



Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America

Michael McDonnell

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In *Masters of Empire*, the historian Michael A. McDonnell reveals the pivotal role played by the native peoples of the Great Lakes in the history of North America. Though less well known than the Iroquois or Sioux, the Anishinaabeg, who lived across Lakes Michigan and Huron, were equally influential. *Masters of Empire* charts the story of one group, the Odawa, who settled at the straits between those two lakes, a hub for trade and diplomacy throughout the vast country west of Montreal known as the *pays d'en haut*.

Highlighting the long-standing rivalries and relationships among the great Indian nations of North America, McDonnell shows how Europeans often played only a minor role in this history, and reminds us that it was native peoples who possessed intricate and far-reaching networks of commerce and kinship, of which the French and British knew little. As empire encroached upon their domain, the Anishinaabeg were often the ones doing the exploiting. By dictating terms at trading posts and frontier forts, they played a crucial part in the making of early America.

Through vivid depictions—all from a native perspective—of early skirmishes, the French and Indian War, and the American Revolution, *Masters of Empire* overturns our assumptions about colonial America. By calling attention to the Great Lakes as a crucible of culture and conflict, McDonnell reimagines the landscape of American history.

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