



Florida's Frontiers (A History of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier)

By Paul E. Hoffman

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Florida has had many frontiers. Imagination, greed, missionary zeal, disease, war, and diplomacy have created its historical boundaries. Bodies of water, soil, flora and fauna, the patterns of Native American occupation, and ways of colonizing have defined Florida's frontiers. Paul E. Hoffman tells the story of those frontiers and how the land and the people shaped them during the three centuries from 1565 to 1860.

For settlers to La Florida, the American Southeast ca. 1500, better natural and human resources were found on the piedmont and on the western side of Florida's central ridge, while the coasts and coastal plains proved far less inviting. But natural environment was only one important factor in the settlement of Florida. The Spaniards, the British, the Seminole and Miccosuki, the Spaniards once again, and finally Americans constructed their Florida frontiers in interaction with the Native Americans who were present, the vestiges of earlier frontiers, and international events. The near-completion of the range and township surveys by 1860 and of the deportation of most of the Seminole and Miccosuki mark the end of the Florida frontier, though frontier-like conditions persisted in many parts of the state into the early 20th century.

For this major work of Florida history, Hoffman has drawn from a broad range of secondary works and from his intensive research in Spanish archival sources of the 16th and 17th centuries. Florida's Frontiers will be welcomed by students of history well beyond the Sunshine State.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Hoffman's expertise in the history of the Spanish borderlands is evident as he recounts the story of Florida's frontiers from the age of the *entrada* to the period of the American settlements. The author's familiarity with the sources is clear as he carefully presents Spain's repeated attempts to overcome Native American resistance, weather, geography, and its own colonial system to establish a successful colony. Thanks to his understanding of the documents and knowledge of recent research, Hoffman (Louisiana State Univ.) unfolds the Spanish-Indian story as instrumental in grasping the first 125 years of La Florida after the arrival of the Europeans. Spanish dependence on the Native peoples for food and labor is clear. Warfare with English and French imperial rivals increased the pressure on this outpost of Spain's global empire, but La Florida survived until overwhelmed by the rising numbers of immigrants from the US. The presence of 642 Europeans in 1574, compared to the 35,000 present in 1830, may reveal something about Spain's potential for success. With numerous highly useful maps and informative figures and tables, Hoffman's volume will inform readers at every level. Upper-division undergraduates and above." ?J. H. O'Donnell III, Marietta College, Choice, October 2002

About the Author

Paul E. Hoffman is Professor of History at Louisiana State University and author of several books including the prize-winning *A New Andalucia and a Way to the Orient: The American Southeast during the Sixteenth Century*. He is honored by LSU with appointment as the Paul W. and Nancy W. Murrill Distinguished Professor.

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