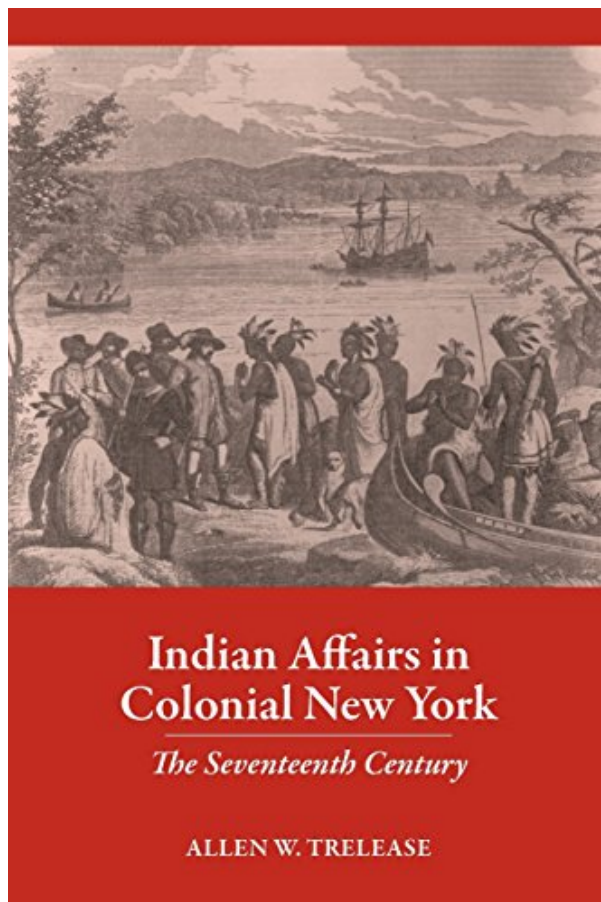


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Trelease here covers the relationship between the natives and settlers in 17th-century New York from both an economic and political point of view. A standard in the field.

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Review

"This is a most important book . . . on the history of contacts between American Indians and the colonial powers. . . . It is a piece of ethnohistorical research and writing of the best sort."?American Anthropologist

"This is an important contribution to our knowledge of seventeenth-century New York, both in terms of its Dutch and English settlers and of its Algonquian and Iroquian Indian inhabitants, written with care and precision."?New England Quarterly

About the Author

Allen W. Trelease, professor emeritus of history at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, is the author of *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction*. William A. Starna, a professor of anthropology at the State University of New York, College at Oneonta, is the editor of *The Journals of Christian Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser: A Journey to Onondaga, 1750*.

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First published in 1960, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York* remains the only one-volume study of Indian-European relations in seventeenth-century New York. In the first half of this book, Allen W. Trelease describes the Dutch period that followed Henry Hudson's 1609 voyage and details New Netherland's dealings with the Algonquian peoples of the Hudson Valley and Long Island.

The second half of the book, addressing the English period after 1664, emphasizes the colonists' relations with the Iroquois. Still widely cited and read, this pioneering work remains an authoritative study of its subject and a valuable contribution to the historiography of both seventeenth-century colonial New York and Indian-European relations in this formative period.

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Journals of Christian Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser: A Journey to Onondaga, 1750.

Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Interesting but flawed.

By Jordan M. Ball

I picked this book up at a book vendor at the local pow wow. He had various tomes on the subject of American indians, and this one seemed to be especially interesting because it concerns my own tribe, that being the Seneca who were an adjunct to the Iroquois.

The book was written decades ago, before the reformation of what had been a uniform curriculum of historical revisionism in the study of American indians. So it's more snide inaccuracies can be discounted as mere products of their environments. One big contention is for me is the way the author tends to downplay the significance of various bands, especially the Iroquois.

His numbers seem off compared to those of more astute, contemporary books I have read. He tries to insinuate that each of the five nations had maybe a few hundred people and a "castle" or two as well as a few sporadic villages throughout their territory. Many other accounts have long since dismissed this. He also trims the origin of the Iroquois confederacy down to a time frame of maybe a hundred years or so before European encroachment. In fact the confederacy has been surmised by most scholars today as having been closer to eight hundred to a thousand years old by this time, depending on the accuracy of various astronomical eclipses that coincide with Iroquois myths and folk tales.

Perhaps the most blatant example of the author's relative misunderstanding of the fundamental culture and history of the Iroquois (and likely the other bands whom I know less about) comes when he describes the formation of the great peace. He describes a story where an adopted Mohawk takes the message of peace from east to west, ending with the Seneca who were the last to join. This is absurd, the legend itself is very clear that the last band to join was the Onondaga. And the mythological war chief Tedadaho was so wicked that he had to have the snakes combed from his hair in order to hear the message. It is pretty well established folklore, but the author of this book seems to have just kind of "winged it."

The book has its good points of course. It accurately describes specific engagements by the Dutch, English and French colonists. Wars and policies and treaties and trade routes are fairly accurate. However the author falls victim to what was once the standard interpretation of Indian history scholarship; he presumes that the European incursion was some kind of enlightenment for the "underdeveloped" cultures already in existence. He even mocks the observation of other scholars regarding the veracity of Iroquois "forest diplomacy," brushing it off as being chaotic and disorganized. Scholars have long since eradicated that kind of thinking as well.

All in all it is a good book for illustrating relations during that time. A good historical gem if you know what to avoid taking seriously; which in this case would mean avoiding the author's backward interpretation of events.

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Must read for those knowing "Indians" of Colonial New York, Quebec, Ontario, New Jersey, Connecticut, New England, et al.

By M

A very detailed and well-written book called "Indian Affairs in Colonial New York, The seventeenth century, by Alan W. Trelase.

all of the people you come into contact with who are not familiar with what you are talking about, should read this book. this is a very complicated subject you know about, that most of the people you deal with daily know very little about.

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