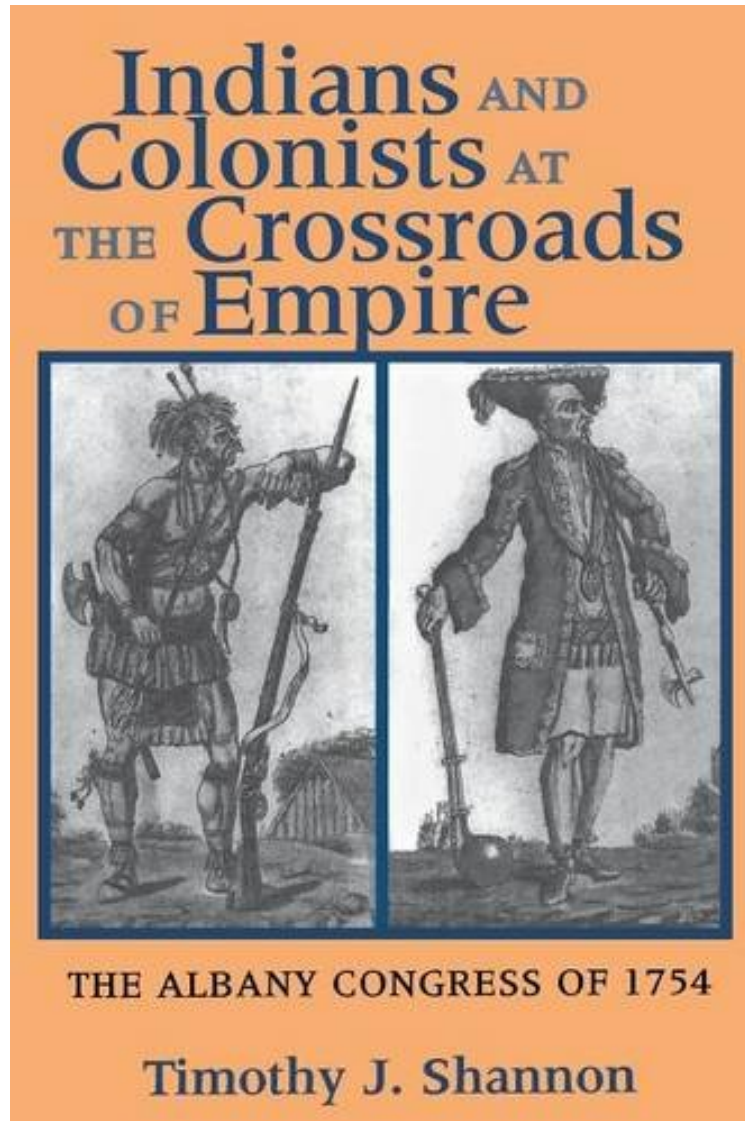


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Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754

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review helpful. Shannon gets it rightBy A CustomerDr. Shannon has exploded a series of myths in this landmark study. His research is impeccable, his analysis bulletproof, and his writing elegant. Anyone interested in the collapse of the British Empire in North America should read this book and, I daresay, commit major parts of it to memory. You may have seen Dr. Shannon on The History Channel commenting on the authenticity of popular movies like *Dances with Wolves* and *The Patriot*. This man is serious, smart, and incisive. Read this book and hope he is working on more.

On the eve of the Seven Years' War in North America, the British crown convened the Albany Congress, an Anglo-Iroquois treaty conference, in response to a crisis that threatened imperial expansion. British authorities hoped to address the impending collapse of Indian trade and diplomacy in the northern colonies, a problem exacerbated by uncooperative, resistant colonial governments. In the first book on the subject in more than forty-five years, Timothy J. Shannon definitively rewrites the historical record on the Albany Congress. Challenging the received wisdom that has equated the Congress and the plan of colonial union it produced with the origins of American independence, Shannon demonstrates conclusively the Congress's importance in the wider context of Britain's eighteenth-century Atlantic empire. In the process, the author poses a formidable challenge to the Iroquois Influence Thesis. The Six Nations, he writes, had nothing to do with the drafting of the Albany Plan, which borrowed its model of constitutional union not from the Iroquois but from the colonial delegates' British cousins. Far from serving as a dress rehearsal for the Constitutional Convention, the Albany Congress marked, for colonists and Iroquois alike, a passage from an independent, commercial pattern of intercultural relations to a hierarchical, bureaucratic imperialism wielded by a distant authority.

"Rejecting both whiggish teleology and the thesis of 'Iroquois influence,' Timothy Shannon sets out to show the congress as an event in mid-eighteenth-century British imperial history in *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire*. . . Native peoples, white colonists, and imperial functionaries are actors on an imperial rather than a protonational stage. . . The issue is divergent understandings of 'belonging' to a web of relationships that spanned the Atlantic and reached deep into the American interior."Edward Countryman, Southern Methodist University. *William and Mary Quarterly*, October 2000"Shannon's *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire* is a valuable corrective to studies that try to explain the congress within the nationalist narrative. . . The book . . . is a well-written study of an important event in colonial history. . . His book is stronger than most works of the 'new imperial history' genre and should thus challenge other historians pursuing that methodology."John Smolenski, University of Pennsylvania. *The New England Quarterly*, December 2000"In 1754, an ethnically Dutch community . . . hosted British metropolitan observers, colonial delegates, and Mohawk diplomats meeting in treaty. Later the colonial participants drew up the famous and failed Albany Plan of Union. If ever there was a colonial moment, rich with ethnicity and potential, this was it, and Timothy J. Shannon's splendidly energetic history of the event deftly grasps it for us. . . Extremely well written and brimming with provocative ideas, Shannon's excellent narrative of the Albany Congress . . . is an exploration of the conflicting futures that Indians, colonists, and imperialists imagined for the British North American Empire on the eve of the Seven Years War."Gregory Evans Dowd, University of Notre Dame. *American Historical*, February 2001"An acute and wide-ranging analysis presented in clear and evocative prose. . . A well-told story. . . compelling and interesting."Eric Hinderaker, University of Utah. *The International History*, XXIII. 1:March 2001"This quietly written account of the Albany Congress as a stage in the evolution of empire comprehends the historical issues of the congress and raises some historiographical issues by implication. . . His work is to be welcomed."Francis Jennings, Newberry Library. *The Journal of American History*, March 2001"A highly discerning, lucidly written book. . . Timothy Shannon's prizewinning study offers a wealth of interpretive insights and a mastery of sources that can only be suggested here. It also signals the arrival of a major young scholar of the First British Empire."Patricia U. Bonomi, New York University. *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Jan/Apr. 01"Timothy J. Shannon rescues the Albany Congress from its traditional place in the footnotes of the American Revolution and restores it to its proper position as a singularly important, and illuminating, moment in American colonial history."James H. Merrell, Vassar College"This deft, deeply researched, and nuanced study of lost opportunities at Albany destroys a central prop of the recent myth of the Iroquois foundations of the United States Constitution, and redirects the history of colonial politics in a fruitful, ethnohistorical direction. Timothy J. Shannon is a scholar to watch."Jim Axtell, Kenan Professor of Humanities, College of William and Mary