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Review of *The Rise and Fall of Indian Country, 1825-1855* By  
William E. Unrau.

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*The Rise and Fall of Indian Country, 1825-1855.* By William E. Unrau. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007. xiv + 201 pp. Maps, notes, sources, index. \$29.95.

This slender volume lays out the story of the creation, evolution, and demise of the mid-nineteenth-century region known as "Indian Country." An amorphous and frequently changing area located in the Plains, one might posit that it existed more on paper than on the ground. The author traces four legal actions underlying the creation of such a region: the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, the 1830 Indian Removal Act, and the 1834 Indian Trade and Intercourse Act. The latter guaranteed the tribes' rights to their land beyond the Mississippi forever. As Unrau's analysis demonstrates, the contrast between American ideas for and actions toward the area proved fatal to hopes for the success of an Indian Country.

Several early chapters focus on changing ideas about the region's land quality and potential resources. The discussion demonstrates clearly how the early negative assessments of the Plains by Zebulon Pike and Stephen Long faded quickly during the 1820s as Santa Fe traders and others crossed the region repeatedly. By the 1830s tribal immigrants from the East and pioneer farmers who squatted along the eastern edges of Indian Country all spoke highly of rich farm lands there. As a result, shortly after the 1834 Trade and Intercourse Act passed, Missouri politicians

succeeded in extending that state's northwestern corner west to the Missouri River through the Platte Purchase. Only one step in the dismemberment of the Indian Country, it illustrated the inability or unwillingness of the federal government to protect the tribes from being overrun and dispossessed by speculators. The 1854 passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened much of the eastern Plains to settlement, resulting in the dispossession of the Indians still there.

The book presents a fresh look at the factors that combined to destroy or forever change some tribal societies in the eastern Plains. Based on careful research and a thoughtful discussion of the central issues, it shows clearly how conflicting and contradictory national objectives undermined any real chance for a permanent Indian Country. Although early nineteenth-century American officials may have looked at the region as a haven for Eastern Indians, later inaction and disorganization made that impossible.

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