

Chapter 1

First Wests, Many Wests

And We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of our Displeasure all our loving subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking Possession of any of the Lands above reserved.¹

In the fall of 1763, as chilly nights settled on the Appalachian mountains and autumn colors tinted the dense woodlands of the Atlantic East, an assortment of humans – Native American women and men, British colonists, indentured servants, Africans, runaway slaves, renegades, and outlaws, European immigrants, traders, and military personnel – milled through and about this land, claimed by Indians as birthright but demarcated by white society as the western reaches of the English colonies. Wary of each other generally and specifically from the recent carnage of the French and Indian War, these folk looked out on a region that faced an uncertain future with but one guarantee: a cacophony of political and economic goals articulated in many languages and by differing cultures portended of more conflict among foes than commonality in friendship, more death by violence than life with harmony.

The rolling, verdant landscape was homeland to many eastern tribes – Shawnees, Senecas, Mohawks, Delawares, Hurons, Oneidas, Iroquois, and to the south the Cherokees, Creeks, and Choctaws – who had defined their political spaces, cultural values, and economic relationships through social patterns, diplomacy, or warfare long before the European incursions. Indians of each tribe had

clear expectations for how the region should be managed and for years the woodland people had manipulated their contact with European emissaries and traders to their advantage. Indians had conferred with Europeans in local communities and delegations had traversed the Atlantic, hobnobbing with the elite and moneyed. Natives negotiated alliances, playing off the international rivalries of the moment amongst the French, English, Spanish, Swedish, or Dutch to secure the best economic and political positions for tribal areas. They had juggled peace and war, each a linchpin in their efforts to retain traditional land, while drawing off the most desirable commodities and diplomatic advantages to be extracted from white society. At least one colonial governor recognized the critical importance of these alliances with Natives, writing to England, "The concerns of this Country are so closely connected and interwoven with Indian Affairs, and not only . . . [for] our trade, but even the Safety of this Province . . . depend upon our continuing in Friendship with the Indians."² In 1763, however, various Native men and women perceived that with the British defeat of France, came a shift in European power that might jeopardize such friendships and the interests of Indians.³ The war had cost Natives heavy losses, raising critical questions among Indians about their future with whites. For example, economic bargains made with the French were not necessarily going to be as attractive with the English, who, indeed, offered low quality trade items. Further, with resentments over burned lands, lost crops, death, and disease, Indians wanted to know why the French and English did not fight and die in their own countries, instead of bringing their disagreements to North America. Natives knew the answer to that question was that the battle occurred on turf the Europeans ultimately coveted for themselves.⁴

As for "our loving subjects," also known as British colonists, they were not blind to the full enormity of their king's declaration. Settlers, already well past the front line of the Appalachians, heard that not only was their westward progress halted by a mandate from Great Britain, but also they were to turn themselves, families, and animals back to the eastern parts of the colonies. Colonists were to stop traveling along the Allegheny River to the Monongahela, making use of the easy water transport and portage, then slipping through the Cumberland Gap, searching out the best of the fertile, well-watered soil. This was more than annoying to backwoods



Figure 1.1 This Jonathan Carver (1710–80) map from 1778, although not entirely accurate, reveals there was depth and breadth to the diplomatic and geographic knowledge available for competing societies in the eighteenth century. *Source:* Courtesy, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

people, those nascent expectant capitalists who defined opportunity by the ease with which they could acquire western land.

For more than 20 years, eastern investors had egged these axe and gun pioneers to continue their advance into and over the mountains. Land speculators knew settlement of white communities could only add to their own wealth, advance the empire interests of England, and secure the back country for colonial governors. Never mind that wealthier colonists had amassed their huge grants through corruption and graft, influencing colonial legislatures to pass land laws that favored the well-to-do. Frustratingly for the speculators, the European military contests had slowed the push into the back country. Now, just on the cusp of success, the western free-for-all, a boon

to the rich and the less-than-rich alike, by command of the crown, was to stop.

In the colonies, it was the small farmers and settlers who felt the weight of the king's order, prohibited, as individuals, to purchase land, negotiate trade, or simply steal land from Native people. The irascible Thomas Cresap, who repeatedly challenged Philadelphia over its Maryland border, had nosed about the forks of the Ohio River as early as 1750 and three years later Christopher Gist led families along the Potomac River as far as Redstone Creek in Pennsylvania. Now, according to King George III, these people were ever to remain British colonials, setting aside the lure of western settlement, land-grabbing, and maverick politics, always so common in an unregulated territory.

These were all galling bits of news for the Americans, fresh from defending the British king's turf during the grueling seven years of the French and Indian War. From 1756 to 1763, that conflict had revealed the ineptness of the British military when confronted with guerilla-like fighters on foreign soil. British generals in the field, especially the infamous Edward Braddock, relied on aristocratic swagger and European tactics to convince Indians in the Ohio Valley of England's power over them and their French friends. In a blizzard of responses, the Indians, backed by French Canadians, dashed the British hopes for a quick solution to the hostilities. The English army collapsed in the face of withering unexpected attacks that humiliated the British, cemented French and Indian alliances, and left American settlers along the western phalanx of all the colonies fleeing for the safety of any nearby fort.

After several discouraging years for the British colonies, the French, in a series of defeats, revealed they were, indeed, vulnerable. Indian warriors reassessed their positions and backed away from their French alliances, several groups joining the British forces. Then, in an improbable move that undid the French, James Wolfe and his soldiers scaled a sheer cliff of rock outside Quebec, stunning the forces of Marquis de Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham, a broad field high above the old city of Quebec.

After this bloody fight in Canada, there were other diplomatic details to be concluded, among them significant issues concerning the balance of power in Europe, but in North America, the French loss rekindled the western fever of British colonists. With the defeat of King George's enemies in North America, formalized through the

Treaty of Paris of 1763, those who had endured the bitter years and fought for the distant monarch anticipated appreciation and generosity, especially in the tangible form of western lands. In addition, as their pack animals lumbered along the rough terrain toward the East, the sweating, disgruntled colonists muttered about other pronouncements from the king, ones that regulated negotiations for Native land and granted religious freedom to the French Catholics, living to the north in Quebec. Loyal British subjects certainly had not bargained for political considerations for their recent foes – the “heathen” Natives and the hated French of Quebec and the Ohio Valley.

This unhappy royal decree, known in history as the Proclamation of 1763, aimed to affirm the king’s authority over a conglomerate of populations, dramatically delivered to him following protracted conflicts with the French. No longer the overseer of 13 coastal-hugging colonies, King George now saw his royal flag flutter along the Mississippi River from the Gulf of Mexico north to the Great Lakes. Given the tumultuous circumstances, the great distance between the governor and the governed, the long festering ill-will of the French, and Indian resistance, it must have seemed a sound strategy to offer these latter two groups some balm, something to deflect their simmering anger over the outcome of the French and Indian War. Perhaps King George could reduce his problems in North America by good faith action, promising Native Americans a halt to the British settlers flooding into the western regions of the 13 colonies and quelling the restlessness of New France, chagrined that its mother country had utterly failed to protect the Canadian colonies.

Of course, the proclamation also was centered directly on the king’s more immediate colonial interests. Drawing some boundaries for the colonists appeared to be the sensible way for the mother country to keep watch over her frequently unruly subjects, whose wandering ways complicated the collection of taxes for the crown. The suggested displeasure of King George, should his American subjects choose to ignore this proclamation, proved slight compared to the surliness that flared among the colonists, who grumbled the document conveyed more rights to “savages and Papists” than to British subjects.

Poor King George with his imaginary boundary line that arced across the Appalachians from Nova Scotia to Florida, and his nod

to the French and their staunchest Native allies who managed to ignite the fires of unity among the notoriously fragmented and feuding colonists from Savannah to Boston, from Charleston to New York. Thus, King George, or more correctly Great Britain's Privy Council, succeeded in what no patriot voice had yet managed and pointed the cantankerous colonists toward common banners – their distaste for the French, scorn for the Indians, anger toward Great Britain, and lust for more land.

