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Author(s): Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron

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*Forum Essay*

From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and  
the Peoples in Between in North American History

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JEREMY ADELMAN and STEPHEN ARON

THE LAST DECADE HAS WITNESSED a sharp debate about the significance of the “frontier” in North American history. Among some self-proclaimed “new western historians,” the word that Frederick Jackson Turner made synonymous with the study of American expansion has become a shibboleth, denoting a triumphalist and Anglocentric narrative of continental conquest. Even his defenders acknowledge the imperialist suppositions of Turner’s thesis, yet some historians continue to assert the significance of a recast frontier. Reconstructed as a zone of intercultural penetration, the frontier has gained a new historiographic lease on life <sup>1</sup>

In many ways, this reformulation revives the notion of “borderlands” that was closely associated with Turner’s protégé, Herbert Eugene Bolton. For Bolton, a historian of New Spain’s northern territories, Turner’s east-to-west model of American development shortchanged the divergent sources of European expansion. More so than Turner’s Anglo-American frontier in which pioneer progress

We are grateful to many friends and colleagues who have commented on this essay. Previous versions were delivered at Princeton University, the University of California at Los Angeles, Claremont Graduate School, University of California Inter-American History Seminar, the meetings of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, and the American Studies Association. We thank David Arnold, Michael Jiménez, Robert Johnston, John Mack Faragher, William Jordan, Tom Mertes, John Murrin, David Myers, Sam Truett, the participants at the “Business of Borderlands” conference sponsored by the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, and the anonymous readers of the *AHR* for their suggestions. Patricia Nelson Limerick generously commented on two versions of this essay. Although we have stubbornly clung to our own interpretation, her pointed criticism forced us to refine and clarify our disagreements with her.

<sup>1</sup> Among “new western historians,” none has been as vigorous a critic of the frontier construct as Patricia Nelson Limerick. See *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York, 1987), 17–32; “What on Earth Is the New Western History,” in Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles E. Rankin, eds., *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (Lawrence, Kan., 1991), 81–88; and “The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century,” in James R. Grossman, ed., *The Frontier in American Culture* (Berkeley, Calif., 1994), 66–102. For attempts to reconstruct (and rescue) the significance of the frontier, see Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, “Comparative Frontier History,” in Lamar and Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven, Conn., 1981), 3–13; William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, “Becoming West: Toward a New Meaning for Western History,” in Cronon, Miles, and Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past* (New York, 1992), 3–27; Stephen Aron, “Lessons in Conquest: Towards a New Western History,” *Pacific Historical Review* 63 (May 1994): 125–47; John Mack Faragher, “Afterword: The Significance of the Frontier in American Historiography,” in Faragher, *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: The Significance of the Frontier in American History and Other Essays* (New York, 1994), 237–41; Kerwin Lee Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Word, Or Being and Becoming Postwestern,” *Pacific Historical Review* 65 (May 1996): 179–215.

necessarily entailed Indian retreat, Bolton's concept of the Spanish borderlands appreciated the extended cohabitation between natives and newcomers that prevailed on the perimeters of European colonial empires. Picking up on this insight, recent historians have substituted "borderland" for all of North America's "frontiers" and, in doing so, have enriched our understanding of the complexity and contingency of intercultural relations. Instead of straightforward conquests, the history of North American borderland-frontiers has been rewritten to emphasize the accommodations between invaders and indigenes and the hybrid residuals of these encounters.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the recent alignment of frontiers as borderlands has often buried an aspect of Bolton's story. For Bolton, northern New Spain was a different kind of frontier because it highlighted the friction between two Old World powers in the New: Spain and England. Too often, students of borderlands neglect the power politics of territorial hegemony. They overlook the essentially competitive nature of European imperialism and the ways in which these rivalries shaped transitions from colonies to nation-states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Absent the inter-imperial dimension of borderlands, the cross-cultural relations that defined frontiers take on a too simple face: "Europe" blurs into a single element, and "Indians" merge into a common front.

Moreover, by stressing the persistence of cross-cultural mixing, social fluidity, and the creation of syncretic formations, new work on borderlands-frontiers has downplayed profound changes in favor of continuity. In such work, a timeless legacy of cultural continuity shrouds the rise and fall of empires, the struggles between emerging independent nation-states, and the fate of increasingly dependent indigenous and métis/mestizo peoples. By contrast, Turner's frontier—warts and all—took into account the underlying transformations. Problematic as efforts to isolate apertures and closures have been, Turner's frontier concept at least insisted on temporal boundaries.<sup>3</sup>

In this essay, we seek to disentangle frontiers from borderlands to rescue the virtues of each construct. By frontier, we understand a meeting place of peoples in which geographic and cultural borders were not clearly defined. Consistent with

<sup>2</sup> For assessments of Bolton's work and influence, see David J. Weber, "Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands," *AHR* 91 (February 1986): 66–81; Albert L. Hurtado, "Parkmanizing the Spanish Borderlands: Bolton, Turner, and the Historians' World," *Western Historical Quarterly* 26 (Summer 1995): 149–67; Hurtado, "Herbert E. Bolton, Racism, and American History," *Pacific Historical Review* 62 (May 1993): 127–42; Donald E. Worcester, "Herbert Eugene Bolton: The Making of a Western Historian," in Richard W. Etulain, ed., *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1991), 193–214. For excellent syntheses of this new approach to American frontier history, see Gregory H. Nobles, *American Frontiers: Cultural Encounters and Continental Conquest* (New York, 1997); Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore, Md., 1997).

<sup>3</sup> The rejection of openings and closings in favor of an emphasis on continuity is the thesis of Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*. For a literary turn in the same vein, see José David Saldívar, *The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique and Literary History* (Durham, N.C., 1991), esp. chap. 3; and Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley, Calif., 1997), 17–35. It is a somewhat ironic twist that the mosaic of hybrid peoples became homogenized into an imagined collective identity as "Hispanic"—thanks in large part to the blanket racism and discrimination of U.S. nativism. See Suzanne Oberler, "So Far from God, So Close to the United States": The Roots of Hispanic Homogenization," in Mary Romero, et al., eds., *Challenging Fronteras: Structuring Latina and Latino Lives in the U.S.* (New York, 1997), 31–54.

recent studies of frontiers as *borderless* lands, we stress how intercultural relations produced mixing and accommodation as opposed to unambiguous triumph. Yet Bolton's original accent on the region as a site of imperial rivalry is no less important. Accordingly, we reserve the designation of borderlands for the contested boundaries between colonial domains. In a pairing of the intercolonial and intercultural dimensions, differences of European rationales and styles come to the fore, as do shifts in those rationales and styles. Equally important to the history of borderlands and frontiers were the ways in which Indians exploited these differences and compelled these shifts, partly to resist submission but mainly to negotiate intercultural relations on terms more to their liking. In this fashion, borderlands and frontiers together provide us with the vocabulary to describe the variegated nature of European imperialism and of indigenous reactions to colonial encroachments. This essay, in short, argues that the conflicts over borderlands shaped the peculiar and contingent character of frontier relations.

Nor, we insist, was this a timeless process across what Patricia Nelson Limerick has provocatively, if misleadingly, categorized as an "unbroken past." Like Turner's opening and closing frontier, borderlands also signifies an era with discrete turning points. Across the Atlantic in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Old World empires imploded, yielding to new political configurations. In North America, as these dynasties ceded to nation-states, a new liberal cant came to govern international affairs. By no means was this a frictionless transition. Well into the nineteenth century, bellicose citizens of the United States coveted the lands of their neighbors—as Upper Canadians learned during the War of 1812 and northern Mexicans painfully discovered in the 1830s and especially in the 1840s. By the century's end, however, treaties recognized borders. The lexicon of mutual respect for boundaries inscribed in treaties crept into international diplomacy. What is more, with few exceptions, competition in trade and not territorial dominion was, by the end of the nineteenth century, the guiding framework of power politics. This shift from inter-imperial struggle to international coexistence turned borderlands into *bordered* lands. To the peoples for whom contested borderlands afforded room to maneuver and preserve some element of autonomy, this transition narrowed the scope for political independence. With states claiming exclusive dominions over all territories within their borders, Indians lost the ability to play off rivalries; they could no longer take advantage of occupying the lands "in between." Thus, as colonial borderlands gave way to national borders, fluid and "inclusive" intercultural frontiers yielded to hardened and more "exclusive" hierarchies.<sup>4</sup>

We hope that reformulating the borderlands concept along these lines offers a framework for a more comparative and common "American" history—a call that Bolton once issued in the pages of the *American Historical Review*. In the spirit of Bolton's "Epic of Greater America," this essay explores the transition from borderlands to borders in three North American theaters: the Great Lakes, the

<sup>4</sup> The idea that Indians successfully "played off" European rivals to shape the terms of trade and the protocols of intercultural diplomacy is borrowed from Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln, Neb., 1983), 34–68. For a discussion of "inclusive" versus "exclusive" frontiers, see Marvin Mikesell, "Comparative Studies in Frontier History," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 50 (March 1960): 62–74.

Lower Missouri Valley, and the Greater Rio Grande Basin. In the eighteenth century, each of these frontier regions was the site of intense imperial rivalry and of particularly fluid relations between indigenous peoples and European interlopers—in other words, these were borderlands. But, by the early nineteenth century, as empires were succeeded by incipient nation-states and imperial rivalries faded in North America, ethnic and social relations rigidified. From a borderland world in which ethnic mixing prevailed and in which still independent Indian and mestizo/métis peoples negotiated favorable terms of trade with competing colonial regimes, border fixing opened a new chapter in North American history in which property rights, citizenship, and population movements became the purview of state authorities.<sup>5</sup>

By no means were the Great Lakes, the Missouri Valley, and the Rio Grande the only American borderlands. Florida, Central America, the River Plate, and northeastern Brazil could almost as easily have been included in our pantheon of case studies. In these regions also, empires competed for control, and indigenous peoples played imperial rivals off against one another. Still, our collaboration on a world history text suggests that the opportunities imperial rivalry presented to Indian peoples in the Great Lakes, the Missouri Valley, and the Rio Grande were not readily replicated around the globe. For reasons that lie beyond the scope of this essay, but on which we invite discussion in the subsequent forum, peoples in between were not always able to negotiate favorable terms of trade or create inclusive frontiers, as they did in certain American borderlands. Here, we limit our inquiry to the Great Lakes, the Missouri Valley, and the Rio Grande, because these borderlands overlapped temporally. The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw the French, British, and Spanish empires lock into a bitter struggle for supremacy in North America at more or less the same time. More important, the fates of the borderlands were linked together. Over the long run, as this essay details, European and indigenous fortunes in one area shaped—if not dictated—outcomes in the other North American borderlands.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In “Epic of Greater America,” Bolton urged historians to adopt a synthetic and less provincial view that explored the commonalities of hemispheric history. Yet in drawing attention to the shared aspects of “New World” history, Bolton clung to a uniform interpretation of the frontier. See Herbert E. Bolton, “The Epic of Greater America,” *AHR* 38 (April 1933): 448–74; Lewis Hanke, ed., *Do the Americas Have a Common History? A Critique of the Bolton Theory* (New York, 1964). For other comparative proposals, see Jay Gitlin, “On the Boundaries of Empire: Connecting the West to Its Imperial Past,” and John Mack Faragher, “Americans, Mexicans, Métis: A Community Approach to the Comparative Study of North American Frontiers,” in Cronon, Miles, and Gitlin, *Under an Open Sky*, 71–109. On Canadian and Latin American frontiers in comparative perspective, see David J. Weber and Jane M. Rausch, eds., *Where Cultures Meet: Frontiers in Latin American History* (Wilmington, Del., 1994); Alistair Hennessy, *The Frontier in Latin American History* (London, 1978); Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (New Haven, Conn., 1930); W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534–1760* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1983); J. M. S. Careless, “Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History,” in Carl Berger, ed., *Approaches to Canadian History* (Toronto, 1967), 63–83; and Careless, *Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, and Identities in Canada before 1914* (Toronto, 1988).

