

***Separate Paths: Lenapes and Colonists in West New Jersey*****Jean R. Soderlund****New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2022****200 pages****ISBN: 9781978813113****DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14713/njs.v9i2.338>**

Historians of early America have tended to focus their studies on New England, Pennsylvania, New Netherland, and Virginia, whereas southern New Jersey, or southern Lenapehoking, the homeland of the Lenape people, has received far less attention. Jean R. Soderlund's *Separate Paths: Lenapes and Colonists in West New Jersey* seeks to rectify this and reveals the relationships between European settlers and Native Americans in the Colony of West New Jersey. Covering roughly the region equivalent to the modern-day southern half of the modern State of New Jersey in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Soderlund examines how the Lenape people coped with incoming Swedish, Finnish, and English Quaker settlers and how these settlers carved a colony out of the Lenape homeland. Soderlund argues that "despite Quaker pacificism and long-standing Lenape-old settler alliances, European colonization in southern Lenapehoking resulted in the dispossession of Indigenous people and enslavement of Africans similar to conquests elsewhere" (4). *Separate Paths* is a deeply researched book that examines an oft-ignored region, illuminating a different model of European settlement and Native American response and adaptations to settler colonialism.

Over the course of the 17th century three different European settler groups came to colonize the Lenape homeland of New Jersey. The Dutch established a presence in northern New Jersey and New York, primarily to trade with the Indigenous people of the region, but after the appointment of Willem Kieft as the Director of New Netherland in 1638, the Dutch sought to violently subjugate the Lenape. The Lenape effectively blocked the Dutch from making major inroads in the south. In southern New Jersey, the colony of New Sweden attracted Swedish and

Finnish settlers who, through the “decades-old alliance of Lenapes and old settlers to share resources and land” had a better relationship with the Lenape largely through the recognition of their sovereignty over the region (8). English Quakers established the colony of West New Jersey in 1675 and the trickle of English settlers quickly became a flood, coming in much larger numbers than the previous Dutch, Swedes, and Finns. Meanwhile the Lenape population continued to decline due to disease.

The Quakers brought the practice of chattel slavery with them to the colony of West New Jersey. These new settlers imported enslaved Africans from Caribbean colonies and also brought in enslaved Native Americans from outside of Lenapehoking. The Lenape were angered by the enslavement of Native Americans and impacted policies on slavery through persuasion and threats of violence if settlers continued the practice of holding Native Americans in bondage. Despite many Quakers speaking out against slavery, the practice continued.

In southern New Jersey, just like elsewhere in North America, European settlers dispossessed Indigenous people of their land, although the process was remarkably non-violent compared to New England, Virginia, and other British colonies. When the Lenape sold land it was usually in small parcels to various individual settlers or proprietors. From the Lenape perspective, they were simply leasing land to allow English settlers to reside on their lands with the Lenape, whereas the English perceived these sales as permanent and were dismayed when Native Americans did not immediately vacate the land. The “old settlers,” as the English called the Swedish and Finnish settlers, had been obligated to follow Lenape understandings of landownership and were largely co-residents with the Lenape on Lenape land rather than seeking to carve out communities devoid of Native Americans as the English wished.

“The Lenape protected their sovereignty, refusing subordination to West Jersey law,” Soderlund argues, and forced concessions from the settlers uncommon elsewhere (64). For instance, accepting compensation for the killings of settlers in the mourning war or offering to compose juries of half settlers and half Lenape when attempting to try alleged Lenape criminals. In the latter example, the Lenape refused even this concession and largely avoided having their people subject to settler laws. The Lenape continued to maintain their towns in New Jersey well into the 18th century, but with the continued decline of Lenape population, they consolidated into ever fewer towns over time. The Lenape resisted when settlers tried to take land without adequate compensation and the threats from the Lenape of practicing the “mourning war,” in which they might kill trespassers or avenge the deaths by disease of their relatives by killing settlers. Settlers feared mourning war practices which prompted them to maintain peaceful relationships with the Lenape. Through diplomacy and cooperation, and the still considerable power of the Lenape nation, the colony avoided the violence and genocide so common in other colonies.

With the unification of New Jersey in 1703 English settlers soon came to dominate the government and by the mid-18th century the Swedish and Finnish settlers no longer maintained cultural distinctiveness from the English and Dutch settlers. By the time of the Treaty of Easton in 1758, most Lenape people resided in modern western Pennsylvania or Ohio, but many Lenape leaders who maintained their homes in New Jersey were represented in the treaty. “They kept rights to hunt and fish on uncultivated lands in New Jersey” and the treaty founded the Brotherton reservation in Burlington County (135). The remaining Lenape on the Brotherton reservation sold their land to the State of New Jersey in 1802 and moved to New York to join the Stockbridge Indians there, and the government soon removed them to Wisconsin. Through various massacres and forced removals, Americans pushed other Lenape groups into Ontario and Oklahoma. The

Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation, a modern state-recognized tribe in Cumberland County, the descendants of those Lenape people that encountered the Swedish, Finnish, and English settlers of the 17th century, maintain their identity and in 1995 regained twenty-eight acres of land that they call the Cohanzick Tribal Grounds.

*Separate Paths* is a solid narrative history of an understudied region of early America that illuminates the histories of the Indigenous inhabitants, a diverse group of European settlers, and to a lesser extent, enslaved African Americans. Soderlund makes an important contribution Native American history as the Lenape people of southern New Jersey are largely ignored by other scholars. The book exhibits exhaustive research and sound conclusions that academics will find useful, and although scholars might wish for a bit more analytical depth and engagement with the literature on Early American history, *Separate Paths* is an ideal book for the classroom and is accessible to a broad audience.

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