

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania, and the First Nations: The Treaties of 1736–62.* Edited by SUSAN KALTER. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006. xiv, 453 pp. Illustrations, notes, glossary, index. \$45.)

Between 1736 and 1762, Benjamin Franklin published thirteen treaties made between Pennsylvania and the Six Nations Iroquois and their native allies, including the Lenapes and the Shawnees. At these treaty negotiations, leaders from different cultures gathered to determine vital issues of war and peace, regulate intercultural exchange, and seek justice from one another. William Penn's secretary, James Logan, noted that the 1736 treaty talks in Philadelphia were conducted "in the presence and hearing of some Thousands of our People" (p. 56). Treaty negotiations were public spectacles in an age without many large-scale events. Of enormous importance in the eighteenth century, the treaties were largely forgotten in the nineteenth century, only to be rediscovered in the early twentieth century as a compelling and uniquely American literary form. In 1938, Julian P. Boyd republished the treaties in a single volume with an introduction by Carl Van Doren. According to Van Doren, the "stately folios" printed by Franklin were "after two hundred years the most original and engaging documents of their century in America" (*Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin*, vii).

Boyd reproduced the treaties in facsimile on legal-sized paper, in a beautiful edition of five hundred numbered copies. These large, unwieldy, and expensive books have rested in the special collections of major research libraries, often with their pages uncut and unread. This new edition by Susan Kalter will make these important documents much more accessible and available. Space and cost restraints mean that the original pagination, spacing, and formatting are gone. Kalter has also omitted the journals of various witnesses of the treaties, which is regrettable because they provided a different, less formal perspective. Kalter has written a new introduction that replaces those of Boyd and Van Doren, along with a new glossary of important persons and explanatory endnotes to the treaties. She has updated the original orthography to improve readability, which is a welcome improvement, as is her expansion of the index, which adds many subject entries and a more complete indexing of Indian names.

This new edition of the treaties will be indispensable for anyone working on native or imperial history in this region and period. Kalter's notes offer explanations of likely sources of confusion in the treaties. The only significant problem with the volume is Kalter's introduction, which recounts a basic diplomatic narrative—a surprising choice of emphasis for a scholar of literature. Kalter is positioned to have offered a fresh reading of the treaties as contested texts, analy-

sis of their composition, printing, and rhetorical strategies, or discussion of the treaty as theater, but she does none of this. Kalter instead devotes a great deal of attention to the question of Iroquois influence on the United States Constitution. Surprisingly, she never cites James Merrell's Bancroft Prize-winning *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (2000), although readers wishing to better understand the context of the treaties ought to consult this important work. Yet however flawed the introduction may be, the real value of the volume is in the treaties themselves and the new apparatus Kalter has provided, particularly the new index. Readers with an interest in Pennsylvania's colonial history or early American literature will be grateful for this attractive and affordable new edition of the treaties.

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WILLIAM CARTER

*Blooding at Great Meadows: Young George Washington and the Battle that Shaped the Man.* By ALAN AXELROD. (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2007. 270 pp. Notes, index. \$22.95.)

The 250th anniversary of the French and Indian War has stimulated a number of scholars to revisit that struggle that led directly to the American Revolution and was an important learning experience for the nation's greatest hero, George Washington. Alan Axelrod's volume focuses on this latter point, arguing that Washington's strengths as a diplomat, soldier, and political leader were very much shaped by the challenges he confronted on the Pennsylvania frontier in 1753 and 1754, culminating in his defeat at Fort Necessity.

Drawing his information largely from Washington's papers, Axelrod revisits the familiar story of Washington's youth, his dependence on his half-brother, Lawrence, and his alliances with the Fairfax family and Virginia's lieutenant governor, Robert Dinwiddie. He portrays Washington as a very ambitious young man who went to great lengths to promote his own interests.

Washington's life was dramatically changed by the growing controversy between England and France over which nation would control the Ohio Country. Washington had considerable interest in the area for business as well as patriotic reasons. By the early 1750s the French had built a line of forts from Lake Erie to the Allegheny River to enforce their claims. In response, Governor Dinwiddie in 1753 dispatched George Washington as an emissary to the French forces in northwest Pennsylvania.

Axelrod provides extensive detail on Washington's remarkable winter expedition from Williamsburg to Fort La Boeuf and back. Along the way, the twenty-one year old learned his first lessons about Indian diplomacy and demonstrated a keen eye for describing French military assets. Escaping death on two occa-