King George may only have hoped to exert some order over his disparate and widely scattered subjects, so recently come under his domain in North America. But the Proclamation of 1763 actually contained more than an affront to the restless interests and wounded pride of land-hungry colonists. With its references to assurances for Native peoples, governance in French Quebec, as well as boundaries of Spanish West Florida, King George wrapped into one short package a North American declaration that encompassed the long and complicated history preceding 1763. It was a history, in one way or another, grounded in notions of “homeland,” “frontier,” “invader,” “invaded” and constantly seasoned with cultural conflicts, economic dislocation, and brutal warfare. It was a history composed of many elements, all of a much longer and diverse lineage than the events that led to the Proclamation of 1763.

Native peoples of North and South America, as well as the islands of the Caribbean, constructed political, economic, social structures far before recorded history or the disquieting arrival of Europeans. Indeed, the earliest footprints of Native people could have marked the western hemisphere anywhere from 25,000 to 40,000 years ago. Scholars point to a series of migrations across a once solid land bridge in the Bering Straits or epic voyages over the Pacific Ocean as reasonable explanations for the populating of North and South Americas.⁵ Small bands, driven out of Asia by hunger, war, or curiosity followed a series of hunting corridors, dropping south along the Pacific Coast into Central and South America, moving west to east through Canada, before trekking down the Atlantic seaboard. Some groups perished, defeated by harsh climates, unexpected calamities, group illness, or war. Others pushed on, adapting to the new environments, adding technologies, and exploiting food supplies that they encountered over many generations.⁶

As a result, across thousands of years, human communities in the Americas entered into the process of civilization building and cre-

ated unique societies. Some, in harsh arid areas, hunkered down in little bands, struggling to maintain themselves. They scratched out an existence in areas with extreme temperature swings and few natural resources, especially water. Some took shelter in high warren-like caves, until impelled by unknown forces, their communities drifted away, abandoning their rock-like cities to give silent witness to their lives.⁷ Others, in loosely affiliated family groups, adopted a marginal nomadic life, perpetually hunting and gathering in the daily search for food. The constant and uncertain struggle for nourishment kept the bands small and the standard of living scant. But where climate and water were salubrious, populations grew and more complex societies were born influenced by planting and harvesting seasons, combining a sedentary life with a nomadic one. For example, by 1000 BC, the southwestern Mogollons had added farming to their traditional hunting and gathering life. Their crops included maize and beans and their influence spread from the southern edge of present-day New Mexico, north through Arizona, having a direct impact on the ancestors of the Pima and Papago Indians. Among the striking remains of early desert people were a complicated irrigation system and an extensive network of underground storage rooms known as kivas, both of which bolstered their agricultural productivity.⁸

In the archeological remnants of the Moundbuilders, so-called for the thousands of huge burial hills they constructed, was found a culture that influenced a stretch of territory from the Southeast around the Gulf of Mexico through the lower Mississippi Valley and north towards Canada. The sophistication of the Moundbuilder society underlined the multi-faceted ways that Native communities throughout the western hemisphere had adapted and altered over time, showing that indigenous people did not live in static societies.

In this culture, domestic arrangements included small camps and fortified semi-permanent villages. The largest, Cahokia, situated in modern day Illinois, supported a population of at least 20,000.⁹ Proximity to the several rivers of inland America aided travel, diplomacy, and communication. Plants and seeds were important parts of the diet, increasingly supplemented by game animals and fish. For hunting, groups often ranged across many miles, returning to a home base in time to harvest large gardens. Constantly adding to tools with chipped stone points, axes, and small



Figure 1.2 For approximately 100 years, these ruins at Mesa Verde in Colorado were home to the ancestral Puebloans, skilled artists and craftsmen, who built a network of buildings deep inside the sheltering cliffs. *Source:* Courtesy, Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Jesse L. Nusbaum, N-293.

vessels, they increased the crops they raised and traded tools, utensils, food, maize, and game along an extensive river network. By approximately 1000 AD, some traditions of these Mississippians had spread into the river valleys of the Plains. People along the Missouri River planted corn, beans, and squash and began to adopt the practices of their woodland neighbors to the east and their pueblo-dwelling neighbors to the drier southwest.¹⁰

Perhaps most singular in culture were the tribes that settled along the Northwest Coast. Factors of geography kept those Natives separated from much of the intense cultural and material exchange that marked the emergence of their neighbors to the south. They, however, enjoyed other benefits. Where many first peoples were challenged by an uneven supply of water or dry soil, the Northwest communities enjoyed an abundance of natural resources and food supply. Along the coastal areas, life centered on the ocean, where the bounteous fish, especially salmon, became a dietary mainstay. Freed from the pressures of continuous hunting and gathering,

the Northwest peoples had time to develop an elaborate culture, notable for its intricate carved art forms and social mores that employed a complicated gift-giving through ritual meals and ceremonies called potlatch.¹¹

Nearing the end of the fifteenth century, shortly before the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492, perhaps as many as 65 or 70 million people inhabited the North American terrain. In many areas, urban complexes, organized by a division of authority grounded in gender and supported by an agricultural economy, flourished. Prosperity promoted societal continuity and encouraged the expansion of all aspects of life, as well as extensive interaction and exchange from tribe to tribe. Thus, political protocols, cross-tribal diplomacy, economic arrangements, cultural symbols, religious ritual, group decision-making, and social custom were highly stylized, diverse, and sophisticated among Native people from coast to coast.

The pre-European centuries created an exclusive environment, where Native peoples honed their relationships with the land and each other. The indigenous peoples of North America pursued political, social, and economic lives as fluid and dynamic as those of Europeans across the ocean. During these halcyon days for Native development and growth, perhaps as many as 550 different tribes ranged across North America. Among them, there were at least 300 languages, which had evolved from extremely complex linguistic structures.¹²

The continent was, of course, not a “frontier” to Natives. Rather, it was “home.” Group identities took shape over hundreds of years, until tribes across the continent had a present form and a past heritage. By politics and trade, by custom and language, by deed and diplomacy arose the myriad Indian names that filled the many corners of North America – the Creeks and the Catawbas, the Navajos and the Apaches, the Pequots and the Pawnees, the Cheyennes and the Susquehannocks, Blackfeet, Sioux, Lumbees, Zuñis, Delawares, Seminoles, Winnebagos, Crows, Kiowas, Assiniboins, Choctaws, Tlingits, Shoshones, Osages, Gros Ventres, Miwoks, Papagos, and Mandans. Each of these communities, as well as hundreds of others, entered into a new experience once Europeans began regular and ongoing contact with North America.

The coming of Spanish explorers in the 1500s set the unfortunate tone for the future of Indian relations with Europeans. Setting out in many directions, conquistadors, intent on the search for wealth in

any form, plunged into North and South America, launching waves of expeditions that continued for several decades. Among those who joined the search for precious metals, exotic spices, human conquest, and new travel routes, Hernando Cortés led more than 500 men on a 1519 expedition into the Valley of Mexico. In less than two years, the Aztecs had fallen to the Spanish and Cortés and his associates moved to plant the Spanish flag in other locations. Within 20 years, Hernando de Soto led his party ashore on the west coast of Florida, setting out for the Mississippi River; other Spanish marched among the Zunis and the Pueblos, sailed on the Gulf of California, saw the Grand Canyon, or scouted along the Rio Grande, Colorado, and Arkansas rivers.

In 1528 Pánfilo de Narváez made landfall off Tampa Bay – among the men in his expedition was the Moroccan Esteban. Esteban, destined to explore thousands of miles and live by his wits, before dying among the Zunis in the 1530s, was the first known African to set foot in North America. He would not be the last. Spanish expeditions typically called for a supply of black servants or slaves, including a few women. The tramp of Spanish boots echoed across the nooks and crannies of the American Southwest and pounded north deep into the Midwest, sounding out the changing rhythms of the race relations that would mark the West in all its corners.¹³

With those sounds came the vicious subjugation that showed the all-encompassing sweep of these invaders. As the Spanish explorers swept north out of Mexico, as far as the coast of northern California and into present-day Kansas, uncivilized treatment of civilized communities, wanton destruction of property, suppression of local religious practices, transformation of the countryside, and lust for gold dominated their behavior. The distances between small Indian clusters played to the advantage of the intruders, who were not inclined to understand the matrilineal clan structure, but saw only the vibrant agriculture as an indicator of other forms of wealth. Initial cultural contacts that would have best been carried out by skilled ambassadors, who acted on the precepts of a thoughtfully planned program of respect and understanding, instead were left to the helter-skelter random behaviors of militaristic and culturally uninformed soldiers of fortune. The land had become a world of undulating borders with Natives standing on one side and Europeans on the other; while Indian people saw homelands under

invasion and lines of authority disrupted, Europeans saw horizons for conquest and opportunities for riches.

