Take the subtitle (please): "A History of Johnstown's Jews of Pennsylvania." We were expecting, maybe, Johnstown's Jews of Jamaica? Or take a page, and almost any page will do. We learn of Noah Goldman, who died "as did most of his company," of chronic diarrhea in the Mexican War. "He may not have been Jewish." (page 27) As for one of Johnstown's "most stable Jewish organizations: ... Not too much credit can be given Rabbis Perelmuter and Stillpass for their excellent work in this direction." (244) The book's organization follows the twin principles of repetition and bewilderment, each chapter spiralling randomly like the last. We begin with Mr. Winograd's own tenure in Johnstown as Reform rabbi (1960s), bounce back to the 1889 flood, up to the 1920s, then to the frontier, the future, the 1936 flood, the present, the era of Hitler, more 1889 flood, temple fundraising in 1906, etc., etc. Stream of consciousness, indeed.

What virtues might this style hold? A couple — one for insiders, one for outsiders. Someone who grew up Jewish in Johnstown will probably find a thousand points of enlightenment here: just when the Big Families came to town, who's related to whom and since when, where this or that building came from, how and why the congregations have (and haven't) gotten along. Outsiders will find here a virtually unmediated look at religion and community at the grass roots. What do these mean for ordinary people in the day to day? They mean strings of rabbis distinguishable for where they had been and where they would go after. They mean burial societies and graveyards; schooling and weddings and births; rivalries, tenacity, and a stubborn sense of precious things. And they mean fundraisers — late, soon, and in between. Anyone shy about checkbook Judaism should leave this book alone, for Rabbi Winograd is one person not afraid to write "Jews" and "money" in the same sentence. In fact the distinctive mark of Johnstown's Jews, the author states repeatedly, is their historic national leadership in per capita giving to United Jewish Appeal. That this has slipped lately gives him cause for worry — worry about the city's economy and worry about his group's faithfulness. Poignant enough, until we read his concluding effect: "[W]e can at least look back on a fabulous but all-too-brief day in the limelight and ponder if, like Camelot or Tara — both civilizations that are 'gone with the wind' — we shall see the likes of them." (275)

**Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies & Tribes in the Seven Years War in America**

By Francis Jennings


Revisionist histories, by their very nature, challenge established interpretations of events and pose more convincing alternatives. Empire of Fortune does this with enthusiasm. Provocative in its language, controversial in its conclusions, this scholarly work will influence, for years to come, studies of Indian-white relations and the French and Indian War.

Readers wishing a new, candid assessment of America's colonial period will welcome this re-examination. Others, equally in earnest, will squirm with discomfort: Jennings wields a keen machete. Myths long accepted are exposed for the false and malicious creations they are. Heroes like Washington, Franklin, Montcalm, and Wolfe slip from pedestals of naive adulation; and poor Francis Parkman, the well-known nineteenth century American historian. He is denounced as a "liar" who "fabricated documents, misquoted others, pretended to use his great collection of sources when he really relied almost entirely on a small set of nastily biased secondary works, and did it all in order to support an ideology of divisiveness and hate based on racism, bigotry, misogyny, authoritarianism, chauvinism, and upper-class arrogance."

In 1757 the initial volume of Jennings' *Covenants Chain* trilogy appeared. *The Invasion of America* traces the growing relations between New England Puritans and their Indian neighbors with particular attention paid to the cultural imperatives that shaped the attitudes and actions of both. The myth of European moral and cultural superiority is rejected.

The second volume, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (1984), explores the advances and reversals of the Five Nations from their first encounter with the French and Dutch to the start of the Seven Years War in 1756. The Iroquois are seen not so much as savage aggressors as skilled diplomats who achieved a workable relationship — the Covenant Chain — between the English colonies and eastern tribes. In this way relative peace was preserved throughout the region and the inroads of whites into Indian hunting grounds were slowed.

Completing the trilogy, *Empire of Fortune* focuses on the American phase of a global struggle between Great Britain and France and their European allies. In 1754 Canadians erected Fort Duquesne at the forks of the Ohio. When Virginia's Assembly sent a force of provincials under George Washington to evict the Canadians, the expedition was defeated at Great Meadows.

