



# **A Tale of New England: The Diaries of Hiram Harwood, Vermont Farmer, 1810-1837**

*Robert E. Shalhope*

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The extraordinary diary of Vermont farmer Hiram Harwood—a fourteen-volume record of personal, family, and community events from 1808 to 1837—provides Robert E. Shalhope with the material for this rich microhistory. Harwood's struggle to reach full manhood and assume his position as head of the family, his misgivings about challenging—much less displacing—his father, the changes American life brought to this traditional rite of passage, Hiram's relationships with wife and children, seasonal events, and all the day-to-day experiences of this finally tragic figure make for a fascinating story and provide a highly unusual window into antebellum American life.

Although he focuses mainly on the story of a single farmer, Shalhope also incorporates other stories from this wide-ranging chronicle. Readers glimpse the social, political, economic, and religious life of the entire New England region. Most of all, though, the story of Hiram Harwood reveals the personal price exacted of him by one family's unyielding belief in patriarchy.

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