<sup>6</sup> On the Florida-Georgia borderlands, see David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, Conn., 1982); on Central America, see Murdo J. MacLeod, *Spanish Central America: A Socio-Economic History, 1520–1720* (Berkeley, Calif., 1973); on northeastern Brazil, see John Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of Brazilian Indians, 1500–1760* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978); and on the River Plate, see Alberto Armani, *Ciudad de Dios y Ciudad del Sol: El “Estado” jesuíta de los guaraníes, 1609–1768* (Mexico City, 1982). See also Roger Tignor, et al., *An Introduction to World History, 1300 to the Present* (New York, forthcoming).

WE BEGIN IN THE GREAT LAKES, where imperial rivalries allowed the greatest degree of Indian autonomy and where the bordered future first dawned. The Great Lakes region that now forms the boundary between the United States and Canada, what the French called the *pays d'en haut*, was contested territory before there was a United States, Canada, or even a New France. It was, however, Europeans' drive for the North American peltry that turned these woodlands into borderlands. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the fur trade molded the pattern of imperial competition and indigenous responses from one end of the Great Lakes to the other. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the focus of British-French rivalry had shifted to this region straddling the Great Lakes. Taking advantage of European dependence on Indian allies and traders, indigenes shaped the parameters of intercultural trade and military engagement. But, during the second half of the eighteenth century, the equation changed. If warfare brought these borderlands into existence, it also undid them: a series of wars—the Seven Years' War, the American Revolution, and the War of 1812—shattered the balance of forces and transformed the Great Lakes borderlands into a boundary between emerging nation-states. In the process, Indians lost first their power to determine the terms of exchange and, subsequently, were stripped of most of their lands.

Big changes, it should be emphasized, were already afoot in the century prior to “contact.” In the fifteenth century, the League of the Iroquois emerged among the previously conflict-ridden villagers of western New York. As Matthew Dennis has argued, the league aspired to “cultivate a landscape of peace.” Among the peoples of the Iroquois' symbolically extended long house, violence diminished. Outside the confederacy, however, bellicose ways still prevailed.<sup>7</sup>

European colonialism exacerbated existing enmities by altering the means and ends of intra-Indian conflicts. Across the breadth of the Great Lakes country, European microbes triggered epidemics in places where Europeans were barely known. In and around Iroquoia, populations declined by 50 percent. As in precolonial times, replenishing numbers by taking and then adopting captives remained a chief rationale for warfare. But the pressures were much greater than before, and, with Dutch-supplied firearms, the Iroquois had new means to wage combat. More important, they had new ends: where precolonial ways of war venerated symbolic demonstrations of courage while limiting actual bloodshed, seventeenth-century Iroquois raids aimed at gaining control of fur-bearing and fur-trading territories. A series of forays against Huron towns and later against Ohio and Illinois villages caused the disappearance of some peoples and the dislocation of others. Refugees scattered south, east, and especially west, recongregating in multi-ethnic communities around Lake Michigan and Lake Superior.<sup>8</sup>

The fur trade grafted onto as much as it transformed the divisions between Great

<sup>7</sup> Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman, Okla., 1987), 13–28; Gordon G. Whitney, *From Coastal Wilderness to Fruited Plain: A History of Environmental Change in Temperate North America, 1500 to the Present* (New York, 1994), 39–120; Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1993), 76–115; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992), 8–49.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Richter, “War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 60 (October 1983): 528–59; Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics among the New England Indians* (Lanham, Md., 1991); Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians,*

Lakes Indians. That many of them were already engaged in the trade made it easier for Europeans to adapt to an existing material culture and tap into precolonial rivalries. Indian producers, however, had other ideas, and here, more than any other North American frontier, symbiotic exchange shaped the patterns of Indian-European relations.<sup>9</sup>

Traders led the French advance into the Great Lakes hinterland, followed by missionaries. From a base in the St. Lawrence, French traders fanned out into the interior, adopting aboriginal technologies for communication and transportation. During the seventeenth century, traders on both sides of the ethnic divide became skilled negotiators over the price and political significance of the exchange. Thus this intercultural trade quickly evolved into political allegiances, bringing Algonquian and Huron peoples, whose commercial links stretched as far as the upper Great Lakes, into alliance with the French.<sup>10</sup>

French penetration and the advantage given to Indian groups north of the Great Lakes brought French allies into conflict with Iroquois to the south—who themselves were engaged in analogous relations first with the Dutch and later English through the Hudson River waterway. This rivalry over the Great Lakes would prove devastating, especially to Huronia, and set the tone for a persistent competition for the gateway to northern North America.<sup>11</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century, the rivalry began to congeal. As beaver stocks were depleted, Iroquois-Huron competition mounted, culminating in the destruction of Huronia in the 1640s. Coupled with the defection of the fur-trading firm of Groseillers and Raddison to the English and the creation of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670, French traders rushed to reconstruct exchange networks, to rebuild the Huron intermediating roles, and to defend against other European traders. The pattern of diplomatic-commercial relations did not radically change with the evisceration of Huronia, but the mere coexistence that typified the French-Huron alliance yielded to more intimate bonds. In accord with Indian customs, nuptial alliances and *métissage* became the metaphor for political entente. Moreover, purely commercial calculations were subordinated to the mandates of intercultural diplomacy. So long as Indians were in the position to demand gifts as

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*Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York, 1991); Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (New York, 1994), 110–30.

<sup>9</sup> Bruce G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Kingston, Ont., 1986), 161, 183. Although he would later turn his back on this insight, Turner himself noted the importance of pre-Columbian aboriginal circulation: "It was on the foundation, therefore, of an extensive inter-tribal trade that the white man built up the forest of commerce." Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Character and Influence of the Indian Trade in Wisconsin: A Study of the Trading Post as an Institution* [1891], David Harry Miller and William W. Savage, Jr., eds. (Norman, Okla., 1977), 9.

<sup>10</sup> H. A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, rev. edn. (Toronto, 1970), chaps. 2–3; Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, 130–47; Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers*, chap. 4; and for descriptions of missions, especially between and among French and Algonquians and Hurons, see James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York, 1985), 23–127; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 84–139.

<sup>11</sup> Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 75–254; Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York, 1984); Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell, eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600–1800* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1987).

the price of alliance, the administrators of the French Empire had little choice but to sacrifice profits to presents.<sup>12</sup>

Global imperial struggles heightened these political imperatives. After the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14), the French moved to hem the English in along the Atlantic seaboard. Doing so required a more extensive presence in the interior, and the fur trade gained additional geo-political significance. The French deepened the central practice forged in the Huronia days—to combine indissolubly economic exchange relations with a network of political alliances.

From the Algonquians' vantage point, the alliances constructed on trade and diplomacy offered greater security and improved material conditions. For those Great Lakes peoples who aligned themselves with the French "father," French protection and firearms deterred Indian enemies, including the Fox of the Illinois country, as well as the Sioux to the west. The flow of trade goods contributed to Indian well-being, even as they altered household and village relations. Clothing, sewing implements, and hunting supplies inducted Indian women into trade and made many traders' wives pivotal brokers of intercultural exchanges.<sup>13</sup>

Competition from the Hudson's Bay Company in the north and Anglo-American traders to the south fueled the drive to consolidate the sprawling *postes du nord*. By the 1730s and 1740s, permanent posts were built as far as the Lower Saskatchewan River, checking the encroachment of the Hudson's Bay Company. These posts—with hubs at the present-day Straits of Mackinac and Detroit, Michigan—served as nodal points for formalized commercial-diplomatic relations. The French never proclaimed territorial sovereignty, merely the right of passage to posts, thus enabling Indians to shape considerably the terms of exchange. For the French, preserving the fealty of Indian allies involved greater attention to reciprocity and rising investments in "gifting." Herein flourished the political economy of what Richard White has called "the middle ground."<sup>14</sup>

However, this tenuous common world forged by French men and Algonquian men and women—replete with ethnic mixing, syncretism, and cohabitation—rested on the contingencies of imperial rivalry. And these contingencies in turn depended on underlying shifts in metropolitan power balances. The growing population of the British colonies and English traders' increased presence in the traditional bailiwicks of New France destabilized the inclusive foundations of French-Algonquian relations. For the four decades after the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), New England and New France lived in tense, competitive peace, interrupted by an inconclusive war in 1744, and ultimately brought to a close by the events of 1759, with the fall

<sup>12</sup> On "fur trade domesticity" and the role of women in creating trade alliances, see Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver, 1980); Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Dean L. Anderson, "The Flow of European Trade Goods into the Western Great Lakes Region, 1715–1760," in Jennifer S. H. Brown, et al., eds., *The Fur Trade Revisited: Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference* (East Lansing, Mich., 1994), 93–115; see also Arthur J. Ray, "Indians as Consumers in the Eighteenth Century," in Carol Judd and Arthur J. Ray, eds., *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference* (Toronto, 1980), 255–71, for the Hudson's Bay trade; Thomas Wien, "Exchange Patterns in the European Market for North American Furs and Skins, 1720–1760," in Brown, *Fur Trade Revisited*, 19–37; R. David Edmunds and Joseph L. Peyser, *The Fox Wars: The Mesquakie Challenge to New France* (Norman, Okla., 1993).

