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James D. Rice. *Tales from a Revolution; Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 280 pp. $14.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-19-538694-3.

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Tales from a Revolution attempts to fills a gap in the literature on Bacon's Rebellion. It is currently the only in-print narrative treatment that would appeal to a broad range of readers, including undergraduate students. The book contains a strong narrative account of Bacon's Rebellion, but it goes well beyond the events of 1676. In its broadened scope, the book makes its greatest historiographical contribution but also contains its most serious flaws.

The title is somewhat deceiving, since only about half of the narrative concerns Bacon's Rebellion proper. Rice narrates Bacon's Rebellion with clarity and precision. He admittedly leaves some major players like Frances Berkeley out of the story for the sake of streamlining, but readers will nevertheless get a solid account of the events of the rebellion and a fair picture of Nathaniel Bacon himself. The second half of the book is less successful. Here, Rice attempts to demonstrate that Bacon's Rebellion was not really Bacon's. It represented rather a broad, late seventeenth-century expansion of the European economy into Indian territories, resulting in severe disruption and discontent among some Indian peoples. Rice frames Bacon's Rebellion as not being against royal authority per se but rather *for* a sort of royal authority that Governor William Berkeley would not offer, especially in his refusal to deal harshly with frontier Indians.

Rice ties Bacon's Rebellion to the Glorious Revolution, which he also argues was never a rebellion against royal authority in the colonies. Instead, Rice argues that the irrational English fear of Catholicism was also present in Virginia and Maryland. The "Baconites" in these colonies never forgot their grievances after Bacon's defeat. Fear of the Catholic and absolutist France of Louis XIV expanding its American empire and using its Indian allies to terrorize the English colonies drove the Baconites again to rebellion. The result was a consolidation of royal authority under William III and his royal governor Francis Nicholson, who put harsh anti-Indian policies in place that effectively resolved the Baconites' major grievances. These rebellions, in Rice's view, unified white colonists in Virginia and Maryland. Whites further unified on the issue of race, as African slavery came to replace white servitude and Indian slavery at the close of the seventeenth century.

Rice's arguments are intriguing, especially in his attempt to recast Bacon's Rebellion as a much grander affair than most have previously thought. However, the narrative structure leaves some major interpretive gaps. Rice does not make the connection between Bacon's Rebellion and the Glorious Revolution entirely clear until the afterword. This afterword properly should have been included as an introduction to the book, since Rice uses it to situatee his work within the historiography, defend his narrative style, and outline his major arguments. Even after reading his summary argument, it seems that there is simply not enough evidence in this small book to clearly demonstrate all of the links that may have existed between Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, the anti-proprietary rebellion in Maryland, and the Glorious Revolution in England and America.

In explaining his narrative approach, Rice confesses that the narrative style does not often leave room for interpretive interruptions. Indeed, one would probably not want an extended review of the literature on the Glorious Revolution to break the flow of the author's tale. However, this book is clearly setting out to be more than just a mere tale or narrative. It attempts to offer a sweeping reinterpretation of Bacon's Rebellion, and a short narrative is not equipped to fully execute that kind of argument. If nothing else, the book needs a substantial and analytical introduction along with explanatory and interpretive footnotes to more convincingly make the case

that Bacon's Rebellion should in fact be thought of as the first stage in a massively transformative revolution that brought about strong royal government and the solidification of white society in the colonial Chesapeake. Rice goes so far as to suggest that the Virginia that emerged from this transformation became a model for the Old South—a model that persisted to the Civil War and beyond. Such sweeping claims are simply beyond the ability of a book of this nature to effectively support.

Rice then offers a very well-written narrative. It offers some synthesis of the major secondary works on Bacon's Rebellion by Stephen Saunders Webb, Wilcomb E. Washburn, and Edmund S. Morgan. It also offers a potential new framework for understanding this entire period of Chesapeake history. The book is a good read and would likely make for a highly discussable text in a classroom setting. However, the book ultimately raises more questions than it can effectively answer.

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