

Frontier Theory and the Omission of Native Americans

Bayley Deaton • Tyler Junior College • Capstone Advisor: Ryan Button • Faculty Advisor: Donna Belt



Image courtesy of www.hjhunt.com/

Background

- Frontier Thesis introduced at the 1893 Chicago World Fair
- Proposed by Frederick Jackson Turner
- Pushing the frontier helped contribute to the development of American democracy
- Consequently attributed little to minorities and Native Americans

Abstract

The purpose of this project is to highlight the issues and implications of Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Theory" proposed at the 1893 Chicago World Fair, and research the long-term effects that this theory has carried into the modern century through various editions of an entry level U.S. History college textbook by way of quantitative content analysis.



Image courtesy of www.hjhunt.com/

Implications/Consequences

- Frequent omission of significant events regarding Native Americans in U.S. History
- Ethnocentric focus on primarily white males
- Exclusion of contributions by minorities
- Unintentional reform of lower education
- "Democracy" by pushing the frontier

Methodology

- Comparative, quantitative analysis of entry level U.S. History college textbooks
- *America: A Narrative History* by George Tindall and David Shi (multiple editions)
- Provide insight to the long-term effects of the frontier thesis in education
- What events were omitted/added?



Image courtesy of www.hjhunt.com/



Image courtesy of www.hjhunt.com/

References

- Munro, J. (2014). Interwoven Colonial Histories: Indigenous Agency and Academic Historiography in North America. *Canadian Review Of American Studies*, 44(3), 402-425. doi:10.3138/cras.2013.037
- KOKOMOOR, K. (2015). Creeks, Federalists, and the Idea of Coexistence in the Early Republic. *Journal Of Southern History*, 81(4), 803-842.
- Kushner, H. I. (1992). The persistence of the 'frontier thesis' in America: Gender, myth, and self-destruction. *Canadian Review Of American Studies*, 23(1), 53.
- Aron, S. (2005). What's West, What's Next. *DAH Magazine Of History*, 19(6), 22-25.
- Higham, C. (1995). Turner in his time and ours. *Journal Of The West*, 34(4), 5-6.
- Shi, D. E., & Tindall, G. (2016). *America: A narrative history*. S.I.: W W Norton.