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background of Mohawk and other Iroquois Indian land claims in New York state, a factor that has shaped events both in the "empire state" and into Canada. Nor does the author even mention the environmental crisis at Akwesasne which triggered Indian frustration and activist Mohawk responses there and elsewhere. The author rightly mentions the Mohawk Louis Hall, who became the theoretician and theologian of the Mohawk Warrior Society movement, but treats this extraordinary figure in cursory fashion, never examining his background as an ex-Jesuit seminarian or his charismatic leadership. Moreover, the author provides the wrong date of the Jay Treaty (p. 71).

Thus, readers would be wise to skip *In Defense of Mohawk Land*. This book, much like earlier ones written by Rick Hornung and Bruce Johansen, is too much of an instant analysis of Mohawk country that falls far short of the mark.

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In Mohawk Country: Early Narratives about a Native People.
Edited by Dean R. Snow, Charles T. Gehring, and William A. Starna. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996. 406 pages. \$39.95 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

The Mohawk, guardians of the "eastern door" of the Iroquoian League of Five Nations, were in a strategic position when Europeans came knocking; situated as they were in the Mohawk Valley, they controlled the entrance of a principal route into the interior. Highly successful in both war and trade in precontact days, they and their fellow confederates in the Iroquoian League lost no time in facing up to the European invasion. They managed to maintain a large part of their territorial and political integrity through two centuries of colonial pressures, up until the time of the American War of Independence. Little wonder that they have made such an impression on colonial histories.

Historians have traditionally relied heavily upon the *Jesuit Relations* and official sources when recounting the relations of these formidable people with the newcomers. In contrast, *In Mohawk Country* casts its net more widely: The result is thirty-eight selections of observations by individuals from various countries and walks of life all focusing on the Mohawk Valley and its first inhabitants. Several of the accounts are trans-

lated into English for the first time, and some have never before been published. As can be expected, the perspectives are varied, from the familiar Jesuit accounts concerned with evangelization in which descriptions of torture abound, as they also do in the reports by prisoners of war, to later more sympathetic French observations. The Dutch had trade on their minds, while the English were out to win the Iroquois as allies in their ongoing wars with the French. Later came the travelers—German, British, French, Italian—curious to see for themselves what the New World and Amerindians were about. The picture that emerges is of a land abounding in the riches of nature being transformed into today's agricultural and urbanized landscape. The picture of the Mohawk and their neighbors is not so clear: Despite attempts to "civilize" them, they cling to their old ways, with which the chroniclers are not impressed, although there are some exceptions. One of these is the story of the European servant girl who ran away to live with the Oneidas, with whom she is happy because they treat her as an equal. She is described by Francois Marbois, a French aristocrat who visited the Oneidas in 1784.

The general tone, however, is one of condescension toward the Natives: Dutch lawyer Adriaen van der Donck in 1653 found that the term *savage* was appropriately applied to them because he said they were living in a state of nature with little or no religion, following their own whims in matters of marriage and property, and often allowing offenses, even crimes, to go unpunished. He preferred *savage* to *heathen* on the grounds that the latter term was too general.

His observation that Amerindians, when converted, slip back easily into their traditional beliefs, was supported by others. Jesuit Jean de Lamberville was gloomy on the subject when he reported in 1672-73 that the faith was making little progress among them. On the other hand, colonists were not always seen as providing good examples. Jasper Danckaerts, looking for land for a Protestant sect called Labadism, took a dim view of the Christianity of the Dutch settlers when he asked in 1680: "If these be the persons who are to make Christians of the heathen, what will the latter be?" (pp. 204-05). Neither were the manners of the Dutch seen as being up to par: As Warren Johnson, brother of Sir William Johnson, reported during a visit from Ireland in 1760-61, they seat themselves in the parlor without bidding, and smoke without asking. Even worse, their children are smoking by the age of seven.

As the Europeans criticized each other while assuming superiority over Indians, the latter had no doubts as to where they stood. Joseph Bloomfield, a soldier who was to become the fourth governor of New Jersey, was struck in 1776 with the demeanor of Iroquois in council, in full native dress and smoking their pipes "with such confident air of Dignity & Superiority as if they were above all other beings mad[e] and their Authority extended over the whole Earth" (p. 277). After describing a Mohawk sachem "in a poor Blanket & dirty shirt" issuing orders "with as arbitrary an authority as a Roman dictator" (p. 282), Bloomfield then went on to say that they "assume the Name of Ongue-honwe, that is, Man surpassing all others." Among themselves, the Iroquois had social distinctions, as van der Donck had earlier observed, but less so than Europeans. He was impressed that the Mohawk, so few in number, could be so redoubtable.

