

Wild Yankees: The Struggle for Independence along Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Frontier. By PAUL B. MOYER. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007. 240 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$39.95.)

In *Wild Yankees*, Paul B. Moyer provides more than a fresh take on the sad history of the rural insurgency in Pennsylvania's Susquehanna Valley. At the same time that Moyer unpacks the story of how Anglo-Europeans competed violently with Native Americans and with each other, making his book a useful study for historians of Pennsylvania, he uses the fight for land to provide an alternative framework for understanding the American Revolution. The rural violence that characterized the region and informed people's choices during the Revolution "was not the result of ideas that trickled down from above, but of aspirations that bubbled up from below" (10). According to the author, insurgent farmers who combined their fight for land with the struggle for independence from Britain were not driven by class relations or politically motivated literature but by their fear of falling into economic and political dependency. What Moyer shows, however, is that through all this, the farmers' insurgency grew out of their daily goals and relationships. Their motives were local, personal, and organic.

Moyer follows a roughly chronological narrative, starting with conflicts between Anglo-European colonists and Native Americans over possession of land in the region. These initial disputes, he contends, demonstrate how contests over land both instigated and were produced by the expropriation of the natives' land by white colonists. Whites confiscated land by attacking claims from all sides, and natives responded to the multiple and uncoordinated legal and physical assaults the best they could. But by the 1750s, white colonists possessed enough power to drive natives from the land and claim it for themselves. Ensuing conflicts erupted when whites from different colonies who represented competing public and private interests tried to exert their authority over the land and the people on it. As a result, the combatants shifted their alliances based on who they thought could secure their property rights. This was particularly true during the struggle for independence from Britain, as officials from several political groups tried to lure people to their side. Ironically, the conflict was ultimately settled not by violence but in a court that had gained authority because the political and economic climate of the region, and of the new country, had changed. The inhabitants of the area accepted the decision because they had become more concerned with staying on land they had improved than with defending the legitimacy of another state's land claims. Moreover, the participants abided by the decision because it had the backing of the new government of the United States.

What stands out, however, is how these rural conflicts overlapped with and shaped the contemporaneous struggle for independence from Britain and how each influenced the other. The movement for independence may have heightened the national political implications of local struggles for property and power,

but that movement could not have succeeded without the support of rural people who sought their own brand of liberty. For Moyer, that relationship illustrates that the radicalism that characterized the revolutionary period, particularly in the countryside, grew out of something more than the ideas espoused by British writers or peoples' material concerns. It grew out of farmers' desires to acquire the political and economic independence guaranteed with property ownership.

Cleveland State University

THOMAS J. HUMPHREY

Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America. By PETER SILVER. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007. 352 pp. Figures, charts, appendix, notes, index. \$29.95.)

During the height of the Indian conflict known as Pontiac's Uprising, a patrol of Pennsylvania militiamen led by George Allen surrounded the camp of three peaceful Delaware Indians. Convinced that these Delawares were part of a war party responsible for recent raids in the area, Allen and his men decided to kill their captives. Ironically, one of the Indians was well-known to the Pennsylvanians. He was called George Allen, having taken that name from the very same militia leader who now leveled his musket at the surprised Delawares. This association, however, did not prevent the soldiers from shooting down the three hapless Indians. After scalping the fallen Delawares, the militiamen turned to leave when, suddenly, the Indian known as George Allen jumped up and escaped into the forest.

The tale of militiaman George Allen's attempted murder of Delaware George Allen contextualizes Peter Silver's monumental study of how Indian warfare in the mid-Atlantic region of early America helped to forge a distinct American identity that embraced democratic government, civil liberty, and a regard for ethnic and religious toleration. The middle provinces, unlike other regions in colonial America, were home to a multitude of European ethnic groups. These diverse settlers brought many age-old cultural and religious tensions with them to America. As Silver eloquently explains, however, warfare with Indians forced these European transplants to set aside their suspicions and prejudices toward one another to focus on a common enemy. In the process, these disparate peoples also found common ideals that far outweighed their ethnic and religious differences.

The author begins with a fascinating, yet graphic, discussion of how Europeans living in the mid-Atlantic backcountry came to fear Indians. While these settlers may have been inured to armed conflict as practiced on the battlefields of Europe, they were wholly unprepared for the style and nature of Indian warfare. The mere rumor of Indian attacks sent thousands of terror-stricken