<sup>14</sup> White, *Middle Ground*.



of Quebec and Niagara. Ironically, France was winning the battle for control of the fur trade; Albany could not meet the Montreal challenge so long as the French were prepared to forsake profits in favor of presents. Gift giving and alliances had their costs: so long as the peltry trade dominated the economic concerns of merchant capitalists in Montreal and policy makers in France, population growth through arable agricultural settlement was at best a secondary goal. For the French, continental sprawl did not translate into large-scale permanent settlement of the frontier or a particular interest in the commodification of Indians' primary resource: subsistence lands.<sup>15</sup>

British encroachment and French defensiveness presented Indians in between with possibilities—and perils. Many Indians favored English goods and drove harder and more expensive bargains with their French allies. Nor were the military bonds quite as solid as the French hoped; Indians were content to refer to the French as “fathers” to reinforce French obligations, but this did not imply deference to ethnic hierarchies. Among the Miami of the Wabash River, who had long ties with the French, splits emerged by the middle of the eighteenth century. Neighboring peoples also shifted between Anglo and Franco-orientations. For a moment, power balances preserved the patina of Indian autonomy and seemingly strengthened their bargaining position.<sup>16</sup>

Warfare jeopardized this borderland balance. Once its strength, French reliance on Indian allies became a debility. The thin reach of the French in North America made its hinterland the weak point of empire, and it was here—not in Europe—that the British chose to strike its decisive blows in the Seven Years' War (1756–63). Hemmed in, the British began changing borderland rules. Intercultural diplomacy gave way to a spirit of outright conquest. Territorial colonization replaced exchange. To be sure, at the very edges of their domain, especially in the Ohio Valley, the British partially respected borderland ways. Only with the French gone and imperial rivalry eclipsed did the British, with Jeffrey Amherst as commander-in-chief and governor-general leading the way, attempt to impose unilateral commercial rules. Thus, in North America, the British sphere became the first to host the transition from borderland to frontier colonies.<sup>17</sup>

This was the first chapter in the waning of these borderlands. If Amherst aimed to accelerate the obliteration of borderland ways to emphasize the unrivaled presence of the British, his plans inspired a series of loosely coordinated uprisings among the Indians of the Great Lakes country from 1763 to 1764. Here, the British saw the lurking French hand. Indeed, the Indians fought to restore, if not the

<sup>15</sup> Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, chap. 5; W. J. Eccles, “The Fur Trade and 18th Century Imperialism,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 40 (July 1983): 341–62; White, *Middle Ground*, 94–185; Harold A. Innis, *Essays in Canadian Economic History* (Toronto, 1956), 141–45.

<sup>16</sup> Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800* (New York, 1997), 3–45; Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington, Ind., 1996), 1–25; Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724–1774* (Lincoln, Neb., 1992), 89–112; Steele, *Warpaths*, 179–96; White, *Middle Ground*, 186–222; Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York, 1988).

<sup>17</sup> Steele, *Warpaths*, 179–247; White, *Middle Ground*, 223–365; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore, Md., 1992), 23–46; Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760–1775* (Lincoln, Neb., 1961).

French presence, then the borderland legacy. In the wake of the Indian revolt, the British recoiled from ushering in a phase of full-throated, unmediated frontier dominion.<sup>18</sup>

The next phase in the demise came with the American Revolution. Like the British after the Seven Years' War, American authorities picked up on Amherst's aborted designs. They, too, attempted to dictate the terms of intercourse. Furthermore, the national independence of the American republic removed the restraining influence that British policy had attempted to exert on the expansion of colonial settlement. In the wake of the revolution, swarms of westering settlers pursuing personal independence through private land ownership poured into the Ohio Valley. As never before, the lands of Great Lakes Indians became the targets for European occupation. This was a decisive moment in the shift from borderlands to bordered lands.<sup>19</sup>

But the borderland era was not over yet. What gave it new life was the short-lived rivalry between the American republic and the holdover British domain in Canada. Effectively, once the British were left with nothing but the old French terrain by 1783, they began acting increasingly as their old foe had. When overhunting depleted the supply of animals in the Great Lakes, trade ceased to be the locus of British-Indian relations. What bound Great Lakes Indians to the British was less mutual material gain than political survival. Once again, the diplomatic component of Indian-European relations on the north side of the border should not be diminished. British North Americans found in "Indian resistance" a decisive military resource with which to thwart republican ambitions to annex Upper Canada.<sup>20</sup>

The Indians, in turn, found in the British offer of alliances cause for confidence in their struggle to retain control over their livelihood and land against an expansionist settlement drive further south. Between French withdrawal and the War of 1812, Great Lakes Indians followed a variety of strategies to thwart further American occupation of their countries and to force British partners back to the terms of exchange that had prevailed in the French era. At least until the French Revolution, Great Lakes Indians won significant British compliance. Into the early 1790s, a multi-ethnic Indian confederacy more than held its own against a confederation of American states that seemed anything but united.<sup>21</sup>

The late eighteenth century, though, was the twilight for the Great Lakes borderland. The old peltry grounds south of the lakes became the negotiating chips between British and American authorities. Britain in 1783, like France in 1763, chose to make peace with its political rival by abandoning its Indian allies in the

<sup>18</sup> White, *Middle Ground*, 269–314; Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Dispossessing the American Indian: Indians and Whites on the Colonial Frontier* (New York, 1972), 75–103; McConnell, *Country Between*, 159–206.

<sup>19</sup> Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, 65–89; Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore, Md., 1996), 29–57; Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (New York, 1995), 129–81; Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 134–83.

<sup>20</sup> Keith R. Widder, "Effects of the American Revolution on Fur-Trade Society at Michilimackinac," in Brown, *Fur Trade Revisited*, 299–316; White, *Middle Ground*, 387–412; Colin G. Calloway, *Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783–1815* (Norman, Okla., 1987); Robert S. Allen, *His Majesty's Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the Defence of Canada, 1774–1815* (Toronto, 1992), 40–86.

<sup>21</sup> Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, 90–115; White, *Middle Ground*, 413–68.

hinterland. But the upheaval of 1789 undid Anglo-American detente. The French revolutionary wars pitted the United States against the British once more in the early 1790s. The colonial masters north of the Great Lakes again turned to Indian allies to check southern expansionists. But the hungry and fractured Indian forces were defeated at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, and what was a limited military blow became a diplomatic catastrophe when the British decided that their fear of Jacobinism outweighed their fear of republicanism. Betraying Great Lake Indians, the British forfeited the western posts south of the lakes to the United States in Jay's Treaty (1794). The following year, Indians surrendered their sovereignty over much of Ohio in the Treaty of Greenville.<sup>22</sup>

The War of 1812 signaled the last gasp of the Great Lakes borderland. The British flirted once again with their Indian allies, raising hopes of a world restored. Too much can be made of this misalliance, and we wish to underscore that British North Americans embraced Indian allies not out of an ontological disposition but out of contingent necessity. As Upper Canadian agriculture began developing in the 1790s with the settlement of refugees from the wars south of the border, the inclusiveness of the Great Lakes borderland was even imperiled in its core. The War of 1812 nurtured a brief revival of mutual dependency, but the peace brought by the Treaty of Ghent marked a new diplomatic order that solidified the border between the American republic and British North American possessions. The Rush-Bagot Convention of 1817 permanently disarmed the Great Lakes.<sup>23</sup>

Thereafter, international diplomacy between sovereign states fixed the lines separating political communities in northern North America. As liberal constitutionalism became the idiom of rights, entitlements, and membership within political communities, no one consulted—as they might have even a generation earlier—Indians. As the border between Canada and the United States extended westward, Indian territories became home to independent proprietors, idealized citizens of liberal regimes, to the exclusion of its original dwellers.

IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY, the practice of expulsion seeped from the Great Lakes down the Mississippi and up the Missouri valleys. By its actions and its inactions, the American republic quickly dissolved decades of borderland accommodation. As in the Great Lakes, inclusive relations gave way to exclusive occupations in the Missouri Country. And yet, as in the Great Lakes, this was not a simple, linear story.

For millennia, where the Ohio and Missouri rivers joined the Mississippi, more ethnic streams met than anywhere on the North American continent. A thousand years ago, the middle Mississippi Valley boasted the largest urban complex north of Mesoamerica. At its peak, the trade networks that passed through Cahokia (Illinois) pulled peoples in from more than fifty villages scattered across the lower Ohio and Missouri valleys. Beyond these immediate hinterlands, archaeological evidence confirms the almost continental reach of Cahokia. Even after Cahokia's

<sup>22</sup> Allen, *His Majesty's Indian Allies*, 88–166; Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Indians of Ohio and Indiana prior to 1795: The Greenville Treaty, 1795* (New York, 1974).

<sup>23</sup> Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, 123–47; White, *Middle Ground*, 469–517.

decline, the confluence of major rivers continued to bring distant peoples together. Chief among the Lower Missouri peoples were the Osages, who complemented horticulture and hunting with extensive trade up and down the Missouri river system.<sup>24</sup>

From the south, Spaniards wandered near this region in the middle of the sixteenth century. They left without a trace, save their microbes. A little more than a century later, French traders from the Great Lakes introduced their brand of colonialism to the Mississippi Valley. The earliest French settlers (*habitants*) resided in the Illinois country on the eastern side of the Mississippi, but in the middle of the eighteenth century, Sainte Genevieve became the first French village across the river. Settled primarily from the Great Lakes, Sainte Genevieve and subsequent French towns in the Missouri Country, not surprisingly, resembled Canadian riverine villages. Still, the presence in these towns of a small number of slaves of African descent showed the influence of the lower Mississippi Valley on the new settlements in the Missouri Country.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the origins of its colonists and the layout of its towns and fields, eighteenth-century Missouri followed the Great Lakes in the character of its intercultural relations. Few in number and far from the Laurentian heartland of New France, European colonists found good reason to extend “the middle ground.” Once again, the imperatives of the fur trade provided the best reason to pursue amicable ties with resident Indian peoples. As in the Great Lakes, marriages between French men and Indian women proved the most effective means to cement trading bonds and forge diplomatic alliances.<sup>26</sup>

Here, as in the Great Lakes, trade and peace were imperfectly preserved. During the mid-eighteenth century, Osages and Missouri Indians occasionally raided Sainte Genevieve and other west bank settlements to steal horses. These forays disturbed the peace, but little blood was shed. Indeed, both raiders and raided seemed intent on avoiding killings that might escalate into widening rounds of retaliatory violence. Still, the disturbances continued, and by the early 1790s, a general war seemed in the offing.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Thomas E. Emerson and R. Barry Lewis, eds., *Cahokia and the Hinterlands: Middle Mississippian Cultures of the Midwest* (Urbana, Ill., 1991); James B. Stoltman, ed., *New Perspectives on Cahokia: Views from the Periphery* (Madison, Wis., 1991); Carl H. Chapman and Eleanor F. Chapman, *Indians and Archaeology of Missouri* (Columbia, Mo., 1983), 71–118; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., “An American Indian Gateway: Some Thoughts on the Migration and Settlement of Eastern Indians around Early St. Louis,” *Gateway Heritage* 11 (Winter 1990–91): 44–45; William R. Iseminger, “Culture and Environment in the American Bottom: The Rise and Fall of Cahokia Mounds,” in Andrew Hurley, ed., *Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis* (St. Louis, Mo., 1997), 38–57.

<sup>25</sup> Carl Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (Urbana, Ill., 1998); Ekberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve: An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier* (Gerald, Mo., 1985), 1–47; Neil H. Porterfield, “Ste. Genevieve, Missouri,” in John Francis McDermott, ed., *Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley* (Urbana, 1969), 141–47.

