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New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield

Richard I. Melvoin

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“[An] accessible, readable, and appealing study of New England’s most famous frontier town. . . . One of the clearest, most persuasive analyses to date of how the relations between Indian tribes (and particularly inter-Indian warfare) influenced the processes of settlement in colonial America. . . . What this splendid book does is enable us to understand, in detail, the harrowing, extraordinary processes by which Deerfield—and by extension Lancaster, Haverhill, and many other places like it—became an ‘ordinary’ New England town at last. . . . Melvoin’s narrative achieves the kind of compelling quality that Parkman managed in *A Half-Century of Conflict*; yet, it is in every sense analytically superior to that classic account.” —Fred Anderson, *Western Historical Quarterly*

This is a study of a small American colonial outpost which, between 1665-1715, came under attack 30 times, culminating in a massacre which claimed the lives of over half of the town's population. The book is also a social history, portraying the lives of the first Puritan settlers and the effect of the colonies on the wars between France and England. The author describes the complexity of the Indians' role in all events, as the balance of power throughout the New England frontier was divided between many Indian tribes as well as the opposing English and French colonists.

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