UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Tohopeka: Rethinking the Creek War and the War of 1812. Edited by

Kathryn E. Holland Braund.

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6z60t6xk

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 38(1)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Tiro, Karim M.

Publication Date

2014

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

studies. Hoxie's reading of these histories blurs the distinctions between those forging the American nation and Native Americans who, rather than swim against the stream, intended to forge political identities and relationships that would strengthen their efforts to shape both their new tribal political realities and those of the United States. Whether examining the history of James McDonald, Sarah Winnemucca or Vine Deloria, Hoxie's notable Indian country is a vibrant space of indigenous political strategy, uplift, and ingenuity and demonstrates the enduring commitment to Native American cultural-political autonomy that is still present today.

Leece M. Lee University of California, Berkeley

Tohopeka: Rethinking the Creek War and the War of 1812. Edited by Kathryn E. Holland Braund. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012. 336 pages. \$34.95 paper.

Tohopeka: Rethinking the Creek War and the War of 1812 is the product of a 2009 Auburn University symposium that brought together academic historians, public historians, and archaeologists to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Horseshoe Bend National Military Park. Horseshoe Bend was the site of a decisive battle, and Tohopeka ("fortification") is its Creek-language toponym. The book is an important resource for anyone interested in the Creek War and the War of 1812 in the South.

For readers unfamiliar with these overlapping conflicts, the editor's introduction and Robert Thrower's "Causalities and Consequences of the Creek War: A Modern Creek Perspective" both lay out their origins, progress, and results. However, as the "rethinking" in the book's subtitle indicates, this book is not intended to serve as a primer on the wars, but engage existing interpretations and guide future exploration. For example, John Grenier argues vehemently against seeing the Creek War and the War of 1812 as separate. Encompassing both conflicts, his bracing essay makes no bones about the principal reason Americans went to war in the years after 1809: to conquer Indian territory as well as evict—and often exterminate—its inhabitants.

With the exception of Grenier's essay, this is a book that dwells on the details. The chapters by Gregory Dowd, Robert Collins, and Kathryn Holland Braund perform some necessary myth-busting. Dowd rebuts the notion that Tecumseh or the Shawnees were unique exponents of the idea that Native Americans must unite to resist expanding white settlement. Dowd also demolishes the canard that earthquakes and comets contributed to the popularity of

Reviews 245

the pan-Indian cause. Collins debunks claims that the British arranged for the Spanish to equip the Red Sticks. However, he also explains that the story took hold because the illusion of collusion served the purposes of multiple parties. Braund establishes that the Red Sticks got their name from their war clubs and poles, not timekeeping devices.

With the brush thus cleared from the path, *Tohopeka* offers solid contributions to military history. Students of Cherokee history will find interesting details in Susan Abram's essay. Tom Kanon's study of Andrew Jackson's campaigning prior to Horseshoe Bend demonstrates that militiamen and regular soldiers in the South were plagued by the same lack of training and supplies as their northern counterparts but met with calamity less often. Kanon portrays Jackson as an unusually effective leader, and highlights the man's innate aggressiveness and tactical shrewdness. Ove Jensen's informative account of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend also points to Jackson's competence.

If Jackson was an effective strategist in fighting Native Americans, David and Jeanne Heidler are less impressed with his overall performance. Their chapter focuses on William Lawrence's successful 1814 defense of Fort Bowyer and his surrender of it in 1815. They argue that Jackson's comprehension of British strategy and of military fortifications was flawed, asserting that Jackson's misreading of British strategy after the Battle of New Orleans could have undone his signature triumph. Indeed, they conclude that "rather than New Orleans saving the country, negotiations at Ghent saved victory at New Orleans. Such are the unexpected ironies of war" (196). Undoubtedly the War of 1812 is already overburdened with irony, but this observation is a striking and substantial one.

Tohopeka also illuminates the material and geographical dimensions of the war. Craig Sheldon's essay provides an overview of Upper Creek architecture, material culture, and territory. Readers should take care not to overlook his especially informative endnotes. James Parker's article focuses on the archaeological and archival record of the sites of American military camps and lesser-known battles. Identifiable sites (excavated, preserved, or otherwise) are catalogued in two valuable appendices, and historic maps are sprinkled liberally throughout the volume.

Gregory Waselkov's essay and the afterword by Ted Isham affirm that although the Battle of Horseshoe Bend ended a chapter in Creek history, it was not the end of the story. While many Creeks reconciled themselves to subjugation by the United States, others did not. Waselkov notes the migration of Red Sticks after the war into Florida, where they joined the Seminoles, whose resistance to United States expansion continued until 1858. Isham considers the significance of the conflict to modern-day Creeks in Oklahoma, stressing how it reflects his people's ability to pull together, adapt, and survive.

In sum, as this book makes us rethink the familiar it also moves scholarship about the Creek War and the War of 1812 beyond Tohopeka and on to other sites and stories—around the bend, as it were.

Karim M. Tiro Xavier University

Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies. By Chadwick Allen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. 336 pages. \$75.00 cloth; \$25.00 paper.

Over the past two decades, indigenous literary studies has been transformed by the call to develop interpretive methodologies that can illuminate tribal or national literatures in their aesthetic, epistemological, cultural, historical, and political specificity. Insofar as Chadwick Allen's second book champions a comparative approach to indigenous literary studies, one that the author terms "trans-Indigenous literary studies" (xvii), Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies thus constitutes a major intervention in the field even as it attends to the distinctive character of particular communities, traditions, and texts.

Because Allen elaborates his methodological vision through assembling careful, multi-layered, and often revelatory readings of texts by American Indian, Kanaka Maoli, Māori, and Aboriginal writers, the book's contributions—and pleasures—are many. As in his first book, Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts (2002), Allen's commitment to reading cross-contextually eschews the homogenizing gaze of earlier "pan-Indianisms" as well as those reductive antiessentialisms that seek to delegitimate the project of intellectual sovereignty by denying that anything like a distinctively Creek or Kanaka Maoli perspective exists at all. Rather, Allen locates his method within an intellectual tradition that includes Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Decolonizing Methodologies (1999) and Craig Womack's Red on Red (1999), two monographs that, as he describes them, center "Indigenous concerns and perspectives within academic research paradigms and focaliz[e] Indigenous theories and analytic perspectives" (xx). Insisting that a trans-indigenous literary criticism is compatible with and indeed requires such a foregrounding of indigenous epistemological frameworks and points of view, Allen draws attention to the ways in which his own personal and genealogical connections, formal training, and professional experience have informed the particular juxtapositions pursued in Trans-Indigenous as he shows what vital critical insights may emerge from reading

Reviews 247