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Kevin Kenny. *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. viii + 294 pp. $29.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-533150-9.

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William Penn Had a Dream

Kevin Kenny's *Peaceable Kingdom Lost* argues that the Paxton Boys controversy of 1763-64 marked the end of William Penn's vision of Pennsylvania as a "peaceable kingdom" inhabited by both Indians and Europeans. In the wake of this failed experiment in intercultural comity, Kenny argues, Indian annihilation emerged as both the practice and policy of Pennsylvania's government and white residents. In making this case, Kenny rejects portrayals of the Paxton Boys as harbingers of a more democratic and republican political system in which frustrated outsiders were able to hold distant political elites accountable for their actions. Instead, he argues, revenge and a desire for land motivated the Paxton Boys and any republican political sympathies or ideas they demonstrated in pursuit of those goals were decidedly incidental to them.

Kenny's interpretation of the Paxton Boy affair reflects a growing trend in the scholarship of Revolutionary America that identifies the period as critical to the formation of attitudes and policy toward Native Americans. In that regard, the book echoes the conclusions of Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (2008); Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (2007); Gregory T. Knouff, *The Soldiers' Revolution: Pennsylvanians in Arms and the Forging of Early American Identity* (2004), and Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (1991): that the emergence of the United States brought with it a more hostile and confrontational attitude toward Indians that promoted war and removal at the expense of diplomacy and accommodation. Kenny, as do these other authors, locates that transformation in European settlers' hunger for Indian land, and the willingness of elites in the East to tolerate westerners' violent methods in exchange for their cooperation in establishing a stable government. The rise of the American Republic, for all of these authors, brought with it, in addition to the often celebrated political reforms, a greater toleration for violence against Indians and a more pronounced sense of racial difference and superiority.

Kenny's contribution to this literature is to focus on how the culture of the Ulster Presbyterian Paxton Boys intersected with politics and the law to end Penn's Holy Experiment. The Holy Experiment was Penn's vision–inspired both by a desire to control the acquisition of land and religious principles–of an Indian policy based on the orderly acquisition of land through purchase and treaties consistent with Quaker principles of fair dealing and nonviolence. This ideal was challenged by a group of immigrants Kenny identifies as Ulster Presbyterians. Their preferred means of acquiring land was conquest and their insular vision of community rarely looked beyond defending its members' interests. In the early eighteenth century, these two views clashed in the Susquehanna Valley where the Ulster Presbyterians consistently encroached on Indian land either not yet acquired or explicitly protected by treaties between the Indians and Pennsylvania's proprietors. In these cases, the proprietary government used its legal authority to enforce the terms of Indian treaties and force the settlers to abide by the terms of Penn's Holy Experiment, a policy that for the most part produced a peaceful frontier and stable colony.

The success of the Holy Experiment, however, depended on the willingness of Pennsylvania's government, which was increasingly divided between factions representing the Penn family and the Quaker controlled Assembly, to use the law to enforce its assumptions. That dynamic persisted as long as both the Penn family's interest in controlling access to the land overlapped with the Quaker Assembly's suspicion of frontier settlers to create a pragmatic and principled commitment to Penn's vision. Of course, the success of this alliance rested on the coop-

eration of native people living within and around Pennsylvania's borders; only if they trusted their European partners to protect their interests would they continue to play their role in the Holy Experiment.

It was this last component of the alliance underpinning the Holy Experiment that proved to be its most vulnerable. Penn's vision of interracial comity began to unravel in 1737 when proprietor Thomas Penn perpetrated one of the most infamous land frauds in colonial America, the Walking Purchase. With the assistance of a deed of dubious validity and the diplomatic pressure of the Iroquois, he was able to acquire the last remaining significant Delaware lands in eastern Pennsylvania. With the stroke of a pen, Thomas Penn undid the proprietors' commitment to fair dealing with the Indians, transforming the Delaware from active participants in the Holy Experiment into the catalysts of its destruction.

In the French and Indian War (1754-63) and Pontiac's War (1763), angry Delawares seeking revenge for the Walking Purchase, aided by Shawnees and other Ohio Valley Indians angry at continued encroachment on their lands, began raiding Pennsylvania's western frontier. Ulster Presbyterian communities bore the brunt of these raids. Consequently, when the proprietors and the Assembly fell to squabbling over how to pay for frontier defense and Quaker delegations tried to revive the Holy Experiment by negotiating with the Delaware, these settlers took matters into their own hands. In keeping with their traditions, they organized local militias for defense and to wage a war of conquest against the Indians. In waging that war, in keeping with their insular culture, the Ulster Presbyterians refused to make any distinctions between friendly and unfriendly Indians, viewing all as equally culpable in the raids and equally a threat to the land the settlers hoped to claim. The culmination of this view of Indians and how to remove the threats they posed came in December 1763 when a party of militia from Paxton Township murdered twenty peaceful Conestoga Indians: first, in a raid on the Conestoga's homes in Indiantown and again in an attack on the Lancaster workhouse where the Indians had been taken for their protection.