The presence, mandated by the Spanish crown in the 1520s, of Roman Catholic friars did nothing to better early contacts or to smooth international relationships. Franciscan friars, spiritual sons of thirteenth-century Italy's famed Francis of Assisi, were the usual companions to the conquistadors. Impelled by a Franciscan ideal that sought purity in spirituality, these monks were a natural choice for missionary work in the hinterlands of an unknown continent. Dismissive of personal property, bound to the wandering life of beggars, the Franciscans were eager New World travelers. In their rough robes and sandals, they cared naught for home and hearth, but found zeal in proselytizing among "pagan" people.¹⁴ Their world view translated into a series of missions in Mexico, Florida, and New Mexico – small centers where captured Native people were expected to learn European work and convert to Catholic prayers. Given less to persuasion and more to coercion, the friars willingly risked the bloody uprisings of the aggrieved Natives, for a violent death on mission shores meant instant sainthood in the Catholic lexicon, honor within European church circles, and a glorious conclusion to one's personal sacrifices for faith.

Predictably, contention arose between the secular and spiritual representatives of the Spanish crown. These disagreements had little to do with issues of morality and justice and much to do with politics and power. The two groups squabbled over who would control the Indians, who could corral them for work, and how their land would be parceled out to their new overseers. This tug-of-war for the minds and bodies of the Natives took on bitter tones, while the subjects of the argument continued under abject conditions to plow fields, herd animals, construct buildings, prepare food, dig wells, or complete any labor the Spanish demanded.

The Europeans seemed to look down on the Indians around them without seeing into the spirit of Native people.¹⁵ Priests and soldiers accepted the outward appearances of Indian conversion at face value, overlooking the internal tribal political and economic motives that may have fueled the move to Christianity. Whether Indian people fully embraced the new religion, added some facets of it to their own beliefs, or melded two faith systems, creating fresh theological concepts were not issues the Spanish considered deeply. Completely distracted by their own interests and their own

conversations, the soldiers and the priests neglected the chance to understand Indian people in roles other than those of the subjugated.

Overall, the arrival of the Spanish – whether priest or soldier – meant that Indian people were killed, enslaved, or forced to accept Christianity. The efforts of Natives to deflect the attacks or negotiate better terms of co-existence were summarily dismissed or betrayed. The narrative is one of nearly unmitigated death and destruction for Indians. It was an epic, however, that brought more than just crass adventurers and black robed priests to Native lives.

The Spanish, movers and shakers in Europe, came with their own sense of confidence and intellectual correctness. Beyond the Americas, they had trafficked in African and Middle Eastern cultures. Their royalty, military, and church authorities had dealt with Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Muslims. From years of European upheaval, they knew about attack and defense, aggression, and compliance. Clash and conflict, bred in the Moorish invasions and refined in the Inquisition's horrors, defined their experience. They saw themselves as "tough," whether in national or international, civic or religious affairs. Their fast-moving technology and burgeoning capitalism added to their assured manner and pushed them to a "winner takes all" mentality. Who were they, in their flashy armor and prancing horses, to be daunted by these Indians, who seemed not to understand place and power in a rapidly changing world?¹⁶

As if those factors were not overwhelming enough, Europeans brought their own animal husbandry and horticulture, dropping both upon a startled American eco-system. Alien animals and plants invaded with the same ferocity as the humans, pressing down on the land in totally new ways.¹⁷ Who gave thought to the terrain, hosting foreign sheep and oxen, their feed and their excrement? Why would one care that a creeping vine overtook indigenous flora or notice the scale that formed on the leaves of a nearby bush? These matters of science were barely formulated and hardly the concern of brash explorers.¹⁸ For certain though, as the Spanish explorers raised the lusty banner of "Gold, God, and Glory," they introduced ecological and cultural wars fated to rearrange everything they touched.

They also complicated those wars through their centerpiece and most glamorous gift to the New World – the horse. Native armies could fight with fury, but where in the world did the mounted warrior not best the foot soldier?

The horse, however, did not long remain the cherished advantage

of the invaders. Native people immediately perceived the advantage and importance of horse skills, skills that the Spanish preferred to deny Indians. Such denial, of course, was futile. Indians acquired the horse through barter, gift, accident, and theft. As a result, a powerful horse culture spread north from tribe to tribe, changing forever the way of Indian life in North America. By 1720, the Blackfeet of the northern Plains were among the last of the Indians to encounter the horse. Like other tribes to the south, they mastered horsemanship quickly, enhanced their fighting prowess, and integrated the horse into an economy, politic, and culture centered on the buffalo.¹⁹

So, the Spanish contributed a tangle of cultural by-products to their hosts. Perhaps none was so important as the collection of European germs that unleashed a torrent of devastating disease among Native populations. Violent warfare everywhere took its toll, Spanish practices and commodities smothered local societies, but nothing struck with a deadly force to equal the merciless attacks of measles, smallpox, or venereal disease. Because the total population figure for pre-contact North America remains a matter of academic debate, there has been uncertainty about the numbers who died from European-borne germs. Yet, all agree that the physical well-being and general health of Native peoples of all ages were savagely undercut by various epidemics that killed scores and left survivors debilitated.²⁰

In addition, the barriers of European versus North American languages worked an extra hardship for indigenous people. There was no common lilt between the tongue of the Indian and that of the European. Indeed, Indians, who had communicated successfully across linguistic groupings for years, must have felt there was a dizzying array of European languages, as conversely did the Europeans. Disparate groups grappled for words, learning “the this and the that” needed to communicate. Native women, as servants, captives, consorts, and wives of Europeans, emerged as cross-cultural interpreters, instructing the invaders in “survival” vocabulary and explaining the halting speech of the invaders to tribal members. The problems, however, far surpassed matters of translation, but enveloped the very core definitions and perceptions of words. Descriptions, agreements, negotiations – each meant quintessentially different concepts to the opposing sides.

Despite their murderous prowess, within less than 45 years, the Spanish on the Southwest borders were exhausted. They had extended

themselves way too far into rough and arid land, about which they knew little and cared less. Their garrisons, or *presidios*, were hardly fitting of such a label, but the regulation of them was controlled by a cumbersome chain of command that wound its way out of the small settlements and forts, south to Mexico City, and over the Atlantic to Spain. When this system was followed, those in the Americas waited weeks for orders concerning the most trivial of local operations.

These directives, when received, reflected the social and political thought of the homeland and sought to replicate European Spanish society, rather than promote adaptation. The soldiers at these outposts, often the least desirable of the Spanish military, showed small aptitude for shifting their routines to fit local circumstances. In European pantaloons, helmets, and breastplates, the king's army sweltered in the dry heat, as its members stumbled about trying to recreate Spain in the American Southwest. The few Spanish civilian workers who had joined them cranked out a miserable existence. Both groups were displeased that great wealth and tractable Indians continued to elude them.

In every way, it was an off-balance world, one that brought only a few Spanish women to New Spain. Living in poorly run, often slovenly bachelor communities, the soldiers fell with ease into the worst behaviors of invading armies. Their associations with Native women took on all the expected negatives. Torment and rape were common. Casual sexual encounters also occurred, but increasingly Spanish men lived in long-term domestic arrangements with Indian women. The importance of relationships with women in Spain diminished. The inevitable requests of some to marry their Indian partners raised new issues of race relations for the government and the Catholic church. Matters of racial control, issues concerning laws of inheritance, and questions of how the bestowing of a religious sacrament concerned humanity became central in the lives of *mestizos*, those born of European–Native unions.