<sup>26</sup> Tanis C. Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Missouri* (Columbia, Mo., 1996), 53–72, 91–97.

<sup>27</sup> Ekberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve*, 86–124; Carl H. Chapman, “The Indomitable Osage in Spanish Illinois (Upper Louisiana) 1763–1804,” in John Francis McDermott, ed., *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762–1804* (Urbana, Ill., 1974), 293–95; Willard Rollings, *The Osages: An Ethnohistorical Study of Hegemony on the Prairie-Plains* (Columbia, Mo., 1992), 1–13, 96–212; James R. Christianson, “The Early Osage: ‘The Ishmaelites of the Savages,’” *Kansas History* 11 (Spring 1988): 2–21; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992), 77–79, 106–08.

By then, of course, France had long since ceded its claims in the Mississippi Valley to Spain. But, on its own, the change in colonial regimes does not account for the breakdown in Indian-European accommodation. As with previous Spanish expansion (to be discussed below), defensive considerations prompted the move into the heartland of North America: to extend a buffer against the ability of European rivals to threaten the silver-rich districts of Mesoamerica. But the transfer that opened the “Spanish years” in Louisiana did not bring many Spaniards to the Mississippi Valley. Only a handful of Spanish officials actually set foot in Missouri. Most of the lieutenant-governors who administered the Illinois and Upper Louisiana territories continued to be French creoles. Nor did Spanish authorities attempt to hispanicize the customs, manners, or language of the *habitants*. For most colonists, the change in colonial regimes made little difference.<sup>28</sup>

For many Indians as well, life went on as before. Abandoning the conquest and tribute-taking policies that had prevailed in the borderlands to the southwest, Spanish administrators decided instead to follow the French lead. Just as the British in the 1760s emulated French policies, so, too, the Spanish adopted the model of borderland accommodation. Spanish emissaries assured Missouri’s Indians that trade would be encouraged and gifts would be given. Some even tried to persuade Mississippi Valley Indians that the French and Spanish were one people, that the real and fictive kinship networks cementing the old commercial-diplomatic alliance were as solid as ever.<sup>29</sup>

Developments beyond the borders of Louisiana undermined Spanish efforts to fill French shoes. The end of the American Revolution allowed Anglo-American expansion into the Ohio Valley once again. Some of the displaced Indians moved across the border north of the Great Lakes; others sought refuge across the Mississippi in Spanish Louisiana. During the 1780s, over a thousand Shawnees and several hundred Delawares crossed the Mississippi to settle in southeastern Missouri. Because Spanish officials also feared Anglo-American expansion, they welcomed westering Indians into Missouri. These pioneers, it was hoped, would defend Spanish Louisiana against their “cruellest enemies” and would provide a buffer between colonial settlements and Osage raiders.<sup>30</sup>

For the same reasons, but especially in hopes of checking American expansion, Spanish officials paradoxically began to encourage the migration of Anglo-

<sup>28</sup> John Francis Bannon, “The Spaniards in the Mississippi Valley: An Introduction,” in McDermott, *Spanish in the Mississippi Valley*, 3–15; Abraham Nasatir, *Borderland in Retreat: From Spanish Louisiana to the Far Southwest* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1976), 6–50.

<sup>29</sup> Louis Houck, ed., *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1909), 1: 44–48, 141–51, 2: 308–12; John C. Ewers, “Symbols of Chieftly Authority in Spanish Louisiana,” in McDermott, *Spanish in the Mississippi Valley*, 272–84; Gilbert Din and Abraham P. Nasatir, *The Imperial Osages: Spanish-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley* (Norman, Okla., 1983), 51–176; Nasatir, ed., *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of Missouri, 1785–1804*, 2 vols. (St. Louis, Mo., 1952), 1: 58–74.

<sup>30</sup> Lieutenant Governor Cruzat to Governor General Estéban Rodríguez Miró, August 23, 1784, in Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1763–1794*, 3 parts, Vols. 2, 3, and 4 of American Historical Association Annual Reports for 1945 (Washington, D.C., 1949), 2: 117–18; Lynn Morrow, “New Madrid and Its Hinterland: 1783–1826,” *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 36 (July 1980): 241; Morrow, “Trader William Gilliss and Delaware Migration in Southern Missouri,” *Missouri Historical Review* 75 (January 1981): 147–51; Usner, “American Indian Gateway,” 43–47.

Americans into Missouri. Spain's inability to people Louisiana with Catholic European émigrés forced colonial authorities to reverse the policy that had blocked Anglos from settling across the Mississippi. Taking advantage of the new policy, an influx of Kentuckians and Tennesseans came to Missouri during the 1790s in search of land. From St. Louis to New Madrid, Anglo-Americans established farmsteads on the west side of the Mississippi and up the lower reaches of the Missouri. By 1800, newcomers outnumbered creoles in Missouri.<sup>31</sup>

Instead of securing the Spanish regime, the immigration policy created more problems than it solved. The relocation of Ohio Valley Indians and Anglo-Kentuckians forced Osages to share their hunting lands and threatened their control over the lower Missouri fur trade. Not unlike the responses of Great Lakes Indians to similar encroachments, the Osages adopted a twofold strategy of migration and confrontation. On the one hand, they moved their villages south and west away from contested lands. On the other, they stepped up their raids against interlopers. During the early 1790s, horse stealing became even more of a problem in creole towns. But Osage warriors only killed selectively: they reserved that fate for Indian refugees and (especially) Anglo-American migrants from the Ohio Valley.<sup>32</sup>

The Spanish inability to preserve relative borderland calm led to inconsistent policies—a sign that the Madrid Bourbons were running out of effective options for defending their peripheral outposts. Alarmed at the mayhem, Spanish authorities resorted to militarizing control: they suspended diplomatic gift-giving and curbed trade. This made things worse. The Osages intensified their attacks, threatening to embroil the region in wholesale bloodletting. Seeking to avert a full-scale war against the Osages, the Spanish returned to a strategy of commercial-diplomatic alliance. The chief architect of the truce was the creole fur trader Auguste Chouteau. Along with six Osage chiefs, Chouteau traveled to New Orleans and brokered a new arrangement. The 1794 agreement called for the Spanish to build a fort near Osage villages and granted Chouteau a monopoly over trade with the tribe. Although Chouteau's exclusivity caused some grumbling among rival merchants, it did reopen the lower Missouri fur trade. And while the Spanish-Osage alliance lacked the intimate foundations of the Great Lakes borderland, it did temporarily restore peace to the Missouri Country.<sup>33</sup>

Still, the influx of Anglo-Americans eroded the basis for a lasting Spanish regime in the Mississippi Valley. Behind the solicitation of Anglo-Americans was the expectation that they (or at least their descendants) would convert to Catholicism

<sup>31</sup> Gilbert C. Din, "The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miró in Spanish Louisiana," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 73 (October 1969): 155–75; Din, "Spain's Immigration Policy in Louisiana and the American Penetration, 1792–1803," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 76 (January 1973): 255–76; C. Richard Arena, "Land Settlement Policies and Practices in Spanish Louisiana," in McDermott, *Spanish in the Mississippi Valley*, 51–60; Morrow, "New Madrid and Its Hinterland," 242; James R. Shortridge, "The Expansion of the Settlement Frontier in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 75 (October 1990): 67.

<sup>32</sup> Chapman, "Indomitable Osage in Spanish Illinois," 295–300; Ekberg, *Colonial St. Genevieve*, 95–103.

<sup>33</sup> Din and Nasatir, *Imperial Osages*, 217–90; John Francis McDermott, "Auguste Chouteau: First Citizen of Upper Louisiana," in McDermott, *Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley*, 1–13; William E. Foley and C. David Rice, *The First Chouteaus: River Barons of Early St. Louis* (Urbana, Ill., 1983), 36–71.

and become loyal subjects of the Spanish crown—even assisting in the defense of the colony against any invasion from the United States. Widespread discontent in Kentucky and the weakness of national attachments among trans-Appalachian pioneers gave Spanish officials reason to hope. But it was American officials who most delighted in the success of the Spanish policy. “I wish a hundred thousand of our inhabitants would accept the invitation,” wrote Thomas Jefferson to George Washington. To Jefferson, the immigration of Americans into Louisiana promised to deliver “to us peaceably what may otherwise cost a war.”<sup>34</sup>

Jefferson was prophetic. As president, he completed the peaceful acquisition of Louisiana and opened up for Anglo-American householders an “empire for liberty.” Of course, if the experience of Ohio Valley and Great Lakes Indians was any guide, the expansion of the American republic promised Indians only an end to liberty.

The incorporation of Missouri into the United States did not immediately foreclose borderland ways. In southeastern Missouri, westering Indians and westering Anglo-Americans coexisted for a decade after the Louisiana Purchase. Along the Mississippi and the lower Missouri, communities of refugee Indians were interspersed among clusters of Anglo-American farms. If they had been mapped, the borders between Indian and Anglo settlements would have been difficult to make out as yet. In the *mutual* process of “frontiering,” both Indians and pioneers had developed novel arrangements, blending material cultures, subsistence systems, and common landscapes. Both sets of pioneers united against Osage threats, and both joined in more friendly rituals such as hunting, horse racing, gambling, drinking, and dancing.<sup>35</sup>

Marital unions facilitated this easy familiarity and peopled a melting pot with mixed-ancestry offspring. On the lower Missouri frontier in the early nineteenth century, claimed John Mack Faragher, “a syncretic society” emerged and persisted. Certainly, the character of social intercourse and the prevalence of ethnic mixing made Missouri distinctive—although these distinctions often troubled contemporary observers. The population of Missouri was “composed of the dregs of Kentucky, France,” and Indians, wrote the English traveler Thomas Ashe in 1806. It was “even more motley than Mackinaw,” according to Washington Irving.<sup>36</sup>

Irving stretched the truth. Compared with the Great Lakes, early nineteenth-century Missouri was a middle-ground failure. Neither Jefferson nor Jeffersonian officials displayed much understanding for the common world and the commercial-diplomatic alliance made by Algonquians and French (and sometimes emulated by the British) in the Great Lakes. Assimilation, not mutual acculturation, was the

<sup>34</sup> Jefferson quoted in Din, “Spain’s Immigration Policy in Louisiana and the American Penetration,” 255.

<sup>35</sup> James F. Keefe and Lynn Morrow, eds., *The White River Chronicles of S. C. Turnbo: Man and Wildlife on the Ozarks Frontier* (Fayetteville, Ark., 1994), 1–13; Usner, “American Indian Gateway,” 46–47; Morrow, “Trader William Gilliss and Delaware Migration in Southern Missouri,” 151; John Mack Faragher, “‘More Motley Than Mackinaw’: From Ethnic Mixing to Ethnic Cleansing on the Frontier of the Lower Missouri, 1783–1833,” in Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute, eds., *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750–1830* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1998), 304–26.

