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Fur Traders from New England The Boston Men in the North Pacific, 1787-1800. Edited by Briton C. Busch and Barry M. Gough.

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culminating moment in her four years of struggling to assert her humanity at Dartmouth. In "Machiavelli and Me" she reflects upon her decision to wear traditional regalia at college graduate and her fears that the garb would somehow draw hostility from this college community known for its enduring Indian mascot. Wescott explains that she modifies the tradition of shifting the mortarboard tassel by moving an eagle feather in her hair from one side to another. The response of the large graduation audience was lighthearted: "This is one of the rare moments that I could share a Native quality, like my sense of humor, with a large group of non-Native people. Most of the time, I must demystify the misconceptions that others have about Indians; I feel like a broken record in doing so. No matter how far-fetched the misconception (such as that Alaska Natives still travel exclusively by dogsled), losing long-held ideas about Indians somehow disappoints many people. At Dartmouth, I often chose to educate myself rather than others" (p. 191). The nature of this testimony is echoed by the others and is what prompted Erdrich to call these students "exhausted cultural emissaries" (p. xii).

The book, then, is not only about the struggles of Native students to survive and succeed in non-Native educational systems. It is also about the effects of "othering."

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**Fur Traders from New England: The Boston Men in the North Pacific, 1787–1800.** Edited by Briton C. Busch and Barry M. Gough. Spokane: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1996. 103 pages. \$29.50 cloth.

Between 1799 and 1815, American merchants centered in Boston dominated the Northwestern fur trade. In securing their furs, ship captains entered into economic relations with indigenous peoples from Hawaii to Alaska to California. Though these Native hunters were essential to the success of the enterprise, the works reproduced in this handsome volume rarely mention the Indians and their involvement in the trade. Indeed, a quick reading of this book suggests there is little information relating to the Native peoples of the region. The reader never sees the impact of this new fur trade on the indigenous communities, learns about the Indians involved in the trade, or even discovers where a majority of individuals involved in the trade resided. Still, a second reading of the book suggests a scholar can glean some important insights about the Indians involved in the Northwestern fur trade.

The editors of this volume bring together four important works relating to the Northwestern fur trade. For this they are to be commended. Of the four works, "Solid Men of Boston in the Northwest" comprises a bulk of the book. Some readers may be familiar with the work since earlier scholars such as Herbert Bancroft and Samuel Eliot Morison used it in their own studies. The current editors' contribution to this work consists of uncovering the authorship of this previously anonymous manuscript. Playing the role of the detec-

tive, the editors conclude that William Dane Phelps wrote the manuscript. They base their analysis on Phelps' close friendship with William A. Gale, a primary informant for the narrative, and the use of Gale's logbook, something Phelps did in his autobiography.

Besides Phelps' account of the Northwestern fur trade, the editors have included three other works on the topic. For some reason, these other works appear as appendices of Phelps' narrative. None of them relate specifically to the main text. Two of these works, those by William Sturgis and James Gilchrist Swan, contain information relating to Native peoples. In these works, price lists and Indian trading practices—including a fleeting description of the role Haida women played in economic transactions—take center stage. The last appendix involves a ship list of those involved in the trade between 1787 and 1807. It is useful for those researching the maritime trade, but not for scholars of ethnohistory or indigenous peoples.

While the book does not provide the reader with any new ethnographic information about Northwestern Indians, it does provide first-hand accounts of how the trade was organized and conducted. It unknowingly provides information about the dynamics of the fur trade once the Americans arrived. For the Chinook, access to the traders meant opportunities. For example, on at least one occasion, they opposed American attempts to build a fort along the Columbia River. Fearing the fort would "injure their own trade" with the interior Indians, the Chinook forced the traders to abandon the outpost (p. 63). Phelps' discussion shows indigenous peoples responding actively to American arrival. Phelps' awareness of the Indians as active participants places the work within the context of current scholarship on indigenous reactions to American economic activity in the nineteenth century.

Another strength of this book is its ability to place the American fur trade in a Pacific-wide context. The Boston men who traveled to the Northwest often stopped first in Hawaii, where they restocked their ships. Captains also hired Hawaiians as extra hands for the journey to Alaska or Canton, though on at least one occasion the Hawaiian sailor joined the crew in Boston. By the early nineteenth century captains also purchased sandalwood from the Kamehameha dynasty for resale elsewhere. What is missing in this work is a discussion—even within the footnotes—of how these primary accounts fit within our current understanding of the events, people, and activities being discussed. For example, Were the Hawaiian participants in the Northwestern fur trade mixed-blood progeny of early British and American arrivals, or were they pure-blooded Hawaiians? Given the role of mixed-blood Hawaiians in the early history of Hawaii-American relations such questions are important and would have strengthened the book even if they are not the central issue of the text.

From Hawaii, the ships traveled to New Archangel, Alaska. Once there, ship captains sought to employ Native hunters. Relying on Russian officials, captains hired hundreds of Kodiak or Aleut Indians. Captains then took their charges southward, dropping them off on the various islands of the Northwest coast, including the Channel Islands of California. California historians might enjoy a few reference to Native populations, though their accuracy is suspect.