With this isolated and warped life, it still might have been possible for the Spanish to cultivate long-held rivalries between tribes to their own advantage. Rather than stimulating withering hatreds through their maltreatment of women and girls, the Spanish might have built coalitions with Native families. Spanish horses and weapons must have made at least some tribes think about forging an alliance with the Europeans against local enemies. But the conduct of the Spanish and their denial of access to their animals or tech-

nology had lost them any allies they might have recruited among Native people. Even the Apaches, known for an uneven relationship with the sedentary Pueblos, shied away from aligning themselves with the marauders from Europe.

In this evolving situation, Indians saw they must create new political and economic strategies for negotiating with the Spanish, but the crush of so many aggravating factors made that difficult. No one plan could have solved the many areas of contention, as dealing with the Spanish had a certain mercurial quality. Personnel came and went, as did the “rules and regulations” imposed by the Spanish government. The few voices of Spanish reformers, such as Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas, who objected to the enslavement of Indians, were not loud enough to bring about sustained change from European administrators. Native policy, therefore, never took on a single design, but assumed various forms. Whether using barter and trade, religious acquiescence, or military cooperation, Indians chose according to the exigencies and the leadership of the moment. However, when the horrors of Spanish occupation reached unbearable levels, Indians showed the organizational abilities that allowed them to coordinate armed resistance.

Native people used local wars in their attempts to throw off the burdensome yoke of Spanish oppression. Actions to defend Indian territory and repel Spanish oversight were sudden and intense, with the Europeans caught by surprise. The results infused the Indians with a surge of confidence as they vanquished the soldiers and missionaries around them. These were, however, small spurts of success.

It was in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 that Native people made a long-term dent in the Spanish colonial world. All aspects of Pueblo life had buckled under a variety of stresses that included several seasons of little rain and poor crop production. Tribal relations between the sedentary, agricultural Pueblos and the nomadic, predatory Apaches, traditionally rather erratic, took a dramatic down turn. The equally hard-pressed Apaches, known for their migratory lifestyle and fluctuating attitudes, abandoned any semblance of peaceful trade and returned to their earlier system of raiding Pueblo supplies and kidnapping Pueblo women. In this difficult time of hunger, despair, and collapsing Indian diplomacy, the Spanish, unwisely, chose to intrude themselves and enforced regulations against lingering indigenous religious practices. These circumstances

made the time right for an influential local leader who appeared in the person of Popé, a Pueblo holy man.

Under his direction, a carefully planned revolt led to a rout against the Spanish, who retreated to Santa Fe and then fled to El Paso. Among those who died were more than half of the missionaries, some who had lived among the Indians for several years. The Spanish who survived had to face the reality that much of the fervor of the violence centered on destruction of hated symbols of Christianity.

The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 restructured the character of New Spain. Although Spanish administrators might have expected their armies to subdue and punish the offenders, the opposite occurred. Other pueblos, inspired by the success of their neighbors, also ignited in anger. Mexico City proved too far away and too poorly staffed to mount an effective response. The Spanish sword of punishment plunged into any apprehended Indians only led in turn to more death for the Europeans.

It was 10 years before the Spanish found a diplomat and soldier with sufficient fortitude to retake the pueblos. Diego de Vargas, convinced of his own skills, made some inroads in securing Pueblo loyalties. However, in 1696 another significant Pueblo uprising reminded the Spanish that their relationships with the Indians had changed for all time. As the Spanish crept back cautiously into Pueblo areas, they adjusted some of their earlier restrictions, especially in the practice of religion.²¹

At the start of the 1700s, the Spanish could look over a nearly 200-year effort to control a land that Native people had lived in and nurtured for generations beyond counting. In the main, the results for the Europeans were highly questionable. The Spanish government increasingly objected to the treasury drain by New Spain. The Franciscans, while powerful at the missions and usually victorious in their clashes with the military and secular leaders of Spain, counted a high number of their priestly brothers martyred and their authoritarian control over local religious practices reduced. New Spain administrators adopted a tough stance, rattling sabers at other challenging nations and pronouncing the Indians “quelled,” but with all the many problems throughout their empire, the reality was somewhat different. The mixed cultural and political outcome tangled into a political and social scenario never seen in earlier national interactions.

The Indians and the growing *mestizo* community adopted Catholi-

cism, mixing it with various aspects of their traditional religion. Still, for nearly another 100 years, Native people in sudden and unexpected moments rose up as they had done in 1680 and 1696. The message appeared to be clear – the Spanish might have come to stay, but they would never truly “control” the indigenous peoples of the Americas. The price they paid for their haste and arrogance would be measured by the Indians. Ultimately, forces from within and without would push against the weakened foundations of New Spain and bring it to collapse.

Yet, even when that happened two results of the Spanish intrusions remained. First, the American Southwest took on a nearly permanent visage of conflict. The Spanish had destabilized an entire region, its people, as well as themselves and many of the disruptions that were produced by that process would not easily evaporate. Second, through Native and Spanish unions emerged new communities of people. Given the great swath of land over which the Spanish traveled and the long time of their residence, cultural mergers did not show homogeneous traits. Although there was a common joining of Native and Spanish people, there were not necessarily identical social and economic factors for all concerned. Tejana/o life in Texas, Hispana/o in New Mexico, and California/o in California, each with its own character, gave witness to the multiple cultural identities that would always be part of the Southwest and, in fact, would escalate with the passing of each year.

The confrontation of one culture by another, the collapse of local infrastructures, the scramble for exploitation of people and resources, the friction of borders rubbing against each other, the resistance of and accommodation by of indigenous populations, the creation of new policies within Native groups, the rearranging of gender spaces, and the melding and merging of language and lives, even in the face of nearly unmitigated hostility and violence, became the hallmarks of all the places in the American West that became the lands of contested borders.

To the north of the Spanish ventures, lay another world, quite different from the dry and desert Southwest. Here was rugged land that butted against the equally rugged Atlantic Ocean. Beyond the salty coast, numerous crashing rivers crisscrossed and plunged along cataracts through the interior. Four clear seasons marked the year, shown by the changing palette of thousands of trees, the cooling of early evening, and the crisp air that covered all. Each

turn of the weather brought special resources to the Natives, but it was winter, with its bitterly low temperatures and heavy snows, that would be most challenging and rewarding for the Europeans with eyes set on northern booty.

Despite the image of the North Atlantic as a forbidding barrier to early explorers, French fishing ships had trolled the coastal waters of North America for cod, at least since the early 1500s. They came to know the region well and more than one group had ventured onto the rocky shores. Over time, these Frenchmen accumulated considerable knowledge about the region, and back in their home ports, they passed their information from one group of sailors to another.

Focused on pressures in Europe, the French government took a while to enter the romp of exploration, but the nation's interests and greed were no less than her Spanish counterparts. Although France had dallied in getting to the New World, she benefited from the knowledge of the area and the contacts with Natives that the fishing fleets had accrued over the years. Perhaps, the French reasoned, they would be the lucky ones to find the elusive water route to Asia or grab great mounds of gold and silver in the North, or, better yet, best their international rivals in the clamor for New World empires,

In 1535, after a number of failed French attempts to find the main passageway, Jacques Cartier finally sailed into the great St Lawrence River. Wide and broad, the lavishly beautiful river, complete with many islands, supported a range of flora and fauna. Fish, especially cod, were plentiful, but so were the hosts of birds and animals that lived along the banks. Grasses and flowers new to the Europeans flourished along with the thick stands of quality timber of many kinds. This vibrant waterway, that stretched nearly 2,000 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes, functioned as a natural highway commanded by Natives and central to French exploration.

Nonetheless, it was not until 1608, when Samuel de Champlain stepped onto the land of present-day Quebec City, that the French permanently settled in this northern region. Champlain emerged as an influential and constant figure in the growth of New France, making him something of an anomaly in the annals of seventeenth-century history. Many Europeans, especially government administrators, found themselves unsuited for the complicated rigors of the New World and returned to their European homes with

haste. Champlain, however, immersed himself in his surroundings. Champlain wanted to know about everything and everybody in this dramatic land and if Native people showed themselves reluctant to come into French settlements, then Champlain would send the French to the Natives. He dispatched men from his company to move among the Indians, gather geographic information, and learn local languages. At the same time, he did not neglect his contacts in France, returning more than once to publicize his efforts or shore up his backers. Thus, he kept a bridge, as it were, between mother country and colony.

