



Borderlands in Change

The View from Above

In 1763, the great powers of Europe assembled in Paris to end the protracted Seven Years' War that had pitted Britain, Prussia, and Portugal against a coalition of France, Austria, Russia, Spain, Sweden, and Saxony. The war had destabilized colonial arrangements in three continents; now peace instated a new world order. France, subdued by crushing defeats in Europe and North America, ceded all its American possessions except for outposts in Newfoundland, the Caribbean, and Guyana. Spain, France's ally, lost the strategically critical Florida to Britain, but it had received New Orleans and the Louisiana territory from France in a secret treaty a year earlier. Britain was the great victor in Paris. Triumphant in war from Montreal to the Philippines, it won Grenada, Senegal, Canada, and Florida, emerging as the world's dominant colonial empire.

The Treaty of Paris redrew the imperial map of North America. The complex collage of colonial possessions and claims was replaced by a symmetrical division into British East and Spanish West along the Mississippi Valley. But this was only one in a series of tremors that rocked the North America of the late eighteenth century. In 1763, as the British made a bid to turn their new paper claims into real control, several native nations launched a virulent borderlands rebellion, Pontiac's War, that inflamed different parts of eastern North America for three years. The consequences of Pontiac's War—increased tax burden in British America, the 1763 Proclamation Line that excluded settlers from the trans-Appalachian West—fueled resentment in the thirteen colonies and helped spawn an independent republic that quickly came to possess enough power to remold human relationships on a continental scale. Meanwhile, in the lands west of the Mississippi Valley, more subtle shifts animated the borderlands. Alarmed by Spain's waning global power and inspired by the Enlightenment movement, the Bourbon monarchs implemented a series of reforms to modernize New Spain's administrative and economic structures and pacify its extensive frontiers. The Bourbon Reforms played a particularly strong role in places where the empire was weakest and most vulnerable: the borderlands.

This and the next chapter take a broadly comparative look into these sweeping changes by exploring how they altered the relationships among colonial empires and between

Europeans and Indians across the hemisphere. What did the division of North America into British and Spanish spheres mean to the native societies that controlled the lands that had been reduced to diplomatic chips in European capitals? How did the rearrangement of colonial claims affect the autonomy and strategic options of Indian societies? How did the big geopolitical convulsions play out on the local level? Were borderlands peoples mere bystanders of the macroscale changes, or did they play an active role in shaping events and outcomes? Did some of them benefit from the changes?

DOCUMENTS

The first two documents focus on Alta (Upper) California and Louisiana, which became part of the Spanish Empire in the late eighteenth century. In the first document, written in 1781, Theodore de Croix, the chief officer of New Spain's northern provinces, assesses the progress of Alta California's colonization until then and compares the new colony to the older colonies in Coahuila, Sonora, Texas, and New Mexico. The next document shifts the focus to Louisiana. France had ceded the colony in 1762, but Spain did not assume formal possession until 1769. In Document 2, Alexandro O'Reilly, the first Spanish governor to actually exercise power in Louisiana, assesses Louisiana's economic position in the Spanish Empire. Louisiana had been a financial drain for France, and O'Reilly proposes measures to reverse that situation under Spanish rule. But O'Reilly is also alarmed by the international, multiethnic character of New Orleans, which he portrays as a polyglot hub teeming with foreign merchants.

In 1776, the Spanish Crown created a new administrative unit, the Comandancy General of the Interior Provinces of the North, to increase the autonomy and effectiveness of the northern provinces of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The new arrangement recognized New Mexico and Texas as vitally important buffer colonies for Mexico's silver mining districts and brought them unforeseen administrative attention. Document 3 is an excerpt from the 1786 *Instructions for Governing the Interior Provinces of New Spain*, in which Viceroy Bernardo de Gálvez provided practical guidelines for the administration of the northern provinces. The excerpt focuses on the subjugation of independent Indians through what Gálvez called "peace by deceit."

In the 1763 Treaty of Paris, France surrendered its remaining North American possessions (except in Newfoundland) to Great Britain, but the Indians who lived on the ceded lands fiercely resisted the transfer, insisting that the French had no right to give away territories controlled by native nations. Document 4 is an excerpt from a journal, probably kept by the French soldier Robert Navarre during Pontiac's War. The excerpt contains parts of speeches that the Ottawa leader Pontiac delivered to Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Huron Indian audiences in the spring of 1763. Pontiac evokes Indian grievances against the British—lack of respect, lack of gifts, restrictions on trade—and he spreads the message of Neolin (Wolf in the document), a Delaware prophet, who urged Indians to reassess their relationships with Europeans, reject the old practices of cross-cultural coexistence, and form a pan-Indian confederacy against the British. The excerpt contains many

voices: that of Pontiac himself, as transcribed by Navarre; that of Neolin, as channeled by Pontiac; and that of Navarre, inserting his interpretations into the narrative.

One of the consequences of Pontiac's War was the formation of the Royal Proclamation Line, which established the Appalachian Mountains as a boundary between Indian lands and colonial settlements and thus recognized native rights to unceded lands in British North America. The Proclamation Line stemmed from royal officials' desire for regulated, clearly defined imperial frontiers, and it reflected their belief that segregation, not interaction, should define Indian-European relations in North America. The next two documents look at how elite British colonists viewed the Proclamation Line and the new order it heralded. Document 5 is a letter by William Tryon, the royal governor of North Carolina, describing the prospects for life in the North Carolina backcountry. The sixth document is a letter that George Washington, then a private citizen, sent to Captain William Crawford in 1767, concerning the prospect of enlarging his estate.

1. Theodore de Croix Compares California to Older Spanish Colonies, 1781

It appears to me, most excellent señor, that my measures with relation to California have been efficacious and diligent, and that from them ought to be expected the increase of its population, the security of its defenses, the union and free communication of the old possession and the new ones by the important establishment of the presidio of the Santa Bárbara Canal, its three inchoate missions, and pueblos of Guadalupe and Porciuncula. These successes have been achieved with a minimum of expense, and those promised by a regulation, made up of methodical points of easy and simple practice, will lessen some part of the expenditures of the annual allotments.

It is increasing the number of officers, troops, and settlers; sets up for them the observance of the particular good rules of government and discipline; assures the pure management of their interest; redeems the royal treasury in this region from bankruptcies, losses, damages, and waste; facilitates, though in small amount, the circulating of money; and creates the pleasing prospect of permanency and increase of the military and colonizing establishment. Finally, with the most minute points clarified, the door is opened wide to the erection of new missions for propagating the voice of the Gospel and reducing docilely the numerous small bands of barbarians that are vagrant in the territory and on the coasts of California as far as the boundaries of the province of Sonora and New Mexico.

Most excellent señor, may all the provinces have the happy aspect of that of the Californias! However, your Excellency already sees that Texas is surrounded by a numerous heathenism that it cannot resist without uniting its weak forces,

Alfred Barnaby Thomas, trans., *Teodoro de Croix and the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1776-1783* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 241-243. Reprinted by permission.

dispersed settlements, and few and dissident settlers; that Coahuila, experiencing the suffering of Texas, produces its own because of its friendship with the Lipan Apache whom it protects in its bosom without being able to protect itself from their devastation of a territory that would be opulent in agricultural resources, mineral riches, and advantageous sites for settlement. The well-known riches of New Vizcaya would be destroyed shortly by the incessant hostility of the Apache that it resists, were not the Apache forestalled by my efficient measures of covering the extensive frontiers of the province with the number of troops that I have at my orders, by increasing the provincials, and by operations which make possible its defense and conservation. New Mexico, because of its distance and because of the proximity of all the barbarous enemy nations, will always offer grave cares. The unfortunate province of Sonora, afflicted notably with the cruel plagues of war, pestilence, and hunger, is beginning to breathe in alleviation from its sorrows and in the hope of their remedy. I am devoting myself to all, aiding, succoring them as far as forces and resources reach, and maintaining vigilance by seeking all exact means for establishing the zeal that animates me in my profound loyalty to the king and my humble gratitude to your Excellency, who I beg may be pleased to place me at the royal feet of his Majesty.

2. Governor Alejandro O'Reilly Evaluates Louisiana's Position in Spain's Colonial Economy, 1769

My Very Dear Sir: Your Excellency is well aware that this province cannot live without commerce. It needs flour, wine, oil, tools, arms, munitions, and all kinds of cloth to make clothing, and can obtain them only by exporting its products.

These are wood, indigo, cotton, peltries, and a little corn and rice. There would be no outlet in Spain for the wood, which is one of the most important products for these people. Of our colonies, Havana is the only one where it would have a sale. I consider its importation there profitable for both the King and that island. It would be advantageous to the King because it would conserve, for the construction of his ships, the cedars now being used for sugar chests, and planks from here would cost His Majesty less for sheathing vessels and other works in which they could be employed.

This lumber would be profitable for that island, because it would make the sugar chests cheaper, as well as other works carried on by the people of Havana.

By permitting this province to engage in the free commerce with Spain and to carry it on with Havana, as Florida formerly did, these inhabitants would find in Havana itself an outlet for all their products, and obtain there most of the things they need. Thereby the King would obtain the duties which those goods pay in Spain, and the excise which they pay on being landed in the island of Cuba. The sugar mills would develop greatly with an outlet for the rum which is now useless and lost. Its consumption here would be very considerable, and

each barrel would pay the two pesos duty which is placed on it in Havana. But in order for this commerce to develop and be mutually useful, it seems to me advisable and necessary that the wood, peltries, indigo, cotton, corn, and rice of this province should not pay import duties at Havana and that, on goods from there shipped to this province, no new excise or export duty be demanded.

From Catalonia vessels would come with red wine. They would load wood and other things here for Havana, and get sugar there. I think that this arrangement would assure an outlet for the products of this colony and a supply of what it needs, and I do not think it possible to establish it more securely or more advantageously to the interests of our commerce.

