

BOOK REVIEWS

Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America. By DAVID DIXON. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005. xiii 353p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

In 1763 and 1764 it may have seemed that the fate of the British Empire in America was hanging in the balance. A wide alliance of Indians throughout the Ohio and Pennsylvania region and into the western Great Lakes had moved against the British forts, and settlers throughout the area had both taken numerous forts and inflicted many casualties. This movement has come down to us through history with the name of Pontiac's Uprising, so labeled because of the leadership of the Ottawa Indian named Pontiac, though historians have differed over exactly how much he controlled the uprising that has been given his name. Largely because of British superiority in numbers and supply potential the war was eventually fought to a stalemate. While the English presence had been pushed back and the natives still controlled the territory they occupied at the start of the war, the Indians had lost an opportunity to inflict greater damage on the English and halt their push for land that would eventually lead to native dispossession.

Though Pontiac's Uprising has always been mentioned in historical texts and studies of the period, it had not been the recipient of detailed monographic analysis for many years. David Dixon has produced a solid treatment of the uprising and has filled a need in focusing more closely on some of the military actions. Unfortunately for his contribution, his study has appeared at the same time as other more complete treatments of Pontiac's Uprising, especially Gregory Evans Dowd's *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations and the British Empire* (2002). Though Dixon seems aware of the basics of the Indian experience, Dowd devotes considerably more time and understanding to the Indian nations, their reasons for involvement in the war, and their worldview. Dixon's book needs to be evaluated, however, in the context of his reason for undertaking the project. As he discusses in his preface, his interest in Pontiac's War developed out of his curiosity about why backcountry settlers supported the Revolutionary War effort when they would not appear to have been greatly affected by the issues of trade and taxation that served as motivations in most accounts of the war. His basic conclusion is that for backcountry settlers, "creation of revolutionary fervor had more to do with hostility towards Indians and a disdain for an unresponsive and distant government than with British economic policies, parliamentary representation, or the social and class consciousness that instigated revolutionary unrest in the urban areas" (p. 274). This purpose does lead him to

focus on Indian atrocities, which clearly did occur, though as Dixon admits, there were atrocities on both sides. Dixon is successful in achieving his goal, but for a more thorough understanding of Pontiac's Uprising on its own terms, there are now more profitable places to look.

Particularly unsatisfying is Dixon's explanation of Pontiac's true role. Though Dixon acknowledges at the end of the book that Indian social structure basically precluded the kind of authoritarian leadership that has been attributed to Pontiac, during the majority of the book Dixon refers to the natives who moved against the English as "Pontiac's forces." While Pontiac undoubtedly displayed more leadership than some works have given him credit for, his role was nuanced and the peoples acting as part of his uprising did so for their own reasons. Better understanding of Indian culture could have led to greater appreciation of factors such as what a wrenching experience and loss it was for Indians to turn over long-time captives who had often integrated into Indian societies. At times the role of captives just appears as a negotiating point, while John Bradstreet is criticized for not demanding enough in his peace negotiations.

Another uncomfortable aspect of Dixon's approach appears in his rather curious treatment of the introduction of smallpox blankets to Indians by Europeans at Fort Pitt. Granted, Indians did engaged in biological warfare of a sort, and it is possible that the smallpox may actually have come from sources other than those blankets. However, as Dowd points out, this does not change the fact that Englishmen engaged in a type of warfare that was technically forbidden in their theories of war, nor does it remove the question this incident raises about European attitudes towards Indians.

These reservations aside, this is a sound and useful analysis of Pontiac's War, though perhaps one that should be used in conjunction with other works to get the most complete picture.

Historic Indian Agency House, Portage, WI RICHARD DURSCHLAG

Naval Documents of the American Revolution. Vol. 11, American Theater: January 1, 1778–March 31, 1778. European Theater: January 1, 1778–March 31, 1778. Edited by MICHAEL J. CRAWFORD ET AL. (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 2005. xxx, 1365p. Illustrations, maps and charts, notes, appendices, index. \$82.)

Few people will read this book cover to cover. At almost 1,200 pages of documents organized chronologically by day, the eleventh volume in the *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* series is not exactly a page turner. And yet there is a drama to this volume all its own. The book covers a crucial three months in the Revolutionary War—the first three months of 1778—as France