

**UCLA**

**American Indian Culture and Research Journal**

**Title**

America's Hundred Years' War: U.S. Expansion to the Gulf Coast and the Fate of the Seminole, 1763-1858. Edited by William S. Belko.

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/82t763ms>

**Journal**

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 37(1)

**ISSN**

0161-6463

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**Publication Date**

2013

**DOI**

10.17953

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to effectively decolonize indigenous nations, and indeed the world, our political imperative is not to foreclose possible alliances with Native peoples who seem to be assimilationist or conservative, but to identify possible nodal points of connection that can lead to global transformation” (181).

The breadth of this book and its interdisciplinary reach is extensive and impressive. With the volume’s greatest strength being its focus on Asian/Pacific Islander/Native North American points of alternative connection and slippage, contributors do an excellent job of exploring alternative connections between “different non-European peoples outside the organizing schemas of Western modernity and globalization” (26). However, although the book claims to join theoretical with practical and ethical concerns (25), the volume is heavily weighted toward the theoretical, especially literary and film criticism. Overall, this book is highly recommended as a helpful theorization of ways to think about indigeneity in a broader cultural, political, and international context. In exploring contact zones, the book convincingly demonstrates not only the centrality of Native American and indigenous studies within an American studies framework, but also how indigenous studies can be analytically useful *for* ethnic and American studies, and vice versa.

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**America’s Hundred Years’ War: U.S. Expansion to the Gulf Coast and the Fate of the Seminole, 1763–1858.** Edited by William S. Belko. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. 320 pages. \$65.00 cloth.

William S. Belko, an associate professor of history at the University of West Florida, is both the editor and one of the contributors to this essay collection. Based upon secondary sources, the book deals much with the expansion of the American empire to the Gulf Coast, with the subtitle, “U.S. Expansion to the Gulf Coast and the Fate of the Seminole, 1763–1858,” bracketing the hundred-year period examined. With regard to the Seminoles, however, strictly speaking there is not much light cast on their “fate” other than what is generally already known. The Seminoles fought a guerrilla war in America’s longest conflict; they avoided much direct confrontation but retreated to safe familiar grounds and attacked at opportune moments. The Seminole resistance inflicted considerable damage to the empire builders, provides a unique example of early guerrilla warfare in the United States, and demonstrates their ability to live on whatever resources could be found. Further, the capture of Osceola and the deceptive use of a flag of truce casts another dark shadow

over the ethics of American expansion into Indian lands, in which the United States used superior firepower, but not superior strategy.

Few discussions of Indians draw on a deep, detailed understanding of Indian perspectives regarding encounters with non-Indians interested in their lands. This is due partly to current dependence on the written word and partly to insufficient interest in Indian oral history. Understandably, many tribal oral history sources are gone or fast fading; hence the important caveat about the one-sidedness of many historical works in which winners with documents end up influencing accounts that give limited views of historical events. As a result, in many historical accounts the Indians appear as cardboard figures. Despite some strengths, *America's Hundred Years' War* is no exception to this general rule. Although the bibliography cites the works of J. Leitch Wright, who has written extensively about Creek and Seminole tribal matters, Wright's work is based on his opinions, which in turn are dependent on interpretation of documents rather than an understanding of Seminole and Creek culture. The book *A Sacred Path: The Way of the Muscogee Creeks* (2001) is a notable exception. It also touches on the nexus of the Seminole wars (the issues of slavery and runaway slaves), as well as Seminole methods of survival under very harsh circumstances, but is based on Jean Chaudhuri's fieldwork and extensive interviews of Seminoles and Creeks.

Among the contributions in *America's Hundred Years' War*, Samuel Watson's "Seminole Strategy 1812–1858" does attempt to render the Seminole side of the conflict. Associated with the US military academy, he focuses on the military aspects of the white-Indian encounter in America's longest war, recognizing that on the individual level, the inexperienced soldiers were no match for the Seminoles. The US big picture strategy was clear enough, but weak American logistics was often a liability, and lacking the agility of the Indians, American tactics were somewhat uneven. Watson does not examine thoroughly enough the reasons why Americans eventually won battles in spite of these shortcomings. Comparative weaponry and firepower make a difference in addition to strategy and tactics. American gunpowder was vastly overwhelming and the Seminoles had not acquired enough of the enemy's weapons (unlike the case of the Viet Cong in the Vietnam war). The case of the Creeks is instructive. In the battle of Horseshoe Bend, Creeks often died from bullets in the back, whereas those few of Andrew Jackson's troops who died mostly had arrow wounds. Watson's essay also discusses Seminole motivation, but does not clearly target the most important factor. The Seminoles were not simply dealing with religion or issues of national politics. Their struggle was for their homeland—the hunting grounds, the agriculture, and survival itself. Watson is correct in titling the essay: "A Prospectus for Further Research."

The main topic of Matthew Clavin's essay, "It's a Negro not an Indian War," is the white fear of slave revolts in addition to general concern about runaway slaves. Clavin notes the great mutual support between Seminoles and elements of the black population, but does not go into great depth about the Seminole perception of blacks, and much work remains to be done on the active role that Seminoles played in protecting runaway slaves. The slaves were interested in their freedom, while the Seminoles were interested not only in freedom but also protecting their homelands and their livelihood.

Susan Parker's essay analyzes the impact of shifting relations between the European powers, including the British, the Spaniards, and the Americans. After their early initial cruelties, at one point in their weak control of Florida the Spaniards depended on Seminole support. In turn, the Seminoles got their first taste of American expansion in 1783. James Cusick's essay provides a complementary discussion of increased Seminole conflicts with Americans after the War of 1812. William S. Belko's essay examines how the Florida Seminoles' fate was intertwined with international affairs in Europe, far removed from Florida.

An edited book with multiple authors faces its own unique challenges. Editor William S. Belko and the publisher have done a good job in selecting participants with complementary specializations, and have coordinated the diversities of topics, authorship, and styles quite well. A common weakness in such edited works is the lack of a consistent common conceptual theme. As is typical of American historians, this book attempts to cover that weakness by relying on chronology to provide a connecting thread. The book includes a good bibliography and index, but contains many footnotes, some of them quite lengthy. Perhaps many of them should have been abbreviated and integrated into the text.

For those interested in the details of Seminole points of view, organization, culture, and tactics, this is not the book. But if one wants a sense of the factors involved in the role of the Gulf Coast in manifest destiny and American expansion, the book can be quite suggestive. In other stories of resistance, guerillas have had their external support and allies—for example, the Viet Cong had the Soviet Union, and at one stage the Taliban had both the United States and Pakistan. In contrast, in the hundred year's war the Seminoles were a confederate, decentralized people who fought basically alone with limited weaponry and courage, standing up to the might of European powers and then the United States. In spite of defeats and Indian removal, those Seminoles who retreated into the swamps and survived provided the nucleus of the Florida Seminoles, including the Muscogee-speaking peoples and Miccosukees of today.

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