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*Ohio's First Peoples* (review)

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*Ohio's First Peoples*. By James H. O'Donnell III. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004. Pp. xii, 176.)

As part of the Ohio Bicentennial Series commemorating the Buckeye State's two-hundredth anniversary, James H. O'Donnell III offers a concise overview of Native Americans in the Ohio region from pre-Columbian times to the era of removal. *Ohio's First Peoples* is an accessible work that includes many useful illustrations and maps to guide the reader through the complicated and tumultuous experiences of Ohio's earliest inhabitants.

O'Donnell organizes his work chronologically beginning with the Adena, Hopewell, and Fort Ancient Peoples who left a distinctive mark on the landscape with their earthen burial mounds. In the tradition of Neal Salisbury and other scholars who emphasize the significance of pre-contact native societies, O'Donnell evaluates archaeological interpretations of these ceremonial centers, noting that much of our understanding remains highly speculative. For reasons that remain unclear, much of the Ohio Valley had been abandoned by the eighteenth century, which subsequently attracted Wyandots, Delawares, Shawnees, Iroquois, and other natives seeking sanctuary primarily from intrusive British colonial populations in the East. Though fleeing European expansion, these diverse groups of Indians desired to maintain cross-cultural trade relations in order to acquire badly needed manufactured goods. Interestingly, O'Donnell stresses the importance of these exchanges involving Ohio Indians, yet his only source for documenting the fur trade in this region is Verner Crane's study of the southern frontier prior to 1732!

The bulk of O'Donnell's work centers on armed conflict between Indians and whites, which is expected since the Ohio Country was the scene of intense warfare for nearly sixty years beginning with the French and Indian War. Although a complex array of factors were involved in generating animosity between native and newcomer, the fundamental issue was land. Ohio's Indian peoples attempted to use every means possible to stem the tide of Euramerican expansion, including "withdrawal, resistance, diplomacy, accommodation, conversion to Christianity, and war," but the "zone of hatred" created on the western frontiers resulted in an endless cycle of suspicion, hatred, and outright hostility (109). Remnant populations who withstood repeated military invasions could not resist the massive influx of settlers and were accordingly forced from their remaining lands during the era of removal.

This is not a path-breaking study of Ohio Indians, but that is not the

intention of O'Donnell or the series' editors. Rather, *Ohio's First Peoples* is intended as a summation of Native Americans in the Ohio region and, toward that end, it is successful. To expect anything more from a work that covers two thousand years of indigenous history in less than one hundred and thirty pages (excluding footnotes and bibliography) is unrealistic. This book is generally well-written and easy to read, though we are reminded five times in chapter three that, indeed, Captain White Eyes was dead. O'Donnell's strongest chapters deal with the American Revolution and beyond, which is reflected in a fluid narrative that demonstrates his familiarity with the primary sources, as well as his command of historical events and processes during the late eighteenth century. As no modern treatment exists of native peoples in Ohio from their arrival to removal, O'Donnell should therefore be congratulated for highlighting the experiences of the Buckeye State's indigenous populations.

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*The United States of Appalachia: How Southern Mountaineers Brought Independence, Culture, and Enlightenment to America.* By Jeff Biggers. (Emeryville, CA: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2006. Pp. 238.)

It has been the recent goal of Appalachian scholars to recapitulate and rehabilitate the historical legacy and meaning of the mountain South. As early as the 1970s, historians, sociologists, and other academics challenged oversimplified, condescending, and downright offensive portrayals of the region by confronting these stereotypes head-on with sophisticated, less emotional studies of Appalachia on the local and regional level. Recently, this revisionist impulse has extended into the realm of social critics and media outlets. Through his 2006 work entitled *The United States of Appalachia: How Southern Mountaineers Brought Independence, Culture, and Enlightenment to America*, writer and National Public Radio correspondent Jeff Biggers takes the fight for Appalachian respectability to the reading public.

Biggers, writing like a born-again Appalachian firebrand (he was not aware of his mountain heritage until 1983), argues that "the Southern Appalachians have been in the vanguard in determining that American destiny" (211). Biggers admits that his work is not definitive in its scope. However, he passionately maintains that Appalachia, with its cutting-edge colonial rebels, abolitionists, linguists, writers and publishers, musicians, and activists, "endowed the nation with an enduring and conflicting treasury