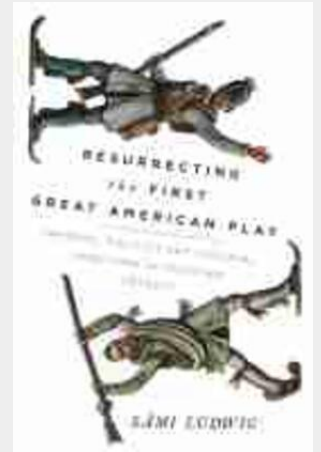


Ludwig

Resurrecting the First Great American Play: Imperial Politics and Colonial Ambitions in Frontier Detroit

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Ottawa chief Pontiac (also spelled Ponteach) led an intertribal confederacy that resisted British power in the Great Lakes region. This event was immortalized in the play *Ponteach, or the Savages of America: A Tragedy*, attributed to the infamous frontier soldier Robert Rogers. Never performed, it is one of the earliest theatrical renderings of the region, depicting its hero in a way that called into question eighteenth-century constructions of Indigenous Americans. SÄmi Ludwig contends that Ponteach's literary and artistic merits are worthy of further exploration. He investigates questions of authorship and analyzes the play's content, embracing its many contradictions as enriching windows into the era. In this way, he suggests using *Ponteach* as a tool to better understand British imperialism in North America and the emerging theatrical forms of the Young Republic.



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