I found the English entirely in possession of the commerce of this colony. They had merchants among the Germans and stores in this city, and I can assure you that they got nine-tenths of all the ready money spent here. The commerce of France accepted the products of the colony in payment for goods, but the English, selling more cheaply, got all the silver. I made the English merchants and other citizens of that nation whom I found in this city depart, and I shall henceforth admit none of their vessels into this port.

May Our Lord guard and bless Your Excellency's life many years.

3. Bernardo de Gálvez Outlines How to Achieve "Peace by Deceit," 1786

I am certain that the vanquishment of the heathen consists in obliging them to destroy one another. They are not capable under their present system of being reduced to the true religion or to vassalage, without a miracle of the Almighty, or of preserving constant faith in their armistices; but I also understand that in the state in which they keep our provinces a bad peace with all the tribes which ask for it would be more fruitful than the gains of a successful war.

The enemy Indians upon our frontiers well know how to surprise and destroy our troops in the mountains and on the plains. They are not ignorant of the use and power of our arms; they manage their own with dexterity; and they are as good or better horsemen than the Spaniards. And having no towns, castles, or temples to defend, they may be attacked only in their dispersed and movable rancherías.

In this region the methods of the conquerors of Mexico are not applicable, excepting that of granting peace to the Indians and using them in their mutual destruction. For this purpose, the king's alien colonies could still be used to prevent hostilities. And it is the only method for subduing those who devastate these provinces.

Peace is founded, as everything else, on private interests, and the Indians, in general, have not been able to have advantages in peace treaties which they have enjoyed up to now. They live by hunting and warfare. These are not enough to

supply the prime necessities of existence. And so, if they do not rob, they perish of hunger and misery.

This is the motivating cause by which we might have peace by deceit, and it actually comes to this. For our grants are not sufficient to maintain them, nor can other assistance, which is absolutely necessary for their existence, be lent.

We shall benefit by satisfying their desires. It will cost the king less than what is now spent in considerable and useless reinforcements of troops. The Indians cannot live without our aid. They will go to war against one another in our behalf and from their own warlike inclinations, or they may possibly improve their customs by following our good example, voluntarily embracing our religion and vassalage. And by these means they will keep faith in their truces.

The interest in commerce binds and narrows the desires of man; and it is my wish to establish trade with the Indians in these provinces, admitting them to peace wherever they ask for it.

One should also foment skillfully the discord and hostility between the factions of the same tribe and the irreconcilable hatred of the Nations of the North for the Apaches.

In the voluntary or forced submission of the Apaches, or in their total extermination, lies the happiness of the Provincias Internas; because they are the ones who have destroyed these provinces, live on their frontiers, and cause the apostatism and unrest of the reduced Indians.

I do not believe that the Apaches will submit voluntarily (God alone could work this miracle), but we may contribute to the means of attracting the different factions of this tribe, making them realize the advantages of rational life, which should please them. They should be made accustomed to the use of our foods, drinks, arms, and clothing, and they should become greedy for the possession of land.

After all, the supplying of drink to the Indians will be a means of gaining their goodwill, discovering their secrets, calming them so that they will think less often of conceiving and executing their hostilities, and creating for them a new necessity which will oblige them to recognize their dependence upon us more directly.

Firearms will be advantageous to them in their hunting, as I have already said, and in the warfare of the heathen tribes with one another, but not in their hostility to us; for if the Indians should abandon the arrow for the firearm, they would give us all the advantages.

Guns for trade should be long, because these the Indians appreciate, and thus they would sell, with barrels, stocks, and weak bolts without the best temper, and with superficial adornments which delight the sight of ignorant persons.

Their size will make them awkward for long rides on horseback, resulting in continual damages and repeated need for mending or replacement. The use of the guns and the maladjustment of the bolts produce the same effect.

Powder should be supplied with regular abundance, in order that the Indians put the use of the firearm before that of the arrow and begin to lose their skill in handling the bow; for in this case we will have the certain advantage (assuming that they make war on us) of their lack of ammunition. Consequently, they would be forced to seek our friendship and aid.

4. Pontiac Urges Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Hurons to Rise Up Against the British, 1763

After the Indian [Neolin] was seated the Lord said to him: "I am the Master of Life, and since I know what thou desirest to know, and to whom thou wishest to speak, listen well to what I am going to say to thee and to all the Indians:

"I am He who hath created the heavens and the earth, the trees, lakes, rivers, all men, and all that thou seest and hast seen upon the earth. Because I love you, ye must do what I say and love, and not do what I hate. I do not love that ye should drink to the point of madness, as ye do; and I do not like that ye should fight one another. Ye take two wives, or run after the wives of others; ye do not well, and I hate that. Ye ought to have but one wife, and keep her till death. When ye wish to go to war, ye conjure and resort to the medicine dance, believing that ye speak to me; ye are mistaken,—it is to Manitou that ye speak, an evil spirit who prompts you to nothing but wrong, and who listens to you out of ignorance of me.

"This land where ye dwell I have made for you and not for others. Whence comes it that ye permit the Whites upon your lands? Can ye not live without them? I know that those whom ye call the children of your Great Father supply your needs, but if ye were not evil, as ye are, ye could surely do without them. Ye could live as ye did live before knowing them,—before those whom ye call your brothers had come upon your lands. Did ye not live by the bow and arrow? Ye had no need of gun or powder, or anything else, and nevertheless ye caught animals to live upon and to dress yourselves with their skins. But when I saw that ye were given up to evil, I led the wild animals to the depths of the forests so that ye had to depend upon your brothers to feed and shelter you. Ye have only to become good again and do what I wish, and I will send back the animals for your food. I do not forbid you to permit among you the children of your Father; I love them. They know me and pray to me, and I supply their wants and all they give you. But as to those who come to trouble your lands,—drive them out, make war upon them. I do not love them at all; they know me not, and are my enemies, and the enemies of your brothers. Send them back to the lands which I have created for them and let them stay there. Here is a prayer which I give thee in writing to learn by heart and to teach to the Indians and their children."

The Wolf replied that he did not know how to read. He was told that when he should have returned to earth he would have only to give the prayer to the chief of his village who would read it and teach him and all the Indians to know it by heart; and he must say it night and morning without fail, and do what he has just been told to do; and he was to tell all the Indians for and in the name of the Master of Life:

M. Agnes Burton, ed., *Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy, 1763* (Detroit: Published by Clarence Monroe Burton under the auspices of the Michigan Society of the Colonial Wars, 1912), 28, 30, 32, 36, 40.

"Do not drink more than once, or at most twice in a day; have only one wife and do not run after the wives of others nor after the girls; do not fight among yourselves; do not 'make medicine,' but pray, because in 'making medicine' one talks with the evil spirit; drive off your lands those dogs clothed in red who will do you nothing but harm. And when ye shall have need of anything address yourselves to me; and as to your brothers, I shall give to you as to them; do not sell to your brothers what I have put on earth for food. In short, become good and ye shall receive your needs. When ye meet one another exchange greeting and proffer the left hand which is nearest the heart.

"In all things I command thee to repeat every morning and night the prayer which I have given thee."

The Wolf promised to do faithfully what the Master of Life told him, and that he would recommend it well to the Indians, and that the Master of Life would be pleased with them. Then the same man who had led him by the hand came to get him and conducted him to the foot of the mountain where he told him to take his outfit again and return to his village. The Wolf did this, and upon his arrival the members of his tribe and village were greatly surprised, for they did not know what had become of him, and they asked where he had been. As he was enjoined not to speak to anybody before he had talked with the chief of his village, he made a sign with his hand that he had come from on high. Upon entering the village he went straight to the cabin of the chief to whom he gave what had been given to him,—namely, the prayer and the law which the Master of Life had given him.

This adventure was soon noised about among the people of the whole village who came to hear the message of the Master of Life, and then went to carry it to the neighboring villages. The members of these villages came to see the pretended traveler, and the news was spread from village to village and finally reached Pontiac. He believed all this, as we believe an article of faith, and instilled it into the minds of all those in his council. They listened to him as to an oracle, and told him that he had only to speak and they were all ready to do what he demanded of them.

Pontiac ... sent runners the following day, Monday, the 2nd of May, to each of the Huron and Pottawattamy villages to discover the real feeling of each of these two nations, for he feared to be crossed in his plans. These emissaries had orders to notify these nations for him that Thursday, the 5th of May, at mid-day, a grand council would be held in the Pottawattamy village which was situated between two and three miles below the Fort toward the southwest, and that the three nations should meet there and that no woman should be allowed to attend for fear of betraying their plans.

Pontiac ordered sentinels to be placed around the village in order not to be disturbed in their council. When all these precautions had been taken each Indian seated himself in the circle according to rank, and Pontiac at the head, as great chief of all, began to speak. He said:

"It is important for us, my brothers, that we exterminate from our lands this nation which seeks only to destroy us. You see as well as I that we can no longer supply our needs, as we have done, from our brothers, the French.

The English sell us goods twice as dear as the French do, and their goods do not last. Scarcely have we bought a blanket or something else to cover ourselves with before we must think of getting another; and when we wish to set out for our winter camps they do not want to give us any credit as our brothers, the French, do.

“When I go to see the English commander and say to him that some of our comrades are dead, instead of bewailing their death, as our French brothers do, he laughs at me and at you. If I ask anything for our sick, he refuses with the reply that he has no use for us. From all this you can well see that they are seeking our ruin. Therefore, my brothers, we must all swear their destruction and wait no longer. Nothing prevents us; they are few in numbers, and we can accomplish it. All the nations who are our brothers attack them,—why should we not attack? Are we not men like them? Have I not shown you the wampum belts which I received from our Great Father, the Frenchman? He tells us to strike them,—why do we not listen to his words? What do we fear? It is time. Do we fear that our brothers, the French, who are here among us will prevent us? They do not know our plans, and they could not hinder anyway, if they would. You all know as well as I that when the English came upon our lands to drive out our Father, [François Marie Picotè de] Belestre [the last French commander at Detroit], they took away all the Frenchmen’s guns and that they now have no arms to protect themselves with. Therefore, it is time for us to strike. If there are any French who side with them, let us strike them as well as the English. Remember what the Master of Life told our brother, the Wolf, to do. That concerns us all as well as others. I have sent wampum belts and messengers to our brothers, the Chippewas of Saginaw, and to our brothers, the Ottawas of Michillimackinac, and to those of the Thames River to join us. They will not be slow in coming, but while we wait let us strike anyway. There is no more time to lose. When the English are defeated we shall then see what there is left to do, and we shall stop up the ways hither so that they may never come again upon our lands.”

