

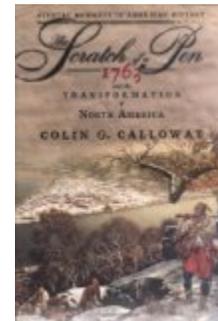
H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Colin G. Calloway. *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. xix + 219 pages. \$28.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-530071-0; \$15.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-19-533127-1.

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Published on H-AmIndian (May, 2007)



In the recent burst of scholarship about Native peoples and colonial empires in the context of the Seven Years' War, Colin Calloway's *Scratch of a Pen* stands out as the book most suitable for undergraduate use. Scholarly interest in this topic revived in the 1990s with studies by Richard White, Gregory Evans Dowd, Michael N. McConnell, Ian K. Steele, and Eric Hinderaker, then extended more recently to Fred Anderson's epic *Crucible of War* and Dowd's *War under Heaven*.^[1] *The general public has been curious about this subject too, as evidenced by recent PBS and History Channel programs, a superb museum exhibit at the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, and a new volume by Anderson that pares down his voluminous earlier study.*^[2] Suffice it to say, then, Calloway's book arrives just as the scholarly wave is cresting. Indeed, his book offers little new in terms of analysis. However, as Calloway has demonstrated in several previous works, including *The American Revolution in Indian Country* (1995), *New Worlds for All* (1997), and *One Vast Winter Count* (2003), he is a master of synthesis, remarkably capable of placing specialized studies in a broad framework suitable for an educated reading public. *Scratch of a Pen* might be the best example of this talent to date, for in a brisk 171 pages of text, Calloway masterfully demonstrates how the 1763 Treaty of Paris "set people and events in motion" across almost the entire North American continent (p. 15). *Scratch of a Pen* is particularly successful at placing Indian country as far west as the Great Plains in a rich comparative colonial context. Readers are sure to finish this book thoroughly convinced that 1763 was one of the pivotal moments in American history.

This volume showcases Calloway's flair for narrating panoramic tours of multi-ethnic America. From the opening chapter's snapshot survey of North America in

1763, *Scratch of a Pen* traverses sea lanes, interior riverways, and woodland trails, to introduce readers to the peoples who shaped and were shaped by empire, including those living in and around Native villages, rather than just those along the Atlantic rim. This approach creates a powerfully instructive kaleidoscopic effect. Oscillating between Johnson Hall and Whitehall, Vincennes and Versailles, will give students a newfound appreciation for the spectrum of North America's peoples, the hybridity and interdependence of many of their communities, and the contested nature and even absence of imperial authority across huge swaths of the interior. If only our outdated maps that attribute this territory to one or another European power would follow suit.

Calloway sustains this theme as he discusses the vast, tangled movement of peoples in response to the Treaty of Paris. The most familiar cast of characters are "back-country" colonists who streamed into greater Appalachia once the French threat was gone. Many of them, as recent scholarship has emphasized, carried vicious hatreds of Native people after experiencing years of back-and-forth atrocities. Joining them were tens of thousand of Scots, Irish, and Scots-Irish newcomers escaping rack-renting landlords and economic displacement. They fled home in such numbers that imperial authorities feared the northern parts of Britain proper would become empty. Indians had an even stronger reaction to the arrival of these groups in America. Colonists' determination to wrest away Indian land for their own use turned the Ohio country into a bloody ground of racialized terror well into the nineteenth century.

Creatively and effectively, Calloway places this now shelf-worn tale in counterpoint with perhaps lesser-

known migrations of Frenchmen, Spaniards, and Natives. Though most French officials and soldiers abandoned North America following the transfer of New France to Great Britain and Louisiana to Spain, Frenchmen and their métis offspring continued to dominate intercultural trade and diplomacy throughout the interior for many years to come, activities which took them into the very heart of the continent, where Indian priorities and protocol trumped imperial initiatives. Even more itinerant were French Acadians, who Calloway follows at every stage from their forced removal from Nova Scotia, to their Atlantic Diaspora, to their partial reconsolidation in the Bayou. The Spanish had their own comings and goings, voluntary and otherwise. Spanish settlers and Christian Yamasees in St. Augustine set sail for Havana in order to make way for British planters and African slaves who formed the new colonies of East and West Florida. Spain's acquisition of French Louisiana was supposed to be tonic for the loss of Florida, but Madrid never exercised much control there. In a fascinating discussion, Calloway examines Spain's efforts to exercise authority on the cheap over its new North American claims, not through its traditional combination of missions and presidios, but by adopting the French method of diplomatic and commercial engagement with Native peoples. In the short term, the transfer of Louisiana interrupted the firearms trade on the Prairie-Plains and heightened sometimes violent competition between the Comanches, Apaches, Osages, and Pawnees. Yet over the long term, Spain's governance contributed to the rise of St. Louis as a fur-trade capital, its link to the thriving Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara exchange center on the Missouri River, and, through those ties, solidified connections between the vast trading networks of the Great Plains bison hunters and the transatlantic economy. Calloway misses an opportunity here to compare and contrast Spanish-Indian relations in Louisiana with those in California, founded shortly after 1763 as part of Spain's imperial reordering. In California, Franciscan missions dominated just as they had in Spanish colonies of old, and the virulent disease environment of these places devastated Pacific coast Indians much as smallpox would shatter the Missouri Valley tribes. Nevertheless, the story Calloway tells is broad and compelling as it stands. Clearly, 1763 had ripple effects across the continent.

