

Canadian literature in the libraries of North American colleges treating Native/White relations and governance.

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Mandell, Daniel R.: *Behind the Frontier: Indians In 18th Century Eastern Massachusetts*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996, ISBN 0-8032-3179-2 Cloth USA \$40.00.

In the preface to this book the author writes,

This study takes a new look at the century between the terrible (King Philip's) war and the American Revolution, and develops a picture of the internal dynamics and external pressures that led Indians in eastern Massachusetts to redefine their communities, transform their loyalties and forge a regional ethnic network (p.2).

In the course of this book, Mandell provides an account in great detail of the changes experienced by a few Native communities in a small geographic area in a limited space of time, and in so doing touches upon a large number of issues that are still relevant to the situation of Native people today. The role of missionaries, the effects of disease and alcoholism, mortality rates, the loss of men in the community, the influx of Afro-Americans, the problems brought by poaching and trespassing and the continuous need for land by White settlers are all effectively brought into the foreground.

The account is divided into two main sections. The first ends with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Before this time the Native communities enjoyed a fairly successful degree of autonomy and independence, living in towns modelled along the "praying town" system that had existed for some generations. Many villages were left largely to their own devices, and documentation shows that Native residents of these villages frequently worked for or sold their produce to the White colonists who were their neighbours.

The second section highlights the problems that developed following 1713. Once the conflict with France was ended, the White settlers could turn their attention to the need to obtain more land to accommodate their expanding numbers and to provide a land base for their growing economic enterprises. At the same time, disease and alcoholism were spreading

through Native communities. As high numbers of Indian men did not return from the earlier war, the number of Indian women marrying Afro-American men brought a new and somewhat divisive element into Native life.

Mandell's in-depth survey of Native communities gives rise to three aspects that I consider to be of special interest and worthy of further attention. First, the interaction of Indians and White settlers as they intermarried and as they created new economic relationships has been widely studied, but Mandell's suggestion that the relationship between Afro-Americans and Natives was disruptive in Indian communities is worthy of further investigation and analysis. Second, the image of missionary as a valiant ambassador of Christ enduring many hardships in the noble quest of saving and civilizing the Indian savages has over the past years been replaced by one of the missionary as the major agent responsible for the collapse of the Native way of life. Mandell, however, offers examples which indicate that not only did the missionaries considerably aid the Indians in adapting to the inevitable increase of White domination in society, but also provided them with the mechanisms to strengthen their own culture at the same time. Lastly, his survey of the various methods used by the Native political leaders in their efforts to balance independence from and cooperation with the Anglo-American colonial authorities provides some informative background to that same process which is on-going today.

At the conclusion of the book, one is aware that Mandell has taken the reader on a journey in which the Native population has evolved through three distinct stages: separate geographic communities where they lived together in towns organized on social, religious and political grounds; scattered minority groups aware of a common unifying factor of race or birth or culture; and eventually an ethnic community bound together by a common identity, history and destiny that unified them no matter where they lived geographically. The book concludes with the Native population being in a much stronger position than they were at the start.

Mandell has written a book that is not for the casual reader. The details offered as the history unfolds are such that one can easily lose track of where the narrative is heading. However, for the student of history his use of footnotes and primary sources is impressive. And the biographical essay at the conclusion of the book is an excellent resource for those interested in the life of colonial Massachusetts.

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