While the ship sailed on, Russian overseers oversaw the Native hunting parties and their search for sea-bearing mammals. Through Phelps the reader learns that two hunting boats were always assigned the task of supplying the hunting camp with fresh meat. Implicit in the account is the notion that meat of the otters, seals, and beavers taken were discarded once the skins were removed. Throughout their travels, captains traded with local hunters, augmenting their fur supply. After a season or two along the Northwest Coast, captains took their cargoes to Canton. Here, sea otter skins sold for between \$20 to \$25 each, though toward the end of the period the skins' value reached \$50. This portion of the trade is what produced the ship's profit for the Boston interest financing the voyage. From Canton, the ships returned to Hawaii, where captains decided if they should return for another season of fur trading or return to Boston.

The book reminds the reader of the trade's immense proportions. In one four-year period, from 1799 to 1802, American vessels took 48,500 sea-otter skins to Canton. This figure does not include the mink, muskrat, raccoon, and beaver skins also taken to China. The figures given suggest there was a good reason why the trade virtually collapsed on the eve of the War of 1812. Nevertheless, the fur trade's possibilities help explain why the American and British governments supported joint occupation after 1818. The British controlled the trade from the forty-ninth parallel while the Americans dominated it south to the forty-second. At the same time, "Solid Men of Boston" reminds the readers of the important rivalries involved in the Northwest fur trade. Boston sailors often off-loaded their skins before entering San Francisco Bay for fear "the Spainards might consider" them "a contraband business" (p. 69). While the Americans had troubles with Spanish authorities, Russian officials helped the Americans enter the trade.

Sturgis' account of the trade gives important information about the type of goods Americans used in dealing with Northwest Coast Indians. It also provides prices for the items involved. As a result, one sees the continuity of trade items over time. As was the case in the colonial period, Indians displayed a preference for strouds and duffles rather than the American equivalent. Moreover, sea captains were just as likely as land traders to undermine the status quo in pricing when it fit their need. The Indians played off these rivalries. In 1799 Indian traders drove the price of cloth up 150 percent. They did this by finding a ship captain willing to give them five fathoms of cloth for three skins instead of the customary two fathoms. The Indians immediately withheld their furs until all trading ships matched the new price. News of the price raise spread quickly, and Sturgis tells the audience, "at every port we visited afterwards we were compell'd to give the same [five fathoms] price" (p. 104). Despite the increase in cloth prices, guns remained constant, as did axes and wire beads. At the same time, Indian consumers dictated certain goods be added to the transaction: rice and molasses. After having tasted the two items mixed together in 1799, Indians demanded these things be sold to them, and they were.

Despite the Indians' success in establishing trade prices, Sturgis reminds the reader of another constant in the fur trade: violence. In 1801, "Wacosk"

warriors attacked the *Bell Savage* (for what reason Sturgis is silent). Shortly thereafter, Captain Ingersoll, commanding the *Charlotte*, sought to avenge the attack. Unfortunately, he attacked the wrong Indians. This produced another attack against a different American vessel. The result was a series of skirmishes that produced a climate of distrust between the indigenous hunters and American traders. This too is a theme found in other studies of the fur trade.

The editors provide the reader with important commentary about the impact of the Bostonians' arrival among the Indian groups. They remind the reader that indigenous peoples saw the Americans as intruders who often created violent situations through their trading practices or violations of indigenous custom. While Phelps' account omits references to these encounters, Sturgis' account does not. He details the consequences Bostonians paid when they failed to live up to Native concepts of behavior.

Scholars looking for new information about the Indians involved in the Pacific fur trade should look elsewhere. Still, this book is useful reading if one is interested in seeing how the American participants of the Northwestern fur trade viewed the enterprise. The editors are to be complimented for the documents they have included in the volume. One wishes, however, that the editors had paid attention to how the information found in these documents fits into our current understanding of the fur trade and the Native peoples mentioned in the texts.

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**Justice in Aboriginal Communities: Sentencing Alternatives.** By Ross Gordon Green. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Purich Publishing, 1998. 192 pages. \$20.50 paper.

This book has value within a limited scope. The cover, which has *Justice in Aboriginal Communities* in substantially larger type than *Sentencing Alternatives*, is somewhat misleading. It would be better were it something like *Sentencing Alternatives for Aboriginal Offenders*, since the book gives only very limited attention to broader issues of justice for aboriginal peoples. Instead, the focus is on alternative approaches to sentencing and, to a lesser extent, the attempted rehabilitation of Native people charged with criminal offenses by the mainstream Canadian police and court systems.

Its focus on options for sentencing Native people found guilty of or pleading guilty to violations of Canadian law offers a good overview of the variety of approaches that have been used to incorporate community input into the standard Canadian criminal justice system. Four categories of approach are examined: "The Sentencing Circle"; "The Elders' or Community Sentencing Panel"; "The Sentence Advisory Committee"; and the "Community Mediation Committee." Background discussions of Canadian sentencing law and traditional aboriginal approaches to justice, for which information is limited, according to this author, set the stage for case studies of these four alternative