With this initial appreciation for and curiosity about the area, it is not surprising that over the next 100 years, the French marked off large portions of Indian land, as various explorers trekked across the Canadian and American West. Taking advantage of the intricate maze of rivers and lakes that facilitated travel, French explorers set out in several different directions. Among Champlain's initiatives, he sent his protégé Jean Nicolet further west, in an expedition that scouted the area of the Green Bay of Lake Michigan. The Jesuit priest, Jacques Marquette, a student of Indian languages, driven by scientific interests along with missionary zeal, made several journeys before his death in 1675, at the age of 38. Others made their way to the upper reaches of the Mississippi Valley. By 1682, the French had so infiltrated western lands that the explorer and entrepreneur René-Robert Cavalier LaSalle, having reached the mouth of the Mississippi River, grandly claimed the entire valley for France, christening it "Louisiana," in honor of King Louis XIV.

During these contacts in the Canadian area, the Indians and the French pursued relationships distinctly different from those between the Spanish and Native people to the south. These Indians knew about Europeans and aggressively pursued business relationships with the French, convincing them to abandon their quest for gold and settle on an economic goal that would be beneficial to both groups. That goal concerned the profits each could amass from beaver pelts, ultimately bound for European consumers. Given their business nature, these commercial alliances and mutual entrepreneurial interests guaranteed an approach that diverged from the Spanish interaction with Native societies. In New France, Indians did not shrink from cultivating profitable opportunities for themselves and Europeans accepted the notion that they entered into an association of mutual need. As a result, the initial cross-cultural

dynamics, so typically characterized by random bloodletting, assumed other characteristics.²²

In the main, it was the powerful Hurons who first welcomed the Jacques Cartier expedition, enticing the explorers with generous gifts of pelts and enthusiastic promises of easy access to a great supply of beaver. In exchange, the Indians wanted hatchets, knives, pots, and cloth that would inflate their standard of living, and enhance their work as diplomats, hunters, domestic workers, and warriors. The French, who had hoped for precious metals, settled on other profits that came from the Indians – specialists in the chase, the kill, and the processing of animals. Thus, the two groups embraced each other, although at times in a prickly manner.

Unlike the Spanish, the French did not engage in wholesale slaughter of Indian villages, nor lock entire Native communities into an enclosed mission. Catholic priests, especially the Recollects and the Jesuits, generally called “Blackrobes,” constructed an early presence in Canada. Some Natives complained bitterly about punishments and proselytizing by the missionaries, but others saw reasons to welcome the priests.

The French, standing on the banks of the St Lawrence and gazing around at as many as a thousand Indians, appreciated that they were in a vulnerable position, subject to disastrous attack should their economic partnerships with the Natives collapse, an anti-Christian faction strike, or debilitating illness, blamed on the Europeans, sweep through a tribe. For their part, Indians tempered their welcome with skepticism – the dangers of dealing with Europeans were widely known. Accordingly, the French, both the religious and secular newcomers, from the first days of Quebec, looked for ways to deflect Indian hostility, move into local settlements, establish commercial ties, learn Native skills, replace Native religious practices with Christianity, and develop fluency in Indian languages. The Indians sought to increase tribal wealth, demonstrate their power against neighboring foes, elevate their diplomatic status, and limit French control of the Native world.

The French, whose settlements generally had a majority of men, avoided the widespread coerced sex associated with military invasion. The Indians did not hesitate to punish sexual transgressors and, in part, graphic accounts of deadly reprisals against Europeans who misused women acted as a restraint. In keeping with the French effort to meet Indians on their ground, trappers and traders tended

to seek marriage with Indian women, honoring tribal customs for matrimony and settling into traditional domestic arrangements within the community. These practices did not mean that sexual abuse and rape did not occur, but the willingness to enter into tribally recognized marriage softened the sexually violent image that Europeans had so deservedly earned.

In addition, finding and trapping the beaver was the provenance of Indian men, giving them an added cachet with the French. Native men excelled at canoeing through the tumbling rivers, finding the lairs of the elusive animals, and snaring the catch. French trappers relied completely on their Indian associates for wilderness survival and successful hunting. The days in the field placed the Indian in the role of knowledgeable instructor and the French trapper in that of unschooled newcomer.

Further, it was Indian women, in this matrilineal Huron society, who held much of the economic power and the French trappers and traders would have been utterly at a loss without those partnerships that crossed gender. Women, the farmers of Huron society, owned and worked the great corn fields. Their skinning and tanning tools made them property holders, whose abilities made it possible to ship pelts to distant markets. Within an Indian band, the wedding of a woman and a Frenchman promised economic dividends for the community, elevating marriage negotiations to the level of tribal well-being.

Matrimony introduced the trappers to local kinship arrangements, making them dependent on their wives in a variety of ways. Women acted as translators, protected their new husbands within Indian society, instructed them in the customs of daily life, shared their wealth as agriculturists, taught them the rituals and taboos of the tribe, guided them in developing their hunting skills, and provided them with the security of a home and family in an alien culture. The trappers, in fact, became students again, this time in the new home, embracing its landscape, learning about its values, engaging its cultural standards, and benefiting from its rich resources. Thus, the French had practical and personal reasons to desire close, even familial, relationships with both men and women of Native communities, reaching across gender divisions in an unusual way for early cultural interaction.²³

These new lifestyles came with obvious positive results for the French, but they were not without their liabilities. It was not

possible for the French to align themselves successfully with each and every Indian tribe. Long before the arrival of the French, a complex Indian–Indian diplomacy played out between and among the tribes. The Hurons and Algonquins could see in the French reinforcements that might help them in their hostilities with the powerful Iroquois. The Iroquois, another name for the confederacy of the Five Nations, ranged across a huge territory, reducing the holdings of other tribes and demanding tribute on a regular basis. The presence of Europeans further intensified friction between the Hurons and the League of the Iroquois, as the former aligned with the French and the latter with the Dutch in New York. Iroquois men began to trap huge numbers of beaver for their Dutch associates and to do so hunted deep into the territory of the Hurons, exacerbating their already contentious relationship. Iroquois women, powerful partners in tribal management, continued, as keepers of the wealth, to calculate the economic benefits from Iroquois domination of the fur trade.

In 1687, the French, allied with the Hurons, destroyed a number of towns of the Senecas, part of the Iroquois League. These attacks not only set the torch to the Seneca long houses, but also the cultivated land of the women. These episodes of violence and death cast a shadow across the future power of Seneca women, who, like their Huron neighbors, exercised authority over agricultural production and distribution of food.²⁴ While the fires were the outward manifestation of war, they were also a symbol of the changing gender dynamics that struck within all tribes confronting European invasion.

The French–Huron victory was brief and, in 1648–9, in a blistering war, the Hurons endured a major defeat at the hands of the Iroquois. Dispirited and split into two groups, the Hurons looked to the growing number of French immigrants as a way to shore up their fighting power against the Five Nations. The French, who suffered their own losses in the recent conflict, did not disappoint them, but in the process further solidified the enmity of the Iroquois League – not a propitious occurrence for the Europeans. The warring Iroquois were quick to apply the same standards to a captured Frenchman as they did to a captured Huron – a near murderous run down a gauntlet, followed by excruciating torture and slow death – trials faced, for instance, by the Jesuit priest Isaac Jocques in 1646.

