

## BOOK REVIEWS

Peter Silver. *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian Warfare Transformed Early America*. (W.W. Norton, 2008. Pp. xxvi, 406, illustrations, maps, notes, index. Cloth, \$29.95; Paper, \$18.95.)

With few interruptions, the British and American borderlands experienced consistent warfare with Native Americans from the midpoint of the eighteenth-century onwards. While warfare certainly transformed indigenous cultures, the persistent presence of native groups near European settlements drastically altered the complexion of British North America as well. Peter Silver attempts to address these changes in *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America*. By focusing primarily on the mid-Atlantic region, the author argues that continuous warfare between natives and Europeans ultimately led to disparate groups of colonists recognizing their similarities over their differences. By doing so, they managed to forge a unified identity previously absent in the British colonies.

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PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY: A JOURNAL OF MID-ATLANTIC STUDIES, VOL. 77, NO. 2, 2010.  
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Silver's North America teems with diversity. Culturally different groups from the British Isles and various German principalities inhabited the colonies. From Europe, these groups brought a variety of religious faiths that frequently provoked distrust. With attention to detail so often ignored by colonial historians, the author further indicates the presence of numerous Native American peoples living very much within the confines of European settlement. Avoiding a homogenized view of North America with Anglos on one side of the 'frontier' and Indians on the other, Silver instead describes a land where conflict might just as easily erupt between competing European groups than between natives and Europeans.

The Seven Years' War and successive conflicts changed this dynamic. The unprecedented violence of the Seven Years' War led many settlers, be they German or Irish, Presbyterian or Lutheran, to seek support from their provincial governments. In places such as Pennsylvania, the perceived ambivalence of colonial authorities led initially to the development of a rhetoric of violence meant to pressure these authorities into assisting settlers. Politically ambitious colonists, more interested in power than helping their western brethren, soon adopted this rhetoric to attack Quaker power in Pennsylvania. This proliferation of anti-Indian imagery seems to have quickly ingrained itself in the colonial psyche, leading eventually to the prevalence of strong anti-Indian sentiment called by the author the "anti-Indian sublime." Silver demonstrates this attitude most shockingly with descriptions of the actions of the Paxton Boys in the 1760s and the massacre at Gnadenhutten in 1782. The author believes that this growth in anti-Indian sentiment drove ethnically and religiously diverse colonists into each other's arms.

Significantly, Silver manages to project his thesis onto the American Revolution as well. By connecting British military efforts to its alliance with natives, the author argues that Americans managed to convince themselves of British barbarity. By doing so, they successfully transitioned American perception of Britain as the glorious empire they had fought to defend a generation before to a nation lacking in humanity. No longer rebelling against their lawful government, they now represented beleaguered citizens defending hearth and home.

In a general sense, Silver's arguments seem convincing. The colonies did represent a diverse set of interests. Relative unity did increase as the eighteenth century came to a close. His voluminous evidence does, moreover, suggest that anti-Indian sentiment played a significant role in this transformation. What readers will not find, however, is a chronological

narrative, strong protagonists or discussion of many areas of British North America.

While attempting to prove that Indian warfare and its subsequent anti-Indian sentiment drove European populations in British North America into each other's arms, the author allows nearly a half century for the developments to fully mature. He attempts to maintain a chronological approach, roughly transporting his reader through the Seven Years' War, Pontiac's Uprising, and finally the American Revolution and the early national period. Yet, within any given topic, the reader is presented with evidence from greatly divergent eras. Most remarkable, Silver at one point provides data from the War of 1812 to support an argument pertaining to the 1760s. While this certainly represents an especially stark example of the author's use of evidence, the reader might frequently be unsure of where exactly they stand in time. Silver's argument, however, does not rest on a clear chronological path. The perceptual shift in mindsets of colonists necessarily occurred to different peoples at different times. By addressing the second half of the eighteenth century, the author demonstrates that anti-Indian sentiment took time to become established. It was, in essence, a process not an event.

The geographical scope of the work, however, is a little misleading. Silver claims in his title to discuss early America. In reality, he focuses almost exclusively on the mid-Atlantic with particular attention paid to the colony of Pennsylvania. Penn's colony of course proves to be a terrific example of the author's argument due to its tradition of diversity and paucity of Indian-European violence prior to the Seven Years' War. While this study might prove especially useful to scholars of the region, it remains questionable how relevant the book proves to other areas of North America. Certainly, diversity emerged later in Virginia and the Carolinas as the backcountries became settled with populations similar to that of Pennsylvania. New York, as well, represented a thoroughly diverse colony. Yet, the author fails to address this point. Certainly, New England represents a different case altogether. Thus, while *Our Savage Neighbors* might prove a useful case study for scholars outside of Pennsylvania, it provides little of substance to support its titular claim of discussing Indian warfare's transformative effect on early America as a whole.

Silver's work is thoroughly researched and offers an intriguing proposition in its assertion that Indian warfare had a unifying effect on colonial societies. By studying the language and actions of colonists toward Native Americans

over a half-century, the author demonstrates how this development was an ongoing, organic process, yet one that was static enough to be used consciously as a political expedient. These insights are both valuable and thought provoking. Still, the narrow geographical limits of the study leave something to be desired. Many readers may still wonder, was Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic unique, or do they represent the colonies as a whole?

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Katherine Carté Engel. *Religion and Profit: Moravians in Early America*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. Pp. 313, illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$39.95.)

Moravian settlements in colonial Pennsylvania have attracted a considerable amount of attention in recent years, with Craig D. Atwood's *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* (2004) and Aaron Spencer Fogleman's *Jesus Is Female: Moravians and Radical Religion in Early America* (2007) addressing various aspects of religious life in Moravian Bethlehem. Katherine Carté Engel's *Religion and Profit: Moravians in Early America* is an outstanding contribution to this literature. She effectively places Moravian missionary activity and economic relationships in the context of the larger global community of the Unitas Fratrum by exploring the bonds between the community at Bethlehem with the "home base" on Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf's estate in Herrnhut, Saxony.

Engel contends that missionary work was the basis of Moravian life. Zinzendorf established the main community of Bethlehem in December 1741 as a pilgrim congregation (*Pilgergemeinde*), and it quickly became the hub for missionary activity throughout the mid-Atlantic. Led by August Spangenberg, who began Moravian work in the colony in 1736, and Zinzendorf, Bethlehem developed into a thriving religious and economic center. These Moravian founders created a communal economic system known as the Oeconomy that, according to Engel, "implied a natural link between a practical, earthly household and a larger spiritual order" (33). A devotion to work dominated the daily life of Bethlehem's settlers; unfortunately, the emphasis on missionary work depleted the labor force and made the communal society less viable.