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The Great Encounter: Native Peoples and European Settlers in the Americas, 1492-1800. By Jayme A. Sokolow

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were abandoned, Fort Robinson was selected for expansion, with troops from nearby Fort Laramie and Fort Sheridan joining its garrison. Also, the Ninth Cavalry, a unit comprised solely of African American army regulars (the “buffalo soldiers”) was deployed to Fort Robinson. These were among the first troops to arrive at Pine Ridge, the new name for the Red Cloud agency, which stood about fifty miles north of the original location and played a key role during the Ghost Dance campaign of 1890.

Exhaustively researched and lucidly written, *Fort Robinson and the American West* makes a welcome addition to the field of western American history. Buecker’s study not only enhances our understanding of Fort Robinson and the people whose lives revolved around it, but also places the unfolding events of its history within the wider context of American westward expansion. In so doing, Buecker offers gripping insights into the history of the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne, U.S. Indian policy, and army life on the trans-Mississippi frontier. The book is graced with photographs documenting the post’s expansion and of the many soldiers who called Fort Robinson home. It is a story that scholars and a general audience will greatly appreciate.

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The Great Encounter: Native Peoples and European Settlers in the Americas, 1492–1800. By Jayme A. Sokolow. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003. 296 pages. \$64.95 cloth; \$25.95 paper.

The growing literature of “new Indian history” continues to generate studies that aim to rectify earlier American Indian history. The method of new Indian history places American Indians at the center of the scene of encounter and thereafter to understand the reasons for their actions. This method makes American Indians active players in the history that unfolds in the Americas, and it renders a less biased narrative in the story of encounter. Jayme A. Sokolow contributes to the field of American Indian history an excellent example of new and corrective American Indian histories. *The Great Encounter: Native Peoples and European Settlers in the Americas, 1492–1800* foregrounds the important role that Americans Indians played throughout the Western Hemisphere as Spain, Portugal, France, and England established colonial settlements and created empires. The premise of *The Great Encounter* is that Spanish, French, English, and Portugal empires failed to transplant their traditional societies in the “New World” because American Indians played a crucial role in the expansion of European settlements and in the development of colonial powers.

Similar to Sokolow’s precursors, Richard White’s *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Neil Salisbury’s essay, “The Indians’ Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 53 (July 1996), *The Great Encounter* places American

Indians squarely within a global drama, highlighting indigenous culture and life before European exploration and throughout European settlements. However, unlike White's and Salisbury's work, Sokolow's places Europeans in their respective "worlds" and queries European life and culture before exploration and during colonization. Sokolow's approach allows her to illustrate, in chorus, the vibrant and vital role that American Indians played in the development of "New World" empires and the driving force of European expansion and colonization in the Western Hemisphere.

The organization of *The Great Encounter* allows the author to deliver her understanding of both worlds. The book is organized into eight chapters, a crisp introduction, and a provocative conclusion. The first chapter examines the Western Hemisphere before the arrival of Columbus, illustrating the different ways that American Indians perceived their origins, their sacred beliefs in everyday life, and their understandings of the development of different Indian societies. The author examines the Incas of the central Andes, the Mapuches of central Chile, the Aztecs of central Mexico, the Mayans of southern Mexico, and other indigenous peoples from vast regions of the Western Hemisphere, such as the Amazon, Caribbean, Panama, and the North American continent. The second chapter covers the growth and development of medieval Europe. Beginning with the Middle Ages, this chapter examines European society and culture, economic and social structures (such as feudalism and serfdom), and the rise of capitalism. Thereafter, Sokolow recounts the rise of conquest in Europe beginning with the Holy War in the Baltic, the conquest of religion (the triumph of Christianity over Judaism), the beginnings of European expansion, and ends with the explorations of Christopher Columbus.

Chapter three illustrates initial contacts between Europeans and American Indians, highlighting the Columbian exchange and the ambitions of Europeans and American Indians in the Americas. This chapter narrates a story of European and Indian confluence in central Mexico, and North and South America, concluding with an assessment of the ways in which American Indians and the first Europeans pictured each other. Unlike the static pictures that Europeans sketched to represent American Indians, Indian descriptions of Europeans were erratic. The Incas initially perceived Europeans as divine beings. However, their perceptions changed as the strangers began to behave as "lordless people" who ransacked and looted like "disorderly thieves." An early European picture of American Indians appeared in 1505, in the German edition of Amerigo Vespucci's *Mundus Novus*. The German translation contained an engraving of several Brazilian men dressed in feathers, women kissing and fondling each other, male warriors in sexual relations with each other, and several Indians eating human body parts.

Chapters four and five examine the rise of European powers and their efforts to build "New World" empires. These two chapters analyze the development of Spanish and Portuguese empires in Latin America during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chapter 6 recounts the beginnings of the British and French empires in North America and their development throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In Chapters seven and

eight, the author states her argument: Europeans failed to transplant their traditional societies in the Western Hemisphere because Indians played a crucial role in the development of the Americas by slowing the aim of European expansion and the process of European conquest. The author argues that “New World” colonies emerged out of an unstable mixture of native defeat; cultural, economic, and political accommodations; Indian resistance; and large-scale racial intermixture. In the concluding chapter, Sokolow raises fundamental questions about contemporary understandings of Western and American history, and is concerned with recovering a fuller meaning of the American past. This chapter dares contemporary historians to challenge modern perceptions of American history by confronting twentieth-century interpretations of the Native world and the process of colonization.

The book is extensively researched, well documented, and gracefully written. Sokolow draws from a wide array of primary and secondary sources. She makes use of archival material (such as interviews, narratives, and Indian texts like the Quiche Maya’s *Popol Vuh*), translated biographical information, and personal writings of Indians and Europeans. The most provocative and insightful element of the author’s approach to primary material comes from her statement that most Indian sources were “mediated, directly and indirectly” by European people “who believed that they could represent the indigenous world far better” than American Indian people (p. 7). The author also makes exceptional use of secondary sources to synthesize a multicolonial continental perspective of American history. She brings into play an assortment of published manuscripts on primary sources to reveal the entwined discourses of race, class, and gender that fortified the European imperial ethos in the Americas. As a scholar of the multicolonial continental perspective, I highly recommend *The Great Encounter* to those interested in U.S., Latin American, Native American, and/or borderlands and frontier history.

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Improving American Indian Health Care: The Western Cherokee Experience.

By C. William Steeler. Coedited by Rashid L. Bashur and Gary W. Shannon. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. 160 pages. \$34.95 cloth.

Dedicated to the memory of William Steeler, this book, coedited by his colleagues Bashur and Shannon, is based on Steeler’s 1990 University of Michigan doctoral dissertation, “Selected Health Policy Issues among Native Americans.” Although the dissertation title indicates “Native Americans,” the book narrows the focus to the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, specifically to two self-help initiatives undertaken by that nation in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. The coeditors emphasize that their motivation for the book is to share the Western Cherokee experience so that other tribal governments might learn from these self-help experiences and utilize the approaches described in the book. However, it is unclear whether Steeler shared this