Another notable characteristic of *Scratch of a Pen* is its labeling of Pontiac's War as the "First War of Independence." In a chapter-length treatment of the event, Calloway suggests that Indians in the Ohio River Valley and Great Lakes region rose up against Britain for

some of the same reasons as the thirteen colonies: in both cases, London wanted to reduce the costs of governance over its now massive claims after running up staggering debt during the Seven Years' War, while at the same time strengthening its rule over peoples unaccustomed to vigorous imperial oversight. In the provinces, this new approach involved Parliament passing taxes that colonists believed violated their rights as Englishmen, interfering with colonists' perceived right to free speech and assembly, and revoking political privileges that colonial assemblies considered prerogatives. In Indian country, it involved treating Indians who considered themselves independent as conquered "subjects." No sooner had the British taken over French posts in the Great Lakes region and Ohio River Valley, then they halted gifts to Native leaders, restricted trade in powder and shot, and appointed military men with an overt contempt for so-called savages to conduct sensitive Indian diplomacy. This ham-handed policy, combined with the inability of the British to restrain the throngs of Indian-hating colonists who streamed into Appalachia, left Indians none too pleased with the fleur-de-lis' replacement by the Union Jack. Native peoples near Detroit, such as the Ottawas, Wyandots, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis, expected the British to fulfill the traditional French role of "father" by arbitrating Indian disputes, handing out generous gifts, subsidizing the costs of trade goods, and treating Native people with respect, including adhering to their protocols. Indians further east, such as the Delawares, Shawnees, and Senecas, also wanted the British to force their provincials to honor the boundaries of Native lands. The British failed in all of these respects, and the Indians, inspired by the Nativist preaching of the Delaware Neolin and the militant calls of the Ottawa Pontiac, responded by placing almost all of Britain's western posts under attack. Though some Indians fought to convince the French to return to the *pays d'en haut*, and others, in lieu of that, to convince the British to act like the French, the Natives' overriding goal "was to keep their country independent of either" (p. 49). That hope grew increasingly dim after 1763, but, with British passage of the Proclamation Line, which placed colonial purchases of Indian land under strict imperial oversight, many Natives believed they had achieved something of a victory. They could see that, more than ever before, future relations with colonial Americans were going to center on negotiations for land.

What is missing from *Scratch of a Pen* is almost as refreshing as what is included. Calloway duly acknowledges that the Peace of Paris directly contributed to the

imperial crises that produced the Revolution, writing that “the [British] government in 1763 began to impose order, controls, and limits on its colonies at the very time when colonists hoped for increased freedom, opportunities, and expansion” (p. 11). Yet he dedicates little space to that old chestnut in favor of developments that directly involved or affected Native people, or that Native people influenced. In his telling, the Revolutionary crisis emerged not only from Parliament’s attempts to reduce its national debt from the Seven Years’ War and to make the colonies more responsive to imperial directives, particularly in wartime, but from its unwillingness to allow these problems to fester any longer after enduring the additional expenses of fighting Pontiac’s War and witnessing the ongoing provocations of Indian-hating settlers moving into Indian country. Britain’s determination to address its “Indian problem” by raising revenue from colonists, controlling diplomacy, trade, and westward expansion, and maintaining a standing army in America that could address Indian or (it turned out) colonial uprising on short notice, played a determinative role in the onset of the thirteen colonies’ War for Independence.

In the end, *Scratch of a Pen* restores contingency to this critical historical moment. It is easy to assume that the colonies’ independence and the Indians’ dispossession was inevitable following the Treaty of Paris. Population figures alone suggested as much, for more migrants (free and enslaved) entered the British colonies from 1760 to 1775 than the total Indian population east of the Mississippi, and Britain showed little capacity from keeping these newcomers and their forerunners from seizing Indian land and throwing off imperial authority. Yet when we restrict our chronological vision and expand our geographic and thematic horizons, as Calloway has done here, we see how difficult it was to predict the future in 1763. Britain and Spain had acquired vast new inland American empires, yet Indians and even Frenchmen still held the balance of power in these places. War, disease, diplomacy, and opportunity, were still capable of unleashing seismic shifts of population and power. Bound-

aries and identities we now take for granted were very much works-in-progress. *Scratch of a Pen* deserves a wide readership and loud praise for reminding us of the many possibilities in what was unquestionably a time of reckoning.

Notes

[1]. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Ian K. Steele, *Betrays: Fort William Henry and the “Massacre”* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage, 2000); Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). Among many other related works, see also Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years’ War in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988); Timothy Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign against the Peoples of Acadia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); and Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

[2]. Anderson, *The War That Made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War* (New York: Viking, 2005).

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Citation: David Silverman. Review of Calloway, Colin G., *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America*. H-AmIndian, H-Net Reviews. May, 2007.

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