5. Governor William Tryon Assesses the Potential of North Carolina Backcountry, 1765

We are in want of nothing but Industry & skill, to bring every Vegetable to a greater perfection in this Province. Indian Corn, Rice, and American Beans (Species of the Kidney Bean) are the grain that is Cultivated within a hundred and fifty Miles of the Sea Board at which distance to the Westward you begin to perceive you are approaching high ground, and fifty Miles farther you may get on tolerable high Hills. The Blue Mountains that Cross our Province I imagine lay three Hundred Miles from the Sea. Our Settlements are carried within one Hundred Miles of them. In less than twenty years or perhaps in half the time inhabitants may Settle at the foot of these Mountains. In the Back or

Western Counties, more industry is observed than to the Eastward, the White People there to, are more numerous than the Negroes. The Calculation of the Inhabitants in this Province is one hundred and twenty Thousand White & Black, of which there is a great Majority of White People. The Negroes are very numerous I suppose five to one White Person in the Maritime Counties, but as you penetrate into the Country few Blacks are employed, merely for this Simple reason, that the poorer Settlers coming from the Northward Colonies sat themselves down in the back Counties where the land is the best but who have not more than a sufficiency to erect a Log House for their families and procure a few Tools to get a little Corn into the ground. This Poverty prevents their purchasing of Slaves, and before they can get into Sufficient affluence to buy Negroes their own Children are often grown to an age to work in the Field. Not but numbers of families in the back Counties have Slaves some from three to ten, Whereas in the Counties on the Sea Coast Planters have from fifty to 250 Slaves. A Plantation with Seventy Slaves on it, is esteemed a good property. When a man marries his Daughters he never talks of the fortune in Money but 20 30 or 40 Slaves is her Portion and possibly and agreement to deliver at stated Periods, a Certain Number of Tarr or Turpentine Barrels, which serves towards exonerating the charges of the Wedding which are not grievous here.

6. George Washington Denounces the Royal Proclamation Line, 1767

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO WILLIAM CRAWFORD

Mount Vernon, *September 21, 1767*

I then desired the favor of you (as I understood rights might now be had for the lands which have fallen within the Pennsylvania line,) to look me out a tract of about fifteen hundred, two thousand, or more acres somewhere in your neighborhood, meaning only by this, that it may be as contiguous to your own settlement as such a body of good land can be found. It will be easy for you to conceive that ordinary or even middling lands would never answer my purpose or expectation, so far from navigation, and under such a load of expenses as these lands are incumbered with. No; a tract to please me must be rich (of which no person can be a better judge than yourself), and, if possible, level. Could such a piece of land be found, you would do me a singular favor in falling upon some method of securing it immediately from the attempts of others, as nothing is more certain than that the lands can not remain long ungranted, when once it is known that rights are to be had.

C. W. Butterfield, ed., *The Washington-Crawford Letters: Being the Correspondence between George Washington and William Crawford, from 1767 to 1781, Concerning the Western Lands* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co. 1877), 1-4.

The mode of proceeding I am at a loss to point out to you; but, as your own lands are under the same circumstances, self-interest will naturally lead you to an inquiry.

I offered in my last to join you in attempting to secure some of the most valuable lands in the King's part, which I think may be accomplished after awhile, notwithstanding the proclamation that restrains it at present, and prohibits the settling of them at all; for I can never look upon that proclamation in any other light (but this I say between ourselves) than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians. It must fall, of course, in a few years, especially when those Indians consent to our occupying the lands. Any person, therefore, who neglects the present opportunity of hunting out good lands, and in some measure marking and distinguishing them for his own, in order to keep others from settling them, will never regain it. If you will be at the trouble of seeking out the lands, I will take upon me the part of securing them, as soon as there is a possibility of doing it, and will, moreover, be at all the cost and charges of surveying and patenting the same. You shall then have such a reasonable proportion of the whole as we may fix upon at our first meeting; as I shall find it necessary, for the better furthering of the design, to let some of my friends be concerned in the scheme, who must also partake of the advantages.

By this time it may be easy for you to discover that my plan is to secure a good deal of land.

I recommend, that you keep this whole matter a secret, or trust it only to those in whom you can confide; and who can assist you in bringing it to bear by their discoveries of land. This advice proceeds from several very good reasons, and, in the first place, because I might be censured for the opinion I have given in respect to the King's proclamation, and then, if the scheme I am now proposing to you were known, it might give the alarm to others, and, by putting them upon a plan of the same nature, before we could lay, a proper foundation for success ourselves, set the different interests clashing, and, probably, in the end, overturn the whole.

ESSAYS

The essay by late David J. Weber, professor of history at Southern Methodist University, is framed with a startling fact: In the late eighteenth century one half of the Western Hemisphere was still under the control of independent Indians. This posed a particularly serious challenge to the Spanish Empire, whose boundaries were contested by numerous autonomous native groups and, after 1783 along the Mississippi River, the United States. The essay explores how the Spanish Empire responded to these external threats by modernizing its borderlands and implementing a new Indian policy. Lacking the numbers and military force to seal off the empire's ragged edges, Spanish administrators set out to protect them through alliances with independent Indians who, they hoped, would help keep rival empires at bay. Influenced by Enlightenment-era ideas of rationality and tolerance, they tried to achieve this not by force but by persuasion: Gifts, trade, and treaties,

not coercion would have to bring “wild Indians” into the Spanish fold. At the heart of Weber’s essay is a gap between ideals and practice, between metropolitan dreams and borderlands reality. To what extent was Spain’s new Indian policy successful? What were its achievements, failures, and contradictions? Weber’s panoramic essay invites comparison with the findings of the more geographically focused essays. For example, what does Hämäläinen’s argument of expanding Comanche power in the Southwest borderlands in Chapter 3 suggest about the goals and rationale of Spain’s new Indian policy?

In the second essay, historian François Furstenberg of the University of Montreal examines the struggles for power and territory in the trans-Appalachian West, the region between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. Furstenberg focuses on the period between 1754 and 1815, picking up the story where James Merrell’s essay left it in Chapter 3. But where Merrell concentrated on Indian-English relationships, Furstenberg looks at the larger geopolitical rivalries that shook and shaped the region. He provides a wide-angle view of the turbulent era, showing how several Native American powers and four imperial players—Britain, France, Spain, and the United States—fought over the control of the region in what he calls a “Long War for the West.” Furstenberg’s essay is not traditional diplomatic history, in which native peoples are reduced to bit players in a European-driven drama. Furstenberg sees imperial centers as powerful historical agents, but he also emphasizes the importance of local actors and borderland spaces in the shifting, multistage geopolitical rivalry that eventually delivered the trans-Appalachian West to the United States. Furstenberg highlights the contingency of historical change and rejects the teleological view that the Anglo-American takeover of the trans-Appalachian West was inevitable. But why was the United States ultimately triumphant? Furstenberg provides a nuanced, open-ended explanation in which mountain ranges, wind currents, colonial officials, borderland inhabitants, and Napoleon all play a part.

New Spain and Its Borderlands

DAVID J. WEBER

In the mid-eighteenth century, two centuries after the Spanish conquest of Mexico and Peru, independent Indians controlled over *half* of the land mass that we think of today as Spanish America. Clearly, Spain had not completed the conquest of America in the Age of Conquest. Independent Indians still held much of the tropical forests and drylands—northern Mexico, the Central-American lowlands and the Gulf of Darién, the Amazon and Orinoco basins, the Gran Chaco, the pampas, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego. From Hispanic perspectives, independent Indians occupied the frontiers of Spain’s New World

David J. Weber, “Bourbons and Bárbaros: Center and Periphery in the Reshaping of Spanish Indian Policy,” in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the New World, 1500–1800*, ed. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy, pp. 79–103 (New York: Routledge, 2002).

empire and the lands beyond; from the perspectives of independent Indians, Hispanics occupied the frontiers of Indian-controlled lands, and the territory beyond.

In the last half of the eighteenth century, Bourbon officials moved with renewed vigor to win the allegiance of the independent Indians who lived along and beyond the peripheries of the empire. Those officials, products of the Age of Enlightenment, brought new values and sensibilities to the task of controlling "savages," who themselves had acquired new values, skills, and technologies for coping with Spaniards. Out of the dialectic between the program that emanated from the Bourbon centers and the strategies of peoples who lived on Spain's American peripheries, came new ways for Spaniards and "savages" to relate to one another.

For the Habsburgs who ruled Spain until 1700, the benefits of extending the conquest of the mainland beyond the highlands of Mexico, Central America, and South America had not, in the main, seemed worth the cost. With notable exceptions (such as the cacao-producing area of Venezuela, the Cauca and Magdalena River Valleys in present Colombia, parts of Paraguay, and central Chile south to the Biobío River), the climate, accessibility, and an apparent lack of valuable resources in the lowlands had discouraged Spaniards from making them their own. These impediments continued to discourage Bourbon administrators, who replaced the Habsburgs in the eighteenth century. As a viceroy of Peru explained in the mid-1700s, "The unconquered country is jungle and mountains, difficult to traverse, and plains that are humid, swampy, and hot, and so cannot support Spaniards." Native opposition in these regions also deterred Spaniards from permanently occupying them. In general, Spaniards chose to conquer highland farming peoples whose labor they could exploit and whose hierarchical governments they could control rather than waging prolonged wars against nomads or seminomads who tended to live in the lowlands.

