

BOOK REVIEWS

Native Americans' Pennsylvania. By DANIEL K. RICHTER. (University Park: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 2005. 100p. Notes, suggestions for further reading. \$12.95.)

For *Native Americans' Pennsylvania*, Daniel K. Richter draws on his extensive expertise in early Native American history and, as usual, produces a tasty morsel that is both readable and satisfying. Although not entirely academic in purpose, the author has included a substantial bibliographic essay that lays out the trajectory of research on Pennsylvania from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century, highlighting the important intersections of anthropology, genealogy, and history as they helped elucidate the lives of native peoples. This multidisciplinary approach emphasizes the complex ways that cultures adapted and survived despite centuries of social and cultural disruption. As a whole, Richter argues that Pennsylvania natives' experience "revealed national trends in starkest relief" (p. 92). In other words, to understand *Native Americans' Pennsylvania* is to understand the broader American Indian experience.

While noting that the iconographic events of William Penn's supposed 1682 treaty with the Lenni Lenape and the massacre of Conestoga Indians by the Paxton Boys in 1763 usually denote the boundaries of Pennsylvania's native history, Richter intentionally starts his tale long before Columbus and reminds us that Indians outlived the frontier violence that defined the eighteenth-century mid-Atlantic. Indeed, the first two chapters contain no Europeans at all. The reader, instead, is introduced to the geographical and environmental factors that shaped the cultural lives of Paleo-Indians and their descendents through 1500. Richter outlines broad trends that illustrate how humans developed from scattered hunters and gatherers into more sedentary, agricultural-based societies. For instance, the introduction of beans, corn, and squash cultivation added variety to their diet, but also affected gender roles and women's authority within an emerging clan system. Here, Richter's clear, compelling prose enlivens even the driest archaeological data on arrow heads and ceramic shards, demonstrating how native cultures became more complex as technological innovations provided new ways of killing game and each other. Along with military and economic developments, new religious rites and political organization emerged, revolving around kinship networks.

Even when Pennsylvania Indians finally discover Europeans in chapter 3, the book continues to emphasize native perspective and traces the impact of this intrusion on cultural practices and ethnic groupings. Disease and trade helped shape settlement patterns and intercommunity conflict, but also led to intermixing

that produced new societies known today as Lenape, Munsee, and Susquehannock. Richter draws from recent scholarship for his section on Penn's colonization and eighteenth-century hostilities, which is standard fare about the struggle between Europeans and natives over territory and resources. By the late eighteenth century, most Pennsylvania natives had been driven from their homes by racialized violence. The only disappointment comes with the hasty construction of the final chapters. Little has been written about eastern Indians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and one wants more about this "invisible minority," which admittedly numbered few. Still, the presence of children at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the participation of Quakers in native benevolent societies, and the prevalence of land claims that crossed state boundaries kept Pennsylvania Indians involved in issues common to all Native Americans. It was through this common cause that they eventually established a "pan-Indian rather than tribal identity" (p. 82).

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Stealing God's Thunder: Benjamin Franklin's Lightning Rod and the Invention of America. By PHILIP DRAY (New York: Random House, 2005. xviii, 279p. Illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. \$25.95.)

In this gracefully written study of Benjamin Franklin's life, Philip Dray argues that Franklin's most important contribution to the eighteenth century was the lightning rod. Dray builds his account of Franklin's scientific and political career around Jacques Turgot's declaration that Franklin the scientist/patriot had "snatched lightning from the sky and the sceptre from tyrants." In *Stealing God's Thunder*, Franklin's lightning rod is ranked with Newton's *Principia* and the U.S. Constitution of 1787 as one of the greatest triumphs of the Enlightenment. At the center of this achievement, Dray's Franklin is a homespun and eminently reasonable hero who tactfully wrests lightning bolts from the hands of an angry God.

Like the Franklin he describes so well, Dray has the gift of making complicated things seem plain. Franklin's electrical experiments are related afresh, placed against the wider backdrop of eighteenth-century natural philosophy. Elevating him from the ranks of knowledgeable dabblers—even proficient ones who managed, as did Franklin, to shock pigeons and ring lightning bells in the stair-hall without serious harm—Dray places Franklin in the company of those enlightened European experimenters who shared his passion for the study of electricity. Dray is at his best writing about Franklin's role in this transatlantic network of scientific friendships and rivalries, and he follows Franklin's scientific interests throughout his long political career.

In its treatment of the American Enlightenment, the book points out the powerful connections between enlightened science and the politics of the