<sup>36</sup> Irving quoted in Faragher, “‘More Motley Than Mackinaw,’” 314; Ashe quoted in Morrow, “New Madrid and Its Hinterlands,” 242.

highest ideal of republican leaders. And when Indians failed to assimilate quickly enough, Jefferson and his agents jettisoned high ideals in favor of a more pragmatic policy that involved persuading Indians to cede lands and move west. To be sure, federal officials offered annuities to vanquished peoples and spoke of commercial-diplomatic alliances with Indians who remained too powerful to conquer. As long as American leaders worried about European rivals in the Mississippi Valley, they treated Missouri Indians carefully. Ohio Valley refugees were left alone, and Osages were entreated with presents and trading posts. But maintaining Missouri as an intercultural borderland was never a goal of American statesmen.<sup>37</sup>

Following the War of 1812, the focal point of imperial competition shifted west of the Mississippi Valley, and the American republic stepped up pressure against Missouri's Indians. Actually, in Missouri, it was not so much what territorial officials and national soldiers did as what they failed to do: protect Indian claims against the tens of thousands of Anglo-Americans who moved to Missouri and squatted on Indian lands after the Treaty of Ghent. Already before the war, the competition for lands between emigrant Indians and emigrant Anglo-Americans was heating up. Then, however, Governor Meriwether Lewis had issued a stern proclamation, warning squatters to depart "punctually." Afterward, as the population of the Missouri territory skyrocketed, the pressure on Indians increased. Territorial authorities went mute. Where previously distant federal authorities had allowed fur-trading interests to dominate territorial offices, the administration of Missouri came under more democratic rules after the War of 1812. Local control ushered the triumph of outspoken agrarians, who promised to secure land titles for their white male constituents. Officials who stood in the way of democratic demands by defending Indian rights found their positions untenable. In much the same way, outsiders who opposed the extension of slavery faced the wrath of Missouri voters.<sup>38</sup>

While the War of 1812 marked a critical divide between Missouri's borderland past and its "border state" future, the speed with which the "syncretic society" unraveled suggests that the blending was always more incomplete than it appeared. The convergence of Indian and Anglo-American ways had also occurred in the Great Lakes. But there and in Missouri, what made Indians and pioneers similar did not make them the same. The patriarchal household relations brought west by Anglo-American men did not mesh well with Indian gender systems. Nor was the quest for private landholdings easily reconciled with woodland Indian property regimes. As Anglo-American pioneers overwhelmed and displaced their syncretic predecessors, Missourians reinvented borderlands as virgin lands. This reinvention legitimated the consolidation of privatized property, making Missouri a gateway for

<sup>37</sup> Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1973); Russell M. Magnaghi, "The Belle Fontaine Indian Factory, 1805–1808," *Missouri Historical Review* 75 (July 1981): 396–416.

<sup>38</sup> Proclamation by Governor Lewis, April 6, 1809, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1949), 14: 261; R. Douglas Hurt, *Agriculture and Society in Missouri's Little Dixie* (Columbia, Mo., 1992), 24–50; William E. Foley, "The American Territorial System: Missouri's Experience," *Missouri Historical Review* 65 (July 1971): 403–26; Jerome O. Steffen, *William Clark: Jeffersonian Man on the Frontier* (Norman, Okla., 1977), 105–28; David March, "The Admission of Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 65 (January 1971): 427–49.



the westward expansion of the United States and providing the girders for “manifest destiny.”<sup>39</sup>

Unlike the Great Lakes, the lower Missouri borderlands did not become an international border. Up and down the Mississippi and all along the Missouri River, American sovereignty faced no colonial or national rival after the War of 1812. With no other contestant for regional hegemony, American officials treated Indians as subject peoples. To century’s end, Indians in the upper Missouri Valley resisted the occupation of their lands, but they lacked the power of peoples in between to thwart American expansion.

THE NORTHERN BORDERS OF NEW SPAIN were for Bolton the classic, indeed only, borderlands. Yet, ironically, the greater Rio Grande was the last region to become a true borderland. Well into the eighteenth century, Spain continued to deal with Indian peoples as subjects and not partners. Only belatedly, in response to threats from colonial rivals, did Iberian authorities turn to the diplomacy of gift-alliances and commercial exchange. Their heirs in the Mexican Republic, however, could not solidify these tentative borderland arrangements. Thus it was that in northern Mexico the United States deployed manifest destiny to mount a war of conquest, attempting first to eviscerate the borderlands and then to push the border between the United States and the Republic of Mexico south to the Rio Grande.

Spain’s initial policies regarding its North American claims derived in large part from the empire’s early experience in which indigenous peoples were treated as subjects of the crown and not sovereign in their own right. Spain’s first mainland contact and conquest involved confrontation with a stratified and extended empire, the Aztecs. If the French and British made contact with, and eventually gained prominence over, far less complex and sedentary societies, the Spanish developed policies designed to incorporate vast tributary domains. In the main, these efforts culminated with military conquest in the truest sense of the term. The idea was to integrate Indian fiscal and tributary structures to serve Madrid’s dynastic ambitions. This ethic of empire governed policy choices for the northern periphery of New Spain, even though the peoples of this semi-arid region differed remarkably from those of the Valley of Mexico. Not until the eighteenth century did the Spanish recognize the necessity of experimenting with borderland-style accommodation.<sup>40</sup>

The natives of northern Mexico resembled their cousins to the north more than they did the Aztecs to their south. Living in loose groupings of scattered settlements—“pueblos” spanning a spectrum of people from the Penutian-speaking Zunis to Uto-Aztecan Hopis—some relied on stable settlements and arable

<sup>39</sup> Stephen Aron, “The Legacy of Daniel Boone: Three Generations of Boones and the History of Indian-White Relations,” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 95 (Summer 1997): 225–30; R. Douglas Hurt, *Nathan Boone and the American Frontier* (Columbia, Mo., 1998), 78–193. On the mutual process of frontiering by which Indian and Anglo-American ways converged and diverged in the Ohio Valley, see Stephen Aron, “Pigs and Hunters: ‘Rights in the Woods’ on the Trans-Appalachian Frontier,” in Cayton and Teute, *Contact Points*, 175–204.

<sup>40</sup> Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (New York, 1995), esp. chap. 3; Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500–1800* (New Haven, Conn., 1995).

agriculture. Furthermore, semi-sedentary peoples followed migratory routes of mobile arable agriculture. Extensive trading networks fanned out as far as current-day Panama. But far-flung villages, linguistic heterogeneity, and localism inhibited the pattern of conquest exemplified in the Aztec domain, the decapitation of which enabled Spaniards—with greater or lesser resistance—to lay claim to extended tribute-paying populations.<sup>41</sup>

The Spanish aim, what might be called paternalistic pacification, was riddled with deep ambivalences. On the one hand, the crown sought to protect Indians from excessively brutal Spaniards. On the other, authorities advocated gradual assimilation through Christianization and, where possible, tribute payment or labor services. Both objectives were collapsed in the concept of the República de los Indios, a juric domain separate from the mainstream Hispanic population but no less loyal to the crown. By this means, paternalistic pacification sought to ensure the fealty of subjects. In contrast to the traders of New France and the land-hungry Anglo-American pioneers, public officials and missionaries composed New Spain's vanguard. Spain's frontier policy was neither inclusionary à la the middle ground, nor exclusionary in the Anglo-American mold. It can better be described as integrating far-flung Indian peoples for the sake of dominion but not dispossessing them entirely.<sup>42</sup>

Having discovered major silver deposits in the region of Zacatecas in the 1540s, Spanish conquerors spread their domain further north and established in 1563 the vast northern province of Nueva Vizcaya, embracing the frontier region from southern Chihuahua to Saltillo, from which all expeditions into New Mexico and the Mississippi would be staged. Until the late seventeenth century, the north was of little interest, for tribute payment was difficult, the population too dispersed to serve as effective sources of mining labor, and the establishment of *encomiendas* a discredited option for incorporating new territories (especially after the New Laws of 1542, designed to protect Indians from Spanish exploitation). After Juan de Oñate's ill-fated New Mexican venture, the northern frontier became a "military-missionary venture." A combination of missions, mainly Franciscans and later

<sup>41</sup> The Yaquis inhabited arable agricultural zones of river valleys, living off maize, beans, and pastoral production, and they traded between villages. In contrast, Hopis maintained an isolated semi-nomadic existence on highland *mesetas*. The largest single group was probably the Uto-Aztecan speaking Tarahumares, who displayed a variety of settlements from valley-floor pueblos to cave dwellings. Evelyn Hu-Dehart, "Peasant Rebellion in the Northwest: The Yaqui Indians of Sonora, 1740–1976," in F. Katz, ed., *Riot, Rebellion and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico* (Princeton, N.J., 1988), 141–75. The same holds for Pueblos of New Mexico and Pimas of Arizona. Edward Spicer, in a classic formulation, described this spectrum of native responses to intruders as "fusion," "compartmentalization," and "rejection." Spicer, "Spanish-Indian Acculturation in the Southwest," *American Anthropologist* 56 (August 1954): 663–78. See also Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 77; John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513–1821* (New York, 1970), 37. On the modal pattern established by Spanish-Aztec relations, see Charles Gibson, "Indian Societies under Spanish Rule," in Leslie Bethell, ed., *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, (Cambridge, 1984), 2: esp. 389; and Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519–1810* (Stanford, Calif., 1964).

<sup>42</sup> Enrique Semo, *The History of Capitalism in Mexico: Its Origins, 1521–1763* (Austin, Tex., 1993), 48–62; Colin M. MacLachlan and Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *The Forging of the Cosmic Race: A Reinterpretation of Colonial Mexico* (Berkeley, Calif., 1990), 199–204. For a recent effort to reduce the centrality of Spanish juridical reconstruction of Amerindian society, see James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, Calif., 1992).

Jesuits, and presidios—military outposts—staked out the Spanish claim. Pioneered by the vanguards of military conquest and religious conversion, Spanish civilians never migrated en masse to this region, nor for that matter to Spain's other northern provinces.<sup>43</sup>

If Bolton conceived of frontier missions as one-way vectors to strip aboriginals of their native cultures, he left half the story out: Indians resisted much of Catholic penetration or used friars as buffers against civilian Spanish exploitation. The long-term effect was as varied as the people the friars encountered. On the whole, they did better among sedentary villagers, such as the Yaquis, than semi-nomads such as the Apaches. Indeed, settlements of mission converts (*reducciones*) made easy prey for predators. The combination of the Spanish spreading from the south and natives fleeing from the north and east compressed the subsistence base, especially of nomads, forcing them into sustenance by plunder. Undaunted, missionaries continued to carry out their purposes.<sup>44</sup>

Military outposts also dotted the land. In the wake of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, Spanish officials called for greater investment of manpower, resources, and a comprehensive pacification of Indians. As it was, frontier Indians were increasingly forced to rely on the defenses of Spanish presidios as Apache nations proved a greater menace to their livelihoods than Spanish acculturation. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, military outposts existed largely to ward off Apaches—other Indians were willing to accept the Spanish protective umbrella.