Yet it had not always been so. In 1659-60, Jerome Lalement, superior of the Jesuits in Canada, noted that within the previous century, the Mohawk had been "at both the top and bottom of the wheel" at least twice, at their low points reduced to so few "that there seemed to be scarcely any more of them left on earth" (p. 132). Yet they quickly bounded back to become the terror of the Eastern Woodlands during colonial times, especially after their acquisition of guns, which Lalement said put ideas into their heads. A major general with the French expeditionary forces which fought on the American side during the War of Independence, Francois Jean de Beauvoir, was not so impressed: As he saw the Mohawk in 1780, they were formidable as an advanced guard, "but as an army they are nothing" (p. 294). Lalement claimed that they were perfidious, that of all "the treaties we have made with them ... they have never kept a single one of the promises that they have so often and so solemnly sworn to us" (p. 134). This is an ironic twist of the politics of today, at least in Canada, where a favorite charge of the Indians (particularly in the West) is that government has not honored its treaties with them. If the Indians were treated well, Danckaerts wrote, they were not inclined to rise against Europeans. He denied that they were particularly vengeful, using the example of their drunken brawls, from which they usually emerged with their friendships intact, in spite of damages inflicted. He carried his point even further: The bad habits of the Indians, he said, were acquired from Europeans.

Reports of Indian cruelty and cannibalism are counterbalanced throughout these accounts with tales of the warmth and

gentleness, even "sweetness" of their relationships within their own communities. An example of this is the story of Pierre Esprit Radisson, 1651-54, the French *coureur-de-bois* who was adopted by an Iroquois family after being tortured as a prisoner of war. Although he became attached to his new relatives, and spoke well of them, he eventually managed to escape. A French immigrant who settled in upstate New York, Peter Saily, noted in 1780 that Indians were more polite than French peasants. Van der Donck did not find Amerindians to be of "surpassing intelligence" or wisdom, but possessing reasonable knowledge based on experience. One of the manifestations of this was their knowledge of medicinal plants, which Europeans found surprising.

Europeans found Indian languages difficult; in fact, in the opinion of van der Donck they were "impossible" to translate, a situation that was not helped by the disinclination he reported among the Indians to do so. Danckaerts agreed that things could be said in Indian languages that could not be translated in Dutch or English; conversely, he reported that one could not accuse another of lying in an Indian language. On the whole, he found Indian speech "pregnant with meaning." Incidentally, at this stage Indian languages were reported having no word for "drunk."

In the midst of this welter of impressions, the land and its abounding natural life came in for a good deal of attention. An early impression that there was no limit to so much abundance was modified later when De Witt Clinton reported in 1810 that trout, which once had abounded in the Mohawk River, were by then no more. Where early accounts had frequent references to wildlife, particularly bears, the only animal that Clinton mentioned seeing in his travels was the black squirrel. By his account, the Mohawk had become politically insignificant; Clinton's concern is with business deals and building canals.

These accounts tell us more about the attitudes and preoccupations of Europeans than they do about the Indians. There is only one attempt to probe Indian beliefs, when van der Donck recounts a creation myth that emphasizes the underlying unity of animal life. Detailed descriptions of geographical features are interspersed with accounts of military campaigns, such as that of the French against the Mohawk in 1693. Surprisingly enough, van der Donck went against generally accepted reports when he said that Indians seldom killed women and children in the heat of battle. There is no hint of a doubt as to the right of Europeans to take over this land where "everything breathes liberty, every-

thing enjoys abundance, and peace attracts to the banks of the river a prodigious number of immigrants from Europe" (François Marbois, secretary of the French delegation to the newly formed United States, in 1784, p. 301). This collection tells us about the birth of a nation as seen through the European Everyman's eyes from the perspectives of particular situations. The three scholars who worked on it are to be commended for their meticulous craftsmanship, a model of its kind.

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The Legacy of D'Arcy McNickle: Writer, Historian, Activist. Edited by John Lloyd Purdy. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996. 264 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

This book examines the life and writing of D'Arcy McNickle, a mixed-blood Cree, who grew up on the Flathead and Kootenai Reservation in northwest Montana. McNickle was a significant figure in twentieth-century Native American history. Between 1936 and 1953, he headed the Indian Bureau's Tribal Organization Division. In subsequent years, McNickle directed a community development project among the Navajos at Crownpoint, chaired the steering committee at the University of Chicago that issued the Declaration of Indian Purpose in 1961, coordinated summer leadership training workshops at the University of Colorado, and chaired the Department of Anthropology at the University of Saskatchewan at Regina, Canada. He also played a pivotal role in creating the Center of the History of the American Indian at the Newberry Library in Chicago.

This book is a collection of scholarly essays that interpret McNickle's three novels and other publications. John Lloyd Purdy, the editor, notes that McNickle was a talented fiction writer whose innovative use of tribal arts deeply influenced subsequent Native American written literature. Purdy also points out that McNickle's writings shed light on complex historical events and issues critical to North American indigenous people.

Part one of the text is an annotated bibliography written by Dorothy Parker. She looks at McNickle's articles and book reviews in a biographical context, rather than his works of fiction, to provide important insights into how Indian and Euro-