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Paths to a Middle Ground: The Diplomacy of Natchez, Boukfouka, Nogales, and San Fernando de las Barrancas, 1791-1795. By Charles A. Weeks.

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The chapter by Philmer Bluehouse and Zion brings us back to the relevance of old-age wisdom. It is short yet sweet. The old story about Lightning and Horned Toad says volumes about the genesis of the destruction of harmony, especially in the context of a deep concern with harmony ceremonies.

The book also offers a helpful comparison of peacemaking and restorative justice, and demonstrates why the peacemaking process may not be adaptable easily to ADR or mediation processes, while the restorative justice perspective shares a focus on restoring relations and community with peacemaking. However, there are key distinctions. Mediation is often a one-time service; peacemaking is a way of life. Mediation typically ignores cultural values; spirituality is central to peacemaking. Mediation is based on the decisions of one decision maker; peacemaking is based on consensus.

The editors invite people to suggest additional research for their "Peacemaking Reading List" located at the end of the book. Let me begin here by suggesting the relevance of the work by John Braithwaite, the ideas of Quannah Parker, and additional thoughts of Philmer Bluehouse.

Overall, this book provides a cogent overview of the peacemaking process and documents advancements made by tribal courts in the relatively short time since the institution of "modern" peacemaking in the early 1980s. It also acknowledges problems in addressing serious "criminal" justice concerns within the community. There are many other reasons to read this book, including the fact that it also brings clear meaning to the deep potential of civil law and the reasons to be civil, which is a project that Vine Deloria Jr. began for all our relations.

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Paths to a Middle Ground: The Diplomacy of Natchez, Boukfouka, Nogales, and San Fernando de las Barrancas, 1791–1795. By Charles A. Weeks. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005. 304 pages. \$45.00 cloth.

Paths to a Middle Ground reads like a breath of fresh air. The growth of Southeastern Indian scholarship in the last several decades is a welcome trend in the field of Native American history, but that does not mean all subfields have received proper examination. On the contrary, many areas of Southeastern Indian history remain unexplored, particularly those in the Yazoo Valley. Charles Weeks's book helps repair this unfortunate situation by examining the pivotal role that Fort Nogales and the surrounding region along the confluence of the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers played in the history of Southeastern Native/Spanish relations. Due to the later growth of Vicksburg, Mississippi (near Fort Nogales), the area's importance in the Civil War overshadows its Spanish period for many historians, but Weeks turns the idea that this region only gained significance during the mid-1800s on its head. Indeed, he shows that the "Gibraltar of the West" was in many ways as vital a part of diplomatic relations in the Spanish colonial period as it would

be in the Civil War era. Fort Nogales served as a meeting ground for groups of Southeastern Indians and Spanish but, more importantly, served as a beach-head from which Spanish influence pressed away from the Gulf Coast and Spanish representatives attempted to stymie the American onslaught.

Focusing on the region during a five-year period, Weeks divides his book into two sections. The first examines Nogales from both Native and Spanish perspectives, providing a wonderful blend of analysis and explanation. The second half consists of translated primary documents from Spanish archives. Both the first and second sections demand a tight, laser-like focus, and the author definitely takes such an approach. Other than occasionally delving into pre-1791 history to explain events between 1791 and 1795, he focuses relentlessly on the stated region and time period. Weeks's writing style can best be described as elegant but disciplined, and this also applies to how he organizes his monograph.

Though Weeks's combination of narrative and analysis is the shortest part of the book, it stands as the strongest. The only weakness in this section is that the detail sometimes seems overwhelming, but the author skillfully turns this to his advantage. Introduced to key personalities from the beginning, readers feel they actually know these people and thus the detail adds to one's grasp of the historical record rather than overwhelming it. What emerges from these pages are strong men and women with vivid personalities: Natives not bewildered by Europeans and pragmatic Europeans already skilled in diplomatic machinations. A particular strength is the author's examination of events from the Native perspective and through Native words. Unlike authors who paraphrase or interpret what Native leaders *might* have said, Weeks examines the exact words and phrases chosen by Native leaders and then examines those words and phrases in their cultural and historical contexts. A prime example is on the book's first page with the Chickasaw Chief Piomingo's declaration that he would follow a "straight path" to meet the Spanish at Nogales. In this context, the phrase connotes direct but peaceful relations, one of many instances in which the author examines phrasing from a variety of angles.

Another strength is *Paths to a Middle Ground's* examination of levels of political power, from tribal and band alliances, to town autonomy, to the role of individual leaders. Gift giving in Southeastern cultures as a reflection of power and cementing of social bonds has been addressed in other works such as Braund's *Duffels and Deerskins: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815* (1993), but Weeks takes a different approach. Gifting not only cemented kinship systems and reflected the importance of a chief (and his consequent ability to gather troops) but also explains how traders entered this preexisting social dynamic and often rose to become important tribal figures. None of this will surprise scholars of Southeastern Native history, but the author's narrative offers a mature interpretation and stands as a graceful explanation, especially for those not already familiar with the region.

