



Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America

Karen Ordahl Kupperman

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In this vividly written book, prize-winning author Karen Ordahl Kupperman refocuses our understanding of encounters between English venturers and Algonquians all along the East Coast of North America in the early years of contact and settlement. All parties in these dramas were uncertain, hopeful and fearful about the opportunity and challenge presented by new realities. Indians and English both believed they could control the developing relationship. Each group was curious about the other, and interpreted through their own standards and traditions. At the same time both came from societies in the process of unsettling change and hoped to derive important lessons by studying a profoundly different culture. These meetings and early relationships are recorded in a wide variety of sources. Native people maintained oral traditions about the encounters, and these were written down by English recorders at the time of contact and since; many are maintained to this day. English venturers, desperate to make readers at home understand how difficult and potentially rewarding their enterprise was, wrote constantly of their own experiences and observations and transmitted native lore. Kupperman analyzes all these sources in order to understand the true nature of these early years, when English venturers were so fearful and dependent on native aid and the shape of the future was uncertain. Building on the research in her highly regarded book *Settling with the Indians*, Kupperman argues convincingly that we must see both Indians and English as active participants in this unfolding drama.

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