

decimated the beaver population, drying up countless beaver ponds and altering the region's landscape. The book ends with a masterful account of an ill-fated effort by Rhode Island shipping merchants to extend their reach northward; they schemed to capture some of rival Boston's commerce with the Massachusetts interior by financing a canal along the newly industrialized Blackstone River. Until defeated by the railroads and battles about water rights, the short-lived artery carried staves, shoes, and ship timbers to Providence, while whale oil, fish, cotton (and unwanted wharf rats) traveled north to Worcester.

Between these bookends, Pastore delves into cartography, boundary disputes, coastal warfare, and the gradual transition from an agricultural to an industrial coastline. Writing accessibly about New England's smallest and least-studied colony, he shows that long before the area's first lighthouse appeared in 1749, maritime settlers were harvesting fish and oysters from the clear, nutrient-rich bay (covering nearly 150 square miles) and raising sheep, horses, and cattle on the surrounding meadows. By 1700, Rhode Island had outstripped its neighbors in livestock production and was provisioning New England's fishing and trading vessels. By 1730, the colony founded by Roger Williams had embraced the African trade, and domineering Narragansett planters with vast estates were forcing enslaved workers to construct the highest concentration of stone walls in New England.

Comparisons with Chesapeake Bay, Charleston Harbor, and Port Royal Sound, much less San Francisco Bay or Puget Sound, do not figure in Pastore's book. But his well-crafted study should prompt researchers to look more closely at the subtle interplay of history and ecology in other major North American estuaries.

Peter H. Wood
Duke University

Lenape Country: The Delaware Valley before William Penn. By Jean R. Soderlund (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) 264 pp. \$ 39.95

For many historians, the seventeenth-century Delaware Valley has long been a blank space on the map, a terra incognita in the heart of early America. Though located midway between Virginia and New England, the region's sparse population of Swedish, Finnish, and Dutch colonists left few marks, making it all too easy to ignore until 1681, when the new colony of Pennsylvania swiftly transformed the Valley into one of the densest sites of European settlement in North America. Soderlund's *Lenape Country* fills this empty canvas with a dynamic picture of a Native-controlled region, where Lenapes—the people later known as Delawares—built a stable set of alliances with neighbors and maintained their independence for decades after the colonial arrival. Countering a long-standing “portrayal of the Lenapes as a powerless people,” Soderlund argues that Lenapes’ political “primacy”

defined the region's early colonial history (5). Although the Swedish, Dutch, and English empires each claimed the Delaware as their own until the 1680s, Soderlund sees a shared society taking shape, crafted by Native interests as much as European ones.

Soderlund's chronological narrative highlights the region's comparatively peaceful character. With the exception of the Sickoneysincks' massacre of several dozen Dutch colonists living at the mouth of Delaware Bay in 1631, no major frontier conflict ever erupted in the area, making it unlike neighboring regions along the coast. In her interpretation of that 1631 attack, Soderlund argues that the sudden destruction of the small outpost was meant to prevent further colonial incursions, making it "a rational act in a violent world" (48). The creation of "New Sweden" in 1638, which was only slowly populated by a mixed Finnish and Swedish population, led to new ties between neighbors, as some colonial men married indigenous women. A Swedish clergyman would later claim that "ours are as one people" and that Lenapes "in their language call these Swedes their own people" (65). The core of Soderlund's thesis is that the Lutheran ideals of these Nordic colonists had a kinship with the communal egalitarian ethos of Lenapes, as "ethnic diversity and alliance among the Swedish nation and Lenapes created a culture committed to personal freedom, religious liberty, shared use of resources, opposition to centralized authority, and focus on economic gain that remained distinctive of Delaware Valley society into the eighteenth century" (141).

Soderlund makes a compelling case, if not an entirely convincing one. Lenape country also lacked a central high-profit commodity that served as a root cause of colonial population spikes and frontier conflicts, in the way that tobacco farming intensified settlement on the Chesapeake and the wampum trade led to political and economic instability in New Netherland and New England. Nonetheless, Soderlund finds evidence that at every tense moment throughout the century that could have easily spiraled out of control, cooler heads prevailed, demonstrating a shared commitment among colonial and Native leaders to reconciliation. Whether this political culture of mutual toleration could have endured in a different regional economy or with a larger European population is anyone's guess.