Still, there were aspects of comradeship between the French and

the Indians. Perhaps the living and working together, under somewhat uneasy alliances, created a fresh experience for all concerned. The building of families across racial lines suggested the possibilities of mixing people of varying backgrounds in a positive way. Those possibilities faltered in some ways; for example, the *métis* children born of French fathers and Indian mothers did not always find a warm reception within the culture of either parent. Still, Indian and French lives began to intertwine and settle on the land.²⁵

Quebec and Montreal took on a zesty air of their own. If for no other reason, the bitter Canadian winters cut off regular intercourse with others. Once the French ships deposited their cargo and fresh immigrants, they made sure they had set their sails for home by early autumn. While the disappearing sails might have caused those French standing on a Quebec wharf to tremble at the long winter ahead, there were advantages. The isolation from France gave the little colony the freedom to develop its own lively personality. Women, known as *les filles du roi*, sent by royal assistance to offset the gender imbalance and become the wives of colonists, were chosen from the more or less lower ranks in French society. Their families were not those of the elite with close contacts in the government. So, these women had little interest in shaping New France into a replica of a mother country that prided itself on gracious living. All in all, the costly 10-year program subsidized by the royal treasury, failed in its “domestic values” goal to bond the New France community closer to its French origins.

Increasingly, life took on the flow of urban–rural patterns. The young men who, dressed in the thick and distinctive garb of the trapper, moved between the cities and the out-lands adopted a somewhat earthy and boisterous manner, happy to leave graffiti on the city walls or bring their *métis* children to the center of town.²⁶ Trappers, traders, and Indians lived in the back country, but traveled into town for business transactions, political news, or access to government services. Those who lived in camps and Indian settlements departed upon the completion of their affairs, to be replaced by another group. Inevitably, the city residents came to look upon these peripatetic visitors as more nuisance than neighbor, more customer than citizen, more uncouth than cultured.

No lawyers were permitted in New France, so individuals learned to advocate for themselves before the courts. Further, there was no printing press in Quebec and thus a hearty oral tradition for

spreading and commenting on the news developed. Still, the colony was not devoid of social services. In 1639, three Ursuline nuns and three Hospitallers had arrived on the French vessel, the *Admiral*, to launch educational and medical services to the French and the Indians of and around Quebec. Their contacts with Native peoples were quickly compromised by the onset of a deadly smallpox epidemic in the fall. Yet, despite these setbacks and their own extreme poverty, the two groups, one located in the Upper City close to the fort, the other in the Lower Town near the river, successfully launched small facilities to serve French families.²⁷

In 1674, the French government, aware that New France had assumed a rather piebald and raucous identity, moved to control its interests in North America, thus replicating the error of most foreign rulers who had slim understanding of New World peoples – either Native or newcomer. The royal plan, based on an earlier 1627 initiative that handed New France to administrators called the Company of 100 Associates, involved the granting of land to seigneurs or lords. These men, after securing a large parcel of land from the government, had the responsibility to develop the acreage. This they did by recruiting settlers from France, through promises of roads, mills, security, and community. In return, the newly arrived immigrants paid an annual tax to the seigneur. Those who became the landed farmers secured their laborers through contracts to *engagés*, men and women who traveled from France to serve as indentured servants under three-year contracts. It was intended to be an orderly system, one that would suppress some of the wilder aspects of New France, distribute land in an organized manner, provide a labor force, populate the colony, and keep the authority of the mother country as a presence in the minds and the hearts of the colonials.

Regardless of what was happening in New France and with Indian–French relationships, those who remained in France were increasingly distanced from the colonists. The interests of Parisians and colonists grew more and more dissimilar. The population of the colony was increasing – by the early 1700s there were perhaps over 20,000 residents – but more and more of these were Canadian-born and Canadian-raised. They had no personal knowledge of France, felt no emotional bond for the king, spoke a French more and more disdained by their co-nationals in Paris. New France, like colonial outpost communities in all locations, felt the pinch of becoming

a debtor society. Hard cash proved elusive, as profits and wealth flowed across the Atlantic to France. The governing structure in New France, established by the mother country, clanked along in a more unruly manner than officials had intended.

The ties between Europe and New France buckled. They would bend to breaking limits by the strains of war and difficult economic days. The Canadian backwoods, with its own flowering culture and style, had diluted the loyalty of the French Canadians. The Indians had exploited the commercial interests of the French by binding them more closely to the Canadian landscape than to the shores of the mother country. France itself had not paid close attention, nor shown itself flexible enough with its colonial experiment in empire building. In the next century, those factors would bring changing patterns to New France.

While Spain and France struggled to find themselves a permanent place of power in the New World, England lurked in the background, watching and learning from the folly of her European rivals. Internal conflicts had kept the English from joining in the efforts to plant national interests in the New World. While England sent explorers to New World waters, not until 1607 did the Powhatan Indians of Virginia see the English patch together a permanent settlement at Jamestown.

Jamestown's story is well known for the shakiness of its beginnings, despite advance information that should have smoothed the way for the English. Instead, they floundered under the same mishaps as the Spanish and the French – a collection of soldiers and adventurers, some of whom were distracted by the lust for gold and failed to participate fully in the basic precautions that might keep one alive in a strange wilderness. Some among the men ignored the detailed instructions they had received from the crown, directives that among other things told them to “first build your storehouse . . . before any house be set up for any private person.”²⁸ Alas, the work of common laborers, farmers, and carpenters held slight allure for those in the group who saw themselves on a dizzying quest for riches. Those first English soldiers of fortune paid the price for their haplessness and would have died to a man without the intervention of the local Indians.

But within 10 years the English in Virginia had reversed their original mistakes, confronting America in ways that increased their chances for success in the European contest for control of the New

World. Perhaps no year more than 1619 showed that the English would take the necessary crucial steps to solidify their position in Virginia and beyond.

First, the colony carved out a significant political advantage by establishing the House of Burgesses as a local governing body. The settlers learned it was impossible to wait for governance requests to pass through long channels of administrators in England. Their perilous situation in a foreign environment made them anxious to have speedy answers for immediate problems. Thus, they wanted to decide for themselves where local roads could be built or community latrines constructed. While the English Privy Council retained administrative power over matters of shipping and taxation, local officials assumed charge of local problems.

Second, the English stumbled onto a way to stabilize their labor force when a dozen or so Africans in chains came ashore at Virginia. It was the fate of those first enslaved persons, possibly literate Christians from West Africa, to become part of the Jamestown population. Their appearance, however, foreshadowed the ghastly slave trade that kept the English colonies supplied with African laborers through coercion and murder. Anglo settlers who had despaired of a strong agricultural future without a large labor force saw in Africans the workers they wanted for their labor intensive crops. Tobacco, cotton, rice, and indigo – crops destined to become the staples of southern farming – would succeed for a time, but at a human cost that could never be tallied. African people, torn from their homes, shipped thousands of miles, and whipped into submission propelled agriculture forward, solidified the economic base of the southern agriculturalists, and added further to the growing racial juggernaut that crippled the American West.

Third, in 1619 yet another ship docked in Jamestown. It carried, among other things, English women, recruited for the purpose of marrying the bachelor settlers. These women bore in their hearts and minds a cultural devotion that determined the future strength of a prevailing English identity. English women marrying English men guaranteed the rise of English social institutions – schools and churches for the education and edification of English children. Further, marriage within Anglo culture limited the practice of English men creating family units with indigenous women, as had been done by both the Spanish and the French. Thus, the English, although not entirely, avoided the friction and rivalry of having

two separate kinds of families – one English–English and the other English–Native.

The arrival in 1620 of the *Mayflower* with the Puritans in Massachusetts Bay Colony further entrenched the all-English family. Although theologically at odds with the Anglican settlers in Virginia, the Puritans enthusiastically codified English values. Largely traveling in family units, they intensified the conviction that English weddings should involve partners of a common cultural heritage.²⁹ The Puritans, after all, believed themselves to be the chosen children of God. As such, they hardly cared to associate with, much less marry, any outside their select group – whether such a person should be Indian, French, or an Anglican. Those travelers aboard the *Mayflower* had not been called “Separatists” for naught.³⁰

The combination of attitudes in the northern and southern English colonies led to a general domestic separation of Anglo settlers from Native communities. The John Rolfe and Pocahontas marriage may have been charming and romantic as its narrative was shaped and reshaped across the centuries, but Anglican clergyman debated whether the bride had a soul – if not, she could hardly be wed in a Christian church. To the misfortune of the Anglo community, the first settlements created an insulated environment in which English mores, laws, and rituals were little encouraged to mix with other cultures.