By the mid-eighteenth century, it became more difficult for Bourbon officials to ignore the Indian country that bordered the empire. Out of those lands came Indians who, more boldly and adeptly than ever before, raided Spanish farms and ranches, destroyed Spanish property, took Spanish lives, and blocked the arteries of commerce that kept empire alive. Spaniards knew these independent Indians by their local names, but referred to them generically as "savages" (*indios bárbaros* or *salvajes*), as "wild Indians" (*indios bravos*), as heathens (*gentiles*), or as "Indians who had not submitted" (*indios no sometidos*), and so distinguished them from Christian Indians, or Indians who recognized Spanish authority—*indios sometidos, reducidos, domésticos, or tributarios*.

Throughout the world in the modern era, state societies in general have found it difficult to control tribal societies, especially nomadic and seminomadic peoples. For Spaniards in America, the difficulty seemed to increase as "savages" made themselves more effective adversaries.

Throughout the hemisphere, *indios bárbaros* had studied the fighting techniques of Spaniards, learned to defend themselves against them, adopted Spanish horses and weapons, and reorganized themselves into new polities or societies.

Spaniards had begun to feel the effects of those transformations in the sixteenth century, most famously in the effective resistance of Araucanians in southern Chile, Chichimecas in northern New Spain, and Chiriguano in southern Peru. Those borderlands where Spaniards encountered "indomitable" Indians had grown more extensive as Spaniards and Indians alike moved onto new frontiers, and as Indians obtained ammunition and firearms from Spain's European rivals.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Spanish policymakers also had to worry that *indios bárbaros* might ally themselves with Spain's chief European rival, England, and facilitate English expansion into lands long claimed but never occupied by Spain.

Along the margins of the empire, independent Indians also threatened the commercial viability of Spain's colonies. Allied with Englishmen or other foreigners, independent Indians could facilitate the introduction of contraband and retard the growth of Spanish trade. Conversely, independent Indians could trade stolen Spanish property to English merchants in exchange for guns and ammunition, then use their greater firepower to steal still more goods from their Spanish neighbors.

Independent Indians seemed poised to weaken the margins of the empire at the same time that Bourbon reformers hoped to strengthen them. Eager to draw more revenue from America in order to reverse what they saw as Spain's economic decline, the Bourbons sought to streamline public administration, raise productivity and trade, and increase security in America. That project, begun early in the century, reached fruition in the reign of Carlos III (1759-88), the most dynamic, innovative, and America-oriented of Spain's eighteenth-century monarchs. As he and his enlightened advisors, such as [Pedro Rodríguez de] Campomanes, looked beyond the empire's profitable cores to the development of its vulnerable but potentially profitable peripheries, it became apparent that they had to bring the "savages," who occupied those peripheries, under control.

The ways that Bourbon administrators sought to achieve that control tell us much about the formulation of policy by the absolutist Bourbon regime, which has seemed to some historians to part from the Habsburg tradition of compromise and to govern instead through "non-negotiable demands" or a "hard line." If Bourbon policies toward *indios bárbaros* can be taken as exemplary, Bourbon officials compromised as readily as had their Habsburg predecessors.

For Bourbon administrators in search of ways to control *indios bravos* along the empire's peripheries, Spanish tradition offered two obvious solutions: send fighting men to conquer recalcitrant natives by force or missionaries to conquer them through persuasion. But armed Indians on horseback did not succumb readily to the blandishments of missionaries, whose successes seemed to diminish in the eighteenth century. Similarly, private armies led by *encomenderos* or would-be *encomenderos*, upon whom Spain had previously relied to advance its frontiers, no longer filled the bill against increasingly mobile bands of Indian raiders.

Enlightened thought and British and French examples, however, offered the Bourbons another strategy: control Indians through commerce rather than by physical or spiritual conquest. Nowhere in Spanish thought was this idea

articulated more clearly than in the well-known *Nuevo sistema de gobierno económico para la América*, a master plan for the economic development of Spain's colonies.

The author of the *Nuevo sistema* lamented that Spain had wasted millions of pesos in making war against Indians who, "if treated with tact and friendship, would be of infinite use to us." In the early sixteenth century, he reasoned, Spaniards in America had no alternative to military force "for there were few Spaniards in America and millions of Indians to subject." But Spain made the mistake of "preserving the spirit of conquest beyond its time, and preferring dominion over the advantages and utility of commerce and friendly trade with the savage nations."

Even as the wildest beast can be tamed by kind treatment, the *Nuevo sistema* analogized, "there is no savage who cannot be dominated by industry and made sociable by a ready supply of all the things he likes." Establishing trade with "wild Indians" would take "time, skill, and patience, but it is not impossible. Other nations had already done so.

Spaniards, however, had a handicap: They had earned "the hatred of neighboring Indian nations." But if Spain's missionaries could enter the lands of those Indians by treating them with kindness, he argued, so could Spain's merchants. Indeed, the *Nuevo sistema* suggested that merchants would have an easier time of it. Unlike missionaries who "threaten [Indians] with hell if they become drunk or take more than one woman, harshly condemning all of the vices to which they are naturally very inclined," he said, merchants treat Indians kindly, give them goods that they need and alcohol (*aguardiente*) "that they so esteem" while making no demands on them.

In this enlightened formulation, Indians would become the foundation of Spain's commercial and economic revival in America rather than enemies, and they would play their role in a new way. Where Spaniards of the Renaissance had expected Indians to adopt the Christian faith when missionaries revealed it to them, the *Nuevo sistema* expected Indians to behave like rational European consumers when merchants displayed their wares. Where Spaniards traditionally viewed Indians as vicious or lazy by nature, needing to be forced to work for their own good, the *Nuevo sistema* argued that Indians would respond to profits and self-interest and voluntarily become producers and consumers.

José de Gálvez, the powerful and dynamic minister of the Indies from 1776 to 1787 ... had his own sources of intelligence, including a nephew and protégé whom he had appointed acting governor of Louisiana in 1776. Drawing from his observations in Louisiana, as well as previous experience fighting Apaches, Bernardo de Gálvez had urged his uncle to rely on trade to control Indians rather than fight costly and ineffective wars. Through trade, he argued, "the King would keep [Indians] very contented for ten years with what he now spends in one year in making war upon them."

Apparently persuaded by this argument, and strapped for resources as he prepared for war with Great Britain, José de Gálvez ordered a policy of "kindness, good treatment, and benevolence" toward Indians in Provincias Internas of New Spain in 1779. He instructed his officers to take defensive action only, to

avoid bloodshed, and to make Indians dependent on Spaniards for merchandise, including luxury goods and guns, so that "they will not be able to live without our help." The king, he said, preferred a slow and peaceful conquest. Three years later, however, Gálvez ordered a return to offensive warfare when Apaches refused to substitute trading for raiding, and when powerful oligarchs angrily demanded a more aggressive military policy that would protect their dwindling herds from Indian predators.

In 1786, when Bernardo de Gálvez benefited from his uncle's penchant for nepotism to become viceroy of New Spain, he ordered officials in the Provincias Internas to return to the kind of policy that his uncle had enunciated in 1779. Although he placed greater emphasis on offensive action against Apaches than his uncle had, Bernardo de Gálvez still hoped for the same result: to force Apaches to appeal for peace and to enter into trade with Spaniards. "With time," he suggested in his well-known *Instrucción* of 1786, "trade may make them dependent on us."

With various modifications and embellishments, Gálvez's policy, as articulated in his *Instrucción* of 1786, prevailed in the Provincias Internas of New Spain. Spain's ablest officers followed his dictum and offered independent Indians access to trade fairs, gifts, cooperation against mutual enemies, and more equitable and consistent treatment than they had in the past. Conciliation and negotiation, previously subordinate to force, became the hallmark of Bourbon Indian policy in northern New Spain in the late 1780s.

This conciliatory Indian policy included reservations for Apaches who appealed for peace. On these reservations, some Spanish policymakers hoped to turn Apaches into town-dwelling Spanish Catholics who farmed, ranched, and practiced familiar trades. Since the Bourbons needed to populate the empire's vulnerable frontiers with loyal subjects but lacked sufficient colonists to achieve that goal, it made sense to try to turn Apaches into Spaniards. Spain had relied heavily on missionaries to achieve this kind of transformation on earlier frontiers and, despite withering criticism by some enlightened Bourbon administrators, they would continue to do so in places where Indians seemed "docile," as in Alta California. But among peoples whom missionaries had failed to convert, soldiers became the preferred agents of paternalistic cultural change on the late-eighteenth-century reservations in northern New Spain. Bernardo de Gálvez's plan ignored missionaries, whose political and economic power had diminished in northern New Spain during the reign of Carlos III.

For Spain, a conciliatory Indian policy promised more than economic and strategic advantages. It also offered a soothing balm for enlightened Spaniards stung by their forebears' reputation for cruel oppression of Indians during and after the conquest of America. "Humanity is the greatest characteristic of civilization. All the sciences and arts have no value if they serve only to make us cruel and haughty," wrote one Spanish botanist in America, José Mariano Moziño, as he lamented the brutal way that some of his less enlightened countrymen treated independent Indians. Indeed, some Spanish army officers close to the scene also extolled the new Indian policies as humane as well as effective. Writing at El Paso in 1796, for example, Lt. Col. Antonio Cordero y Bustamante, a veteran

frontier soldier, noted that the "wise measures" of the Spanish government were bringing the war to a close. Spain did "not aspire to the destruction or slavery of these savages," he noted with pride. Rather, Spain sought "their happiness ... leaving them in peaceful possession of their homes," while at the same time getting them to recognize "our justice and our power to sustain it" so they would cease raiding Spanish settlements.

