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**The Boundaries between Us: Natives and Newcomers along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750–1850.** Edited by Daniel P. Barr. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2006. 261 pages. \$52.00 cloth.

This new collection contains eleven essays on the subject of Native-European relations in the Old Northwest from the Seven Years' War to removal. While the essays are diverse in content and approach, they share a common purpose to break down simplistic myths of heroic conquest and tragic resistance and replace them with more sophisticated analyses of historical contingency and agency characteristic of frontier mythology. Taking a cue from numerous works, beginning with Richard White's *Middle Ground* (1992), the authors collectively suggest that the significance of cultural interaction should be sought "in the meeting [rather] than in the result" (ix). *Boundaries between Us* demonstrates the continuing fruitfulness of this intellectual project.

The unifying purpose of this collection will be familiar to the scholarly audience. After reading Barr's introduction, one questions the usefulness of positioning the essays against the "familiar stories and comfortable understandings" that many scholars have been destroying for at least a generation (ix). Barr's introductory essay is a concise and nicely written summary of a generation of scholarship—ethnohistory, frontier and borderlands studies, and midwestern regional history—to which this book aims to contribute. A greater sense of the specific innovation provided by the essays might have been even more useful, however. Barr instead unfurls several key words—*accommodation, negotiated identities, fluid boundaries, interactions, local circumstances, individual choices*—that frame the work in now-familiar abstractions and leave the reader wanting a more concrete sense of the intervention these essays provide into the historical debate.

The essays can be separated roughly into two main groups. In the first group, historians focus on the agency of Natives who shaped their own responses to the challenges of colonialism in the Old Northwest. Focusing on leaders, such as the Sak chief Keokuk, the Mahican Aupaumut, and the Iroquois Joseph Brandt, the contributors aim for explanations of Indian behavior within the specific, contested, and diverse logics of the Indians. Keokuk is revealed thus not as the passive accommodationist of lore but rather as a shrewd leader who consciously manipulated traditional roles of chief and warrior to shape a careful response to settler encroachments. These essays illuminate Indian leadership as intelligent, active, and complex rather than simple and reactive, and they also bring out the contested and diverse nature of Indian decision making, overturning the tendency to view Northwest Indians as a monolithic entity.

Similar results are attained when the scholars move beyond individual leadership to explore Indians' collective actions. Contributors illuminate the specific experiences of Ohio Country and Great Lakes Indians and explain how these shaped constrained, but still creative, responses to colonization. Yet these essays can overgeneralize at times. For example, Barr refers to how the Western Delawares' concept of Native sovereignty shaped responses to the French empire without defining what that concept meant to them (28). Dixon

explains Native resistance in 1763 through the concept of ethnogenesis by arguing that Great Lakes and Ohio Indians developed a “collective identity,” through “commonality in culture, trade, politics, and warfare” (47, 59). While this attempt to add new factors to the explanation for Pontiac’s Rebellion is promising, the thesis remains somewhat thinly supported and perhaps too broad. By contrast, Ian K. Steele’s masterful essay gets on the ground to explain Shawnee decision making during the revolution by focusing on the specific theme of captivity. Steele shows how Shawnee violence was rooted in long-established cultural imperatives of captivity, rather than in the abstract hostilities that often have been used to explain Shawnee behavior.

Beyond exploring Indian agency, another agenda of the essays is to explore the formation of boundaries and social identities in the Old Northwest, adding specificity and contingency to a process often viewed as inevitable. As Barr argues in his introduction, the authors believe that the Old Northwest was a place of “fluid boundaries and negotiated identities” (xii). For example, traders operated in between Indian and national agendas. The British Army defended Indian interests from settlers and traders, considering them (and treating them) as true friends. These essays complicate simple narratives of inevitable racism or easy distinctions between whites and Indians on the frontier.

One essay explores fluid boundaries even more explicitly. Examining the lives of three individuals, Donald Gaff argues that frontier actors, such as Miami Chief Little Turtle, behaved in flexible ways in order to assume different identities across the frontier. Of course, his conclusions are necessarily speculative, and perhaps the evidence does not warrant Gaff’s conclusion that ethnic boundaries were “so porous as to be almost non-existent” (143). But the overall point is well taken; simplistic stories of inevitable frontier violence crumble when faced with evidence of people who could operate skillfully between Indian and white worlds.

But herein there lies a tension that is never resolved in this collection of essays. Although social boundaries were often fluid, at the same time the frontier clearly was a crucible for violence, increasingly rigid boundaries, and the eventual development of race hatred. As Gaff admits, social boundaries and identities were flexible, but then there were things that were not negotiable. For example, as Gaff writes, the “Miamis would never adopt agriculture, given that it was antithetical to their traditional culture” (153). If this is a slight exaggeration, Gaff’s observation points to an important truth—over time Indians and Europeans came to see their interests as opposed and irreconcilable. Other essays in the collection point to other seemingly irreconcilable and monumental differences between cultures, such as Aley’s essay on the growth of commercial agriculture and internal improvements and McGlinchey’s essay on town planning in Marietta, Ohio. Both authors show how American settlement effectively ignored Indians’ use of the landscape in the Old Northwest. It does not seem as if frontier “fluidities” amounted to much against the huge oncoming changes of the young republic.

This collection has left some work to do in working out the tension in the “boundaries between us.” I am concerned that historians move beyond the now-orthodox stories of fluidity, agency, and contingency and undertake

to explain and resolve the tension between moments of fluidity and eventual rigid boundaries. Historians such as White, Hinderaker, Aron and Adelman, Merrell, and Shoemaker have begun to resolve the tension by providing arguments for the transition from fluidity to rigidity in social boundaries in the early West. This essay collection might have done more to address this dynamic of change-over-time.

This critique is not meant to question the continuing importance of the idea of a fluid frontier. In the best essay of the collection, Bruce Smith shows how the framework of the “middle ground” can still yield important new insights and approaches. Smith looks at legal institutions in frontier Illinois and particularly focuses on the legal handling of interracial violence. As he concludes, far from being a tool of domination, the law in the Northwest was a flexible zone of negotiation, in which whites and Indians could pursue their own versions of justice. Like Steele’s essay on captivity, Smith’s essay deserves a wide readership, opening up an original and previously ignored avenue of inquiry.

Of course, as Barr writes, the authors of this collection do not pretend to give the final word. An added virtue of the volume is the way in which the authors point the way for future studies in the field. Detailed endnotes, together with an excellent bibliography, provide a directory of the rich source materials related to the Old Northwest. As many know, the Old Northwest happens to have some of the most extensively published and readily available primary sources of any field in American history, thanks to numerous nineteenth-century collectors, state historical societies, and early twentieth-century historians and editors, such as Thwaites, Alvord, Carter, Kellogg, and Draper. The helpful contribution of this bibliography corroborates Barr’s hope that the collection will encourage new entries into this vital field.

All in all, the collection adds some interesting case studies to our growing understanding of the history of this region, especially opening up new insights into agency and contingency. Some of the essays suffer from stylistic and organizational problems, as well as distracting faults such as long quotations. Still, these are well-researched and useful essays with important points to make.

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**Buried Indians: Digging Up the Past in a Midwestern Town.** By Laurie Hovell McMillin. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006. 283 pages. \$60.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Laurie Hovell McMillin’s book is an interesting approach to community research and writing, as she documents attitudes and local decision-making processes in her hometown of Trempealeau, Wisconsin. Her attempt to account for the positions community members take on whether platform mounds on Trempealeau Mountain are authentic and deserve archaeological preservation takes her into a wide-ranging study of the identities and world-views of the local population.