UCLA
American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title
Fit for War: Sustenance and Order in the Mid-Eighteenth-Century Catawba Nation. By Mary Elizabeth Fitts.

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4dx31696

Journal
American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 42(1)

ISSN
0161-6463

Author
LeMaster, Michelle

Publication Date
2018

DOI
10.17953/0161-6463-42.1.135

Copyright Information
This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, availalbe at
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

it difficult to determine the extent to which his themes of Indian veterans' experiences can be applied to other reservation contexts; this is not a comprehensive national study. The chronological range is also limited; much of the book covers the years 1918–1930, with only the final chapter focusing on the 1930s and 1940s; and in that chapter, as in the others, Standing Rock looms large in the analysis. Accordingly, the book will be of value especially for readers interested in the Standing Rock Reservation and in American Indian life during the 1920s.

Paul C. Rosier
Villanova University

Fit for War: Sustenance and Order in the Mid-Eighteenth-Century Catawba Nation. By Mary Elizabeth Fitts. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017. 360 pages. $79.95 cloth and electronic.

Fit for War is the latest work on the Catawba Nation, following works by James Merrell and Charles Hudson, among others. Author Mary Elizabeth Fitts is an assistant state archaeologist for the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology and a research associate with the Research Laboratories of Archaeology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Almost two separate books in one, the first part of *Fit for War* uses documentary records and secondary works to reconstruct a history of both the fledgling colony (or colonies) of Carolina and the coalescent Nation of the Catawbas, but the the real meat is found in the original research of the book's second part, which focuses on archaeological studies of the mid-eighteenth century towns of Nassaw-Weyapee and Charraw in the Catawba River valley.

The title is in some ways misleading: the first part emphasizes Catawba militarism, but the second emphasizes women's economic activities, particularly pottery-making and the production and processing of food. However, the two parts are not unconnected. Fitts emphasizes that the Catawba used their "warlike" reputation as a strategy to maintain geographic persistence in the lower Catawba River valley. Fighting for the British as auxiliaries in the eighteenth century allowed the Catawba to recruit refugees to augment their numbers, gain colonial goodwill, and defend their lands. The militarization of the Catawba Nation coincided with political centralization which allowed the Catawba to incorporate outsiders and accomplish a degree of coalescence that speeded response time and ensured survival.

At the same time, however, settlement aggregation put considerable stress on subsistence and produced food insecurity. Thus, the second half of the book turns away from militarization to focus on food insecurity, away from the activities of men to those of women. Here Fitts makes a number of interesting and novel arguments that offer considerable food for thought for scholars of the Catawba, as well as Southeastern Indians more generally. This reviewer is a historian and not an archaeologist, and will leave evaluation of the archaeological methodology to scholars in that field. Fitts's conclusions, however, raise interesting questions about the nature of coalescence and

ethnogenesis. She posits that men's activities, particularly warfare, served to bring together and unite the various groups that came together in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century to make up the Catawba Nation. Military activity and political centralization tended to aid the process of consolidation. Women's activities, however, were more ambiguous in nature. Forces such as matrilocality, linguistic diversity, and memories of the slave trade and other conflicts tended to differentiate various communities from one another. Fitts finds in regard to pottery production that although communities of women were functioning within a larger shared genre of practice, they cultivated variation that continued to mark separation between different towns. Women in Nassaw-Weyapee and Charraw, for example, manufactured different types of vessels using somewhat different techniques.

The study of foodways, however, produces a more complex result. Overall, Fitts finds that women in Catawba communities responded to food insecurity by producing more maize and reducing gathering.The towns differed, however, in patterns of food consumption and processing. Women in Nassaw processed more corn, while women in Charraw gathered more fruit. In addition, Charraw women don't seem to have processed corn in their own villages to the same extent that Nassaw women did. Fitts argues that Charraw women probably traveled to other locations to take part in cooperative labor, thereby creating intersettlement communities of practice. She suggests that, as a refugee community, the Charraw may have had more incentive to build external support networks than the more stable Nassaw.

