

BOOK REVIEWS

Promised Land: Penn's Holy Experiment, The Walking Purchase, and the Dispossession of Delawares, 1600–1763. By STEVEN CRAIG HARPER. (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2006. 164 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.)

With this slender volume, Steven Craig Harper attempts to provide new insight into the story of the relationship between the Delawares (also known as the Lenape) and the Quakers who settled in their homeland. Harper states that the old tales of the settlement of Pennsylvania and a loving, peaceful friendship between Quakers and the Delawares are essentially wrong—the fact of the matter is that this relationship was not always loving but it emerged, developed, and truly worked because both peoples needed each other and used each other to their own respective advantages. The Delawares invited Quakers to stay in their homeland, he claims, in order to maintain and bolster their flagging political power in the face of increasing Iroquois efforts to extend dominion over them and their territory. Moreover, he asserts that Penn needed a friendly group of Native Americans with whom he could work to establish a safe place for his people, to launch his “Holy Experiment,” and then present it to the rest of the world. What emerged was a cooperative, mutually beneficial, peaceful association that created a unique “middle ground” between the two peoples, which existed for a very brief time. This fragile relationship, Harper then explains, was quickly overshadowed first by the private interests of Penn himself and later by those of Pennsylvania settlers, James Logan, and Penn’s sons. The need for amity with the Delawares ended when Penn’s chronically indebted sons took control of the colony. They then used the atmosphere of good will and harmony as a façade to camouflage their efforts to take the Delawares’ land and make money to pay creditors. The relationship reached its nadir in 1737 with the so-called Walking Purchase. Logan, Penn’s sons, and the Iroquois orchestrated this outrageous scam to rob the Delawares of their land and their political power, and to force their relocation. Soon the Delawares found that the middle ground was practically gone—they had less power and less space in which to negotiate because they were no longer useful. Although the Delawares protested and attempted to redress their grievances through negotiation, their efforts ultimately fell flat, which then led many of them to resort to violence in the French and Indian War in an effort to regain some of what had been lost. Yet while some lashed out, others relocated or acculturated or assimilated.

Well-written, informative, and thought-provoking, Harper’s work synthesizes a great deal of scholarship and presents it all clearly and concisely. The chapters

on the Walking Purchase and its aftermath are the best treatment of that subject yet, and Harper provides a carefully crafted and very accurate map to chart the infamous land grab. The book's merits, however, are eclipsed by significant flaws, especially Harper's inadequate understanding of both Delaware belief and Quakerism. Harper notes that the Delawares expected reciprocity "in return for encroachment" (p. 24) but neglects to adequately explain the concept of reciprocity in the context of their culture. His failure to realize that the Delawares' faith was based on reciprocity undermines his analysis of their interaction with European newcomers. He also has an insufficient understanding of Quakerism. He suggests that Penn's Quakerism was compromised by "English gentility" and "condescending colonialism" (p. 14) and hints broadly that as proprietor he was prepared to use force in a dispute with Delaware sachem Tammany. Such a course of action, however, would have violated Inner Light theology and the peace testimony, basic tenets of his religion. Quakers believed (and still believe) that they should "let their lives speak," meaning that they should be living examples of their faith and treat everyone with kindness and respect in order to answer the divine spirit within all, which, in turn, might move a non-Quaker to convert; Penn's dealings with the Delawares also need to be understood in this light. These and other surprising errors undermine Harper's otherwise admirable work and leave the reader with an incomplete and incorrect understanding of both the Delawares and Quakers and the brief period of time when interactions between the two peoples were shaped by their religious beliefs.

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"Rememb'ring our Time and Work is the Lords": The Experiences of Quakers on the Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania Frontier. By KAREN GUENTHER. (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2005. 251 pp. Maps, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$52.50.)

This study of Exeter Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends in Berks County, Pennsylvania, is based upon intensive primary research in religious and governmental records and places these backcountry Quakers within the framework of much recent scholarship on Euro-Americans in colonial Pennsylvania. Karen Guenther uses a chronological and topical structure in examining the evolution of Exeter from its founding in 1737 by Friends, who included the parents of Daniel Boone, to its decline after 1789, marked by division from Robeson and Catawissa monthly meetings.

The author carefully describes the religious and ethnic context in which Exeter Friends lived, demonstrating the very different experience of Berks County Quakers from their coreligionists in Philadelphia, Chester, Bucks, and