

genitors" (414). It is a lesson that the twenty-first-century West and Middle East, both peopled by the descendants of the same religiously inspired conquistadors, must relearn if we are to avoid the escalating violence of our ancient past.

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The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534–1701. By JON PARMENTER. (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2010. xlix, 474 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95.)

The Edge of the Woods argues that historians have made too much of the rooted fixity of local Haudenosaunee Iroquois agricultural communities. The emphasis instead should be on their people's "unsurpassed level of geographical knowledge of northeastern North America" and how that knowledge undergirded a flexible strategy to "link supposedly 'scattered' and 'fragmented' communities in a wide-ranging, often fluid, yet interconnected indigenous polity" (xi). Parmenter organizes his book around the major stages of the "Woods Edge" ceremony—an Iroquois ritual that mediates between the village and the forest, the fixed and the mobile, the peaceful and the warlike—and offers each stage of the rite as a metaphor for a distinct period of an Iroquois history lived in a constantly redefined geographic space.

The point about mobility is well taken, although it requires a curious lack of attention to the gendered ways in which *both* fixity and mobility are woven throughout Haudenosaunee history. In critiquing earlier scholarship, Parmenter assails mostly unnamed historians whose work "continues to anticipate the inevitable conquest of the continent's indigenous population by settler society" (xxviii–xxix). Yet apart from a few diehard technological determinists, one is hard pressed to find anyone writing since at least about 1980 who has argued that the European conquest was inevitable. Parmenter is particularly critical of those who rely on a technique that William N. Fenton called "upstreaming," the use of later ethnographic descriptions to interpret fragmentary earlier documentary and archaeological materials (xxxi–xxxiii). Yet Parmenter is hardly the first to point out that upstreaming tends to privilege historical paths that happened to lead to the present at the expense of patterns that did not endure. Again it is hard to find any recent historian who has not confronted these perils while emphasizing contingency and the need to read the past forward rather than backward. Except perhaps Parmenter himself, who seems untroubled by the fact that upstreaming is the only way to recover the ceremony that provides his book's title and narrative structure.

The Edge of the Woods comes with an impressive bulk of scholarly apparatus, including 101 tightly packed pages of notes. But a closer look sometimes

reveals citations to both primary and secondary sources only marginally related to the subject at hand (see, for one instance, n. 41, p. 302). Characterizations of previous work sometimes appear with no notes at all or in ways that twist the original meaning. Parmenter argues, for example, that large-scale adoption of war captives, “far from representing a ‘dilution’ of Iroquois ‘ethnic identity,’ . . . derived from the very assumptions constituting the core of Iroquois ethnic identity” (124). The implication is that the author of the quoted words, James W. Bradley, thinks otherwise, yet a reading context reveals the two to be in virtually complete agreement (*The Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois: Accommodating Change, 1500–1655* [1987], 186–87). Meanwhile, Parmenter’s narrative of events explores few new sources (or manuscript versions of century-old printed editions) and contains few surprises for readers who have kept up with recent literature on Haudenosaunee history in the seventeenth century.

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“The Good Education of Youth”: Worlds of Learning in the Age of Franklin.
 Edited by JOHN POLLACK. (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2009. 641 pp.
 Illustrations, drawings, maps. \$49.95.)

“The Good Education of Youth” is a remarkable collection that successfully combines scholarly articles, an exhibition catalogue, and a photographic essay within its covers. The book’s genesis came from the tercentenary celebration of Benjamin Franklin’s birth in 2006 and an exhibition created by the University of Pennsylvania Libraries in honor of Franklin’s contributions to education. According to editor John Pollack, “the essays and the exhibition offer . . . new insights into the educational history of the early middle Atlantic region and an incentive to researchers to explore it in further detail” (ix).

Pollack and the other contributors deliver on this claim by providing a rich array of essays that explore various facets of education from the 1680s through the 1820s. The starting point for many of these essays is Franklin’s famous 1749 publication, *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania*. Pollack’s introduction provides an excellent overview examining the implications of Franklin’s *Proposals* and the ways that his call for public support of education and the establishment of a new school in Philadelphia initiated a dialogue over learning that continues today. Pollack delves into historical debates over the significance of Franklin’s advancement of education: some scholars consider him to be a revolutionary figure, while others view him through more cynical lenses, claiming that he used education as a means to join the ranks of colonial elites.

The eight remaining essays discuss various aspects of learning in the age of Franklin, ranging from Michael Zukerman’s argument that Franklin was more