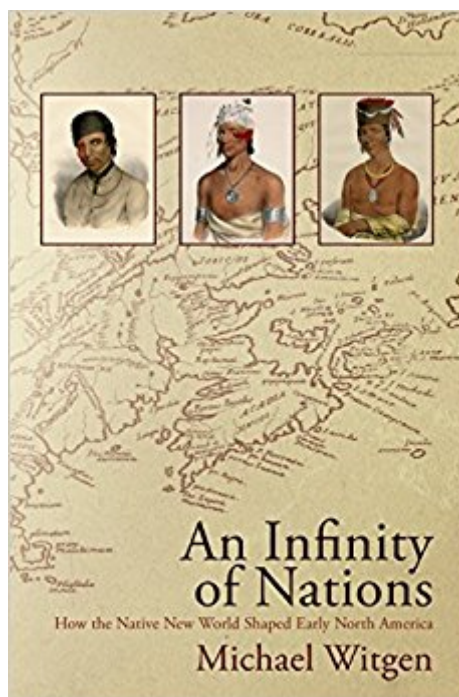




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An Infinity Of Nations: How The Native New World Shaped Early North America (Early American Studies)



Synopsis

An Infinity of Nations explores the formation and development of a Native New World in North America. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, indigenous peoples controlled the vast majority of the continent while European colonies of the Atlantic World were largely confined to the eastern seaboard. To be sure, Native North America experienced far-reaching and radical change following contact with the peoples, things, and ideas that flowed inland following the creation of European colonies on North American soil. Most of the continent's indigenous peoples, however, were not conquered, assimilated, or even socially incorporated into the settlements and political regimes of this Atlantic New World. Instead, Native peoples forged a New World of their own. This history, the evolution of a distinctly Native New World, is a foundational story that remains largely untold in histories of early America. Through imaginative use of both Native language and European documents, historian Michael Witgen recreates the world of the indigenous peoples who ruled the western interior of North America. The Anishinaabe and Dakota peoples of the Great Lakes and Northern Great Plains dominated the politics and political economy of these interconnected regions, which were pivotal to the fur trade and the emergent world economy. Moving between cycles of alliance and competition, and between peace and violence, the Anishinaabeg and Dakota carved out a place for Native peoples in modern North America, ensuring not only that they would survive as independent and distinct Native peoples but also that they would be a part of the new community of nations who made the New World.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"An important and original history, *An Infinity of Nations* should lead ethnohistorians to reinterrogate other North American regions for indigenous categories of social and political organization that may have been more important, and more fluid, than Europeans understood." — *Ethnohistory*

"Witgen implores readers to reimagine native peoples as agents of their own destiny well into the nineteenth century. As such, *An Infinity of Nations* invites scholars to reconsider crucial tenets of early American history." — *Journal of American History*

An Infinity of Nations is a bold and altogether original examination of Indian-European relations, indigenous social formation, and European imperialism. Though centered on the western Great Lakes and northwestern interior in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the book travels far and wide geographically, chronologically, and thematically — to Iroquoia in the East, Hudson Bay in the North, the prairie-plains in the West, and Ohio Country in the South. Witgen also reaches deep into the past to place the events of the late 1600s in a long historical context of evolving indigenous North America, and he takes the story into the early nineteenth century, showing how, as it expanded westward, the United States collided with a long-evolving and fully formed indigenous world. A sophisticated study of a different kind of colonial world where kinship ties, mediation, small gestures, and right words signified and brought power." — Pekka Hämäläinen, author of *The Comanche Empire*

Selected by *Choice* magazine as an Outstanding Academic Title for 2013

Michael Witgen is Associate Professor and Director of Native American Studies at the University of Michigan.

A seminal work, a tour-de-force, a compelling, elevating, enlightening read. Witgen is unrelenting as he wrests us from complacencies. We gradually absorb the reality of a 'new world' that was not fundamentally European. Thanks to Witgen, his colleagues and their students, we are now beginning to appreciate the richness of our heritage.

While there's interesting information and perspective here, the writing is sometimes jargony and always extremely repetitive. The book could have been half the length (or shorter) without losing anything. Definitely try a sample before buying to see whether you like the writing style.

Provides a much-needed perspective on European colonial expansion. Possibly the best work to date that grapples with Native perspectives in the making of the New World.

Perfect condition! Received it quickly. And the book, bogged down a bit with thick details and attention to linguistics, wrangles together a good source base and richly engages "middle ground," Native American "empire," and North American "borderlands" studies; this is a smart addition to R. White, D. Richter, and K. DuVal, P. Hämäläinen. Thanks!

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