One might ask why the Spanish bothered to protect such a troublesome and unremunerative territory. A simple answer lies in the importance of the mainstay of Spanish New World imperialism: silver. The ebb and flow of precious metal dictated the economic rationale behind frontier expansion. If Zacatecas was the mother lode, Nueva Vizcaya boasted its own lucrative mines in Santa Barbara, the Valley of San Bartolomé, and after 1630 the bonanza at San José del Parral. However, predatory Indians made mining camps and settlements their targets for lucrative raiding. The “Great Northern Revolt” provoked by the pueblo uprising of 1680 led to Indian attacks as far south as Durango, leaving many mining centers razed. Mining also intensified local demand for foodstuffs and pastoral products. Some

<sup>43</sup> P. J. Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico: Zacatecas, 1546–1700* (Cambridge, 1971); Philip Wayne Powell, “North America's First Frontier, 1546–1603,” in G. Wolfskill, ed., *Essays on Frontiers in World History* (College Station, Tex., 1982), 12–41. The term “military-missionary venture” is borrowed from Oakah L. Jones, Jr., *Los Paisanos: Spanish Settlers on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Norman, Okla., 1979), 3; see also William Merrill, “Conversion and Colonialism in Northern Mexico: The Tarahumara Response to the Jesuit Mission Program, 1601–1767,” in Robert W. Hefner, ed., *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation* (Berkeley, Calif., 1993), 129–63.

<sup>44</sup> For a classic statement of the mission as a Spanish frontier bulwark, see Herbert E. Bolton, “The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish American Colonies” [1917], in John F. Bannon, ed., *Bolton and the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman, Okla., 1964), 187–211; and a useful comment, David G. Sweet, “Reflections on the Ibero-American Frontier Mission as an Institution in Native American History,” in Weber and Rausch, *Where Cultures Meet*, 87–98; Oakah L. Jones, Jr., *Nueva Vizcaya: Heartland of the Spanish Frontier* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1988), 99–104; Merrill, “Conversion and Colonialism in Northern Mexico,” 132–33, 139; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 133–41. See Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846* (Stanford, Calif., 1991), esp. 146–48, for a treatment of New Mexico; and Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700–1850* (Durham, N.C., 1997), 70–75.

regions, such as the Santa Barbara Valley, became a vital source of wheat for the miners. Throughout the north, cattle became the key frontier staple. Highway traffic, mines, and cattle herds of the Mesa became exposed targets for plunder by nomads, especially Apaches.<sup>45</sup>

What made this increasingly violent frontier region into a borderland was the arrival of the French at the mouth of the Mississippi in the 1680s. This accentuated the vulnerability of New Spain's northern frontier. The Spanish governor, fearing Indian alliances with the French intruders and more alarmed at the prospect of a French overland threat to Mexican silver (previously, European rivals restricted their attack on the Spanish silver supply to high-seas plunder and maritime contraband), ordered military expeditions to drive the French back up the Mississippi as far as the Missouri. But France's threat was clear: in coming down from the Great Lakes to seal off the English and seeking overland access to New Spain's silver, they encroached on the porous northern frontier and posed a direct challenge to Spanish sovereignty. No longer a Spanish-Indian frontier, this had become an imperial borderland.<sup>46</sup>

Confrontation with France drew Spanish interest to Texas, hitherto a backwater of Iberian concern so long as the silver wealth of central and northern Mexico faced no overland threat. In 1691, Texas was officially created as a frontier province to buffer the "silver provinces." After the War of the Spanish Succession, Spanish officials, with the help of a renegade French trader, Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis, struggled to reoccupy Texas. The linchpin of borderland policy involved a profound mutation of Spanish approaches to Indian populations. Rather than create vassal subjects through conquest, eighteenth-century Iberian envoys went north with instructions to imitate the French and English patterns of signing treaties with Indians, implying a mutual relationship between autonomous peoples and abandoning the principle of paternalistic pacification.<sup>47</sup>

Treaties and alliance formation did not signify a wholesale revision of imperial

<sup>45</sup> Jones, *Nueva Vizcaya*, 66–71; Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico*, 126–28; Eric Van Young, "The Age of Paradox: Mexican Agriculture at the End of the Colonial Period, 1750–1810," in Nils Jacobsen and Hans-Jürgen Puhle, eds., *The Economies of Mexico and Peru during the Late Colonial Period, 1760–1810* (Berlin, 1986), 64–90. The most useful account is Terry G. Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1993), esp. chap. 5.

<sup>46</sup> Just as Spain adopted a defensive interest in its northern Mexican hinterland, the French switched tack, from La Salle's diminutive military escapade, to encroachment by trade. Especially after the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), French concern with English aggrandizement prompted Governor Cadillac, Antoine Laumet de la Mothe, in Canada to extend trade networks into Spanish possessions, founding the trading post of Natchitoches on the Red River in 1713 as a launching pad for small trading expeditions to the Rio Grande. Cadillac's plan was to use commerce to drive into the heart of the northern silver provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and establish North America's first continent-wide imperial trading network. As it was, beyond the Mississippi, rivers drained into the Gulf of Mexico, and unlike the St. Lawrence and Hudson Bay basins did not facilitate easy cross-continental transportation. Overland transportation costs remained an important obstacle to Cadillac's ambitions. This structural impediment notwithstanding, regular appearances of French traders in Spanish pueblos, presidios, and towns as far as Durango struck fear in the heart of viceregal authorities that the French might devise an effective continental contraband machine to siphon Mesoamerican silver. Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 148–59.

<sup>47</sup> In 1688, Juan de Retaña was sent to sign a series of treaties to ensure the alliance of Indian groups on the other side of the Rio Grande. In 1716, Governor Ramón sought to establish an alliance with the people of the Hasinai confederacy, and especially the Tejas. Bannon, *Spanish Borderlands Frontier*, 117; Jones, *Los Paisanos*, 43–44.

policy to indigenes. Spain did not abandon missions and presidios. Guns and bibles, however, made poor substitutes for consumer goods. One of the reasons why Spanish authorities continued to rely on their own, not particularly successful, measures to galvanize Indian loyalty to the crown was the latter's commercial debility. Effective alliances relied less on hortative claims of fealty than on the exchange of goods, either by trade or gifts. Compared to the French, the Spanish had great difficulty using commerce to establish—and defend—an imperial presence. Throughout the empire, French and British contraband sucked the specie out of Spanish commercial veins. French traders were reported to be crawling all over New Spain's northern frontier, enticing Indians with guns and other goods and thereby weakening Spain's commercial grip on its hinterland.

Spain lost control over more than the terms of intercultural trade. French, and increasingly British, competition in the borderlands comprised only half the problem. The other half came from the very Indians that European competitors displaced from their territorial homelands and then armed. The focal point of conflict was the Apaches, pressed from behind by Comanches, who in turn had been driven out of their homelands on the Great Plains by French-armed Pawnees. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the Apaches responded to this squeeze by trying to block Spanish defensive expansion, relying on two bequests of imperialism: the horse from Spain and the gun from France. The Texan and New Mexican equipose, with the presidio and mission as outer-edge bulwarks of the Spanish presence, could not withstand Apache raids. Efforts to subdue Apaches by sending conciliatory missionaries failed. Accustomed to conquering sedentary populations, Spanish officials seem never to have understood the implications of Indian access to firearms and horses, nor to have appreciated the changing geo-politics of Indian rivalries.<sup>48</sup>

Imperial warfare was, once again, a watershed. The Seven Years' War forced Spain to adopt more consciously a borderland-style approach to the frontier. This was paradoxical: French defeat in 1762 might have brought relief to northern Mexican outposts: gone were the French trading parties plying their contraband through the silver provinces, gone was the French military threat from Louisiana. Viceregal authorities breathed a premature sigh of relief. They did not account for the defensive agency of Indians themselves, for Comanche-Apache conflict only intensified. Reinforcement and reform did little to alleviate the damage. By the 1770s, these borderlands were becoming a dark and bloody ground. Apache raids struck deep into the heart of Nueva Vizcaya, leaving behind charred remains in the Valle de San Bartolomé, Parras, Saltillo, and the royal mines of Guarisamey. These were not pre-political acts of banditry: many raiding parties were made up of multi-ethnic peoples, Indians, Africans, Europeans, and mestizos, with complex internal hierarchies and elaborate espionage networks. Nor did they sabotage

<sup>48</sup> William B. Griffen, *Apaches at War and Peace: The Janos Presidio, 1750–1858* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1988), 19–30; Bannon, *Spanish Borderlands Frontier*, 125–26; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 191–95. This, of course, did not prevent northern New Spain from becoming a site for *mestisaje* and some degree of coexistence of pueblo dwellers, mixed bloods, and landless Spaniards. See Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 300–05.

commodity flows: raiding parties systematically sold their loot to rival European buyers.<sup>49</sup>

To such mayhem, the Spanish responded by abandoning all local pretense of paternalistic pacification in favor of a policy of calculated deceit through negotiation. Some Spanish authorities, most notably Viceroy Bernardo de Gálvez, urged the adoption of “the French model,” by which he meant that Spain should trade guns with, rather than aim them at, Indians. Of course, this was not reciprocity as the French sometimes practiced it. The Spanish combined this arms trade, lubricated with generous doses of alcohol, to lure the Apaches. For the recalcitrant, Spain’s viceregal *compañías volantes* and thirteen squadrons of provincial militias began a series of devastating battles, crippling Apache autonomy. By the 1780s, the Apaches were both increasingly dependent on Spanish trade and ever more vulnerable to Comanche assaults. In 1790, the Commander in Chief of the Interior Provinces, Jacobo de Ugarte, signed peace treaties with Apache bands all along the western front and into Texas. For the exhausted and war-weary Spanish and Apaches, these pacts ushered in a period of uneasy coexistence.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, by the 1790s, Spain was inching away from paternalistic pacification and adopting a borderland stance of accommodation and reciprocal exchange with Indian peoples. If this signified a more solid Spanish presence in the Rio Grande region, Spain’s hold over the territory quickly slipped. The inter-imperial truce after the Seven Years’ War provided only short-lived respite from European interloping. Spain lost Florida but kept Cuba; it acquired Louisiana by default, thereby extending silver’s buffer into the Mississippi Basin. But U.S. independence in 1783 posed a new problem for Mexico. Just as Spain embraced borderland tactics, the Iberian flank faced the emerging territorial threat of the United States.<sup>51</sup>

Belatedly and ineffectually, Spain turned to the commercial-diplomatic option, the hallmark of a more fully borderland-style approach to Euro-Indian affairs. Presidios became the home for protected Apache families (among many others) who tilled lots and raised livestock that they sold on local markets. Spanish outposts also furnished food and trading goods to allies. Accentuating Indian bargaining power, Iberian policy makers also violated longstanding commitments to monopolistic concessions: viceregal authorities threw open the Mississippi to all licensed Spanish traders, hoping that more active commerce would align Indians with Bourbon authorities. In the end, however, the Spanish merchants’ response was unenthusiastic, so the crown created the Missouri Company in 1793 as a conglomerate to meet the Anglo-American threat (although, as we have already noted, most members of this commercial conglomerate were French and not Spanish traders).

