

BOOK REVIEWS

A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters among the Delaware Indians. By GUNLÖG FUR. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. 280 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95.)

In *A Nation of Women*, Gunlög Fur examines the origins of the “Delawares-as-Women” metaphor (160) within the context of the meanings of gender in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Native American and Euro-American societies and beliefs. She identifies three perspectives on the Onondaga speaker Canasatego’s post-Walking Purchase charge that the Delawares had lost their rights to land because “We conquer’d You, we made Women of you, you know you are Women, and can no more sell Land than Women” (163). The Iroquois and Pennsylvania government adopted the “Delawares-as-Women” metaphor to emasculate the Delaware men by denying their right to own land and wage war. While this perspective coincided with European patriarchal ideologies of women’s subservience, for the Iroquois the trope departed from traditional views of women and served their desire to ally with the English government. Fur explains that Delawares like Teedyuscung, who had assimilated to many European ways, adopted a second perspective, which accepted the negative connotation of the metaphor in order to accommodate the English; this was a strategy to retain a land base in eastern Pennsylvania.

For many Delawares, however, the metaphor reflected their culture and history. They embraced the image of a nation of women who negotiated peace among their native and European neighbors. Women were not subservient to men in Lenape society; their roles and status were complementary, not hierarchical. Men conducted war and hunted, while women established peaceful relations and raised crops. In this matrilineal society, women held responsibility for raising children born and adopted into their families and made key decisions for their communities. Fur provides interesting examples of diplomacy during the Seven Years’ War and its aftermath in which Delaware men seeking peace addressed one another as “sister.” Many Delawares embraced this identification as a nation of women who negotiated peace among warring neighbors. In diplomacy, use of the greeting “sister” marked an approach to peace while use of the appellation “brother” suggested readiness for war (185).

Fur grounds this discussion of the “Delawares-as-Women” metaphor in earlier chapters that look at gender ways among seventeenth-century Lenapes (as discussed in European contact narratives) and mid-eighteenth-century Delawares in the Pennsylvania town of Meniolagomekah (as discussed in the diaries of Moravian missionaries). Fur demonstrates how male Moravian missionaries,

even during the period when European women held considerable authority within the Moravian community, showed relatively little interest in the work and lives of Lenape women. Perhaps this underscores scholars' dependence on the available sources. Female missionaries' diaries might have told a more nuanced tale. Interestingly, while the Moravian missionaries come across as unsympathetic toward Lenape women, David Zeisberger provided the best evidence of why Delawares used "sister" in peacemaking.

Fur offers a convincing explanation of many Lenapes' understanding of their status as women. But not all Delawares accepted a role as peacemakers, as some men fought in the mid to late eighteenth century to preserve native lands. The "Delawares-as-Women" metaphor retains the aura of an identity imposed from outside by Iroquois, English, and modern scholars. The role of Delaware women was similar to that of other native women in the eastern woodlands of North America. What apparently distinguished some Delaware men was their willingness to accept the role of peacemaker and to adopt the metaphor of women as peacemakers as part of their identity.

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Scotch-Irish Merchants in Colonial America. By RICHARD K. MACMASTER. (Belfast: The Ulster Historical Foundation, 2009. xii, 324 pp. Bibliography, index. \$25.)

In 1718 and 1719, seven thousand people left Ulster for America, marking, according to Richard K. MacMaster, the "beginning of large-scale emigration . . . that would in time have significant impact on the societies of both Ireland and the American Colonies" (1). The mid-Atlantic was the favored destination, but some emigrants chose South Carolina, where the government offered inducements for settling the backcountry. MacMaster argues convincingly that this exodus, prompted by high rents demanded by landlords and periodic crop failures, was aided by an extensive trade in American flaxseed that made regular Atlantic crossings possible and contributed to the rise of Scots-Irish merchants in America.

In order to produce the best quality linen, Irish weavers pulled flax plants before they set seed; they relied on imported flaxseed for the next year's crop. In the 1700s, Britain enacted laws allowing Irish merchants to export linen directly to the colonies and the colonies to export flaxseed to Ireland. Trade was informal at first. "Scowbankers" and peddlers brought linen with them to sell in America, and some dealt in flaxseed. Soon Scots-Irish merchants established themselves in American port cities. They created networks within Ireland, across the Atlantic, and extending into the backcountry, and they began regular shipments of flour,