

formative, and very well put together. As a book for the teaching of a civil rights course, it fills a void. This book makes for enjoyable reading for those who were participants or observers during the civil rights struggle of the 1960s, as well as to those who were not even born at that time. This book is long overdue.

—Samuel Hinton  
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**Russell Thornton. *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987) xx, 292, \$29.95.**

A sociologist, Thornton has written a thorough and balanced demographic account of Native American societies in what became the United States from before the arrival of Europeans to the present.

There is still no agreement on pre-European population size north of Mexico, but everyone now agrees that Mooney's estimate of about one million is too low. Thornton rejects the highest estimates but chooses seven million as the most reasonable. Since there is agreement that Indians in the United States were reduced to about 250,000 by the end of the nineteenth century, the loss was of staggering proportions.

There is an excellent general discussion of the causes for this terrible loss, under the headings of: increased mortality due to disease (the most important factor); warfare and genocide; removal and relocation; the destruction of ways of life; decreased fertility; migration; and physical and genetic change among American Indians. There is also a discussion of the loss by various time periods, in which specific events (e.g., the Sand Creek and Wounded Knee massacres) are noted.

Later chapters deal with the recent increase in the Indian population in the United States, genetic mixture with non-Indians, the effects of the increasing urbanization of Indians, and also the official definition of an Indian (and who makes such a definition) and of a tribe.

There are a few good photographs, many good maps, and numerous graphs, charts and tables to provide basic data simply or to illustrate important relationships graphically. There is also an excellent bibliography.

Some specialists will no doubt continue to differ with Thornton on some details, but the reader is given ample guidance to follow up if more information is desired.

Use of the term "holocaust" in the title and the preface may be questioned. The loss of life among Native Americans from 1492 to the end

of the nineteenth century was of gigantic proportions; millions died and some entire societies disappeared. Yet "holocaust" has come to refer to a special case of genocide, involving a deliberate governmental policy aimed at eliminating entire categories of people, and only a small part of the experience of Native Americans fits this pattern. Thornton does not spend as much space as he might discussing those cases in which extermination was intended, mentioning incidents primarily in California. But in all cases, genocidal actions were by individuals, although some of these were government employees; in no case did a European or Euro-American government deliberately set out as a matter of policy to exterminate entire peoples. It is true that these governments did not often attempt to counteract the diseases that were the principal killers of Native Americans (although in the 1830s there was some effort by the national government to vaccinate Indians against smallpox, the most destructive disease), but this is not the same as genocide. However, Thornton almost entirely deals with hard (and disturbing) evidence, so that this difference of opinion about the use of one word in two places makes very little difference overall.

An issue which might have been considered is the impact of such terrible losses on Native cultures. Calvin Martin, in *Keepers of the Game* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), for example, has noted that severe droughts contributed to destruction of fur-bearing animals in parts of the Northeast. Such catastrophes must also have led to loss of significant elements of the cultures of the most severely damaged groups who survived at all.

In brief, this is a very thorough, competent, fair and well-written book about an important topic, and should remain the basic work in its field for some time. What Europeans did to the Native peoples they found in North America, whatever their intentions, is an important aspect of the European expansion of the last few centuries which has shaped the modern world for non-Europeans (what some people mean by "ethnics") ever since. Those who think of the growth in the United States as an example of the growth of material wealth and freedom should be aware that there is another aspect of this development.

—Elmer R. Rusco  
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