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The Indian Frontier, 1763–1846. By Douglas R. Hurt. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002. 318 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$21.95 paper.

The Treaty of Paris, signed on 10 February 1763, ended the Seven Years War that was fought in North America among four major powers—the French, British, Spanish, and Native Americans. The treaty transferred all French claims east of the Mississippi to the British, forbade the French to support colonies in North America, and confined the Spanish west of the Mississippi River. The significance of the treaty is that it remapped geopolitical boundaries and disrupted habitual Indian-white relations throughout the continent. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, ending the U.S.-Mexican War that began in 1846, also marked a significant shift in boundaries and Indian-white relations throughout the continent. In *The Indian Frontier, 1763–1846*, Douglas R. Hurt contributes a synthesized historical account of Indian-white relations that evolved along the many frontiers of the continent between 1763 and 1846.

Although Hurt makes a generous contribution to the developing thread of Western U.S. history literature, *The Indian Frontier, 1763–1846* might be problematic for American historians, especially specialists in frontier and new Western history. What exactly was the “Indian frontier”? Did Indians have a “frontier”? Does Hurt’s title suggest that there was *one* “Indian frontier” on a continent that extends from the Pacific to the Atlantic and from Canada to Mexico?

Hurt is more than aware of the controversies that plague the “frontier” paradigm. He avoids becoming entangled in the complex and intricate webs that interweave or “unweave” the concept of the “frontier.” There is no mention of Fredrick Jackson Turner, Herbert Eugene Bolton, or any other later or contemporary historian who has contributed to the epistemology of the “frontier.” Hurt states in his preface that he uses the “concept of frontiers in the historical, that is, contemporary sense of the European and Anglo-American cultures that interacted with the Indian nations.” Thus, he uses the term in the context that gave it meaning in the past. Hurt asserts that the “French, British, and Spanish used the term ‘frontier’ as unsettled or slightly populated areas that both Indians and whites used, if not shared, and an area that each culture wanted as its own, but also one in which both made accommodations of the other based on their own cultural, economic, political, and military needs” (p. xiii).

Hurt’s contextualization of the frontier allows his observations and assessments to affirm that there was more than one “Indian frontier” between 1736 and 1846. Moreover, his methodology allows him to employ a multicolonial continental theme and the concept of the “frontier”—that is, zones/regions of encounter and cultural interactions. He merges the two to produce a continental vision of many “Indian frontiers.” The structure of the book allows Hurt to accomplish this construction. Each of the book’s nine chapters focuses on a particular region, analyzing the cultural, political, economical, and social interactions between Indian and white groups. This approach allows Hurt to demonstrate how Indian-white interactions differed from region to region throughout the vast continent, how different “Indian frontiers” came into existence, and how these frontiers belonged neither to a particular space or place in time.

One such frontier is that of the Chinook in the Pacific Northwest. The Chinook controlled trade in the present-day southern border of British Columbia. When the Spanish, the first Europeans to interact with the Chinooks, attempted to move into the area, tap into the sea otter pelt trade, and establish their presence as the dominant empire, the British—and later the Americans—were quick to send an expedition to thwart the Spanish attempt. The Chinook experience with trade, followed by their dealings with Spanish, British, and Americans, allowed them to hone their trade and diplomatic skills. By 1792, the sea otter pelt trade in the Pacific Northwest had become a profitable business for all concerned. The indigenous traders “had become increasingly sophisticated in dealing with the Spanish, British, American, Russian, and French fur traders who visited the area” (p. 88). Chinook traders were able to play white traders against each other and achieve the best prices for commodities such as guns, powder, and metal wares. The Chinook’s ability to trade and negotiate with white traders made it difficult for any colonial power to maintain a claim to the Pacific Northwest.

Hurt stresses the complexities of these “frontiers”: frontier matters involved complex, multisided negotiations for influence, domination, and control of a region that was shared by Indians and whites—a region that each group wanted as its own, and in which each made accommodations based on their needs. Although features of the “Chinook frontier,” where Indians and whites tried to control trade and land, characterized other regions of the continent, other “Indian frontiers” vastly differed from the Chinooks’.

The Comanche “frontier” was situated in a region that included the Comanche in the Great Plains, the English in the east, and the Spanish in the south. Unlike the Chinook, the Comanche relentlessly refused to accommodate: they incessantly plundered both Spanish and English establishments. However, they did trade with both the Spanish and English. As the Chinook learned how to maximize the value of trading their pelts for European goods, the Comanche developed their skill in trading horses, cattle, sheep, and other commodities. Yet the Comanche frontier possessed a commodity whose significance elevated the value of exchange, trade, and barter from other “Indian frontiers”—captives. In a recently published book, John F. Brooks, a historian of Comanche and white relations, assesses the importance of captives. Captives, who had been taken into Indian or white custody either by raids or in battles between Native Americans or between Natives and non-Natives, represented a type of “cultural capital” that allowed for the accumulation of wealth and power within Native and non-Native communities. According to Brooks, “captured women and children served as objects of men’s contestations for power, while simultaneously they enriched the cultures in which they found themselves lodged through their own social and biological reproductive potential” (John F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*, University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2002, 363).

Hurt sets forth the experience of numerous “Indian frontiers” throughout the continent. He makes effective use of manuscripts, personal letters, and military records, among other sources, to place the experience of Indian

and white interactions from 1763 to 1846 into historical context and to capture the place and time of the “frontier[s].” Hurt also uses his sources to place Indians at the center of the scene in the formation of these frontiers.

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For Our Navajo People: Diné Letters, Speeches, and Petitions, 1900–1960.

Edited by Peter Iverson. Photo editor Monty Roessel. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002. 296 pages. \$34.95 cloth; \$19.95 paper.

This impressive collection of documents can perhaps best be summarized in a quotation from the book’s introduction:

There is a vast literature about American Indians in general and Navajos in particular. However, most of it has stressed the actions and words of non-Indians. Indians become the acted upon, the victims, the people to whom things happened. Such accounts stress defeat and dispossession. They appear to concentrate on shortcomings and failures. In many instances they exacerbate existing stereotypes.

This book therefore reflects a new Indian history. . . . Instead of portraying Indians solely as victims, this history emphasizes agency—the ways in which Native groups sought to hold onto their land, create and sustain viable economies, maintain their communities, educate their young, affirm their rights, govern themselves, and find ways to maintain their heritage while forging a brighter future. (p. 2)

The editor’s excellent choice of documents in this collection vividly portrays the anguish associated with the well-meant but badly executed stock reduction program, but quickly destroys the stereotypical misconception that all Navajos were opposed to all aspects of it. Many, in fact, fully supported drastic reductions in the number of “useless” or “surplus” horses since for every horse eliminated there would be pasture enough for five income-producing sheep (e.g., see pp. 6–7, 43, 243). Also, “politically correct” non-Navajos seldom mention “the often bitter internal disputes that even today continue to plague the Diné Nation. Thus, these documents clearly demonstrate especially troubling tribal, regional, and local disputes over oil and timber revenues and land use in general (e.g., see pp. 3, 14–15).

The editor highlights the major dispute between Jacob C. Morgan and Chee Dodge over who should benefit from the development of such economic resources as oil. Chee Dodge believed “that such development should benefit all of the Navajo Nation” (p. 3), while Morgan, echoing the concerns of the people of his region, felt that the income from such resources should be spent locally (e.g., see pp. 3, 162–163). Ultimately, as seen in the later documents in this collection, although internal disputes continued, Chee Dodge’s viewpoint gained the upper hand.