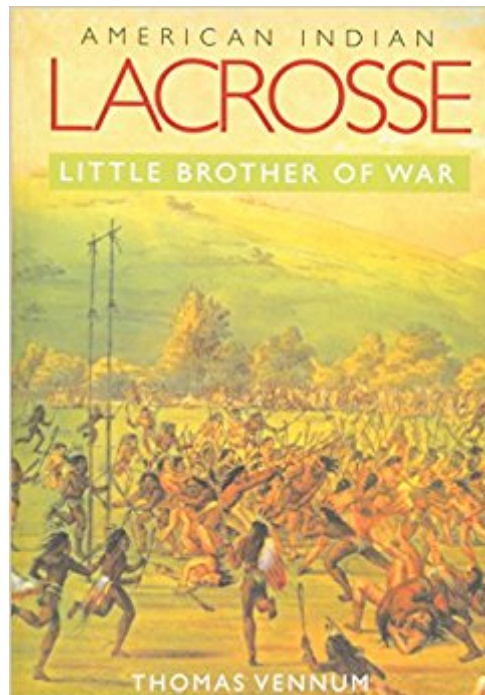




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# **American Indian Lacrosse: Little Brother Of War**



## 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 were—and are still—buried with their sticks. Here Thomas Vennum brings this world to life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Lacrosse is recognized as the oldest of North American sports, its roots running deep into Native American history. In tracing its origins, Vennum relates how the game frequently rose above recreational status, functioning as a substitute for warfare between tribes as well as a curative for a variety of ailments. It also afforded the tribes an opportunity "to express social alliances, at the kinship, village, reservation, and national levels." Detailed explanations of the rules, techniques, equipment, and playing fields are accompanied by numerous illustrations depicting the game's development. This exhaustive, well-documented work serves as a definitive study of the sport in its traditional form. A worthy addition to core subject and Native American collections.- William H. Hoffman, Ft. Myers-Lee Cty. P.L., Fla.Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Father Le Mercier, one of the "Black Robe" missionaries of the 1630s, set down an early written

account of lacrosse (a negative one, disparaging the custom as heathen), just one of many accounts and legends that Vennum recasts. An ethnographer, he shifts between tales to the sport's cultural expressions within the eastern woodland Indian tribes and its centuries-long development toward its current form and popularity among Native Americans, and as a springtime college sport. Before the NCAA's play-offs, there were even bigger big-time contests: Vennum regales readers with the play-by-play, replete with pregame invocations of the Great Spirit and post-game recriminations about the result, of a Seneca-Mohawk match in 1794. When not retelling other notable encounters, Vennum describes the equipment, variant rules, and, in an interlude, the paintings of George Catlin. His images are among a trove of illustrations on this unique contact sport, all of which blend into the enthusiastic, if idiosyncratic, text. In places where lacrosse lives (along the Mississippi and eastward), patrons will be pleased to see this. Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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.

Got this for my daughter when she played lacrosse in High School. She seemed to take in the history of the sport and also accepted its violent nature more easily...

I ordered this book for a gift for my son who plays lacrosse. It does not have as many pictures as I would have liked and the text is a bit dry but it appears to be thorough. The book was new and arrived well packed and on time.

great book for lax

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 a 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.

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

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