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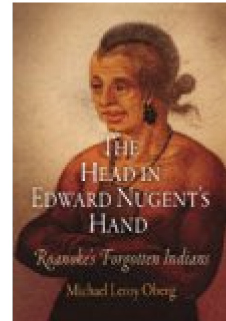
Michael Leroy Oberg. *The Head in Edward Nugent's Hand: Roanoke's Forgotten Indians.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. x + 205 pp. $32.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8122-4031-3.



Reviewed by June Namias (Independent Scholar)
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Edward Nugent, Ossomocomuck, Wingina, Manteo, Wanchese, Granganimeo, Aquascogoc: these are not names and places most of us know. That is just the point. Michael Leroy Oberg, professor of history at the State University of New York, College of Geneseo, takes on the job of explaining to his readers, not the story of the "Lost Colony" of Roanoke, but the "Lost Indians" of Roanoke, or what he calls in his subtitle, "Roanoke's Forgotten Indians."

As students or teachers of American history, many of us begin our study of North America with the story of Sir Walter Ralegh (Raleigh) and his attempt to found the first English colony in North America off the North Carolina banks in a place called Roanoke. For students and even for teachers this story carries great fascination. There is Ralegh's close relationship with Queen Elizabeth. There is Ralegh's own desire to be a kind of English Cortés without the Spanish conquistador trappings but with the imperial will to begin a productive colony with an attempt at Christianizing Native people. There are the various attempts at this colonization, beginning in 1584 and interrupted by the Spanish Armada (1588). There is John White's work on the attempt to plant the colony, and his watercolors and map–many represented in this text and one on the cover of the book. But what of the Algonquin story? This is what Oberg wants us to know. In fact, several times he tells us: this is an Algonquin story.

But we do not know the names of the leading indigenous characters. We do not know the names of most of the places. That is why we need Oberg's work. There are piles of studies about the "Lost Colony," even though we do not know the answers there, but nothing from the Algonquin perspective. Oberg's book is a real contribution. There are others who have tried to shed light on this, one of the first encounters between the English and Native Americans in North America. Oberg uses their work to advantage. He examines all of the primary documents he can find, including the collections of David Beers Quinn, both primary and secondary in nature. He uses much of the secondary work of anthropologists and archaeologists, as well as historians such as Karen Ordahl Kupperman, Calvin Martin, and Helen Rountree, and much new work on Native Americans, especially along the Atlantic.[1]

Olberg begins with Ossomocomuck–the area in to which "the oddly-attired Englishmen had intruded." It is a term which "may mean something as appropriate and simple as 'the land that we inhabit, the dwelling house,' or 'the house site' "! (p. 3). He gives us a map of this region: the outer banks of the Carolinas and what today is the southern region of Virginia. He also includes five well-produced drawings and engravings from John White and Theodor DeBry–the former from the British Museum's originals of White's paintings. He then takes us, with the help of Thomas Harriot and his *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590) and other works, through the various villages of this area and shows how these villages may have developed over the centuries. There are creation stories and descriptions of subsistence life, the use of the sea, agriculture, clothing, ritual and religious rites, and burial rites. There is a discussion of Native *weroance*s (leaders) and *sachem*s, especially *weroance* Wingina. There is also a good deal about Manteo and Wanchese, who were taken back to London and lived there for some months. Both learned English and taught their version of their Algonquin language to Thomas Harriot. Manteo eventually stayed with the En-

glish when they returned to North America in 1586. In England and on the sea, Wanchese saw how the English behaved, how huge their setting and population was in England, and what their intent really was for his homeland. Oberg continues with a Roanoke "brother" named Granganimeo and the first encounters between Englishmen and villagers of the coastal area. There were welcomes, pipes, and other rituals of greeting. There were women, including Granganimeo's wife, who came "to meete us very cheerfully," as Arthur Barlowe, a member of the expedition, wrote (quoted, p. 3).

Eventually all of these meetings come to no good. It is the head of Wingina that is mentioned in the book's title: *The Head in Edward Nugent's Hand*. This is the pivotal story and the result of how, "at Roanoke, the English newcomers intruded into an Indian story" (pp. 30-31). For Wingina and his people, the world of balance was a central tenet of culture. For the English, the return from England in 1586 took them through the Spanish Caribbean, where they hit upon Spanish settlements to force a turnover of animals and amass a year's supply of a variety of foods. But Sir Richard Grenville, head of this return trip, was caught in a major coastal storm coming into Carolina's outer banks. One of his large supply ships was wrecked, and all of the supplies except for about three weeks' worth were ruined. As the English moved along the coast they found other Natives. After leaving this village they returned to accuse one of the Native men of stealing a cup. This soon became a row, with the English burning the entire village to the ground. This village is Aquascogoc–most likely the first Native village to be torched by the English, but soon to be followed by a Pequot village in Connecticut, torched by the men of the Massachusetts Bay colony in 1637.

The English brought their language and their Anglican faith. Several believed that, with the smothering of Algonquin languages with English and the conversion of the villages to Christianity, the Natives would become like the English. The English also brought illness. These diseases are thought to have been some sort of flu brought from Europe. They were new to the Native people. Wingina became ill twice. He first thought was that English technology and bearing brought special sacred powers. Then he realized that his connection with the English brought death, disease, and violence. He began to distance himself from Grenville and the English, and also from his willingness to have his village feed them daily.

After a variety of crises, Wingina changed his name to Pemisapan. The English tried to bring him and his village back to feeding them daily and supplying them with translators. Manteo stayed with the English. Because the Natives failed to fulfill English wishes, violence ensued. Edward Nugent, a young Irishman, killed Wingina. The leader's head was subsequently displayed on a pole. Other Natives of Aquascogoc had been beheaded earlier. In King Philip's War in New England in the 1670s, the Wampanoag King Philip, or Metacom, was killed. He was beheaded and his body quartered. His head was placed on a pole outside of Plymouth and remained there for months.

In the book's introduction, Oberg questions how and whether it is possible to reconstruct the Native American side of meetings, interactions, and conflicts with Europeans at the time of European arrival and after. We have documents from the European side but none from the Native side until colonial court records and treaties become available. Oberg sees Wingina's murder as the end of the English notion of establishing Eden in the New World. He also goes into some depth trying to explain the integration of English people left off the Carolina banks with the Roanoke and other Atlantic coast Native people, but underplays the possible roles of hurricanes, starvation, winds, and storms.

Oberg's work is part of the serious and growing set of studies done by historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists, as well as Native American scholars, on the early interactions between Native people and Europeans. This is a long, hard road. Is this study perfect? No. Is it complete? At this point in time, yes. Critical questions are asked, much is attempted, and much is accomplished.

Note

[1]. See Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke: Voyages and Colonies, 1584-1590* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), and *The Roanoke Voyages, 1584-1590* (New York: The Hakluyt Society, 1955); Kupperman, *Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony*, second edition (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and Rountree, *Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500-1722* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993).

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