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White Man's Paper Trail: Grand Councils and Treaty-Making on the Central Plains. By Stan Hoig. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2006. xvi + 245 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

This is a strange book, in part because the author does not seem to recognize the massive amount of scholarship available on the topic of Indian treaties that has accumulated in the last thirty years. Mostly limited to works published before 1970, its bibliography highlights the problems arising from minimal familiarity with recent research.

The book itself claims to be a unique narrative about the treaty councils of the Central Plains. In reality, it is not unique, and its coverage spans an area from Texas to Montana. The Southern Plains are a particular emphasis and fit the author's expertise. The volume's eighteen chapters begin with a brief essay on treaty-making and conclude with a personal essay in which the author intones, "Like democracy or even life itself, it [the treaty system] was far from perfect and often severely unfair. Yet who among us can suggest anything better?" A reading of many more of the works of Vine Deloria Jr., Walter Echo-Hawk, and modern Native and non-Native scholars of law and history might have helped answer that tumid question.

Interpretive problems abound. In the preface, the author states, "The principle of [N]ative sovereignty over regions in the New World was first established by Spain." This is simply a misreading of sovereignty concepts. Indigenous peoples themselves assert Native sovereignty. And they did so before Spain appeared in the Plains. Again, the author states, "Limited examination has been made of U.S. treaties in the context of the Indians' continual loss of land and self-determination." This is partially inaccurate. The problem has been that treaties have mostly been read from one side's perspective. All sides to treaties require full consideration. Unfortunately, this book continues the long tradition of partial examination of the topic. A third sample of the interpretative

difficulties that beset the book is, in the following, italicized by the author himself: "*Arguably, if conducted fairly and with commitments fully honored, the treaty system may have been the only humanely plausible method of advancing one society over another.*" This is a statement that might have been a worthy consideration when Father Francis Paul Prucha published his classic two-volume series, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (1984). Scholarship has moved far beyond this kind of observation.

The best part of the book covers the complicated aspects of Texas-Indian relations. Most historians aside from those who focus on Texas do not appreciate the special circumstances that occurred there, particularly because of Texas's nine years of independence. I recommend chapter 5, "Council on the Canadian," and chapter 6, "Sam Houston and the Indians," which open windows on these complexities.

Overall, this well-written but partially researched volume can only be recommended as a period piece.

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