



Resilient Cultures: America's Native Peoples Confront European Colonization, 1500-1800

John E. Kicza

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This book provides a comparative perspective of the impact of early European colonization on the native peoples of the Americas. It covers the character of the indigenous cultures before contact, and then addresses the impact of and creative ways in which they adapted to the establishment of colonies by the Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English. Paying attention to environmental change, the book considers such issues as the nature of military conflicts, the cultural and material contributions of each side to the other, the importance of economic exchanges, and the demographic transformation. For individuals interested in the history of colonial America, colonial Latin America, and the American Indian.

Resilient Cultures: America's Native Peoples Confront European Colonization, 1500-1800 Details

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Jessica says

Good option for a class reading assignment. Writing and organization make the breath of information accessible, and the interspersed primary sources and illustrations are helpful. There are moments, such as his discussion of syphilis, where the age of the volume shows. I also got really annoyed by how much the word "very" was used. It was very aggravating. (see what I did there?)

Canuck says

With years of Canadian public school education behind us one might expect John Kicza's "Resilient Cultures America's Native Peoples Confront European Colonization" to personify the classic European stereo type of humble European settlers and explorer's being confronted by a savage race of "Indians." Or maybe even the complete opposite, of which one might suspect a bias in the other direction, depicting the Native people's as victims which played little role in the stabilizing of a new race in a new world and doing little to defend their own customs. However, the author has written a historical account of how the Indigenous people from across North, Central and South America were able to encounter and co-exist with Europeans while being confronted with and addressing similar situations in a similar style.

Although the book is not viewed by me to be cultural biased one way or the other; the author does present his work using a scientific theory, which although classic, it is not the most popular theory with the Indigenous people's themselves. That is, Kicza states his belief that the Indigenous people of the America's arrived in their continent by way of Beringia. This statement may be based in scientific theory it does not leave the Indigenous people's theory, of existence in the America's since the beginning of time, up for debate. This brings me to, Kicza's lack of attention and comparative analysis on the Native American people's spiritual beliefs. The author does address the fact that missionaries did try to convert the Indigenous people, and were in many documented cases successful, but little, if anything, is said about the Indian's traditional spiritual resilience. If one is to research, discuss and write about First Nation peoples, then Aboriginal spirituality must not be overlooked.

It is my recommendation that this book be used as source for people's initial reading's into such a subject and as a supplementary text when researching a topic as in depth as the cultures of the Americas.

Michael says

This book gives a really nice overview of the entire colonial period in the New World, comparing different European and Native American nations and the way their interactions were shaped by the geography and the different colonial economies. The key analytic tool used in this book is the division of native cultures into sedentary (Aztec, Inca) semisedentary (those who practiced slash and burn agriculture) and nomadic (hunter gatherers). The author convincingly shows that the type of culture, combined with the colonial economic interest in the New World, more or less explains the history. My only complaint is that it was too short. Also,

it stops at the end of the colonial period (which is actually well past 1800 in many cases like the Araucanians in Chile). It would be very interesting to read a companion book along the same lines of analysis covering the nation states period.
