

Matthew DENNIS, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth Century America* (Ithaca, Cornell University, 1993, p. xiv+282, ISBN 0-8014-2171 -3)

Thomas S. Abler

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[See table of contents](#)

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Matthew DENNIS, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth Century America* (Ithaca, Cornell University, 1993, p. xiv+282, ISBN 0-8014-2171-3).

The vast majority of those who identify themselves as students of "ethnohistory" in fact study the history of North America's Native Peoples. Initially (in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s) this ethnohistory was dominated by persons trained in anthropology departments (who presumably had some training in, or at least an encounter with, folklore). However, as academic historians were forced to accept the fact that history is something more than the activities of elite males of European descent, an increasing portion of ethnohistorians has ancestral roots in history rather than anthropology. Matthew Dennis, author of the work under review, is one of these historian ethnohistorians.

However, in this work Dennis goes well beyond the sources of conventional history, those documents contemporary to the period analysed. Central to his discussion of early seventeenth century interaction between Iroquois and both Dutch and French are Iroquois myths, first collected in full texts by pioneer folklorists (e.g. Hale 1883; Smith 1883) just a bit more than a century ago. In Part I of the book, Dennis intertwines episodes from the Iroquoian creation myth and the epic of Deganawidah's founding of the Iroquois Confederacy with the findings of archaeology, twentieth century ethnographic research, and observations from seventeenth century description of Iroquois behaviour to construct an Iroquois "world view." This world view is then used to explain political behaviour of the Iroquois *vis à vis* their Dutch and French neighbours in the seventeenth century. Motivation for Iroquois diplomacy (and warfare) is provided, in Dennis's view, by Deganawidah's legendary vision of the Great Peace preached when he established the Iroquois Confederacy in the prehistoric past. He dismisses the economic motivation of the fur trade long considered the most important factor in interaction between Iroquois and their neighbours (Hunt 1940; Trelease 1960). He argues "The Five Nations traded in order to acquire the Netherlanders as kinsmen" in contrast to the Dutch who "reluctantly became the Iroquois' 'brothers' in order to trade" (p. 175). Iroquois policy throughout the period is portrayed as an attempt to incorporate others, both Native and European, in Deganawidah's League of Peace. The Iroquois war against the Huron is seen as a result of Iroquois "disappointment and frustration caused by their [Huron] refusal to join the Iroquois confederation" (p. 227). While intrigued by his argument, I remain unconvinced.

I found portions of his discussion unsatisfactory. He feels the Iroquois were "a single socially and politically integrated people" (p. 5) and discusses their seventeenth century actions as if that were the case. In fact, the members of the

Iroquois Confederacy often pursued disparate policies; Mohawk actions were usually independent of those of the Onondaga or Seneca. When assessing the declarations of a seventeenth century Iroquois diplomat, one should be aware of which nation he represents, and possibly which village within that nation and even which faction within the village.

Dennis also discusses the nature of the Dutch and French societies which interacted with the nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. His description of "the chaos of Beverwyck" (the Dutch settlement at what is now Albany) is fascinating. "Riding the goose" and cross-sex-dressing on Shrove Tuesday (pp. 148, 150) do not, however, receive the same interest from Dennis that Iroquois oral tradition and ritual receive in earlier chapters.

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Thomas S. ABLER
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario

Susan STEWART, *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation* (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 353, \$49.00 Cdn. (cloth), ISBN 0-19-506617-0).

Stewart takes as emblem for this impressive and at times fascinating study of "the relations between subjectivity, authenticity, writing, speech, and the law"