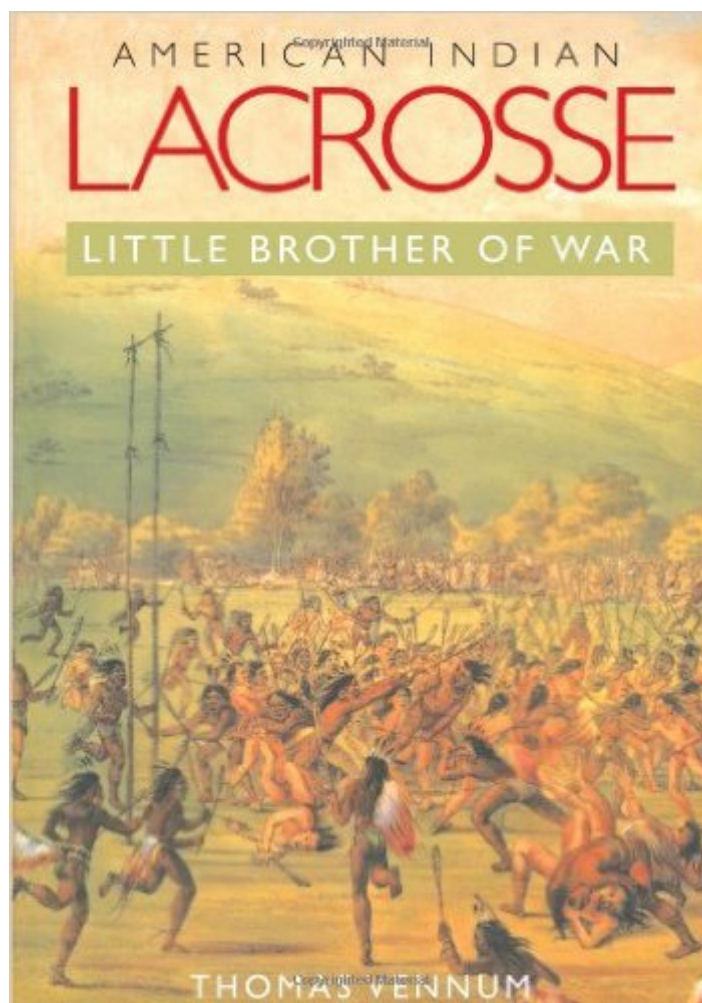


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American Indian Lacrosse: Little Brother Of War



Synopsis

To understand the aboriginal roots of lacrosse, one must enter a world of spiritual belief and magic where players sewed inchworms into the innards of lacrosse balls and medicine men gazed at miniature lacrosse sticks to predict future events, where bits of bat wings were twisted into the stick's netting, and where famous players wereâ•and are stillâ•buried with their sticks. Here Thomas Vennum brings this world to life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Vennum's work covers a neglected aspect of North American history: the role of lacrosse in native culture. By examining varieties of the game played across the continent, Vennum demonstrates that it was more than just a sport. Lacrosse provided entertainment, served as a substitute for armed conflict (and sometimes was a precursor to it), and was part of native spirituality. Particularly fascinating is Vennum's ability to weave the sporting aspects of the game with the sociological. Also important is his investigation of how the majority culture has taken this game and turned into something completely different: with standardized plastic sticks and a for-profit motive for playing. By taking the story all the way to the present, the author reveals that to native Americans the game still means much more, although many nations no longer even know they once enjoyed playing the "fastest game on two feet." My only complaint, as a Canadian, is that Vennum appears not to know geography quite well, and he consistently refers to Canadian sites incorrectly. But, overall, this a wonderful book

I can't say enough good things about this book! I picked it up while at a book sale and immediately had to have it. It's full of photographs of American Indian teams and tells you the full story of Lacrosse/baggataway and you get so much more--it's an in-depth look at how it affected the peoples and tidbits about their daily lives. Interspersed between each chapter are short 'stories' about lacrosse events. This is a great book, and a wealth of information. It's about more than just lacrosse. Don't hesitate to get this!

Every year, it seems as though Lacrosse is growing in popularity. With great enthusiasm, new teams are being added at every level. We are truly living in a Golden Age of Lacrosse. Yet, the game seems to be increasingly divorced from its Native American roots. "American Indian Lacrosse" is an essential book for all those are interested in learning where this Pre-Columbian game came from. Thomas Vennum is an anthropologist based out of the Center for Folklife Programs at the Smithsonian Institute. Vennum has carefully mined both the historical texts and the more recent ethnographies to assemble the most complete story to date of Native American Lacrosse. He examines such important topics as Lacrosse and Indian spirituality and its historic role in warfare and diplomacy. "American Indian Lacrosse" is a well written book, dense with historic and anthropological detail. It is a must read for people who want to understand the origins of the game they love.

This is a serious piece of scholarship and clearly shows the spiritual aspects inherent to the game for Native American/First Nation Peoples. I haven't finished the book yet, but I've only read one story, so far, that relates American Indian lacrosse to war. I was expecting something along the lines of stories similar to those that come out of Ireland regarding ancient hurling matches, held before major battles, where legend has it that more players died in the hurling match than in battle.

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