Within a year French and British regulars were in the field, the latter regiments attacking on three fronts. Only in Nova Scotia, however, were the British able to expel a hostile population and build a naval base. In the south Brad-
dock’s army encountered disaster; in the north another expedition failed to reach its military objective, Niagara.

Throughout 1756 and 1757, the contest ground on inconclusively for the British. They lost two forts by their own iniquity while French Canadians and their Indian allies raided freely in New York and Pennsylvania. The only effective British operations were those around Lake Champlain by colonial rangers under Major Robert Rogers.

William Pitt’s elevation to the office of Prime Minister changed crown policy for the better. British war aims were redefined. Capable officers replaced bumbling. The wholehearted cooperation of American colonials was secured, which guaranteed the conquest of French Canada. In this victory, however, lay embers of colonial unrest that a decade later blazed into open revolt.

Fascinating as the account is, tribal politics interest the author most. He writes with utter frankness of the conceits and jealousies of Indian leaders, of their disappointments and frustrations. The tribes emerge as nations in their own right, each with its special political and cultural aims. Unfortunately for them, alliances amongst themselves often proved fragile. They distrusted each other as much as they did the white man, a fact that colonial administrators used to advantage.

The tribes’ sole remaining hope lay in uniting in defense of their lands, and this resolution was repeatedly undermined by broken promises. British officials declared that once the fighting stopped they would draw a line between colonial and Indian territories that would prevent future encroachments. In reality, when France capitulated, Great Britain placed sizable garrisons throughout Indian lands. When the tribes revolted, their sieges at Pittsburgh, Detroit, and elsewhere failed in nearly every instance, leaving them further demoralized. The cultural clash, Pontiac’s War, presaged other reversals to come. As Jennings concludes, that strife must be viewed as an incident of the forty years of on-again, off-again wars by the tribes of the Old Northwest to preserve their lands. Traditional accounts have portrayed these episodes as flare-ups of “savage” emotion lacking rationality, but the land issue was omnipresent in the councils of the chiefs. When the Delawares and Shawnees raided Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland in 1755 after Braddock’s defeat, they began a sequence of military and political events that continued until the treaty of Greenville in 1795 established a boundary recognized by the United States.

Here the trilogy ends. This I feel regrettable. The American Revolution and subsequent settlement of the Old Northwest warrants the same scholarly scrutiny, a challenge I hope some other bold spirit takes up with equal vigor and care, if not Jennings himself.

They distrusted each other as much as they did the white man...

The chapter on “Ignorant Armies” I found among the best. Soldiers in the Seven Years War were a “motley lot” whose conduct was frequently stupid and outrageous. Terrorism by authority was the order of the day. Generals who expressed horror at the Indians’ fighting style did not hesitate to use them as instruments of terrorist strategy against enemy civilians. The only difference was that the French had so many more Indian allies. The British therefore resorted to terror in other forms, Wolfe turning his cannon on civilians at Quebec, and laying waste the Gaspe’ peninsula.

British regulars came more from jails and gutters than manor houses. From the time of their arrival, they consequently annoyed, exasperated, and enraged colonists. They were contemptuous of American provincials, considering them slovenly. Yet the provincials displayed their mettle. Until 1756 they captured forts and held the French at bay while the regulars lost all their engagements. Jennings’ recognition of these colonial units is just and accurate (though why he ignores Washington’s Virginians at Braddock’s Defeat I cannot fathom). Studies of later revolutionary militia suggest that they, when wisely deployed and led, fought well, especially in the southern theater of action.

Finally, a tribute must be paid to Jennings’ even handling of the Quakers’ part in the struggle. Quaker records previously ignored documented his contention that Thomas, the son of William Penn, was indeed a swindler, greedy, and “wholly without scruple.” Israel Pemperton, in contrast, is found to deserve his epithet, “the king of Quakers.” His view of Indians was humane and enlightened, his inquiry into government fraud timely, and his support of General Forbes in wilderness road-building generous and trouble free. Pemperton and his Friendly Association “knew very well what they were doing and as the result of their strenuous effort and sacrifice the scourge of raid and massacre was lifted from the backwoods of Pennsylvania.”

_Empire of Fortune_ is valuable. Its documentation is awesome, its interpretations clear, and its insights frequently unsettling.

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