The more humane policy that Cordero applauded could not work, however, if Apaches were demonized. Frontier officers like Cordero, Bernardo de Gálvez, and José Cortés needed a new discourse if they were to redeem Apaches—and they found one. These enlightened officers depicted Apaches as fierce, courageous, and skilled warriors, but not as innately indolent, untrustworthy, and thieving, as the previous generation of officers, intent on exterminating Apaches, tended to do. Enlightened officers sought to explain Apaches' behavior as responses to external forces, rather than as innate characteristics. If Apaches possessed "extraordinary robustness" it was because they lived outdoors and ate basic foods; if they moved with a great agility, speed, and endurance it was because of daily exercise and the conditioning of a nomadic life. If Apaches waged "cruel and bloody war" against Spaniards, the cause could be found in the Spaniards' own "trespasses, excesses and avarice," as Cordero put it. If Apaches treated Spaniards cruelly, it was, Gálvez observed, "because he owes us no kindness, and that if he avenges himself it is for just satisfaction of his grievances." "The truth is," Gálvez wrote, "that they are as much grateful as vengeful, and that this latter [quality of vengeance] we ought to forgive in a nation that has not learned philosophy with which to master a natural feeling...."

These were ideas whose time had come, defended on pragmatic grounds and shared by enlightened officials who faced "savages" throughout the frontiers of the hemisphere. In Chile, for example, Ambrosio Higgins, an Irish-born Spanish officer, argued that Spain could not defend its vast Pacific coast from foreigners without the goodwill of Indians. Indians would not support Spaniards, he said, "while we are at every opportunity irritating and beating Indians along the frontiers, making them internal enemies." Alienated from Spain, they would ally themselves with Spain's opportunistic European rivals.

Frontier imperatives, then, forced the Bourbon state to find peaceful ways to win the allegiance of independent Indians and, in the words of one historian, turn them into "frontier soldiers of the Crown." That policy was consistent with Bourbon efforts to draw other native-born Americans, *criollos* and mestizos, into its defensive system after the loss of Havana in the Seven Years' War revealed how badly Spain could be outmanned in one of its own colonies.

During the Bourbon era officials came increasingly to see the practical benefits of recognizing that some Indians had the right to live autonomously beyond the bounds of the empire—a recognition that occurred, ironically, at the same time that the Bourbons extended the effective boundaries of the empire. In the 1700s, Spain's recognition of Indians' rights to autonomy increasingly took the form of written treaties that rose out of formal discussions. In North America, for example, Spanish officers entered into a series of treaties with independent Indians, following Spain's acquisition of Louisiana from France in 1762. In

1784 alone, officials in Mobile signed written agreements with representatives of Alabamas, Chickasaws, and Choctaws, and officials in Pensacola signed an agreement with Creeks. In 1785 and 1786, respectively, the Spanish governors of Texas and New Mexico signed treaties of alliance with Comanches; in 1786, the New Mexico governor also signed a treaty of alliance with Navajos. In 1793, Spanish officials in Louisiana signed a treaty of mutual assistance with Alabamas, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks, all of whom, on paper if not in fact, had formed a confederation.

In these agreements, Spaniards referred to Indian peoples as "nations" and recognized Indian polities as distinct from their own. Both parties agreed to peace, to make war against common enemies, and to establish commerce. In signing these treaties, Indians usually accepted the "protection" of the Crown, as did Ecueraçapa, the leader of the western Comanches in 1786, and the tribes bordering on Louisiana and Florida in 1793. These natives did not, however, become "vassals or subjects" of the Crown, surrender autonomy, or accept missionaries. Nor did Spanish leaders ask these things of them. Rather than attempt to tax these Indians, Spanish officials regularly presented gifts to their leaders, as the French and English had done before. By 1794, gifts to Indians amounted to 10 percent of Spain's cost of supporting Louisiana and west Florida suggesting that, where Spaniards failed to tax Indians, Indians had succeeded in taxing Spaniards.

In the Southeast, Spaniards came to recognize a native "nation" as more than a people of common origin (an ordinary usage of *nation* in that era), but as a sovereign nation-state—inferior, to be sure, but a nation-state nonetheless. Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, governor of Spanish Louisiana's Natchez district, offered that view explicitly in regard to Creeks, Chickasaws, and Choctaws, when he wrote in 1792 that those Indians "are free and independent nations; although they are under His Majesty's protection, we cannot forcibly prevent them from signing a treaty with the United States." United States Secretary of War Henry Knox had argued similarly in 1789 that "the independent nations and tribes of Indians ought to be considered as foreign nations, not as the subjects of any particular State." The idea that Indians could maintain their sovereignty while under Spanish protection conformed to the usage of the day. "Mere alliances of protection, tribute or vassalage, which a state may contract with another, do not hinder it from continuing perfectly sovereign," one jurist noted in 1788.

By the late eighteenth century, Spanish Indian policy in the Southeast had come to resemble French and British policy, as the *Nuevo sistema* had urged. Traders or interpreters on the Spanish payroll, many of them mestizos who understood Indian languages and customs, with names like Brashears and Thompson, lived among the Indian nations to maintain their friendship and trade, as provided for in the treaties with southeastern tribes (as had a 1786 treaty with Navajos in the Southwest). In this way, Spain tried to control Indians indirectly through trade without exercising dominion.

Circumstances in southeastern North America in particular gave Spain no other practical alternative. As Campomanes warned in 1792, if Spain tried to

assert direct control over the "savage Indians" along the Gulf of Mexico or build settlements among them, the Indians would "lose confidence [in us] and ... call the Americans to their defense." Even as the benevolently despotic Bourbon monarchy reduced the power of its own subjects—Spanish aristocrats, American criollos, and indios domésticos—it paradoxically loosened its claims to dominion over some of North America's independent Indians.

Spanish officials' reliance on written documents that recognized Indian autonomy in North America represented an innovation. In the past, Spaniards had treated with Indians throughout the hemisphere, but usually to specify the terms of the Indians' surrender and to require that Indians put themselves at the service of the Crown. Previously, as one historian has aptly put it, "Spaniards understood Indian peoples to be royal subjects, ready for Christianization and exploitation, but inappropriate for the kinds of bargaining and negotiation that might have resulted in [written] treaties."

The Bourbons' employment of written treaties, however, had precedents in South America that reached back to the Habsburg era. In Chile, Spanish officials had held formal negotiations, or *parlamentos*, with Araucanians as early as 1606 and 1612, and by 1641 Araucanians had forced Spaniards to recognize the Biobío River as a permanent boundary. According to one version of the treaty, the Araucanians agreed in 1641 to recognize their "vassalage" to the Spanish Crown and to permit missionaries to come among them. Nonetheless, well into the late eighteenth century Spaniards *implicitly* recognized that Araucanian lands, the Estado de Arauco, enjoyed autonomy. Beginning in 1774, Araucanians even sent ambassadors to represent them in the Spanish capital.

In the late eighteenth century, influenced by their Chilean counterparts, officials in the Río de la Plata also began to employ *capitanes de amigos*, and written treaties became commonplace, too, on the pampas and the Gran Chaco. In contrast to those late-eighteenth-century treaties in North America that recognized full Indian autonomy, written treaties in South America usually required Indians to accept missionaries, settle in specified areas, recognize their vassalage to the Crown, and obey royal officials. In the Araucanía, the Chaco, and the pampas, Indians lacked the immediate threat of powerful foreign allies that enabled their North American counterparts to gain greater concessions by playing one side against the other.

South American precedents appear to have had little if any influence on the Spanish policy that evolved in North America in the 1780s and 1790s. Rather, the impetus for change in North America seems to have come from Indians themselves, who demanded the kind of treatment they had received from the French and English, and from officials on the scene like Bernardo de Gálvez, who recognized that Spain needed Indian allies to hold its borders against Americans in the Southeast and Apaches in the Southwest even if it meant taking the radical step of giving Indian allies arms and ammunition. In North America, then, recommendations for change seemed to flow less from the metropolis to the frontiers than from the frontiers to the metropolis, where they met a ready reception by Bourbons schooled in enlightened thought.

In the late eighteenth century Spain continued to import colonists and to found new towns in strategic areas that it wished to maintain but had not occupied previously, such as Patagonia, the Miskito coast, Louisiana, and California. And Carlos III, in particular, sent a wave of Spanish scientists to America, who intellectually appropriated peripheral territories—along with their flora and fauna, natural resources, and inhabitants—as an integral part of taking actual possession of them in the Age of Enlightenment. Yet amid this continuing expansion and reconnaissance, the idea of pressing Spanish claims to areas that lacked strategic value came to be regarded as anachronistic by some enlightened officials. Theirs was an eminently “rational” response to the reality that Spain could not defend or colonize all of the space that it claimed. In military terms alone, it seemed prudent, as one army officer put it, to try to control only those regions that Spaniards actually occupied—“what should be called the dominion and true possessions of the King.”

Some enlightened thinkers went a step further and argued against military expenditures to defend even Spain’s “true possessions,” when the cost exceeded the benefits. [The Spanish savant and mariner, Alejandro] Malaspina, who thought it foolhardy to occupy the California coast, argued that Spain should abandon its effort to defend northern New Spain with soldiers and forts: “a border that consumes a million pesos to defend property worth 100,000 pesos should be avoided.” In economic terms, Malaspina seems to have been attracted to the views of philosophes who argued that “in these distant climates, one must trade not conquer.” Campomanes and the mysterious author of the *Nuevo sistema* would have agreed, although they probably would not have carried the argument to the extreme that the Conde de Aranda did in famously advising the Crown in 1783 that, with the exception of some ports of call or bases for trade on islands like Cuba and Puerto Rico, “you Majesty should rid himself of all his dominions on the continent of both Americas.”

Those Spanish policymakers in administrative centers of the empire who sought to limit Spain’s claims to dominion and to emphasize domination through commerce, redefined the use of power on the frontiers of the empire. Their new definition of Spain’s relationship to those American lands it had not settled or firmly controlled provided a theoretical and legal rationale for recognizing the autonomy of Indians (who were, of course, autonomous in fact). The new policy also provided ideological space for Spaniards to build relationships with independent Indians based on the law of nations, rather than require Indians to submit as vassals or suffer the consequences of war or “pacification.”