<sup>49</sup> Between 1771 and 1776 alone, 1,674 Spaniards were killed, 154 captured, and 68,256 head of livestock were stolen in Indian raids. In 1781, the Yuma Revolt wiped out the settlements of San Pedro and San Pablo, with the women and children seized as captives. William Merrill, “Cultural Creativity and Raiding Bands in Eighteenth Century Northern New Spain,” in William B. Taylor and Franklin Pease G. Y., eds., *Violence, Resistance, and Survival in the Americas: Native Americans and the Legacy of Conquest* (Washington, D.C., 1994), 124–52; Jones, *Nueva Vizcaya*, 190–201; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 204–15.

<sup>50</sup> Griffen, *Apaches at War and Peace*, 30–49; Jones, *Nueva Vizcaya*, 215–16.

<sup>51</sup> Jones, *Los Paisanos*, 47.

Patchy efforts to sign treaties coupled with commercial liberalization suggested the genesis of a new frontier policy.<sup>52</sup>

These borderland ventures of the 1790s added up to too little, too late. Spain never knew how to handle its North American acquisition, partly for lack of experience handling non-tributary aboriginal peoples, and thereby failed to embrace treaties and alliance formation with Indians. Moreover, Spain (like France before it) was unable to sustain the escalating costs of gift giving. Spain ineffectively met the commercial challenge posed initially by French traders and subsequently on an unparalleled scale by Anglo-Americans offering muskets, alcohol, and all manner of cheaper and more useful manufactured goods as gifts and commodities to potential Indian partners. This failure lost Spain a potentially crucial and possibly decisive political resource: tight alliances with the aboriginal population—a pattern mastered by the French and English in their battles over the Great Lakes and the Missouri.

This belated and half-hearted shift from a frontier policy of pacification to borderland accommodation meant that, over the course of a generation, Spain and then independent Mexico lost all its claims from the Ohio to the Rio Grande. First came the French Revolution, whose bellicose fallout hammered the fiscal base of the Iberian war machine on both sides of the Atlantic. In desperation, the Spanish Bourbons opted for diplomatic conniving to thwart competitors swarming from the heartland of North America. Having betrayed his English ally by aligning with France, Charles IV let his chief minister, Manuel de Godoy, curry favor with the United States to prevent open English attacks on its New World possessions. Spain was, above all, alarmed at the threat of the Royal Navy on the seas and British traders' overland penetration. The Treaty of San Lorenzo del Escorial (1795) ceded all Spanish claims to the Ohio Valley and granted American traders free navigation of the Mississippi. This calculation, however, had the combined effect of allowing the spread of U.S. goods into the Spanish borderlands, and left Spain's hitherto allies, the Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws, all within the territory of the United States, thereby losing the confederation of southeast tribes as a buffer against American expansionism. In desperation, fearing both a French invasion of the peninsula and American marauding of the borderlands, Godoy was persuaded by Napoleon to cede Louisiana back to France in the Treaty of San Ildefonso (1800). (To be fair to the otherwise venal minister, the treaty did stipulate that the territory not be transferred to a third party.)

This, the minister hoped, would restore the buffer between the greater Rio Grande and the swarming North American heartland. The gamble backfired: Napoleon, in an effort to galvanize American support (or neutrality) in his rivalry with Great Britain, sold the sprawling province to Jefferson in 1803. New Spain was thrust back into the defensive position it had in 1762. But the menace of American expansion eclipsed anything posed by the French or British in an earlier day.<sup>53</sup>

By turning its back on local, borderland alliances, Spain exposed itself to shifting, capricious allegiances in Europe. Napoleon betrayed Spain twice over, first by

<sup>52</sup> Ignacio del Río and Edgardo Lopez Mañón, "La reforma institucional borbónica," in Sergio Ortega Noriega and Ignacio del Río, comps., *Historia general de Sonora* (Hermosillo, 1985), 2: 223–47.

<sup>53</sup> Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 289–91.

selling the Louisiana territory to the United States and second by duping Ferdinand VII into a false entente in 1808. To be sure, the Spanish crown had been plotting a large-scale settlement of Texas, but the plans never transcended the paper stage. Viceregal authorities also induced Indians, the Alabamas, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Coushattas, Pascagoulas, Shawnees, and Delawares, from U.S. territories to Texas to create a buffer against rivals. It would be interesting to speculate whether or not these measures might have worked. At best, these were too late. Certainly, Iberian difficulties sent the erstwhile loyal Apache *rancherías* into their own orbits. Either way, desperate efforts to keep the borderlands were overwhelmed by the constitutional crisis in Spain in 1808 and the long-expected French invasion.<sup>54</sup>

Transatlantic warfare forced Spain into an increasingly borderland-style policy, but the depth of the imperial rivalry over Spain's precious dominions made them prey to interlopers' thirst to claim these possessions as their own. In due course, the borderlands became a bordered land between a hobbled republic to the south and an expanding regime to the north. Ferdinand VII's house arrest at the hands of Napoleon, a spreading insurrection in Central Mexico, and eventually the declaration of Mexican independence by Agustín de Iturbide in 1821 did not lead to a stable constitutional order for a reconstituted political economy. Instead, the vacuum accelerated Mexico's collapse into civil war. Bereft of central authority, Mexico City's grip on the northern borderland slipped. To compound matters, the consolidation of the North American heartland as the site of territorial occupation pushed borderland Indians south and west. The Osages jostled with the Cherokees for shrinking hunting grounds, culminating in fierce raiding and counter-raiding in 1818 and 1819. By 1820, East Texas was dotted with hamlets of Cherokee refugees. To their west, semi-sedentary Wacos, Tawakanis, and Taouayas struggled to defend compressed homelands whose own western flank lay open to mobile and ever more armed Comanches. Indian appeals for Mexican treaties, gifts, and territorial guarantees to stabilize the borderlands fell on the fiscally deafened ears of Mexico City rulers. If the region still seemed like a borderland, it was only because one colonial rival was too weak to stake territorial claims, while the other was too busy inducting the Missouri borderland into its frontier designs.<sup>55</sup>

This was more of a borderland by default than by arrangement. Indians defended their dwindling independence with renewed vehemence. Comanche and Lipan Apaches stepped up their raiding—to which the Cherokees replied with offers to Mexican authorities to help stymie nomad assaults if the Americans could be kept

<sup>54</sup> Tulio Halperín Donghi, *Reforma y disolución de los imperios ibéricos, 1750–1850* (Madrid, 1985); David Brading, "Bourbon Spain and Its American Empire," in Leslie Bethell, ed., *Cambridge History of Latin America*, (Cambridge, 1984), 1: 433–39; Brian R. Hamnett, *La política española en una época revolucionaria, 1790–1820* (Mexico City, 1985); Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *The Independence of Spanish America* (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>55</sup> Dianna Everett, *The Texas Cherokees: A People between Two Fires, 1819–1840* (Norman, Okla., 1990), 14–29; Juan Domingo Vidargas del Moral, "La Intendencia de Arizpe en la Intendencia de Nueva España: 1810–1821," in Ortega Noriega and del Río, *Historia general de Sonora*, 2: 299–317; and on Mexico's transition to independence, see Timothy E. Anna, *The Mexican Empire of Iturbide* (Lincoln, Neb., 1990); and *The Fall of Royal Government in Mexico City* (Lincoln, 1978); Brian R. Hamnett, *Revolución y contrarrevolución en México y Perú: Liberalismo, realeza y separatismo, 1800–1824* (Mexico City, 1978).



out of Cherokee lands. When Mexico wavered, the Cherokees and Comanches even dallied with the idea of a common alliance against all white authority, to no avail. Eventually, the Comanches went their own way and honed their skills in guerrilla warfare. This was not recidivist war. Comanches used their ability to criss-cross the border for profit. They plundered and stole cattle, selling their booty to the other side. Apaches did the same. The Mexican government countered with an even more gruesome form of commodification: offering pecuniary rewards for Indian *piezas*, bits of indigenous bodies, like ears, scalps, and heads. The Mexican state created incentives for large private posses and armies to chase down armed borderlanders. The “scalp market” thrived.<sup>56</sup>

Borderland warfare gave way to war over the border. Fearing Anglo-American penetration, northern Mexican authorities invited new occupants, hoping they would become reliable Mexicans and stabilize these unruly provinces. In effect, Mexico City abandoned the remnants of borderland policies in an effort to consolidate Texan allegiance to the south. It backfired, quite like Spain’s former gamble in Missouri. Newcomers turned against their political hosts. The Missouri *empresario* Moses Austin (father of Stephen) set out for San Antonio bearing a proposal to the Texan government (which was still loyal to the fissiparous regime) to settle 300 families in the region. After much wrangling, the Mexican government approved the plan in early 1821. Moses died that year, but Stephen Austin carried out his father’s plan. By 1823, settlers were flooding in—to the alarm of local Indians. Cherokees complained to the mayor of Nacogdoches of “illegal” American occupation of their lands. Still, some saw the Cherokees as potential allies against raiding. Stephen, for one, relied on brokers like Richard Fields to secure some measure of Cherokee loyalty. But settler numbers mounted, eviscerating any hope of borderland accommodation. Indian raiding increased; Mexican authority plunged into civil war. Anglo-American, and even sparse Hispanic dwellers, could not count on protection from the south. It was not long before a local settler chorus rose for switching fealty from Mexico to Washington.<sup>57</sup>

The stage was set first for Texan secession in 1836 and subsequently New Mexico, Arizona, California, Colorado, Utah, and Nevada’s annexation to the United States in 1848. An impoverished Mexican state could not secure Indian allies, defend local settlers, or thwart American aggrandizing aims. Texan-American traders like Charles Stillman of Brownsville extended their reach from Matamoros as far as Saltillo and San Luis Potosí, nursing dreams of making the Rio Grande into a great riverine conduit for commerce. Grandiose plans never materialized, but businessmen-cum-frontier consolidators were happy to back a war to incorporate defini-

<sup>56</sup> Ralph A. Smith, “The Comanches’ Foreign War: Fighting Head Hunters in the Tropics,” *Great Plains Journal* 24–25 (1985–86): 21–44; Smith, “Indians in American-Mexican Relations before the War of 1846,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* (February 1963): 34–64.

