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Author

Davis, Karl

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enemies. This admirable volume realized its collective hope that “Pennsylvania’s Native friends and foes . . . will be forgotten folk no more” (268).

John M. Shaw

Minnesota State University Moorhead

The History of the American Indians. By James Adair. Edited and with an introduction and annotations by Kathryn E. Holland Braund. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005. 608 pages. \$65.00 cloth.

Those who study southeastern Native American history struggle with finding sources for the eighteenth century, which are rare and often problematic. Some scholars consider James Adair’s *History of the American Indians* a source too riddled with errors and exaggerations to be of use, even though he lived in intimate contact with southeastern Native people during the eighteenth century for more than forty years. The new volume reintroduces Adair as a viable source for understanding southeastern Natives. A handsome, accessible book, it is enhanced by Kathryn Braund’s lucid annotations in which she uses other primary and secondary sources to aid in understanding Adair’s work.

James Adair was a British trader who emigrated to the American southeast around 1735. Soon after his arrival he entered the lucrative though risky trade in deerskins. He made connections first with the Catawbas and Cherokees and by the mid-1740s developed a trading relationship with the Chickasaws farther to the west in what is today northern Mississippi. He married a Chickasaw woman and had several children with her. Like most other British traders of the time, his experiences gave him many insights into southeastern Native people’s rich culture. Unlike other traders however, Adair was literate and educated and had a good knowledge of classical texts and languages, all of which allowed him to publish his book in 1775. While the title suggests a more comprehensive geographic coverage, Adair dealt only with southeastern Native Americans, specifically five tribes: the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, Cherokees, and Catawbas.

Other similar works from the eighteenth century possess neither the scope nor the depth of observation and understanding available in Adair. Most people who were inclined to publish accounts of travels or even extended stays in the interior southeast were usually educated but seldom showed the same interest in Native people, and none spent as much time with any of the tribes as did Adair. For example, among accessible, published works, Bernard Romans’s interest was primarily environmental and he, in his relatively short visit and only in the Gulf region, never lived with Native Americans. John Lawson’s journal showed more concern with Natives, but in South Carolina only and again for a limited time compared to Adair. French and Spanish sources, primarily unpublished and in archival collections, give us a good deal of knowledge about tribes farther west, especially the Choctaws and to some degree the Creeks, but are mostly silent on the other three groups explored by Adair. Antoine Le Page Du Pratz is one of the more

valuable single published French sources on affairs in the lower Mississippi Valley and can be relied upon for information on Native culture, particularly the Natchez. British officials, surveyors, and military men can also be consulted for information about tribes affiliated with South Carolina, but none provides anywhere near the comprehensive coverage of Native nations as does Adair.

In the first half of his book Adair discusses his belief that Native Americans were descended from Hebrews, which he elaborates in twenty-three separate arguments. Many scholars claim that Adair was so insistent on proving his thesis that it tainted his observations and made his work unusable as a source. Braund cites these scholars in her introductory notes. Other scholars have disagreed with this point. Charles Hudson argued that Adair's thesis actually helped him better understand Native people. Hudson wrote that Adair's good understanding of Native culture, especially ceremonies, was aided by his respect and knowledge of ancient Hebrew rituals. To Hudson, and Braund as well, Adair's sensitivity and respect for Native Americans were the keys to his valuable insights. Hudson added that there were times when Adair misled himself in his attempt to support his argument but that he nonetheless faithfully described his observations (Hudson, "James Adair as Anthropologist," *Ethnohistory*, Fall 1977).

Adair's work as a description of Native culture is unmatched for the time. He describes ceremonies in detail, even when they fail to fit his Hebrew thesis. In the case of the Green Corn ceremony, arguably the most important southeastern Native ritual, Adair tried to shoehorn Hebrew words and sounds into the Native American litany, such as when he claimed that words chanted during the ceremony, "HE HE" and "WA WA," can be equated with "hallelujah." He still rendered precise descriptions and uses of material elements: the clan brush arbors, women's tortoise-shell leg rattles, and the tea made from an indigenous holly, all of which can be confirmed by other sources. The detail in Adair's work is stunning, particularly regarding women's activities, usually lacking in other sources, as most eighteenth-century European men were not interested in or even allowed to witness Native women's rituals. At one point, again chronicling events relating to the Green Corn ceremony, Adair describes women "cleaning out their houses, renewing the old hearths, and cleansing all their culinary vessels, that they may be fit to receive the pretended holy fire, and the sanctified new fruits, according to the purity of the law" (145). He was influenced here by his understanding of Hebrew beliefs, but he still faithfully characterized how and why Chickasaw women understood their spiritual lives.

Braund opens the volume with a fifty-two-page history of Adair's diplomatic relations with British authorities and Native groups. The context she provides is vital for understanding his motives beyond his culture thesis since he had personal political motives and was also "a man who wafted tenuously between two very different worlds and was not completely of one or the other" (35). In one episode he negotiated an alliance with a faction of Choctaws to undermine French influence in the Mississippi Valley. Adair claimed that policy makers in South Carolina failed to support the Choctaw splinter group

adequately, leading to disaster for them since most remained loyal to their French alliance, who then easily crushed the British-allied group. Adair wanted to put himself in the best light under these circumstances and tried to explain how he fell out of favor with the South Carolina governor James Glen. Braund's narrative comes down on Adair's side of the story, perhaps in an overly sympathetic way, but does help confirm Adair's own defense of his political career. Braund's narrative will help even readers unfamiliar with this history to understand the motives of British officials and to see the geopolitical atmosphere in which the tribes in the south operated.

Braund's more than seventy pages of insightful annotations are what separate this book from previous reprints. Not only is it the first reissue in thirty-seven years but her exhaustive research also allows the reader to contextualize Adair's assertions and helps eliminate many of the problems inherent in his observations. One sort of annotation involves confirming observations based on other sources, such as where she used Romans's work to validate Adair's assertion that Native men squatted to urinate. In other places more history is needed, such as when Adair mentions Native America captives sold into slavery. Braund informs the reader, based on secondary literature, of the Creeks' slave raids on the Spanish allied tribes in Florida to explain the source of Native slaves sold to South Carolina. Other points are not so easily confirmed, but Braund does a good job of finding sources that help us understand Adair's claims. For example, Adair describes Chickasaw construction in detail, a point difficult to confirm with other contemporary observations, but in her annotation, Braund shows how modern archeology can serve the historian and verify the layout of Chickasaw structures.

This attractive volume is a fine addition to the growing body of literature on the study of southeastern Native Americans, especially given the paucity of primary sources for the eighteenth century. The book includes good maps, although some additional illustrations would have improved the work, and I found none of the typographical or editing errors so common in many scholarly works today. Braund and Alabama Press should be commended too for the inclusion of an extensive bibliography of both primary and secondary sources on eighteenth-century southeastern history as well. The original is long out of print and the two later reprints are hard to find, so that alone makes this new edition a worthy endeavor. Braund's well-written opening narrative and her insightful annotations add enormously to the value of this work.

Karl Davis

State University of New York, Oswego