Whatever ideas informed their actions, Bourbon officials in the colonial centers and on the frontiers responded pragmatically to local circumstances as their Habsburg predecessors had done. Spanish officials made substantial concessions to Indians who forced them to recognize that conquest would cost more than peace, and to Indians who could turn to foreigners for support. In places such as southeastern North America, the Miskito coast, and the Araucania, Spanish officials, like Europeans on similar frontiers, paid tribute to natives and recognized their autonomy.

Conversely, when Spain expanded into California beginning in 1769, officials saw no need to sign treaties or enter into alliances with small groups

of seminomads who lacked horses, firearms, the political organization to offer effective resistance, and had little prospect of aid from foreign powers. In California, as in other remote areas like Tierra del Fuego, or the llanos of today's Colombia, where Indians offered only modest resistance, Bourbons relied on missionaries and small mission guards to establish dominion, much as the Habsburgs had done.

Between these two extremes were places where Spaniards succeeded in isolating Indians from weapons and allies, defeated them, and forced them to surrender. Some Apache prisoners, whom Spaniards regarded as incorrigible, were be put in chains and sent into virtual slavery—a time-honored practice. Others were confined to reservations around military posts, through the formal treaties that Bourbon officers came to rely upon. On May 17, 1787, for example, Spaniards obliged the leaders of two small, bedraggled groups of Mescalero Apaches to enter into an eleven-part agreement at Presidio del Norte. Rather than guarantee their independence, the treaty required the Mescalero bands to live near the fort, not to leave without obtaining a license.

At the level of the individual, Bourbon policies toward *indios bárbaros* were subverted by "Spaniards" and "savages" who chose to ignore established categories. Individuals from each group moved across the porous boundaries that separated them and resided within the society of the other. Some did so by choice and others as captives. Some moved back and forth with the seasons. "Wild" Indians, for example, entered the Hispanic world to work temporarily in missions or for wages in haciendas, just as Hispanic traders in pursuit of profit ventured into Indian territory and lived among "wild" Indians. Some marginalized individuals—Hispanics, Indians, and mixed bloods—lived together in multiethnic outlaw bands as outcasts from both societies. In such ways, individuals on the frontiers of the empire looked after their own interests, usually preferring commerce and negotiation over war, a preference that they came to independent of the policies or philosophies of enlightened Bourbon officials.

In the Bourbon era, then, policy was not consistent or consistently applied. Directives that originated in the core of the absolutist Spanish state often took local conditions into account, and peripheral peoples—native and European alike—shaped and reshaped royal directives according to their own needs, perceptions, and power. New Indian policies emerged out of the interplay between core and periphery, tradition and innovation, pragmatism and ideology, and venality and idealism. In this respect, then, Spain resembled other early modern empires where, as historian Jack Greene has noted, authority did not merely flow "by imposition from the top down or from the center out but through an elaborate process of negotiation among the parties involved"—even in situations where relationships of power were unequal.

The various ways that Spaniards engaged independent Indians in the late colonial period would seem unremarkable were it not for the tendency of North American scholars to regard Spanish policy toward independent Indians as homogeneous and timeless, fixed in the sixteenth century, and to reduce Spain's multifaceted and pragmatic practices to caricature. Familiar oversimplifications

resonate throughout our literature: the idea that the Indian policy of England and France “was based on trade ... and Spain’s was based on the vain hope of mass conversion to Catholicism,” the generalization that all Indians who resisted conquest “were defined [by Spaniards] as barbarians, as natural beings to be conquered and tamed by their betters,” the argument that “placelessness” of nomads and seminomads “deprived them of any autonomous right to a frontier territory,” the notion that “there were no Spanish-Indian treaties, the commonplace distinction that, “While the French sought a consensual ‘alliance’ with the natives, Spaniards sought submission. Even the most benevolent methods of enacting Spanish authority *never* sought consent from natives....”

Never say never.

Anglo-America and Its Borderlands

FRANÇOIS FURSTENBERG

The Appalachian Mountains may have been the continent’s single most important feature. Separating the eastern seaboard from the Mississippi Valley, the Iroquois in the uplands from the Algonquian peoples along the coasts and valleys, the British from the French colonies, the ocean-facing coast from the western-oriented backcountry, the Appalachian Mountains were responsible for the great problem of North American, and perhaps even Atlantic, history from 1754 to 1815: the fate of the trans-Appalachian West.

By drawing on the arguments and sensibility of an older diplomatic historiography, and connecting that to the methodological and historical insights of a newer ethnological and social history of the frontier and more recent scholarship on empire, we gain new insights on North American history from 1754 to 1815. In particular, certain continuities emerge over more familiar ruptures—including, in the U.S. context, the all-important division between “colonial” and “early national” periods. Taking an Atlantic perspective on the continental interior, it appears that the Seven Years’ War, which ostensibly ended in North America in 1760 and in Europe in 1763, in fact continued with only brief interruptions to 1815—in the form of the American Revolution of the 1770s, the Indian Wars of the 1780s and 1790s, and the War of 1812. Call it a Long War for the West. During this Long War, as the action shifted among various “hot spots” across the trans-Appalachian West, the great issue animating Native, imperial, and settler actors alike revolved around the fate of the region: Would it become a permanent Native American country? Would it fall to some distant European power? Or, perhaps the most unlikely scenario of all, would it join with the United States? Only in the wake of the British defeat in the War of 1812 was the region’s fate as part of the expanding United States settled once and for all.

François Furstenberg, “The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History,” *American Historical Review* 113 (June 2008): 647–677. Permission granted by University of Chicago Press.

Facing East, as it were, from Native America, the years from 1754 to 1815 most clearly emerge as a single, coherent period of extended struggle to maintain Native control of the trans-Appalachian West. As historians now largely accept, where Native military power encountered the distant reaches of European empire, and none could claim supremacy, Euro-American interaction most often resulted from negotiation born of "mutual weakness." European empires in the West existed—as they later would in other forms of non-settler colonialism—not through military or demographic domination, but by fostering various forms of consent or "persuasion" among local allies; European imperialism drew settlers and colonial administrators into Native "diplomatic, economic, judicial, and family ways" as often as it did the reverse. The result was a complex system of shifting alliances continually beset by diverging Native and European interests.

This system began to collapse in the Ohio Valley—the "hot spot" of the trans-Appalachian West in the mid-eighteenth century, where the Long War for the West began. It was there that Native control over hunting grounds and trade routes was most contested. It was there that the British Empire confronted the French over issues of territorial sovereignty.

From the perspective of France's Native American allies, the French imperial collapse in the Seven Years' War was an ambiguous event. On the one hand, the territorial cessions being drawn on maps in Paris bore little connection to realities in the trans-Appalachian West, where Native American nations—unlike their French allies—remained undefeated.... On the other hand, the 1763 Treaty of Paris, which ended the war, radically transformed North America's geopolitical landscape, upending the imperial balance of power and with it longstanding patterns of Native-European interaction. France's defeat marked the beginning of a unipolar North America. Native Americans throughout the West discerned a sinister British design to seize their land and render them impotent.

Eager to restore a balance of power, some western [Native] nations urged the French to reconsider their capitulation.... Alas, these and other overtures were rebuffed. Exhausted by war, its navy in tatters and its treasury drained, France was not about to renew hostilities.

And so the western Indians fought on, with even some Iroquois nations abandoning their former allegiance to resist Britain's new imperial power. Their objectives essentially carried forward previous French imperial policy: to contain British settlement between the Appalachians and the Atlantic. The hot spot of the trans-Appalachian West now shifted from the Ohio Valley to the forts and frontier settlements along the Appalachians and the Great Lakes, where Native nations allied under the Ottawa chief Pontiac launched a series of devastating assaults on British settlements. If Pontiac's War of 1763–1764 failed to push the British into the Atlantic, it succeeded in restoring some autonomy to Native Americans in the West.... Britain agreed to limit colonial settlement in the trans-Appalachian West, reserving the area as an autonomous Native American territory—an objective that would persist in various forms over the next several decades.

The British imperial crisis of the 1770s and 1780s began, like the French crisis before it, on the imperial periphery: at the crest of the Appalachians, where imperial authorities found themselves squeezed between the conflicting demands of the rebellious Native and settler populations. This will come as little surprise to those who have followed recent scholarship on eighteenth-century empires, which has largely turned away from the perspective of older diplomatic historians—imperial conflict as seen from European capitals—to focus instead on imperial edges, emphasizing local forces in what are variously called frontiers, borderlands, or marchlands. Shifting its sights from traditional state actors, this newer historiography focuses on local agents—missionaries, fur traders, petty colonial officers, land speculators, settlers, and of course Native Americans—people who navigate native grounds, middle grounds, or divided grounds.... Local actors were the driving force ... rather than imperial capitals imposing their will on populations of distant peripheries, the actors on those peripheries impose *their* will on policymakers in the center. The tail in effect wags the dog. With so much emphasis placed on imperial margins, however, the metropole often drops out of such studies, and it might be asked whether the pendulum has swung too far—whether an older imperial perspective can be integrated into this new narrative by setting metropole and periphery in dialogue with each other.

From the perspective of London, the vast territory acquired by Britain in the Seven Years' War created daunting new challenges. The scope of its victory, the territoriality of an empire that had theretofore defined itself as maritime, the multitude of new peoples and ethnicities now under British dominion, all led to a fundamental rethinking of the nature of empire, and ultimately to the greatest crisis the British Empire had yet seen. In seeking to accommodate the objectives of their new American subjects—Native American and Catholic—imperial policymakers ran headlong into the ambitions of their older subjects.

The first conflict emerged in the wake of Pontiac's War, when the government enacted the Royal Proclamation of 1763, forbidding colonists from "making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking Possession of any of the Lands," and ordering those who had settled there "forthwith to remove themselves." Even as it eased Native tensions, the proclamation infuriated local settler populations, who, seeing their hard-won western land claims denied, began to look suspiciously on the distant imperial authority. Settlers' fears of losing control of the West were reignited a decade later by the Québec Act of 1774, which granted religious and legal rights to the *habitants* in the Saint Laurence Valley. By detaching the Ohio Valley from the seaboard colonies and attaching it to the new province of Québec—restoring, in effect, the configuration of New France as the French had insisted it was in 1754, and as the British had sworn it could never be—the Québec Act further alienated British settlers.

