

INDIGENOUS LIFE AROUND THE GREAT LAKES

➤ *War, Climate, and Culture* ◀

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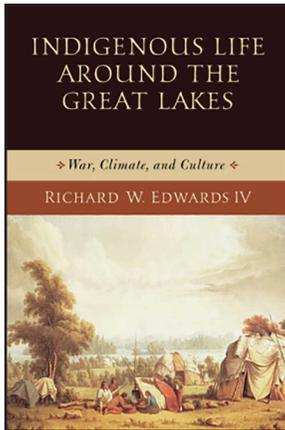
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Indigenous Life Around the Great Lakes: War, Climate, and Culture

By Richard W. Edwards IV. 2020. [Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame](#). 283 pp. Paperback (\$45.00), Hardback (\$125.00), eBook—Web PDF and EPUB (\$35.99).

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Edwards' *Indigenous Life Around the Great Lakes* is excellent. Although I have co-authored a couple studies on Late Pre-historic-era stone technology from the Midwest, I am by no means an expert on the period, cultures, or analyzed artifacts present in the book. Nevertheless, it was plainly evident to this reviewer that Edwards penned a *tour de force* from which I learned much and enjoyed the journey along the way. According to the preface, *Indigenous Life* represents the first of a new archaeological monograph series, Midwest Archaeological Perspectives (MAP), which is a joint venture by the University of Notre Dame and MAC, Inc. If Edwards' work is any indication of the direction that this series is headed, then the field of Midwestern Archaeology can look forward to many more years of robust, exciting research published in monograph form.

The wonderful thing about *Indigenous Life* is its tight and clear structure, which stems from a hypothesis-driven and quantitative approach. In effect, this monograph is a journal article that is given room to breathe. In an era where word limits in “top” journals force authors to pack, stuff, and cram data and analyses into supplementary materials (sometimes with detrimental effect on the review process, science, and public consumption), Edwards' tome is a welcome and timely reminder for us all that robust science is more important than immediate “impact,” and that good science will eventually glean impact over the *longue durée*. Edwards sets up his questions, subject background, theoretical orientation, and methods in the Introduction and first three chapters before presenting two meaty results chapters. He concludes with what I would identify as five “discussion” chapters in which he explores the results via intra- and inter-cross-cultural comparisons. A final “conclusion” chapter summaries the work and ties the research together with a nice, neat bow.

Using both preserved macrobotanical specimens and isotopic data, Edwards tests the how agriculturally oriented people were at the Koshkonong Locality in southeastern Wisconsin, an important site within the Oneota cultural complex. Edwards succeeds in answering this question, concluding that “the residents of the Koshkonong Locality were maize agriculturalists” (p. 211). Edwards' definitive conclusion is possible because he does not depend on non-specific generalizations, but instead does the hard work of viewing the Koshkonong data and results within a frame of archaeological sites over space and across time. The “risk management” angle present throughout the volume also works well and could easily be expanded into an explicitly evolutionary approach in the future if Edwards or another researcher chooses to do so. I especially loved reading the analysis and conclusions regarding the influence of enemies versus environment on Koshkonong settlement and lifeways, the former acting as more of a threat when compared to the latter.

Book Review

There are gobs of data presented throughout the book, presented in tables as well as two appendices. The figures are clean and easily interpreted, and any reader cannot help but admire the care that went into the figures depicting the Principal Components Analyses (PCA), which can often be a mess but here are a pleasure to look at and contemplate. The index is compact, but complete.

In sum, Edwards' *Indigenous Life* is an achievement, and one that I recommend to archaeologists studying any time period or place.