One of the strengths of Weeks's first section is how much easier to read it makes the second section. In 1991 he and Sarah Banks wrote *Mississippi's Spanish Heritage: Selected Writings, 1492–1798*, and the second half of *Paths to a Middle Ground* clearly reflects his mastery of Spanish colonial sources relating

to the Nogales region. Seventeen primary documents address major themes of Native/Spanish relations and cover a wide range of material, from Native communications to those by Spanish governors, from treaties to journal entries. The strength of these documents is not simply that they offer insight into politics of the Nogales region, but that they examine the same issues from so many different angles. Weeks's translations are elegant in form, capturing both the underlying anxieties and ambitions of the players. Scholars of later Southern history will be interested to read the words of early settlers who grew into major figures in the lower Mississippi Valley, such as José Vidal and Stephen Minor. These men eventually became patriarchs of the Natchez region, an area just south of Nogales that had more millionaires per capita than any other American settlement just prior to the Civil War. To read the words of these men as young, untried figures interacting with Native patriarchs they helped displace in their own rise to power is a bittersweet, curiously depressing experience, but one that will appeal to scholars of the region. These documents enlighten both beginning readers and advanced scholars, a rare thing indeed.

The irony of *Paths to a Middle Ground*, and its ultimate success, is that although the focus is on a five-year period in a relatively obscure fort, the themes and issues raised in those five years illustrate much broader themes. The author modestly states in the preface that his work is not that unusual in terms of its subject matter but blends older schools of borderlands studies. A careful reading shows him to be very much correct, albeit perhaps a bit too modest. *Paths to a Middle Ground* blends earlier theories, uses that hybrid to examine a small but vital part of the Southeast with grace and respect, and then uses that small area to illustrate much broader themes. That is a remarkable accomplishment, and the success of this book makes it a good choice for any number of college classes and of interest to any number of scholars. Scholars of Southern history will benefit from the book's emphasis on people and themes that would come to fruition in the 1800s, while scholars of Spanish borderlands history will find the "straight paths" the Spanish took in Nogales a complement to Spanish policies in other regions. Last, scholars of Southeastern Indians will find that the book fills a gap in the history of the region, showing conclusively that Fort Nogales played as important a role in Native and Spanish interactions as other, more well-known posts.

For those interested in teaching a course using this book, several older volumes would complement it nicely. If one chooses to stay in the Southeastern region, good choices might be the previously mentioned *Deerskins and Duffels* or the classic *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Usner 1992). Perhaps the best pairing with this work would be the similarly named *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (White 1991). Divergent as these two volumes are in time, region, and players, many of the same themes crop up repeatedly, and the comparison of the Delta and Great Lakes regions would be a very good exercise for students.

In summation, Charles A. Weeks has written a valuable work. It fills a gap in the history of a number of Southeastern topics and the author presents

his argument about the importance of Fort Nogales in an elegant, eminently readable style. Whether this work would fit the needs of a particular class or add to a scholar's resources is something each reader must decide, but scholars of Southeastern Indian history or comparative Native history should definitely examine this book. The reader will never look at the history of the Yazoo Valley or the Nogales region the same way again.

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The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee. By Jeffrey Ostler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 406 pages. \$65.00 cloth; \$21.99 paper.

As the title clearly indicates, this book is a history of the interaction between the Lakota people and the United States from the beginning of the 1800s to approximately the end of that same century. Because so much ink has already been spilled on this topic, it may be legitimate to wonder what Ostler could possibly add to this story. This book, however, will probably surprise those who are expecting little more than a repetition of what has been presented in other texts. Ostler brings a new approach to an old topic.

One aspect that separates Ostler's account from the overabundant existing literature about Lakota history in the 1800s is his emphasis on Lakota agency in resisting American colonial policies. Whereas many authors have portrayed the Lakota as doomed victims of American expansion, Ostler focuses his attention on the ways in which the Lakota worked to create their own destinies within the confines of a progressively shrinking political autonomy. In this regard, Ostler seems to be inspired by the work of James Scott, the author of *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1992) and *Weapons of the Weak* (1987).

Ostler gives less weight to the theme of Lakota factionalism than other historians (for example, Joseph M. Marshall's *The Journey of Crazy Horse: A Lakota History* [2005] considers factionalism as a major theme). According to Ostler, both overt resistance and limited accommodation were strategies used to limit the impact of colonization: "Indeed, by focusing too much on factionalism it is possible to fail to appreciate the extent to which Sioux leaders' strategies had a common goal" (7). Ostler is certainly right that factionalism has been overplayed as a cause of all Lakota problems. Overemphasizing factionalism allows some revisionist historians who act as apologists of American colonization to diminish the importance and the horror of US government policies toward the Lakota by shifting the attention to the Lakota's own inner rivalries. Ostler's choice to avoid this mistake is laudable but is both a weakness and a strength of this text. On one hand he tells us of little-known examples showing the unyielding spirit of resistance that continued to animate the Lakota throughout the 1800s, and it refuses to divide the Lakota people in simplistic portrayals of sellout collaborators