These and other attempts to rationalize imperial governance led the settlers, like Native Americans before them, to discern a sinister design to seize their land and render them impotent. Like the Native Americans before them, they feared being made into "slaves" and having their property taken from them at pleasure. And so they, like the Native Americans before them, rebelled.

The end of war in 1783 did not settle the fate of the trans-Appalachian West, however. Once again, the Ohio Valley lay at the center of the geopolitical conflict. Britain ceded the region to the United States hoping to divide the Americans from their French allies. Whatever goodwill was achieved by the gesture, however, was immediately extinguished by British postwar diplomacy. Militarily, Britain's Native American allies, fiercely opposed to U.S. power, remained dominant in the region. Diplomatically, the British government was in an even stronger position to claim the Ohio Valley for its Native allies, for here was an issue on which Britain and its enemies agreed: Britain, Spain, and France all united in hoping to see the region between the Appalachians and the Mississippi dominated by Native American power, a buffer zone to stall U.S. expansion at the Appalachians. Had the British negotiated the peace of 1783 in combination with European and Native powers—granting concession to the indigenous rather than settler populations—U.S. borders might well have remained permanently fixed at the Appalachians.

If British-native alliances seemed poised to keep American settlers from the Northwest, Spanish-Native alliances were designed to do the same in the South. Although Spain had taken possession of Louisiana after the Seven Years' War, imperial authorities valued Louisiana not per se, but rather as what the Spanish minister Conde de Aranda called a "recognizable barrier" to protect its invaluable Mexican possessions.

Spanish imperial policy in the trans-Appalachian West had two primary objectives: to protect Mexico from British/American expansion, and to ensure Spanish dominance in the Gulf of Mexico. These aims determined the Spanish response to the American rebellion in the 1770s. Despite their reluctance to support the colonial rebellion ... Spanish authorities eventually bent to French pressure and entered the war, providing the United States with crucial military assistance. In return, they demanded a reacquisition of the Floridas in the immediate term, and the restriction of American settlers from the trans-Appalachian West in the long term.

After 1783, the Southwest in general—and New Orleans in particular—emerged as the hot spot of the trans-Appalachian West. In order to preserve control over the Gulf of Mexico and shore up its Louisiana buffer, Spanish officials pursued a two-pronged strategy to keep Americans from the Southwest: frustrate trade along the Mississippi, and offer logistical and material support to Native allies. Spanish officials refused to grant Americans trading rights through New Orleans, hoping, as a 1782 French government report put it, to close "the Missisipi [*sic*] to the Americans, and to disgust them from making establishments on that river." Thanks to these efforts—and to the feeble U.S. response—the Spanish Empire seemed poised not just to block American expansion, but even to pluck away U.S. territories south of the Ohio River.

From the perspective of Paris, it was unclear that France had been permanently chased from North America in 1763. Only in retrospect does the year emerge as a defining moment, and even then it can appear as one of those turning points at which history failed to turn. In certain respects, "France" remained in

North America: French settlers continued to populate the West, French officers continued to conduct Spanish diplomacy in Louisiana, and French diplomatic *moeurs* continued to shape Native relations with both the Spanish and the British. Most important, perhaps, French policymakers continued to harbor ambitions—and sponsor attempts—to reestablish their North American empire. This continuing French presence in the trans-Appalachian West—demographic, diplomatic, cultural, and imperial—decisively influenced the Long War for the West.

French imperial planners retained a keen interest in North America for two reasons: to counter the ambitions of Great Britain, France's principal rival for global hegemony; and to protect its all-important Caribbean colonies, especially Saint Domingue, which now lacked a mainland base for provisions and military operations.... Postwar French policy thus aimed to ensure the permanent estrangement of Great Britain and its former colonies, ideally with the United States as a French client state.

As for the United States, its primary objective after the Revolution was to become an independent nation-state; and as many at the time recognized, the greatest obstacles to that ambition lay in the trans-Appalachian West. From 1783 through the end of the eighteenth century and beyond, it remained possible that the region would become a neutral Native American territory, or that it would fall to some distant European power. U.S. sovereignty in the trans-Appalachian West would be ensured only by overcoming three challenges: the geography of North America, and of the Appalachian Mountains in particular; Native American resistance; and the ambiguous loyalties of western colonists.

If the maps drawn in London in 1783, and by Jefferson and others in the years that followed—maps still used in history surveys today—extended U.S. sovereignty to the Mississippi River, such cartographic imagining was hardly in accord with the realities on the ground, where vexing geographic obstacles could not be so easily erased, Native Americans remained dominant, and settlers remained little swayed by feelings of national loyalty.

In seeking to control both sides of the Appalachians, U.S. policymakers were attempting something that no political entity, Native or European, had ever accomplished without rapidly disintegrating. Unlike the Atlantic Ocean, which served as both barrier and bridge between Europe and America, the Appalachian Mountains were an unambiguous obstacle dividing the East from the West. Also unlike the Atlantic, the Appalachians could be crossed at only a few points. The two most important passages lay along the Mohawk River in New York—dominated by the Iroquois, which helps explain their strategic importance—and, some seven hundred miles of rugged terrain to the southwest, through the Cumberland Gap, the old Indian trail that had been converted into a wagon road.

The separation was not simply one of distance; it was more fundamentally one of orientation, founded in the diverging paths of North American waterways. In the original thirteen states, where most settlement lay within fifty miles of the tidewater, the economy and society naturally faced out toward the Atlantic. "The inhabitants of the Atlantic coast give [to the West] the name *Back-Country*," a French traveler once observed, "indicating by this term their moral attitude,

constantly turned towards Europe." Not so in the western settlements: "Scarcely had I crossed the Alleghanys [*sic*], before I heard [the residents] ... call the Atlantic coast the *Back-Country*; which proved that their geographic situation has given their views and their interests a new direction, in conformity with that of the waters that serve as roads and doors toward the Gulf of Mexico." Waterways were indeed the key. Through them, nature had decreed that the trans-Appalachian West would be more connected to New Orleans, and even to the Caribbean, than to Philadelphia, New York, or Boston. For it was not from any eastern port, but down the Mississippi, via New Orleans and through the Caribbean, that all commerce from the vast region must eventually pass.

These geographical forces made the Southwest in general, and New Orleans in particular, the hot spot of the trans-Appalachian West after 1783. Without control of New Orleans, no part of the region was safely American. Barges and boats from distant reaches of the Ohio Valley floated goods to New Orleans, and thence into international markets.

The second great challenge to U.S. sovereignty in the West was Native American power. If the American War of Independence was what scholars call a settler rebellion, it had the particularity of occurring amid an indigenous rebellion that began with the Seven Years' War and extended into the nineteenth century. In many respects, the ultimate success of the settler rebellion—long-term national sovereignty—would hinge on the outcome of the indigenous one; one had to fail for the other to succeed. The Long War for the West thus continued through the 1780s and into the 1790s, as the United States sought to establish its military supremacy in the Mississippi Valley, where Native Americans, as historian Eric Hinderaker remarks, refused to "accept the principle that the lands abandoned during the war had been forfeited by the Indians or won by the United States."

If Native Americans posed an immediate military threat to U.S. sovereignty in the West, the tenuous loyalties of the region's settlers posed a longer-term existential threat. Given past and present connections between westerners and the British Empire, the bonds tying western settlers to Britain "were potentially much stronger" than those tying them to the eastern states. There were many good reasons to suspect that western settlers might break away from the United States to make a separate peace with Spain or Great Britain.

It was precisely this fault line between eastern elites and western settlers that the international situation exacerbated. Nothing inflamed the resentment of settlers more than the Spanish policy of harassing commerce along the Mississippi River, and many feared that their welfare would be sacrificed on the altar of eastern interests. "The right to unrestricted access of the Mississippi was the *sine qua non* of western loyalty," observes Andrew Cayton. "And many frontiersmen, particularly residents of Kentucky, were convinced that the United States was not interested in obtaining it." As American settlers poured into western lands, provoking Native reprisals, it was becoming imperative for the U.S. government to assert its sovereignty—or risk losing the region entirely.

Securing the loyalties of trans-Appalachian settlers—keeping them from "an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power"—was, in short, a matter of existential importance to the young nation. No one really knew

whether the semi-United States could survive as a little strip of settlements huddled along the Atlantic coast and hemmed in by the Appalachian Mountains. At the very least, they would have become what both French and British policymakers were trying to make them: the client states of a great power.

The year 1789 stands as an important date in this story of the trans-Appalachian West. It saw the inauguration of a new U.S. government, which moved quickly to secure the West—with military force against the Ohio Valley Indians, and with diplomatic overtures to open the Southwest. Despite the more robust military commitment, however, the new government would have, in its first years, no more success than the previous one in defeating Native Americans, who, as long as the British and Spanish maintained a western presence, found ready support to resist U.S. expansion.

But 1789 marks a turning point for a second reason: that year, some ten weeks after Washington's inauguration, revolution exploded in France. Its reverberations would be felt throughout Europe, across the Caribbean, and deep into the North American interior. Although the impact of the French Revolution on the United States has generated much scholarship, historians usually attend to its partisan and ideological implications along the East Coast, obscuring its other legacy: the sectional tensions it fomented between eastern elites and western settlers. As frontier regions across the United States seethed with unrest during the 1790s, local political conflicts repeatedly merged with transatlantic geopolitics.