Drawing from Swedish, Dutch, and English sources, Soderlund's methodological toolkit is decidedly that of a traditional historian. Although her thinking is clearly informed by ethnographic work on Native societies, most of Soderlund's interpretation relies on weighing multiple sources against each other, considering comparative historical regions, and reading against the grain. She includes images of archaeological finds, such as pipe fragments, Susquehannock-made combs, and other trading goods, but these artifacts serve only as illustrations, not sources of evidence (29, 50–51). Her interpretation touches on questions of cultural change, gender, religion, and linguistics, but, at its core, it remains a traditional historical narrative concerned with events and their causes.

Lenape Country is not, nor does it claim to be, a model of interdisciplinary inquiry. But Soderlund adds new depth to our understanding of the beginnings of the Middle Colonies, telling a surprising story of a “Native ground” that persisted on the eastern seaboard many decades after the founding of Jamestown, Plymouth, and New Amsterdam.

Andrew Lipman
Syracuse University

Ceramic Production in Early Hispanic California: Craft, Economy, and Trade on the Frontier of New Spain. By Russell K. Skowronek, M. James Blackman, and Ronald L. Bishop (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2014) 440 pp. \$84.95

Focused on an overlooked and perhaps (to some) seemingly inconsequential topic, this innovative collection of essays investigates ceramics in Hispanic California, showcasing the unique contributions made possible by collaborative research. The authors and researchers include archeologists, chemists, historians, anthropologists, an architectural historian, and an artist.

After initial important studies on pottery in Alta California, from both the Spanish (1697–1821) and Mexican (1821–1846) periods, were published in the 1980s, the topic covered in this book was virtually abandoned.¹ The authors of the current study offer an explanation for why these abundant potsherds, plentiful fragments of bricks and tiles (*ladrillos* and *tejas*), were of little scholarly interest: “Tons of these have been excavated and curated or sometimes thrown away or sold because they were seen as undiagnostic by archaeologists and curators” (xxv). These copious plain-ware fragments became diagnostic, however, in 1999, when the Smithsonian offered to conduct instrumental neutron activation analysis (INAA) on them in its Center for Neutron Research at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. This unique interdisciplinary project analyzed more than 2,000 California pottery samples dating from c. 1790 to

1 As noted by the authors in the preface (xxiii), the initial studies were Julia G. Costello, “Ceramic Analysis of Maiolicas and Mexican Earthenwares,” in Stephen A. Dietz (ed.), *Final Report of Archaeological Investigations at Mission San Jose (CA-Ala-1)* (Santa Cruz, 1983), 247–253; Robert L. Hoover and Costello (eds.), “Ceramics and Other Ceramic Artifacts,” *Excavations at Mission San Antonio 1976–1978* (Monograph 26) (Los Angeles, 1985), 20–56; *idem* (eds.), “The Brick and Tile Kiln,” *ibid.*, 122–151; Ann Hagerman Johnson, David Fredrickson, and Vance Benté (eds.), “Mission Pottery—Analysis from Feature 1. Appendix G,” *Report of Phase III Research for Block 1, San Antonio Plaza, San Jose* (San Jose, Calif., 1985); *Santa Ines Mission Excavations: 1986–1988*, California Historical Archaeology no. 1 (Salinas, Calif., 1989); Ronald V. May, “Spanish Period Ceramics from the San Antonio Plaza Project,” in Johnson, Fredrickson, and Benté (eds.), *Report of Phase III Research for Block 1, San Antonio Plaza, San Jose, Appendix H* (San Jose, 1985); *idem*, “Spanish and Mexican Majolica in California: Key Indicators of the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Spanish Empire,” *Fort Guijaros Quarterly*, 1:2 (1987), 14–22.