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Osceola and the Great Seminole War: A Struggle for Justice and Freedom. By Thom Hatch.

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connection well, such as the sometimes nominal Maori response to the Dawn Raids of the 1970s, when citizenship in New Zealand remained centered upon English criteria for policing the boundaries of an island nation-state, rather than Pacific notions of good citizenship.

Once Were Pacific reads as a proposition, a critical self-examination, that is timely for Pacific and indigenous writers, academics, activists, students, and artists. It suggests a method for practices of sovereignty in relationships between those who are indigenous “here” and those indigenous “elsewhere.” The book does not claim to be a blueprint, but the approach Te Punga Somerville enacts could be a model.

At the moment the deed of settlement for Alice Te Punga Somerville’s home island, Matiu, was handed to her tribe, she was able to recognize a nuanced, difficult, and hopefully unavoidable “opportunity and a responsibility.” It is in this post-flinch stance that Te Punga Somerville performs an act of sovereignty; a choice to read beyond the tunnel visions that colonizers handed to us, to build upon an unsanitized remembering of the mistakes and intimacies of the past, and to render a future where we have worked to make ourselves legible to each other, maybe even a time when the apostrophe might hold a world of possibilities, *Once We’re Pacific*.

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Osceola and the Great Seminole War: A Struggle for Justice and Freedom. By Thom Hatch. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2012. 336 pages. \$27.99 cloth.

In *Osceola and the Great Seminole War*, author Thom Hatch seeks to recount the life of Seminole war leader Osceola and his impact on Native American and United States history. With increased academic attention focused on the Five Civilized Tribes during the past few decades, the resurgence of Osceola in American memory is an important task to undertake. Osceola, the Seminole leader who migrated from the Creek Nation into the Florida panhandle during the Creek War of 1813–1814 and passed away while still only in his thirties, is one of the most famous Native American leaders of the nineteenth century. Osceola stymied five US generals in the longest and most expensive war against Native Americans that the United States ever had. Hatch uses the life of Osceola to illuminate “the social, political, cultural, and historical events of the era, including treaties, race relations, and tribal histories and customs” (3). While Hatch’s goals are to be admired, it is unfortunate that he falls short on many of these objectives. His work is exceptionally well-paced and shows

great promise. However, the book is awkward in both its research and its portrayal of Osceola and the Seminole Wars.

Hatch begins his monograph with Osceola's childhood as a Red Stick Creek and his family's subsequent migration to Florida. The first two chapters cover the lifestyle and society of the Creeks and Seminoles, as well as the history of the Creek War of 1813–1814 and the First Seminole War. Within these chapters Hatch's writing style is clear and his work fast-paced and easy to read, establishing a rhythm of themes that is prevalent throughout the book. However, this storybook-esque rhythm can also impede the accuracy of the text. Hatch's short history of the Creeks and Seminoles contains many inaccuracies that result primarily from his streamlining of very complicated subjects, as well as a reliance on older secondary sources. Subjects that are oversimplified include the causes of the Creek War, the structure of Creek and Seminole social similarities and differences, and the treatment of the Red Stick and White Stick portions of the Creek Nation. When General Richard Call introduces Creek warriors into the Second Seminole War, Hatch notes that these "were the same Creeks and their descendants who had fought against the Red Sticks twenty years earlier and had driven Osceola" and his family out of the Creek Nation (168). Actually, many of the Creeks fighting with Call had been Red Sticks. When Hatch states that only Upper Creeks were Red Sticks and Lower Creeks were all considered loyal to the United States, he continues to reinforce an inaccurate notion. Hatch is rendering an exceptionally complicated part of Southern history and this is to be admired. However, his readers may gather inaccurate portrayals of the Creeks and Seminoles.

In narrating the antecedents of the Second Seminole War and the reasons for Osceola's role within the conflict, Hatch pays particular attention to the time that Osceola spent as the policing chief of the Seminole Nation and his relationship to many important American officials in the area, including Wiley Thompson and Seminole Indian Agent Gad Humphreys. Hatch points to the many times that Osceola apprehended his own people who were involved in a crime in order to be in a position to alleviate their punishment. He notes that "these offenders were much better off when Osceola captured them than they would have been had they fallen into the hands of a white settler" (72).

Before the forthcoming war Osceola gradually gained notice as a war leader within his town and the Seminole Nation, and was present at the Treaty of Payne's Landing, which began his movement towards militant action. While Hatch covers Osceola's involvement within the treaty negotiations, the majority of his text is focused on Osceola's conduct of the Second Seminole War. Hatch is quick to note Osceola's genius in the beginning of the war and his orchestration of attacks that included Dade's Massacre and the Battles of Withlacoochee. In these and many other conflicts throughout the war, Hatch

notes the use of guerilla tactics by Osceola both befuddling the United States Army and attaining a shocking number of victories and stalemates against a force vastly superior in numbers.

While the book's discussion of Osceola's tactical brilliance is informative, it echoes previous works on the Seminole Wars. John and Mary Lou Missall's 2004 book *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict* contains the same basic knowledge while providing a broader and more accurate picture of the conflicts surrounding the war. Hatch's observations on Osceola's mind-set during the battles are intriguing, but he doesn't offer much research to lend substance to his thoughts. If Hatch were to delve into the history of the Seminoles, these introspections would be a fantastic boon to the overall monograph.

Perhaps the most frustrating issue is the author's continually derisive language about Creek and Seminole ways of living. Hatch constantly uses the word *primitive* to describe aspects of Creek and Seminole societies, their tools, and their military tactics, painting a biased picture that is not assisted by his accusations against American military and political officials of lies or treachery. The bias created by such phrases clouds Hatch's work, be it intentional or unintentional.

The conclusion concerns the imprisonment and death of Osceola. These last months of Osceola's life Hatch paints beautifully, utilizing the notes left by visitors, portrait painters of Osceola such as George Catlin, and his personal doctor, Frederick Weedon. Hatch's somber tone in telling the last days of the Seminole leader's life invites the reader to share in the final moments. It is in these last few chapters that Hatch adds his own contribution to and interest in the existing works pertaining to Osceola.

A fast-paced and enjoyable read, but at times awkward, *Osceola's War* examines how a militant Seminole faction "led by Osceola could withstand the might of the [United States] government" (255). Had Hatch included a more comprehensive history of the Creeks and Seminoles, *Osceola's War* may have become a hallmark introductory manuscript for those beginning Seminole and Southeast Native American research. Instead, the knowledge is simply too erratic to be recommended, especially in light of the work by the Missalls, William Belko, and other historians within this burgeoning field.

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