History Professor Schmidt publishes Revolution history of Native Americans

History professor Ethan Schmidt announces his publication "Native Americans in the American Revolution: How the War Divided, Devastated, and Transformed the Early American Indian World."

Delta State faculty uphold a continuous effort to reach academic expertise as they develop the minds of the eager student body. One aspect of this effort is the writing and publication of books and scholarly reports.

Ethan Schmidt, assistant professor of history, proudly announces his most recent publication, "Native Americans in the American Revolution: How the War Divided, Devastated, and Transformed the Early American Indian World."

The book examines how the American Revolution provided the opportunity for many colonists to continue displacing Native Americans — a topic often neglected when examining the war.

"This topic is important because to date, there has not been a comprehensive scholarly account of the Native American experience in the Revolutionary era," said Schmidt. "I have taught an upper division course on the American Revolution for 10 years now, and there are great books about the experiences of women, African-Americans, the urban and rural laboring classes, et cetera — but not one book that you could assign to students which covered it in its totality."

The work also discusses the role of Native Americans in the revolution's outbreak, progress and conclusion. Schmidt covers the experiences of specific Native American groups such as the Abenaki, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Delaware, Iroquois, Seminole and Shawnee peoples.

The first part of the book examines the effects of the Imperial Crisis of the 1760s and early 1770s on native peoples in the Northern colonies, Southern colonies and Ohio Valley respectively. The second section focuses on the effects of the Revolutionary War on these three regions during the years of ongoing conflict. The final section concentrates on postwar years.

Along with teaching about the war at Delta State, Schmidt also teaches Native American history. Through his research, Schmidt leaned a great deal about 18th Century Choctaws and Chickasaws, two groups who inhabited much of Mississippi and the Delta. He is looking forward to sharing this knowledge with his future students.

Brady DeSanti, assistant professor of religious and Native American studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, had high praise in a review of Schmidt's book.

"Ethan Schmidt's 'Native Americans in the American Revolution: How the War Divided, Devastated, and Transformed the Early American Indian World,' is a magisterial accomplishment that provides a much needed synthesis of native people's involvement in the American Revolution," said DeSanti. "Previous studies, while offering important insights into Native American involvement in the Revolutionary period, tended to focus exclusively on individual tribal experiences and presented native peoples' participation as purely reactionary to European colonial activities.

"Schmidt focuses with laser-like precision on how deeply involved diverse Native American tribal nations were in shaping the events prior to the American Revolution, how thoroughly engaged they were during it, and how they strove in novel ways to maintain control over their destinies in the aftermath of the newly created United States."

Prior to teaching at Delta State, Schmidt instructed at Texas Tech University. He holds a doctorate in early American history and Native American history from the University of Kansas.

His published works include "The Divided Dominion: Social Conflict and Indian Hatred in Early Virginia," as well as articles in Atlantic Studies, American Indian Quarterly and Historical Journal of Massachusetts.

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