The attack on the Conestogas was a direct repudiation of the Holy Experiment, and one that required a strong response if it was to be preserved. Initially the Quaker controlled Assembly and the proprietary governor followed the pattern already established in dealing with settler abuse of Indians; they condemned the attack and insisted that the Paxton Boys, as they were called, be brought to justice. The Ulster Presbyterian sense of communal solidarity, combined with intimidation of outsiders and dissenters, however, prevented the provincial government from uncovering the identity of the murderers let alone bringing them to trial. In a reversal of roles, in fact, representatives from Ulster Presbyterian settlements marched on Philadelphia where, in two sets of written demands, they demanded that the Quakers, whom they believed had aided and protected Indian raiders, and a group of peaceful Moravian Indians, whom they suspected to be complicit in the frontier raids, be surrendered to them for their own vision of justice. These demands came to nothing, but they marked a critical moment in which the authority of the Pennsylvania government and its laws had been openly defied, which, Kenny argues, demanded a forceful response if Penn's Holy Experiment were to survive.

That response, Kenny recounts, never came. The proprietary party seized on the Paxton Boys's accusations that the Quakers had directly and indirectly aided the Indians in their attacks on the frontier to discredit their long-time adversaries. The Quakers and their Assembly allies, similarly, used the excesses of the Paxton Boys to illustrate the weakness of the proprietary government and the dangers of Presbyterian immigration. These political divisions prevented the government from taking any further action against the Paxton Boys and in defense of the Indians. Kenny lays most of the blame for this inaction on the proprietary party's and its allies' willingness to ignore the Paxton Boys's assault on the laws of the colony and its constitution in the hopes of creating a political alliance capable of unseating the Quakers and their allies in the Assembly. In this paralyzed state, law and order on the colony's western frontier broke down, and relations between Europeans and Indians were governed by Ulster Presbyterians' notions of community and conquest. Attacks on Indians, peaceful and belligerent, increased and any attempt to punish those responsible was met with community obstruction and interference; prisoners were rescued from jails and trials ended in acquittals if they happened at all. The proprietary party, however, was rewarded for turning a blind eye to these events as they road an alliance with Philadelphia's Presbyterians to victory in the elections of 1764.

Despite the change in de facto, if not de jure, Indian policy, the Paxton Boys did not immediately receive the land they had hoped to gain when they began the war of conquest that led to the deaths of the Conestoga Indians; they had to wait until the conflict between Connecticut and Pennsylvania over the Wyoming Valley provided an opportunity to conquer lands from both the Indians and Pennsylvanians. In the American Revolution, those efforts at conquest took on a patriotic overtone, as the Pax-

ton Boys styled themselves as fighting against the cruel Indian enemy and the arch-Tory Thomas Penn; if they fought as patriots most died that way as well, killed in the Indian raid on the Wyoming Valley in 1778. They were appropriate martyrs, Kenny concludes, not for republican government but for the United States' increasingly violent Indian policy that produced a massacre of peaceful Moravian Indians at Ghanadenhütten in 1782 and Indian Removal under Andrew Jackson.

Kenny's account of the Paxton Boys incident and its aftermath adds an interesting dimension to the scholarly literature on the relationship between European settlers and Indians and the policies that governed or directed it. Kenny's focus on both the cultural dimensions of the Ulster Presbyterians' behavior and the squabbles that dominated contemporary Pennsylvania politics to explain the causes and consequences of the Paxton Boys affair strikes a good balance between understanding colonial British North America as an extension of the Old World and the product of conditions in the New. It also, by emphasizing the previous relative success of the Holy Experiment and the Quakers demand that the Paxton Boys be punished, restores a degree of contingency arguably absent from the growing literature on the changing attitude and policy toward Indians following American Independence. Would a serious attempt by the proprietor and the Assembly to punish the Paxton Boys, Kenny's work implicitly asks, have succeeded in restoring the Holy Experiment? If it had in1764, would the Holy Experiment have survived independence and the Revolution? Griffin's and Knouff's work certainly suggest Penn's vision would not have survived independence even if it could have been restored in 1764. Kenny's implicit raising of the possibility that the Holy Experiment might have survived, however, is still useful. By restoring a sense of contingency to the chaotic affairs of the winter of 1763 and spring of 1764, Kenny asks us to remember that human decisions shape history, and those that involve putting aside the law for short-term political gain can have disastrous consequences.

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