nineteenth century. Second, he elaborates the way these lines of connections are organized and sustained by a rich multicultural workforce including Amerindians, Euro-Americans, and Chinese often working in the shadow of British, Russian, and Spanish navies and merchants. (Thomas Bender, *New York University*) About the Author Evan Lampe has taught at Endicott College, St. Thomas University, and Taipei Medical University. He is currently visiting scholar at the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica.