

BOOK REVIEWS

A. G. Roeber, ed. *Ethnographies and Exchanges: Native Americans, Moravians, and Catholics in Early North America*. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008. Pp. 240, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$45.00.)

Ethnographies and Exchanges: Native Americans, Moravians, and Catholics in Early North America is a collection of essays that will be of interest to a wide range of scholars concerned with borderland interactions during the sixteenth through the early nineteenth centuries. The thirteen essays comment on the dynamic of cultural exchange that accompanied both French Catholic and Moravian missions to the Ohio Country and *pays d'en haut*. Specific attention has been given to the life, work, and records of David Zeisberger, a Moravian missionary, whose recently translated diaries provided the focal point for the Max Kade German-American Research Institute Conference held in 2004. The fruits of the conference are noted in Roeber's balanced and insightful interdisciplinary publication.

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Perhaps most importantly, the Zeisberger diaries underscore the fact that few “repositories contain more sizable or substantive documentation of greater value to ethnohistorical research than the Moravian Archives” in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania—no doubt a tidbit of information many of us have overlooked (49). Roeber emphasizes this point in the preface of the work, suggesting that the lack of attention is not surprising given scholarly preoccupation with the story of contact in the Chesapeake and New England regions. As the articles indicate, we should keep in mind the “episodic” nature of contact and exchange and thus pay closer attention to the wealth of information that can be mined by looking “both east and west from parts of the North Atlantic world that are less familiar” (xiii).

In response to this apparent void, Roeber has edited an impressive collection of essays that seek to shift our attention to the complexities of cultural exchange that oftentimes unfolded in separate but equally important narratives when compared to Crown and Haudenosaunee interaction. Instead of revisiting the diplomatic and imperial maneuvering of grand councils and colonial capitals, and the principle players involved in such negotiations, *Ethnographies and Exchanges* includes a refreshing discussion of text, translations, language, gender, and the problems associated with identifying Native and European interactions and convictions in those settlements and regions targeted by Moravian and Catholic missionaries.

David Edmunds’ contribution, “This Much Admired Man,” encompasses many themes that can be identified throughout the collection. His analysis of the Munsee war chief Glikhikan, and those close to him, underscore the problems associated with uncovering the motivations and convictions of Native Americans affected by European missionaries. And while Edmunds concludes Glikhikan was a “true convert,” he offers a caveat given the upheaval that characterized the worlds of many first peoples following contact: “Native Americans usually integrated Christianity within the parameters of their own cultures rather than those of Euro-Americans” (16). Nevertheless, Edmunds’ contribution admittedly complicates this generality, which is perhaps why it appears as the first article of the collection.

The other essays are divided into three distinct sections. The first collection of essays—Texts and Interpretive Perspectives—focus on the problems associated with identifying the intentions of one group of peoples through the biases and written record of another. Christian Feest, for instance, draws the ethnographic contributions of Zeisberger into a wider discussion of religion and early accounts of native life and customs. While lacking nuance, Feest’s conclusion

remains important: scholars should not forget the principle purpose of those individuals that left the first detailed records of the customs and actions of the continent's initial inhabitants.

By grappling with the problematic nature of succession among Delawares during the mid to late eighteenth century, Hermann Wellenreuther also tackles the problems associated with “particular accounts included, left out, or unknowingly misrepresented” in the historical record (xxi). Wellenreuther's use of the Zeisberger diaries as related to the stories of Netawatwees (Newcomer) and Geleleminde (John Killbuck) does much to further the idea that not “only did the mode of selecting head chiefs change, but so did the meaning of key terms such as ‘tribe,’ ‘nation’ and ‘phratry’” (47–48). Perhaps taking a closer look at why someone like George Croghan and other cultural brokers sought to knowingly misrepresent the heirs to chieftdomships would have added another important facet to Wellenreuther's insightful tale (32).

Thoroughly referenced and well organized, Robert Grumet's addition to the collection revisits Netawatwees and Geleleminde as viewed by Zeisberger to suggest that the “Delawares employed a bifurcate merging kinship terminology characteristic of Crow kin-term systems” as well as to illustrate the “Heckewelder error” in terms of the mistake commonly made by scholars when referencing and identifying the tribes of the “Delaware Nation” (63). Grumet's categorization of tribal organization may differ from Siegrun Kaiser's views, but it is his passing reference to the term “acculturation” when identifying the pressures that “erased the collective memories of ever-decreasing populations forced to move from traditional [settlements]” that no doubt demonstrates what Dominique Deslandres considers one of the fundamental problems scholars continue to bring to the study of missions and cultural exchange in early North America (59).

Deslandres' “The Impossible Acculturation” begins the second section of essays—Missions and Exchanges—which emphasize the importance and changing nature of missions and missionaries in North America. Where Deslandres sees seventeenth century French missionaries as theologically uncompromising agents of the Catholic faith struggling to rationalize “the Other” in an attempt to both convert and explain the existence of first peoples, both Luca Codignola and Christopher Bilodeau underscore the flexibility of both missionary and Indian from the middle of the century onward. As Bilodeau's examination of Wabanaki reactions to Catholicism demonstrates, it is difficult to believe that the theological convictions of all French missionaries remained steadfast and static until the end of the seventeenth

century given localized circumstances and experiences. In fact, coupled with Codignola's analysis of French missions in the post Seven Years' War period that convincingly argues missionaries in the field increasingly "acted mostly according to their own conscience and personal whims" (95), the authors reinforce James Axtell's earlier claim that many missionaries were content if their Indian converts simply believed in God and strove to follow the ten commandments (99).

Following Rowena McClinton's analysis of Moravian missions in Bethlehem and Salem, Walter Woodward's essay on the importance of music in both Moravian and Delaware culture rounds out the second section of essays. Woodward's article, which argues that "music, especially song, was a persuasive and essentially important aspect of ... Native American [and Moravian mission] culture" is perhaps the most interesting and refreshing essay in the collected works. There should be little doubt, as Woodward remarks, that all historians can benefit "from paying attention to the presence of music and song in our sources" and the "new scholarly effort to understand the significance of sound in the world we have lost" (126).

Inter- and intra-tribal relations provide the basis to the third and final segment of essays in Roeber's collection—Indigenous Perspectives. Siegrun Kaiser's exploration of indigenous resistance to Moravian missionary efforts not only uncovers potential problems with scholarly misidentification of Munsee Indians, but more importantly the remarkable, albeit unsuccessful maneuvering and use of Moravian missions to save them from dislocation. Kaiser's essay reminds us of the fractionalized nature of tribal diplomacy given the oftentimes localized concerns of those first peoples struggling to maintain land, culture, and identity in the face of increasing European pressures. In fact, Jane Merritt's revisitation of the gender frontier illustrates that Delaware and Mahican women cleverly adopted and subtly redefined the divine message of the Moravians to suit their personal or family needs. This did not sit well with men like Zeisberger, underscoring not only a gender bias in the record, but also the unpredictability of each zone of cultural exchange. Alyssa Mt. Pleasant's analysis of missionary presence at Buffalo Creek adds to the notion that a close study of European culture and religion—and the misfortune of those first peoples that did not engage the missionaries—provided opportunities for indigenous communities to maintain their lands. Interestingly, while Mt. Pleasant adds a fresh perspective by diverging from discussion of Moravians, Catholic, and the Delaware in favor of the Senecas and Presbyterian missionaries at Buffalo Creek, the author neglects to include

commentary of those Haudenosaunee along the Grand River. If she had done so, Mt. Pleasant may have realized the notable connection between events occurring on the Haldimand Tract with regard to the religious schism between "Christian" and "Pagan" factions and those Haudenosaunee south of the forty-ninth parallel.

It is fitting that the translator of the Zeisberger diaries, Julie Tomberlin Weber, was given the final word in this interesting collection of essays. In her concluding remarks, Tomberlin Weber comments at length on the complexities of translation, suggesting that we, as readers and researchers, should keep in mind that transparency in translation "is unobtainable and that no translation can ever live up to an original text" (196). Coupled with James Merrell's recent examination of the recordings of Teedyuscung's 1756 council speeches, her remarks should keep those of us interested in the history of cross-cultural exchange humble and mindful of our sources.

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David Brion Davis. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xvi, 440, maps, illustrations, notes, index. Cloth \$30.00; Paper, \$18.95.)

In the past three decades slavery has come to occupy a central place in history. Scores of monographs discussing various aspects of slavery are written each year, and *Slavery and Abolition's* Annual Bibliographical Supplement now exceeds one hundred and fifty pages. This increased interest in slavery has also been reflected in the realm of public history, as museums throughout the world have presented exhibits highlighting slavery's importance. Slavery has even become the center of interest in such popular movies as *Amazing Grace*, *Amistad*, and *Glory*. As David Brion Davis realized in the mid-1990s when he began a seminar on slavery for high school teachers, despite the greater acceptance of the importance of slavery in our history, neither the public nor college students are well informed on the subject. To remedy this circumstance, Davis set out to provide a synthetic narrative of the history of slavery in the Americas that could connect with the general public and serve as a textbook. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* succeeds on both counts.