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Mr. Jefferson's Hammer

William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy

By Robert M. Owens

(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. Pp. xxx, 311. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

William Henry Harrison looms large in Indiana territorial history. Historian Robert M. Owens's biography follows Harrison's life from the time he entered the Ohio Valley until his brief tenure as President of the United States in 1841. Harrison, born of the planter class in Virginia in 1773, first contemplated a career in medicine and then decided to seek a commission in the army, which he received in 1791. His first major posting was to Fort Washington (Cincinnati), where he eventually served under General Anthony Wayne, from whom he learned his military and Indian-negotiating skills. The combination of a good military reputation and Virginia class connections led Harrison to become Secretary of Indiana Territory in 1798, then territorial delegate to Congress, and finally the first governor of Indiana Territory in 1800. This position Harrison held until 1812. Subsequent career moves included Senator from Ohio, ambassador to Colombia, and, finally, president.

Owens's biography of Harrison concentrates primarily on his years as governor of Indiana Territory. Three main issues preoccupied Harrison during his term: legalizing slavery in the territory, thus overriding Article VI of the Northwest Ordinance, which prohibited slavery; preventing Illinois from splitting off from Indiana; and acquiring Indian land. The slavery issue in particular consumed much of Harrison's time. Believing it nearly impossible to attract Southerners to the territory as long as the practice was disallowed, he sought ways around the ordinance's ban, finally settling on a system that would force many blacks into lifelong indentureships. This plan pitted Harrison and his southern allies against eastern settlers who eventually succeeded in prohibiting any form of slavery in Indiana. Harrison proved equally unsuccessful in preventing Illinois from separating from Indiana; the new territory was established in 1809.

Harrison proved more successful in separating Indians from their lands. By promising various kinds of payment, overriding traditional forms of tribal government, appointing chiefs at will, bribing, pitting tribes and members of tribes against each other, distributing alcohol to induce drunkenness, and creating tribal reservations, Harrison, according to Owens, ushered in the origins of American Indian policy. Such methods, however, had long been a staple of treaty and land negotiations and did not originate with Harrison. He was, of course, only following the orders of President Thomas Jefferson, who, despite lofty pronouncements of good will toward tribal peoples, practiced a brutal policy of tribal land acquisition. Jefferson rationalized these contradictory views with the belief that only by forcing the practice of agriculture—and hence civilization—on Indians could they be saved from racial extinction. In reality, as Owens correctly points out, most of the eastern tribes south of the Great Lakes were primarily farmers and only secondarily hunters. Despite being critical of the policy, the means

under which land acquisition was carried out, and the suffering these caused to tribal people, Owens still claims that Harrison, given the political and economic realities of the time, probably acted as fairly as possible. A greater understanding by Owens of Midwestern Indian cultures—especially their social, political, and economic structures—would have made native concerns and suffering more explicit. A fuller account of the effects of dislocation, land loss, and changing economics on tribal politics, factions, and social organizations (kinship, clans, and bands) would have made for a richer work. Still, this book is a very useful addition to early Indiana history.

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Stephen A. Douglas and the Dilemmas of Democratic Equality

By James L. Huston

(Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2007. Pp. xi, 221. Illustration, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$39.00.)

James L. Huston's book presents an intriguing reinterpretation of the life of Illinois' famous antebellum senator. Huston uses Douglas's life to shed

light on America's path from its pre-revolutionary heritage of "hereditary preferment and inequality" to a future based on the then-revolutionary