Despite their differences, English colonists in the North and the South prevailed, creating specialized worlds that would have an impact across the continent.³¹ The history of both regions was marked by expansion from east to west. In the South, that expansion tended to be manipulated by wealthy speculators and the practice of settling land before government survey. In the North, the first extension into the back country followed a rigidly structured pattern that required a government contract of permission, survey before settlement, and the transport of entire communities to a new location.³² After 1720, this system faltered and the northern settlement patterns replicated much of the land scramble of the South.

Those developments increasingly took on the tone of animosity as tensions grew between those living in back country areas and those representatives of the British crown governing the colonies in the East. Thus, the first significant regional hostilities in the British colonies did not organize across North–South interests but formed out of ill-will between tidewater and piedmont communities. The latter,

generally of a common social class, felt that the former, of an aristocracy, failed to respond to their needs, especially improvements in transportation and protection from Natives. In the meantime, the tidewater officials fretted that they were losing control over back country residents – a worry that was not ill-placed.

By the time of the Proclamation of 1763, the back country was in turmoil. The northern areas had been marked by repeated Indian–colonist clashes. In 1637, the Puritans had effectively annihilated the Pequot Indians, a victory that invigorated the colonists' sense of Christian entitlement and imperialism, as well as their desire for more land. By 1675, these attitudes had encouraged the English to encroach further into Indian territory. In a bloody two-year war, King Philip led the Wampanoags and Narragansetts, former enemies now allied against their common foe, in a ferocious assault on the English. The English retaliated viciously, but also changed their attack strategies, using the guerilla ambush style common among the Natives, as well as destroying Indian agricultural stores. During the worst of the fighting, the colonists retreated toward the East, but once the Indians had been killed or enslaved, the settlers began a cautious re-entry to the back country. It proved to be the pattern that would characterize all future Indian–white warfare on American zones of clashing cultures.

Similar conditions of confusion existed on the southern front, which between 1763 and 1773 was racked by the Regulator Wars in South Carolina. The Scots-Irish and Germans there had already warred against the Cherokees. The struggle had been so intense that there was great insecurity throughout the piedmont, where almost 97 percent of all whites in the colony lived. The authorities in Charleston failed to address the economic instability and social disorder for people who were living without governing institutions but within the grasp of various corrupt political appointees. An assortment of marginal groups – hunters, debtors, poor settlers, mixed blood persons, and professional outlaws banded together with a common cause – the defeat of the planter class or so-called “respectable” people. Following a 1767 summer crime wave, this group rose up and, taking the name “Regulators,” began a march on Charleston, where they demanded laws, jails, and circuit courts.

The Regulators quickly became more of a problem than their foes. They took to executing outlaws and then “correcting” the morals of other back country residents. In answer, yet another group arose in

the back country. These were in the Moderator Movement and for a time a near civil war broke out between the Moderators and the Regulators. Essentially these were extra-legal or vigilante groups, the lessons of which were that such behaviors always occurred outside the law, sprang from highly conservative sentiments, involved the most powerful citizens as the “enforcers,” and denied to other citizens the due process protections that would later be identified with the US Constitution.³³

By the time the American colonists organized themselves for independence in 1776, all regions of the back country were in high disorder. Those who lived beyond the Tidewater had been disobeying colonial law for years, so defiance of the British king was nothing new. Further, their day-to-day concerns tended to be more immediate than colonists living along the coast, restricting the amount of time they had to devote to problems for the American army in Philadelphia and Boston. Of course, the British hoped to exploit the anger of Indian tribes, increasingly pushed back by advancing colonists. The Americans somehow thought they could convince the Indians to follow a policy of neutrality, although back country residents demanded more direct control of Native warriors.

The goals of the Indians were quite simple – they wanted to protect their trade, strengthen their position against any enemy tribes, and get a taste of revenge for the years of pain they had suffered from colonial intrusions and mistreatment. In their view, a victory for the British might mean tribes could reclaim lost turf. Many felt that the spirit of the Proclamation of 1763 pointed to the possibility that Great Britain would honor boundaries of Native land. And, given the power of the British navy and its ability to blockade colonial merchant shipping, the Indians knew they could rely on far better weapons and trade goods from the British, if such would be provided. These factors were sufficient to sway the Indian diplomats. As the American Revolution began, British colonists living on the contested outer regions found themselves surrounded by a ring of hostile Indians – Shawnees, Delawares, Cherokees, and to some degree, the Creeks.

The victory of the Americans over Great Britain had enormous significance for the western areas of the colonies, where the war itself had not taken place. By the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the hostilities were declared suspended. In fact, in the western parts of the new country, the conflicts were just heating up. The enthusiasm for

acquiring as much western land as possible surged through the Americans, who were fueled by their heady victory over Great Britain. The British, stung and angered, thought to separate America from her allies and yet hold to as much western land as possible. The French longed for revenge on the British, while the Spanish hoped to control the Mississippi River and strike for revenge against anyone. Native Americans, who had sided with the wrong nation, looked at western lands, now teeming with the enraged representatives of three major European nations and wondered how to rid themselves of these interlopers and still manipulate the beneficial aspects of doing business with white society.

Overlooked by all were the implications of the tangled interplay in the territories known as Spanish Texas, French Louisiana, and the southern Plains Indian regions of Apacheria and Comancheria. Here, removed from those places commonly highlighted in the narration of the Native introduction and response to European imperialism, another important story unfolded. This was a tale that, although long overlooked, deepened the nature of North American slavery, broadened the accounts of Indian tribal policy, and illuminated the dynamics of gender.

Indeed, the land that seemed so distant and romantic, so receptive to myth-building – French Louisiana and Spanish Texas – should have drawn the close scrutiny of the Americans.³⁴ There they would have seen that the Spanish moving north out of Mexico and the French moving south out of Canada and the Ohio Valley mingled with Indians in places that would be known as Comancheria and Apacheria. The overlay of cultures produced a world distinct from other regions of Native–European interaction.

After the French and Indian War, Spain gained administrative control of Louisiana. By this time, the French had added the Comanche and Wichita Indians to their earlier alliance with the Caddos. These Indian tribes came to a position of economic and political dominance across the region. A prominent component of these interlocking commercial relations included a vigorous trade in female slaves.

The armies of men see-sawed between military aggression and peace-keeping ventures. In the teetering back and forth, women and children of the foe became targets for capture. Within this environment, the most vulnerable of the enemy camp were actively pursued as captives. This system led to widespread occasions of human slavery, predicated not on race, but on gender.

Although a woman in a Native society often held carefully delineated economic and political power, when separated from her cultural community, a woman could find that her decision-making and personal agency evaporated. Instead, now held by an enemy camp, a woman became quite powerless, transformed into a slave to be used for forced labor – domestic, mercantile, or sexual. Often referred to almost benignly as “captivity,” the condition was, in fact, slavery, one in which women had no control over what happened to them.

In this unsavory circumstance, women were valued as war booty. Men were not seen in the slave trade, as they either killed themselves before capture or were murdered when apprehended. Women and children, however, might be captured as punishment against an offending tribe, such as when the Spanish carried off Apache women. In addition to inflicting emotional pain on the enemy, the Spanish anticipated the value of the captives as a trade item during peace discussions, which they assumed would materialize at some point. The women, however, had no idea how long their slavery might last or its outcome – sold off to a jobber for labor and death, given as a “gift” during peace talks, exchanged for female slaves held by their captors’ foes, murdered, raped, or married.

The French moving south and west on the Plains during the eighteenth century more than dabbled in this slave trade, as they stoked the fires of their Indian alliances. Natchitoches and its nearby fort was a trade center, where the French acknowledged the most valuable goods were horses, pelts, and slaves. The trade in female slaves allowed men on both sides of the table to enhance their commercial and diplomatic ties.

