



Poison Arrows: North American Indian Hunting and Warfare, David E. Jones, University of Texas Press, 1 February 2007.

“War is waged with weapons, not with poisons” is the saying the Roman army used in response to the Germanic practice of poisoning wells. This has given some scholars the mistaken notion that poisoned weapons were historically rare. *Poison Arrows* adds to the growing body of knowledge on how unexceptional poisoned weapons were in antiquarian societies.

After a crude introduction to the general history of chemical-biological warfare, the author explains why many scholars may have missed the importance of using poisons in the North American Indian society and how they were employed for nonmilitary purposes such as hunting and fishing. The rest of the book focuses on poisoned arrows, including an extension to poisoned bullets and the conjecture of prehistoric hunting with poisoned arrows.

The disappointment in *Poison Arrows* is the frequent listing of references to various poison concoctions created for use with weapons. This renders the publication to a scholarly text of special interest, with a long list of sources from firsthand observers. There is no attempt to validate the correctness of the concoctions in terms of potency, with the author freely admitting that many may have been more ceremonial in origin.

Nonetheless, it is fascinating to see the similarity of many of the poisons and the specialized design of weapons. For Soldiers who have an interest in early American history, *Poison Arrows* will bridge the gap between profession and hobby; but for others, the book is too short and specialized to hold one’s attention.

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