Overall, this section raises important questions about the creation of the Catawba Nation itself. Fitts suggests that while men's activities, like war and politics, led to consolidation and unification of the various ethnic groups that came together in the Catawba River Valley in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, women's activities may have instead helped to preserve some level of ethnic distinctiveness well into the eighteenth century. Different towns, and particularly those settled wholly by a single ethnic group, like Charraw, may have retained a certain level of independent identity. Core Catawba groups, like those residing in the town of Nassaw, probably faced less pressure to cooperate with other ethnic groups, while refugee groups, like Charraw, uprooted from their habitual locations, were more likely to adopt foreign techniques in areas like manufacturing and food processing.

Focused as it is on the two locations of Nassaw-Weyapee and Charraw, the book does not follow the Catawba past the great smallpox epidemic of 1759. Fitts posits that the story of the late eighteenth century would be considerably different, but her work doesn't allow her to follow the Catawba after they removed from these two sites. It will fall to other researchers to determine what later archaeological sites can reveal about the continued ethnogenesis of the Catawba. Further, the narrow focus on pottery-making and food production leaves a lot of ground uncovered on which later scholars can elect to focus. The work does not investigate other types of manufacturing (basket-weaving, arrowhead production, or tool-making, for example), nor does it look at the adoption or use of European artifacts (admittedly often studied by other scholars). One wonders how much weight can be placed on conclusions drawn from such a limited study. Nonetheless, the ideas Fitts posits are intriguing

and worth considering. Further, the book's emphasis on women's labor, which is so often given short shrift by scholars due to its invisibility in the documentary record, is very welcome.

In sum, Fitts book offers suggestive food for thought for scholars of American Indian history more generally, and of the colonial Southeast more particularly. Her conclusions regarding the complex process of ethnogenesis deserve detailed consideration and engagement.

Michelle LeMaster
Lehigh University

Gambling on Authenticity: Gaming, The Noble Savage, and the Not-So-New Indian. Edited by Becca Gercken and Julie Pelletier. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2018. 161 pages. $29.95 paper; $23.95 electronic.

Gambling on Authenticity is a significant contribution to the growing body of research and writing on Indian gaming and may be the first text of its kind to explore the issue from both sides of the United States/Canada border. As its title suggests, the collection explores conceptions of Indigenous identity and their role in shaping the legal and economic landscape impacting Indian gaming initiatives. It examines important differences in Indian gaming policies in Canada and the United States and their effects on Indigenous economies, cultures, and representation. Additionally, it suggests the important ways that Indigenous issues traverse international boundaries. The effects of stereotypes are addressed in significant detail, including the way they condition non-Indigenous responses to Indians generally, and Indian gaming in particular, and the responses of Indigenous peoples to those stereotypes and how they may contest or buy into them. Like much of the writing on Indian gaming, *Gambling on Authenticity* demonstrates the profound and undeniably positive changes in Indian country wrought by the gaming enterprises of United States tribes and Canadian First Nations, even as it details the many unresolved and vexing issues that still confront Indigenous peoples seeking political, economic, and cultural self-determination through gaming. The collection includes work from a range of disciplines, including poetry, creative writing, the fine arts, anthropology, history, literary studies, and sociology.

In establishing its primary focus on the experiences of Indigenous peoples themselves, the collection begins with a foreword by Chickasaw poet and writer LeAnne Howe, who grew up in Indian country long before the advent of high-stakes gaming and has witnessed the dramatic changes it has wrought. Commenting on the debilitating stereotypes that have haunted Indian peoples, she offers a cautionary note on the power of tribal gaming to effect positive change. Other US tribal-member contributors include Scott Andrews (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma), whose poem "Columbus Day 2092" expresses "Pan-Tribal Nationalist Fantasies." Heid Erdrich's interview with Ojibwe painter Jim Denomie, whose work includes representations of casinos, offers a way of thinking about tribal gaming and the