In this swirl of several Indian tribes, Spanish administrators, and French traders, men of opposing sides cooperated in perpetuating the traffic in women, holding them in a bondage that was neither gentle nor brief. Women were an instrument to be used for the advance of masculine political and economic strategies. In the meantime, female captives changed the demographics of American slavery, forcibly held in western lands that were increasingly mythically regarded as a paradise of unfettered freedom. Such unattractive elements in western life, as this female slavery, were typically minimized or ignored.

In general, the territorial limits of all the new land that came to the United States after the American Revolution were not written

with the greatest clarity. True, the Mississippi River was established as a boundary for the new United States, but nothing was very clear about the northern and the southern boundaries – a point not missed by France and Spain, whose claims in the West remained blurry.

In addition, was not a Mississippi River water boundary a rather porous dividing line? Would countries not jostle over the notion that all should have equal navigation rights? Would farmers and pioneers not glance across the wide waters at new land that beckoned? Would Indians not glide along from tribe to tribe, seeking alliances before the next great forward thrust of English settlers? Since the entire continent had already been a field of violence and conflict since the first days when Spanish, French, and British adventurers had touched the soil of the New World, why would that change for those who populated the area increasingly known as the American West?

Thomas Jefferson, a key figure in the Republic's formation and always alert to his own political standing, did not overlook these questions and felt that the distribution and management of western lands were of importance for the new nation. If as well these issues aided him politically, how fortunate. After all, the new leadership in America could see that it had inherited the problems of the Privy Council of Great Britain – persons living far from the center of government chafed under circumstances whereby they were handled as “colonials.” By 1785, operating under the governing authority of the Article of Confederation, Thomas Jefferson, who wrote brilliantly on political theory, placed his distinctive stamp, not just on the newest territory the country controlled, but on all future land acquisitions of the United States.

Those troublesome back country folk raised their voices about breaking away from the older colonies, even before the end of the Revolution. Lawmakers in the East, uneasy about growing restiveness and constantly struggling with land company speculators who wanted to secure huge profits through the sale of western territory, sought a remedy that would settle the unruly, mollify the speculators, and give the government a procedure for dealing with western lands. It was Jefferson who, after a first sweeping failure to resolve the problems, saw that the western territories represented two distinct dilemmas: how should the land be divided for ownership and how should distant land be governed by eastern administrators?

By the Land Ordinance of 1785, all government lands were divided into townships and these into 36 sections. The lands were to be sold

at public auction and one township section reserved for a school. It was a unique document in the history of country building, for it mandated survey before settlement and introduced an orderly system for the transfer of public land into private hands. A number of factors, including the wealth of land speculators and the locations of auctions in the East, close to moneyed people prevented the Land Ordinance of 1785 from attaining the egalitarian goals to which it aspired. Nonetheless, it was a crucial document in early American history because it resolved the procedures for land distribution, before the United States governed all the territory it eventually controlled.³⁵

That innovative law was followed by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, an even more original document. This legislation addressed the governance of newly acquired lands. In a historic moment, the Americans constructed a three-stage system by which western lands entered the Union “for the establishment of states . . . and for their admission to a share in the federal councils on an equal footing with the original states.”³⁶ In one stroke, American politicians, turned aside a centuries-old European practice of treating newly acquired lands as colonies and their peoples as a subservient source of labor, resources, and profit for the mother country. While it might have seemed remarkable that eastern politicians would shower such largess on the West, base motives did fuel their decision.

Eastern seaboard states feared the size and potential power of large land areas to the west. With new attractive spaces, loaded with natural resources, opened for settlement, the eastern states faced a possible population drain, as land-hungry settlers and European immigrants headed west. Further, the proposed boundaries for new western states dwarfed the older Atlantic colonies. What power would the 13 original states retain, as western size and population overtook them? Clearly, the eastern grasp on the western lands was not so secure following the American Revolution. Foreign agents of many stripes agitated in the back country with regularity and who could say that settlers with thin allegiance to the patrician East would not duplicate the recent conduct of the eastern rebels themselves? The westerners had not contributed much to the war effort, but it seemed they represented “independence” and “freedom.” Had anyone really investigated the lives of back country people, the absence of these two qualities would have been evident.

Even if Americans failed to examine closely the lands they so romanticized, they had concocted a good national tale for themselves and the new nation would need, among many other things, a patriotic myth to get the country launched. More than one such myth was just ahead.

NOTES

- 1 "The Royal Proclamation, October 7, 1763, By the King." Avalon Project, Yale Law School, <www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/proc1763.htm>.
- 2 Governor Glen, "The Role of the Indians in the Rivalry between France, Spain, and England, 1761," Documents for the Study of American History, <www.ku.edu/carrie/docs/texts/glen_on_indians.html>.
- 3 Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 22–4, 66–9.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 50–1.
- 5 Peter Iverson, "Native Peoples and Native Histories," in Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss, eds., *The Oxford History of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 13.
- 6 Walter Nugent, *Into the West: The Story of Its People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 19–20.
- 7 Iverson, "Native Peoples and Native Histories," 17.
- 8 Kathryn A. Abbott, "Indians of the Southwest," in Howard R. Lamar, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 540–2.
- 9 Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Narrative History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3.
- 10 For a rich description of the Moundbuilders, see Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 252–67.
- 11 P. Richard Metcalf, "Indians of the Northwest Coast," in Lamar, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of the American West*, 538–40.
- 12 P. Richard Metcalf, revised by Ives Goddard, "Indian Languages," in Lamar, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of the American West*, 522–5.
- 13 Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528–1990* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 27–32.
- 14 David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 92–6.

- 15 Michael P. Carroll, *The Penitente Brotherhood: Patriarchy and Hispano-Catholicism in New Mexico* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 39–40.
- 16 David J. Weber, “The Spanish–Mexican Rim,” in Milner et al., eds., *The Oxford History of the American West*, 47.
- 17 Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, 59–62; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 27–9.
- 18 The seventeenth century saw a flurry of European scientific developments; in 1665, the Englishman Robert Hooke, using a primitive microscope, identified cells and has been labeled the “father of biology.”
- 19 For a detailed explanation of the link between the horse and the buffalo for Plains people, see Colin G. Calloway, *One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003) and John C. Ewers, *The Blackfeet* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958).
- 20 Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, 59–62; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 25–9.
- 21 For a full account of the Pueblo revolts, see Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 133–41.
- 22 A major explanation for the ways in which early cultures interacted and exchanged is found in Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- 23 Major studies that address the economic nature of the fur trade and the place of women in it include Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (1956; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) and Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983).
- 24 Joan M. Jensen, “Native American Women and Agriculture: A Seneca Case Study,” in Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz, eds., *Unequal Sisters: A Multi-Cultural Reader in Women’s History* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 52–3.
- 25 For a full discussion of the experiences between Natives and the French, see James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 1–127.
- 26 For an understanding of the dynamics of life for the *métis* in Canada, see Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980) and Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown, *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (1985; St Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001).

- 27 *Glimpses of the Monastery: Scenes from the History of the Ursulines of Quebec during Two Hundred Years, 1639–1839* (Quebec: L. J. Demers and Frère, 1897), 13–21, <<http://www.canadiana.org/ECO/PageView/28997/0003?id=091f884c23f2df6c>>.
- 28 “Instructions for the Virginia Colony, 1606.” Documents for the Study of American History, <www.ku.edu/carrie/docs/texts/virginia_instructions.html>.
- 29 Classic studies of the New England experience include John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) and Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years, Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636–1736* (New York: Norton, 1970).
- 30 Jay Gitlin, “Empires of Trade, Hinterlands of Settlement,” in Milner et al., eds., *The Oxford History of the American West*, 90–6.
- 31 An important work that realigned the settlement narrative was Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).
- 32 To understand the dramatic changes for all systems, see William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).
- 33 The Regulator Wars continue to yield fresh interpretations. Two recent works are Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulators Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) and Wayne E. Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001).
- 34 This discussion is based on the scholarship of Juliana Barr, “From Captives to Slaves: Commodifying Indian Women in the Borderlands,” *Journal of American History* 92:1 (June 2005): 1–27. Other works that deal extensively with this subject are James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2002) and Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
- 35 An essential work for understanding the distribution of lands remains Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789–1837* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).
- 36 Documents from the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention, Ordinance of 1787, American Memory, Library of Congress, <www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>.