

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Ethnographies and Exchanges: Native Americans, Moravians, and Catholics in Early North America.* Edited by A. G. ROEBER. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008. 240 pp. Notes, index. \$45.)

How reliable are the observations about Indian cultures recorded by Euro-Americans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and how well are current scholars able to interpret the meanings of their texts, especially in translation? What are the limitations faced by translators and translations, both then and now, in conveying the meaning of words spoken and written by unfamiliar peoples in unfamiliar languages? What motives and mentalities characterized the minds of European missionaries as they encountered Native Americans? What methods did they employ as they endeavored to mediate the Christian message to potential Indian converts? And how did native men and women respond to those overtures as they looked for means to ensure the well-being of themselves, their families, and their communities?

These are some of the core questions that animate the essays of *Ethnographies and Exchanges*. If those queries are not particularly new for students interested in the interactions between Native Americans and Europeans in early America, where these authors search for answers is groundbreaking, at least comparatively and according to editor A. G. Roeber. Countering what he sees as the still-dominant focus of scholars on English contacts with Indians in New England and the Chesapeake, this volume looks instead to mine some of the rich materials produced by French Catholic and German Moravian Protestant missionaries in order to add to and correct the “received wisdom about the language, religion, and political structures of Europeans and First Peoples” (xiii). As most early Americanists are aware, the texts those newcomers produced contain much valuable ethnographic data and afford historians and other scholars a wealth of opportunities for making more sense out of the complex cross-cultural contacts that were at the heart of early American history.

The publication of an English translation of one of those texts, Moravian missionary David Zeisberger’s diaries for the years 1772 through 1781, gave rise to a scholarly conference in 2004, which in turn resulted in this collection of essays. Using Zeisberger’s journals more as a springboard than endpoint, contributors examine various communities of Delaware, Mahican, Munsee, Wabanaki, Haudenosaunee, and Cherokee Indians and their exchanges with Moravian and Catholic missionaries from the late seventeenth through the early

nineteenth centuries in places stretching from southern Québec to the western frontiers of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio and as far south as Salem, North Carolina.

Divided into three sections, the volume's essays generally offer insightful and balanced analyses that capture effectively both native and European perspectives on their exchanges. Following a fine introductory biographical piece on Glikhikan, a well-known Munsee war chief who surprisingly became a pacifist Moravian convert, part 1 contains three articles that, from different angles, wrestle with the interpretive problems posed by language and translation when using Moravian sources for understanding Delaware life and culture. Part 2 presents five essays on Catholic and Moravian mission mindsets and strategies and includes especially effective discussions of Jesuit tactics in "policing" Wabanaki neophyte behavior and Moravians' uses of music within their evangelism. Part 3 shifts our attention to Indian points of view on the Euro-American Christian presence. Recent emphasis on the multiplicity of native responses to Christianity (as opposed to a simple acceptance/rejection model) is reinforced here. A concluding essay revisits the challenges faced by eighteenth- and twenty-first-century translators.

The volume could have used an additional concluding essay that offered some comparative reflections on the Catholic and Moravian experiences. Nevertheless, it makes a solid overall contribution to the burgeoning scholarship on these Christian communities' encounters with native peoples in early America.

*Westmont College*

RICHARD W. POINTER

*The Life of Benjamin Franklin, Vol. 3, Soldier, Scientist, and Politician, 1748–1757.* By J. A. LEO LEMAY. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. 768 pp. Illustrations, appendices, notes, index. \$45.)

J. A. Leo Lemay died in October 2008, and volume 3 of what was to have been "the" definitive multivolume (a total of seven projected) biography of the great eighteenth-century American literary figure and statesman now stands as the final monument to Lemay's intensive, rigorous, and loving study of Benjamin Franklin. He joins the ranks of Douglas Southall Freeman, Dumas Malone, and Irving Brant, biographers of Washington, Jefferson, and Madison.

Lemay has a wonderful talent for weaving the concrete facts of Franklin's life into the recollection of those events as Franklin presented them in his *Autobiography*. Lemay, almost with a mischievous smile, points out what Franklin has misremembered or slightly reshaped. Because he has an unparalleled command of every detail in the *Autobiography* and every document published in thirty-nine volumes of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (1958–2008),