

## BOOK REVIEWS

*A*my C. Schutt. *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. Pp. 250, notes, index. Paper, \$22.50.)

There has been much written about colonial Pennsylvania and the Delaware Indians or Lenape in the last two decades. Recent interpretations, such as James Merrell's *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999) and the essays in William Pencak and Daniel Richter's edited volume, *Friends and Enemies in Penn's Woods: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), have emphasized the high level of violence in William Penn's colony and the difficult journey of the Delaware people from homelands in the Hudson and Delaware River Valleys, through Pennsylvania, and ultimately to the Ohio Country by the time of the American Revolution. Visions of pacifist Quakers dealing justly and peaceably with the original inhabitants have largely been

---

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY: A JOURNAL OF MID-ATLANTIC STUDIES, VOL. 76, NO. 2, 2009.  
Copyright © 2009 The Pennsylvania Historical Association

overturned. These images have been replaced by those of the disingenuous "Walking Purchase" of 1737 when Penn's descendents manipulated original agreements between Natives and Europeans in order to acquire more land than the Indians originally intended to grant them. Likewise, more emphasis is on events like the "Paxton Boys'" violent forays during the 1760s, and the Gnaddenhutten Massacre of 1782, where dozens of Native American Moravian converts were murdered by Pennsylvania militiamen. Amy Schutt's contribution to the literature on the Delawares and Pennsylvania is valuable, not necessary for its novelty or the profundity of her interpretation, but for the book's clarity in presenting a very complicated history of the occupants of the Delaware and Lower Hudson River Valleys at the time of European contact through the American Revolution. Schutt draws on the German-language *Records of the Moravian Mission among the Indians of North America* in addition to the well-known published and manuscript sources on Delaware culture and colonial Pennsylvania. Based on this evidence, she explains how and why the eastern dialectal groups—the Unami, Unalachtigo, and Munsee Delawares—were forced westward. As they migrated through Pennsylvania and ultimately to Ohio, they formed and reformed their communities.

The interpretation that holds the narrative together is the argument that alliance formation among Delawares and their neighboring groups was a salient characteristic of life before, during, and after their "odyssey." Because the terms "tribe," "nation," or "confederacy" often imply coherence that did not necessarily exist for all native communities, Schutt's use of a flexible concept like "alliances" between villages and other communities helps to make sense of the Delawares' complicated and fluid arrangements. At the time of contact with Dutch, Swedish, and English explorers and settlers, the Delaware communities were held together by extended family groupings that were ostensibly matrilineal; however, individuals were also organized into nuclear families at the same time. The multiple layers of family life meant that a given individual might belong to different familial groupings, providing an extensive support network. Relations among villages, up and down the valleys, worked similarly. Immediate neighbors traded, married, and interacted with each other. However, the trade networks also extended northward toward Albany and southward to the Delaware Bay.

European encroachments, largely by the English settlers who became more desirous of agricultural lands, made the Delaware position in their homelands untenable. In her explanation of dispossession of lands, Schutt emphasizes that Europeans and Indians, especially through the seventeenth

century, had flexible agreements about land usage, based largely on Indian traditions, where neighboring communities might share a specific plot of land for hunting purposes without conflict. However, English land-use patterns and increased immigration required the land to be held exclusively by Europeans, especially by the 1730s. Thus, often through threats of violence, the English successfully compelled the Delawares to sign agreements giving up land in the East and forcing them to move ever westward, through Pennsylvania, and ultimately into the Ohio Country. Some populations remained dotted throughout Pennsylvania; others moved in with the western Iroquois nations. According to Schutt, the survival of the Delaware as a people with a cohesive identity had to do with language, in part, but relied more on their willingness to ally with other communities as they were dislocated. This tradition served the migrating groups well as they reformulated their communities to survive forced removal, economic disruption, and epidemic disease.

Readers will be thankful to Schutt for providing some excellent maps, which not only provide lucid details of village locations, streams, and rivers but also place the grand movements and long-distance relationships among the Delawares and their allies and enemies in their broad spatial context. Because the migrations occurred between small settlements, often on lesser-known rivers and streams, the geography of Delaware migrations could potentially be difficult for all but those readers with extensive knowledge of Pennsylvanian geography. Fortunately, the maps are placed at just the right places in the book to help the reader follow the paths of the Delawares quite easily.

Like all scholars of colonial-era Native American history, Schutt has imperfect sources and is compelled to make conjectural assertions due to missing and often contradictory evidence. Usually, Schutt remains on solid ground in her interpretations. The one arena where she makes some questionable interpretations is in the realm of the fictive gender language used by the Delaware in their negotiations with Europeans and Native Americans. In particular, there are several places in the documentary record where the Delaware refer to themselves or are referred to as "women," usually after defeat or subjugation by the Iroquois to their north. For instance, Schutt notes, "In agreeing to terms at the end of Pontiac's War, Ohio Delawares at the Johnson Hall treaty referred to themselves as 'women' and urged reconciliation .... 'You know you made us women,' they told the Senecas." Schutt continues, "This statement, however, did not assume quiet submissiveness.

Instead the Delawares took the lead in urging the Senecas to return their English captives. In so doing, Delawares linked their female status with the authority to 'strongly recommend' actions and to shape policy. 'We expect that Men will not refuse what we earnestly desire . . .' (123). It is, of course, well-documented that among the northeastern Indians women played a more active role in the political realm than in European society. Among the Iroquois, especially, women were very influential in the treatment of captives. However, the use of the term "women" in this context serves to place the tribe in a gendered position relating to warfare—a realm where women rarely participated on the field of battle. Thus, the level of even marginal equity that Schutt suggests existed between the Iroquois and Delawares is not particularly convincing.

A very welcome Epilogue explains the current locations of descendents of the Delaware populations by summarizing the movements from the Ohio Country to Wisconsin, Canada, Texas, Oklahoma, and New York State. Less clear, however, is the nature of modern Delawares' political status in terms of tribal recognition and other issues. Of course, the later history is not the declared focus of her study and the odyssey that she describes thoroughly really ends with the American Revolution. The rest of the odyssey of the Lenape people, continuing through the present, is left for other scholars to unpack.

THOMAS J. LAPPAS

*Nazareth College of Rochester*

Aaron Spencer Fogleman. *Jesus is Female: Moravians and Radical Religion in Early America*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. Pp. x, 330, illustrations, tables, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$49.95.)

Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, leader of the Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Church), came to Pennsylvania in December 1741. A firm believer in the unity of all Christian churches in a shared faith, who saw no contradiction in his own dual role as Lutheran minister and Moravian bishop, Zinzendorf presided over the first of seven ecumenical synods on New Year's Day 1742. His stated aim was to form an association of autonomous churches, united on the essential doctrines and free to follow their own traditions in worship and work, but others saw an attempt to proselytize for the