Lewis O. Saum's book breaks new ground in Indian history because he shows that for the trader, the Indian represented a great deal more than a portion of the landscape. While there are obvious difficulties in attempting to evaluate conclusions of traders who lived in different centuries and who wrote about separate linguistic families, Saum demonstrates that the traders viewed the Indian as a human being with human strengths and weaknesses: sometimes as a barbarian of the Stone Age, sometimes as a noble savage, and sometimes as a valuable ally in the work of acquiring furs. Generally, the traders seem to have had little to offer in the way of proposals to "civilize" the natives. Often they expressed genuine pessimism about the possibility of future changes in Indian societies. Nor did they express enthusiasm about encouraging modification of the Indians' hunting mode of living which might interfere with fur trading. Despite the flavor of self-interest in the writings of the traders, Saum's volume shows that the observations of literate men like James Adair, Peter Skene Ogden, and Jedediah Smith help to illuminate a shadowy era of the past. Their writings enable one to distinguish more clearly between fact and fable in the story of the American Indian, which is increasingly being recognized as an important part of the nation's heritage. Too much of what has been accepted as Indian history has resulted from a plenitude of imagination.

University of California, Santa Barbara  Wilbur R. Jacobs


Although some 125 separate Indian tribes lived in the Pacific Northwest at the time of first white contact, numerical weakness, factionalism, and intertribal warfare prevented sustained or effective defense of the region against the tide of white settlement. Seldom was a common front presented to any enemy, Indian or white, with the result that white occupation of the region was comparatively easy, marred only by brush-fire wars. Thus, aside from the dramatic dash for freedom by Chief Joseph's little band of Nez Percé, the Indian wars of the far Northwest have held little appeal for historians. This very readable and richly detailed book atones for that scholarly neglect.

Father Burns suggests that the presence of Jesuit missionaries, not Indian factionalism or weakness, facilitated white takeover of the Northwest. He credits the strenuous and continuous Jesuit efforts to maintain peace between the races with the prevention of large scale and protracted hostilities. Since they often were the only whites trusted by the Indians, the missionaries assumed the role of wilderness diplomats, mediating between hostile warriors and the white world. On several occasions the missionaries were instrumental in the arrangement and negotiation of key peace treaties and land cessions. Yet, despite the importance of their efforts, only scant mention was ever made in the
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official reports of the Jesuit participation in these activities. In part
this was due to nineteenth century anti-Catholicism and nativism (most
of the Jesuit missionaries were foreign born); in part to the fact that
government agents and army officers did not like to share the glory
and responsibilities for their successes. Ironically, rather than thanking
the missionaries for their efforts, many whites suspected them of
instigating, directing, and even arming the hostiles.

The author has done a prodigious amount of research in printed
and manuscript sources both here and abroad, and he presents many
new and interpretive perspectives to little known or legend-shrouded
events. His account for the most part is objective, dispassionate, and
studied. He is at his best when discussing the Northwest, but he reveals
a lack of familiarity with peripheral topics: the “fiery stake” was
not common to the Plains Indians (p. 261), and the whites never
“closed in with Gatling guns to effect a near annihilation” of Dull
Knife’s band of Cheyenne (p. 459). Also, spot checking of printed
sources revealed some errors. Many, such as listing Chief Black
Hawk as “Black Horse” (p. 455), are of a trivial nature; but others,
such as substituting “really” for “ready” in the quotation that “the
Indians were really for war...” (p. 266), could affect the validity
of subsequent interpretations.

Nevertheless, no one, buff or scholar, should miss this excellent
addition to the Yale Western Americana series.

Indiana University

American Intellectual Histories and Historians. By Robert Allen
Pp. xi, 326. Notes, appendices, index. $6.95.)

American Intellectual Histories and Historians is the first book-
length study of the writing of American intellectual history. Skotheim
offers a review and analysis of the backgrounds, methods, interpreta-
tions, and ideologies of all the major academic historians of ideas in
America from the pioneering efforts of Moses Coit Tyler to currently
active writers such as Daniel Boorstin. Although very much an exercise
in professional self-consciousness, this intellectual history of intellectual
history is valuable as a careful and scholarly examination of an enter-
prise which, since its beginning at the end of the last century, has
assumed sizable proportions and has had an important influence on
over-all interpretations of the American past.

Skotheim’s analysis stresses ideology rather than methodology. He
believes that the approach to ideas which historians have taken has
depended more on their images of desirable public policy or ethical
standards than on specifically methodological considerations. Their
stance as men and citizens has determined in large measure their
attitude as historians. He sees two broad traditions. One, exemplified
in the work of Charles A. Beard, James Harvey Robinson, Carl Becker,
Vernon L. Parrington, and Merle Curti, is dedicated to reform, pacifism,
pragmatism, and an ethics based on science rather than religion. This