<sup>57</sup> For a classic account of U.S. colonization of Texas, see Mattie Austin Hatcher, *The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement, 1801–1821* (Austin, Tex., 1912); also Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846–1848* (Lincoln, Neb., 1974). On the turmoil after 1808, see Donald Fithian Stevens, *The Origins of Instability in Early Republican Mexico* (Durham, N.C., 1991); and Jan Bazant, “Mexico from Independence to 1867,” in Leslie Bethell, ed., *Cambridge History of Latin America* (Cambridge, 1985), 3: 423–70. On latter-day Indian roles as brokers between Comanches and Euro-Americans, see H. Allen Anderson, “The Delaware and Shawnee Indians and the Republic of Texas, 1820–1845,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 44 (October 1990): 231–60; Everett, *Texas Cherokees*, 30–42.

tively much of the borderland region into the territorial reach of the American republic. In early 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo inscribed the Rio Grande as a border. Within the U.S. side of this line, former Indian lands were given over to occupation and Hispanic ranchos yielded to the surveyors of and claimants to private property. In turn, albeit later during the regime of dictator Porfirio Díaz, the *porfiriato* (1876–1911), Mexico, too, brought the intra-border region into the domain of an enclosed proprietary structure for capitalist occupation. This did not put an end to the relatively unobstructed border crossings of Indians and Mexicans, but they did so most often in search of a wage rather than to escape commercial colonialism—and they did so precisely because border fixing allowed an entirely different commercial rationale to prevail over the erstwhile borderlands. Either way, border peace brought trans-border collusion among nation-states to curb the mobility and autonomy of borderlanders. For many borderlanders on the Mexican side, public armies and private head hunters waged little less than a war of extermination.<sup>58</sup>

THIS EXPLORATION OF THE TRANSITION in North American history from borderlands to borders has emphasized the connections between imperial competition and intercultural relations. Stated simply, where the former flourished, the latter more likely featured inclusive frontiers. Where European colonial domains brushed up against one another, Indian peoples deflected imperial powers from their original purposes and fashioned economic, diplomatic, and personal relations that rested, if not entirely on Indian ground, at least on more common ground. During the eighteenth century, the Spanish, the French, and the British would not have survived their North American rivalries without Indian allies. As the French struggled to restrict British colonists to the east of the Appalachians, as the Spanish sought to slow the drainage of specie to French and British traders, and as the British worked to enlarge their share of North American resources, each empire had to come to terms with Indian peoples. The French learned the art of intercultural mediation, the Spanish abandoned their longstanding policy of paternalistic pacification, and the British, most ironically, on the eve of the American Revolution, showed signs of mastering the diplomacy of the middle ground. To varying degrees in the borderlands that were the Great Lakes, the lower Missouri Valley, and the Greater Rio Grande, intermarriages and gift exchanges cemented political alliances.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Joseph F. Park, “The Apaches in Mexican-American Relations, 1848–1861,” *Arizona and the West* 3 (Summer 1961): 129–45; Smith, “Comanches’ Foreign War,” 29–37, on the difficulty the border posed for Indians; David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (Austin, Tex., 1987), 19–59; David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley, Calif., 1995), 13–19; Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley, 1994), 26–29, for the decline of the Californios and dispossession of Mexican rancheros.

<sup>59</sup> The twists and turns of European expansionism should dispel the temptation to see frontier history as the unfolding of national ontologies. For a taste of such reductionist history, see Claudio Veliz, *The New World of the Gothic Fox: Culture and Economy in English and Spanish America* (Berkeley, Calif., 1994), which offers an especially timeless treatment of European “styles” of aggrandizement. There is something of this approach, though much more sophisticated, in Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession*,

But borderlands born of imperial rivalry and cross-cultural mixing became borders when the costs of ethnic alliances surpassed their benefits and when European empires decayed. The demise of the Great Lakes fur trade and the territorial expansion south of the lakes forced the custodians of the old *pays d'en haut* to abandon their existing diplomatic commitment to Indian partners in favor of a new diplomatic commitment to the peaceable coexistence of states on either side of an international border. Deprived of imperial rivalry, Indians of the Great Lakes struggled on in a futile effort to defend remaining homelands and to preserve the fraying ligaments of cross-cultural exchange. The same held true for the peoples of the Rio Grande. If the Spanish came late to borderland ways of alliance making, nomadic and pueblo Indians did try to manipulate Bourbon frailty to their advantage—although it was this very weakness of Spanish and later Mexican territorial control that led to annexation by the United States.

Thus Indian agency posed contingencies with which European powers had to contend, forcing them to adapt their expansionist ways. Cross-cultural brokering and conflict shaped but did not determine the patterns of coexistence. In the end, Old World conflicts and eighteenth-century warfare provided the decisive markers for hinterland processes. The crucial turning point in the above narratives came with the age of “democratic revolutions”—a process that sundered all three empires of North America and gave way to liberal statemaking. The American and French revolutions shattered the delicate equipoise of borderland adaptations and put Indian peoples on the permanent defensive. The fate of the Missouri Valley exemplified this aboutface most dramatically. The American Revolution and the Jeffersonian ascendance that followed wrecked generations of syncretic and symbiotic Indian-European arrangements by unleashing a virulent model of homestead property. In Missouri, two rival regimes of occupation converged: one based on slave labor, the other on free, and both had unlimited appetites for land. Thus did Missouri change from borderland to border state. But the conflict between free and slave labor, which for Americans proved to be the biggest difference (and culminated in the carnage of the 1860s), made little difference to Indians, who were displaced by both forms of exclusive occupation.<sup>60</sup>

The Age of Revolution and the ensuing Napoleonic Wars also remapped the borderlands in the Great Lakes and Rio Grande regions. Heightened military conflict not only shattered the French and Spanish regimes in North America and initiated Britain's gradual withdrawal, it also laid waste the rival commercial and intercultural links of the borderlands. As the continental wars spread to North America, culminating in the War of 1812, they wrote the final chapter in the Great Lakes evolution from borderlands to border. Thereafter, border fixing gave way to

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179–93. Seed dubs these continuities “habits.” For a more general discussion, see Jeremy Adelman, “Colonial Legacies: The Problem of Persistence in Latin American History,” in Adelman, ed., *Colonial Legacies: The Problem of Persistence in Latin American History* (New York, 1999), 1–13.

<sup>60</sup> On the effects of hardening borders in a single community, see the classic study by Oscar J. Martínez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juárez since 1848* (Austin, Tex., 1978); and his more recent *Border People: Life and Society in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson, Ariz., 1994). For reflections on another “peripheral” zone, of border making in the revolutionary age, and how the French Revolution gave the notion of territoriality a “national” content, see Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrennes* (Berkeley, Calif., 1989).

the birth pangs of Canadian statehood and the coming of age of the American republic.

The War of 1812 finalized American control of the Mississippi Valley as well. Earlier, in a last-ditch effort to retain their foothold in the North American heartland, the Spanish sought to inoculate the Louisiana territory against American expansion by inviting in American pioneers. Paradoxically, this policy created an explosive mix that the Spanish defused by ceding the territory back to the French. Three decades later, Mexico, now independent, repeated the same mistake. In the midst of their own civil strife and struggling to preserve the fealty of northern borderlanders and the integrity of their northern borders, Mexican officials opened the doors of Texas to Anglo-American refugees from the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. Here, too, the upshot of war was a redrawing of international boundaries and remapping of borderlands into borders.

To be sure, borders formalized but did not foreclose the flow of people, capital, and goods. Even if the eclipse of imperial rivalries afforded less space for Indian and métis/mestizo autonomy, the prolonged weakness of nation-states left some room to maneuver. International boundaries remained dotted lines that took a generation to solidify. Up to the 1880s, Apaches flaunted the conventions of border crossing—that is, until General Díaz consolidated Mexico City's hold over the nation's north, and General George Crook managed to contain Geronimo and his followers. Almost simultaneously, the Canadian–United States border solidified. For the Canadian Métis, the surviving extension of the Great Lakes middle ground, border drawing narrowed the range of movement, imperiling their folkways and ultimately setting the stage for the uprising of Louis Riel (1869–70, 1885). Lest readers see Apache resistance or Métis freedom as unique, borders and the consolidation of nation-states spelled the end of autonomy for Yaquis, Comanches, Sioux, Blackfoot, and countless other peoples who once occupied these North American borderlands. Hereafter, the states of North America enjoyed unrivaled authority to confer or deny rights to peoples within their borders.

If borders appeared juridically to divide North American people, they also inscribed in notions of citizenship new and *exclusivist* meanings. They defined not only external sovereignty but also internal membership in the political communities of North America. Defended by treaties, borders separated new nation-states; they also helped harden the lines separating members from non-members within states. The rights of citizens—never apportioned equally—were now allocated by the force of law monopolized by ever more consolidated and centralized public authority.

For those included, this unleashed new eras of freedom and autonomy; for the excluded, life within nation-states more often meant precisely the opposite—the loss of political, social, and personal status. Furthermore, ossified borders reduced the freedom of “exit,” at a minimum the ability to leave and at best the power to play off rival rulers. With the consolidation of the state form of political communities, borderland peoples began the long political sojourn of survival within unrivaled polities.

Over the long run, excluded or marginal former borderlanders began to reconcile themselves to accommodation, and eventually assertion within multi-ethnic or even multinational states (especially in Canada). In the parlance of census takers and

apostles of national integration, borderlanders became “ethnics”—minorities distinguished by phenotype or language from the “national” majority. It took some remarkable political dexterity to transform this particularizing and separating category into a basis for challenging the unitary claims of North American national-statists. Of late, the idiom of self-determination has enabled borderlanders to champion the idea of community sovereignty with rights that even transcend nation-states. This, however, is a recent phenomenon, and should not be projected backward onto peoples who, a century ago, cared little for states and less for nations. Whatever lands Indian and métis/mestizo peoples may reclaim will be won as much in national courts as in their own councils. These triumphs, however, will hardly restore the power and autonomy once enjoyed by the peoples in between.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> On the problem of citizenship in multi-ethnic polities, see Michael Walzer, “The Politics of Difference: Statehood and Toleration in a Multicultural World,” in Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan, eds., *The Morality of Nationalism* (New York, 1997), 245–57; Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (New York, 1995), 10–26.

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**Jeremy Adelman**, associate professor of history and director of the Program in Latin American Studies at Princeton University, earned his doctorate from Oxford University. He is the author of *Frontier Development: Land, Labour, and Capital on the Wheatlands of Argentina and Canada, 1890–1914* (1994), and *Republic of Capital: Buenos Aires and the Legal Transformation of the Atlantic World* (1999). Adelman is currently researching a book on Latin America since World War II. **Stephen Aron** received his PhD at the University of California, Berkeley, and is now an associate professor of history at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the author of *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (1996) and is completing a book on the lower Missouri Valley frontier. Together, Adelman and Aron have edited a collection of essays entitled *Trading Cultures: The Worlds of Western Merchants* (forthcoming) and are collaborating with Natalie Zemon Davis, Steve Kotkin, Suzanne Marchand, Gyan Prakash, Robert Tignor, and Michael Tsin on a world history textbook to be published by W. W. Norton.