



Indian Treaty-Making Policy in the United States and Canada, 1867-1877

Jill St. Germain

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Indian Treaty-Making Policy in the United States and Canada, 1867–1877 is a comparison of United States and Canadian Indian policies with emphasis on the reasons these governments embarked on treaty-making ventures in the 1860s and 1870s, how they conducted those negotiations, and their results. Jill St. Germain challenges assertions made by the Canadian government in 1877 of the superiority and distinctiveness of Canada’s Indian policy compared to that of the United States.

Indian treaties were the primary instruments of Indian relations in both British North America and the United States starting in the eighteenth century. At Medicine Lodge Creek in 1867 and at Fort Laramie in 1868, the United States concluded a series of important treaties with the Sioux, Cheyennes, Kiowas, and Comanches, while Canada negotiated the seven Numbered Treaties between 1871 and 1877 with the Crees, Ojibwas, and Blackfoot.

St. Germain explores the common roots of Indian policy in the two nations and charts the divergences in the application of the reserve and “civilization” policies that both governments embedded in treaties as a way to address the “Indian problem” in the West. Though Canadian Indian policies are often cited as a model that the United States should have followed, St. Germain shows that these policies have sometimes been as dismal and fraught with misunderstanding as those enacted by the United States.

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