Nowhere did sectional tensions merge with partisan conflict more dramatically than in the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, which saw insurgents in western Pennsylvania call on other westerners to join the insurrection as "citizen[s] of the western country." Settlers across the Ohio Valley responded, and for a time the events seemed to portend a settler rebellion like that of 1776. "We are too distant from the grand seat of information," charged one angry Kentuckian. As the frontier disturbances spread from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia across the Ohio Valley to Kentucky and Ohio, some Kentuckians proclaimed their willingness to "renounc[e] the allegiance to the United States and annex themselves to the British."

French officials were well aware of these sectional tensions, of the open talk of disunion among westerners, and of western Republicans' sympathy for France—sometimes at the expense of their loyalty to the United States.

In light of all this ... Jay's Treaty of 1794 emerges as a diplomatic triumph. Today the treaty is best remembered for the partisan war it unleashed—a perspective, however, that ignores the more important sectional peace it ensured. Jay's Treaty secured Britain's evacuation of the long-disputed western posts, isolating the Ohio Valley Indians, crippling their resistance to U.S. expansion, and setting the stage for the Treaty of Grenville, which saw Native leaders abandon their longstanding demand for an Ohio River boundary between Native American country and the United States. By defusing a crisis with Britain, it strengthened the United States' negotiating position with Spain so much that Spanish officials soon acceded to longstanding settler demands to open Mississippi River trade in the 1795 Treaty of San Lorenzo. Even as Jay's Treaty reduced Spanish,

British, and Native American threats in the trans-Appalachian West, however, it created a new and even more ominous French menace.

It is ironic that France's defeat in the Seven Years' War, by forcing it to retrench in the Caribbean, inaugurated what might be called the golden age of the French Atlantic. The development had major implications for the trans-Appalachian West, whose waterways fed into the Gulf of Mexico and thence to the Caribbean; and it explains why, from 1794 to 1803, Saint Domingue emerged as the hot spot with the greatest impact on the trans-Appalachian West.

It is hard to exaggerate the importance of Saint Domingue in this period. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the French colony—one-half of a single Caribbean island, with an area one-sixth the size of Virginia—had experienced an economic boom without precedent, and by 1789 it was the richest, most productive colony not just of the French Empire, but of any empire.... And in 1791 it all came crashing down, in a revolution that quickly fused with the bitter imperial conflict between revolutionary France and Great Britain in the Caribbean.

The United States would soon be drawn into these Caribbean events.... As the crisis deepened, the abolition of slavery in Saint Domingue was ratified in the name of the French republic, and a force never before seen in the modern era—of slaves become citizens—was mobilized to crush France's enemies. With the British navy crippling French shipping, France was forced to open its colonies to unrestricted trade with the United States in 1793.... "The force of events hands the French colonies over to us," a smug Thomas Jefferson told French minister Fauchet in 1795. "France enjoys sovereignty and we, profits." Rather than make the United States into its client state, as France had hoped after American independence, France was now becoming dependent on the upstart nation.

By the mid-1790s, then, French policymakers came to realize that they could no longer depend on their fickle ally; they would need a more secure continental foothold. And so they turned their sights to Louisiana.... It was a prospect that many Americans feared above all others. A French Louisiana, warned a New York newspaper in 1802, could "hold forth every allurements to the inhabitants of the Trans-Alleghany settlements ... and inveigle them by degrees into the idea of forming a separate empire." Equally ominous was the impact that a French Louisiana might have on American slavery; the specter of France's transracial Caribbean armies loomed large. "A few French Troops with ... arms put into the hands of the Negroes," Mississippi's territorial governor warned in 1798, "would be to us formidable indeed."

"Before Bonaparte could reach Louisiana," Henry Adams once remarked, "he was obliged to crush the power of Toussaint ... If he and his blacks should succumb easily to their fate, the wave of French empire would roll on to Louisiana and sweep far up the Mississippi; if St. Domingo should resist, and succeed in resistance ... America would be left to pursue her democratic [*sic*] destiny in peace."

The road to Louisiana, in other words, ran through Saint Domingue—not just metaphorically but also geographically. By giving France control of the

Windward Passage between Cuba and Saint Domingue, which separates the Atlantic Ocean from the Caribbean Sea, the island secured French access into the Caribbean and to the Gulf of Mexico. With navigation dependent on winds and currents, ships headed for the Caribbean or the Gulf of Mexico passed almost of necessity through the Windward Passage.

And so in 1802 Napoleon sent his brother-in-law, General Charles Victor Emmanuel Leclerc, along with a force that would eventually total more than 80,000, to conquer Saint Domingue. If a commitment to preserving the plantation order explains why the British navy let Leclerc's force cross the Atlantic, American support for the French mission is harder to fathom. Certainly Jefferson, now president, had no wish to see France installed in Louisiana. "There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy," said Jefferson in 1801. "It is New Orleans." No amount of lingering attachment to France could alter this view. "France, placing herself in that door, assumes to us the attitude of defiance." To be sure, the alternative to a French recapture of the island was profoundly troubling to Jefferson, whose terror—not to say hysteria—at the prospect of a republic of former slaves in the Caribbean is well known. The thought of an independent Saint Domingue inspired nightmares of "the Cannibals of the terrible republic" pulling into American ports, sending "black crews, supercargoes & missionaries thence into the Southern states," and fomenting insurrection throughout the nation.

In the end ... Napoleon's fatal insistence on fighting Toussaint led to the collapse of his American ambitions. Jefferson played the diplomatic game perfectly, luring the French into Saint Domingue with promises of assistance before abandoning them in the quagmire. The game was up. France had lost its last doorway into the North American interior, and it was obvious that Louisiana could not be held.

But Napoleon had one last matter to clear up as he withdrew from America. "It was left to him," wrote [François] Barbé-Marbois [Napoleon's finance minister], "only to prevent France's loss from becoming Britain's advantage." And so Napoleon hastened to turn the colony over to the Americans and grab whatever cash he could. Although the purchase was financed in the London capital markets—raising money for France to wage war against Great Britain—the British government did not object because it believed that an American Louisiana was less threatening than a French Louisiana.

The long war for the West did not end with this second French loss of Louisiana. The dynamic that had shaped events in the trans-Appalachian West since 1754 continued, European imperial competition joining with enduring Native/settler conflict to keep the region's fate uncertain. A simmering warfare persisted in the years after 1803, as American settlers pushed west and up the Mississippi River into Native lands.... British-Native military mobilization, building on years of village politics in Indian country, stirred up the embers of western settler unrest, which burst into flame in 1812, a war that in retrospect emerges as the last battle of the Long War for the West.

If the United States and Great Britain fought a war in the East and on the Atlantic over questions of maritime rights and impressment, American settlers and

Native Americans in the Mississippi Valley fought a far more consequential war whose objectives were, on the one side, continued U.S. expansion into Native and British land, and, on the other, the preservation of the West as an Indian country forever protected from American settlement. If this seems familiar, that is because these objectives echoed those for which France had gone to war in 1754, for which Pontiac had fought in 1763, and which the British had pursued since 1783: the restriction of American settlement from the trans-Appalachian West, and the creation of a buffer between the United States and British and Spanish territory. Like previous wars, the War of 1812 saw the emergence of pan-Indian unity and ideology: where in the past it had been led by Neolin and Pontiac, now it was led by the Shawnee leader Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa. As previous wars had seen Native leaders urging a return of the French to counterbalance British power, this war saw Native leaders in the North and Southwest reach out to the British and Spanish to balance U.S. power.

This western war ... ended with the Treaty of Ghent in 1815, which once again left Native Americans empty-handed. British diplomats began the negotiations in Ghent insisting as "*a sine qua non* for peace" that the Native nations be included in the treaty negotiations, and that a 250,000-square-mile area in the Northwest between the United States and Canada—equivalent to roughly 15 percent of the U.S.—be set aside for Native Americans, which the United States would be forever barred from purchasing. It was a prospect that the British almost certainly could have accomplished in 1783, with the help of Spanish and French diplomats, who would have proven supportive. By 1815, however, it was too late: American negotiators contemptuously dismissed the cession of what they considered to be their territory as "injurious and degrading." Too many American settlers had poured into the Mississippi Valley, their American loyalties now cemented by the searing experience of war and the increased political power they exerted in Washington, where Kentuckian Henry Clay served as speaker of the House of Representatives, and where the presidency would soon pass to Andrew Jackson of Tennessee. The French, defeated once and for all at Waterloo, no longer threatened Britain's global hegemony. The Spanish, now isolated in the West and under pressure from settler independence movements across the Americas—many of them modeled on the United States—were no longer in a position to challenge U.S. territorial claims, which they finally ceded in the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1820. Most important of all, Native nations across the trans-Appalachian West were now bereft of international military support. The Long War for the West was finally over. It was a decisive victory for the United States and a final defeat for Native nations of the trans-Appalachian West, who could never again hope to make their lands into an autonomous Indian country.

To whom does the trans-Appalachian West belong? That was the great question animating imperial, Native, and settler actors alike during the Long War for the West, as each group battled alone and in shifting alliances to retain a hold on the region. But on a different, historiographical, register, the question remains as pressing today as it did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Does the region belong to U.S. history, imperial history, Native American

history, frontier history, Atlantic history, or some combination of them all in a confused, even entangled, form? ... The history of the trans-Appalachian West shaped the destinies not just of Native America, nor of Mexico, Canada, and the United States, nor even of the most powerful global empires of the nineteenth century, but by extension of modern world history itself.

With the trans-Appalachian West thus set in its fullest context, we are ultimately poised to return to U.S. history, and there to better recognize the sweeping forces of imperialism and global warfare that buffeted a young and fragile United States, decisively shaping its history as well as its geography. Of course, few at the time could have seen the irony of the U.S. victory in the Long War for the West, which, by opening the Mississippi Valley to a contested U.S. expansion, half slave and half free, would eventually generate sectional conflicts so severe that the country would be confronted with the greatest existential crisis of its history. To the victor went the spoils. In the near term, however, the U.S. victory resolved the fate of the trans-Appalachian West. Never more would tenuous western loyalties, Native American resistance, or European imperialism threaten U.S. sovereignty east of the Mississippi.

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