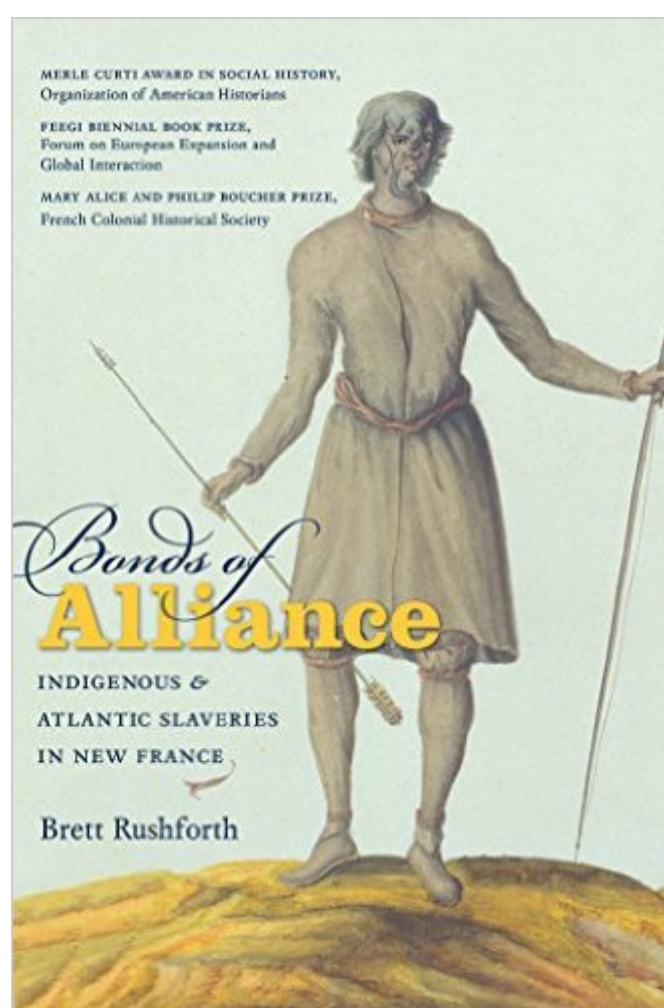


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# Bonds Of Alliance: Indigenous And Atlantic Slaveries In New France (Published For The Omohundro Institute Of Early American History And Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia)



## Synopsis

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, French colonists and their Native allies participated in a slave trade that spanned half of North America, carrying thousands of Native Americans into bondage in the Great Lakes, Canada, and the Caribbean. In *Bonds of Alliance*, Brett Rushforth reveals the dynamics of this system from its origins to the end of French colonial rule. Balancing a vast geographic and chronological scope with careful attention to the lives of enslaved individuals, this book gives voice to those who lived through the ordeal of slavery and, along the way, shaped French and Native societies. Rather than telling a simple story of colonial domination and Native victimization, Rushforth argues that Indian slavery in New France emerged at the nexus of two very different forms of slavery: one indigenous to North America and the other rooted in the Atlantic world. The alliances that bound French and Natives together forced a century-long negotiation over the nature of slavery and its place in early American society. Neither fully Indian nor entirely French, slavery in New France drew upon and transformed indigenous and Atlantic cultures in complex and surprising ways. Based on thousands of French and Algonquian-language manuscripts archived in Canada, France, the United States and the Caribbean, *Bonds of Alliance* bridges the divide between continental and Atlantic approaches to early American history. By discovering unexpected connections between distant peoples and places, Rushforth sheds new light on a wide range of subjects, including intercultural diplomacy, colonial law, gender and sexuality, and the history of race.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Take a look at the reviews (the professional reviews) of this book. Allan Greer, Jim Merrel...I'm inclined to trust the experts over anonymous screeds via product review. Rushforth is a world-class scholar and the Omohundro Institute's publication process is the cream of the crop. Every footnote and source is checked (no other publisher of academic history does this). The charge that one of their books has been "rushed to press" is ridiculous. If you purchase this book with a realistic idea of what it is trying to accomplish--synthesizing an immense amount of primary sourcework to illuminate an academically neglected part of North America's colonial era--then you will be very pleased with your choice.

This book is good read for anyone interested in the interactions between Europeans and Native Americans in North America. Rushforth discusses practices that have long been ignored. This book takes an in depth look at the practice of slavery in New France (Eastern North America, Great Lakes region) among indigenous groups as well as Europeans. He ties these practices to supposed practices conducted circa AD 1250 (the time of Cahokia), which is much farther back than most go. While I find his discussion on archaeological interpretations somewhat sketchy (he largely only uses one of the prominent viewpoints), I applaud his effort. You rarely find historians willing to venture out of their field. He also nicely links these North American actions with the larger Atlantic World. A point that I'm not sure I completely agree with is his linkage between the marriages "in the custom of the country" to slavery, which is a much stronger interpretation than most have had. Whether you agree with his interpretation or not, it is well worth the read. It provides thought provoking questions on the nature of the relationships between various indigenous groups, as well as between the French, the British, and the various Native Americans. As an archaeologist, I cannot vouch for the accuracy of some of his statements. However, much like archaeology, he can see the evidence in one way where others see it differently.

This is a highly-learned, deeply-researched, and altogether brilliant book on a much under-researched topic. It is one of the best books published recently in early American history, and will alter the way scholars and the general public have seen both native slavery and New France. It is published by an excellent scholarly press, yet offers a readable, provocative account of this world. Students, scholars, and indeed anyone with an interest in American history will benefit from reading

this terrific book.

*Bonds of Alliance* is a compelling and illuminating treatment of the patterns of Indian slavery in New France. Rushforth treats in great detail the patterns of slavery among Native groups as well as the ways in which French colonizers incorporated versions of those slavery practices. Rushforth treats his subjects with great respect, especially the Natives forced to participate in the systems of slavery. While this work forces a reconsideration of previous ideas about the ways slavery operated in New France, it does so in a coherent, powerful way that leaves little room to doubt his interpretation. I look forward to further work by Rushforth on these fascinating topics. A note to readers with weak stomachs--life in these systems of slavery was brutal and in the process of honoring the lives and suffering of slaves, Rushforth does not hide the dark realities of life in slavery.

Dr. Rushforth explores an under-studied realm of colonial American history in this masterful book and draws some exciting conclusions. For most readers this will be a great introduction to a now obscure slave system and it will leave them eager to learn more.

This work, years in the making, provides a breathtaking overview of the role of Native American slaves and slavery in the extended French Atlantic during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This book is richly sourced, with detailed footnotes on practically every page providing the evidence, background, and historiography (hence no bibliography). The parts that touch on my area of expertise exhibit a deep understanding of the key sources and debates. Crafted to stand the test of time, *Bonds of Alliance* has magnificent detail and rich insight that will pay scholarly dividends for decades to come.

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