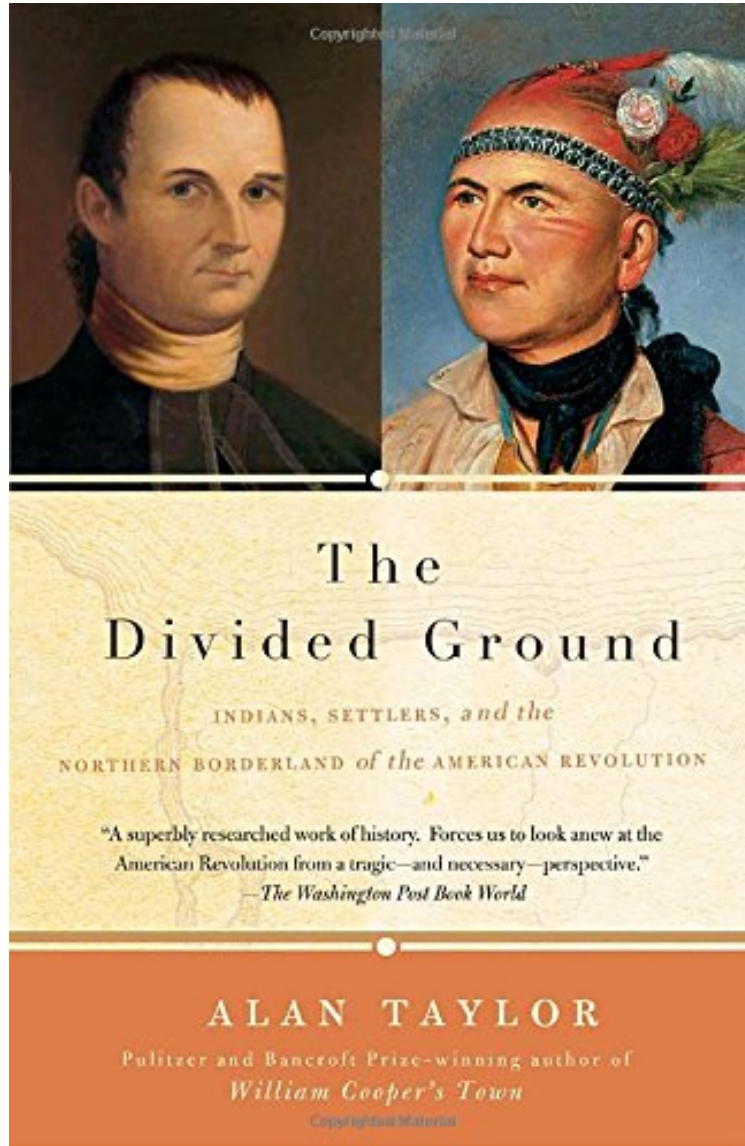


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The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution

Alan Taylor

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From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *William Cooper's Town* comes a dramatic and illuminating portrait of white and Native American relations in the aftermath of the American Revolution. *The Divided Ground* tells the story of two friends, a Mohawk Indian and the son of a colonial clergyman, whose relationship helped redefine North America. As one served American expansion by promoting Indian dispossession and religious conversion, and the other struggled to defend and strengthen Indian territories, the two friends became bitter enemies. Their battle over control of the Indian borderland, that divided ground between the British Empire and the nascent United States, would come to define nationhood in North America. Taylor tells a fascinating story of the far-reaching effects of the American Revolution and the struggle of American Indians to preserve a land of their own.

From Publishers WeeklyThe study of borderlands is hot; Pulitzer and Bancroft prizewinning historian Taylor (*William Cooper's Town*) offers a rich, sprawling history focusing on the Iroquois Six Nations of New York and Upper Canada during the era of the American Revolution. Taylor examines Indians' wise but unsuccessful attempts to hold onto their land as colonists encroached on it. One of Taylor's great insights is that historians have taken at face value what European settlers said about the "preemption rights" by which colonists and imperial governments claimed Indian territory. Taylor recovers Indians' reactions to those "rights." Many Indian leaders, recognizing that they couldn't reverse European settlement, tried to at least dictate how that settlement would unfoldthey wished to lease, rather than sell, their land, and they hoped to pick their neighbors. Giving narrative shape to the depressing and potentially unwieldy saga is the tale of a 50-year relationship between Joseph Brant, a Mohawk who exploited his ability to shift "between European gentility and Indian culture" in an effort to preserve native land rights, and Samuel Kirkland, a pious Calvinist who was both an evangelist and government agent among the Indians. This complex history told by a master of the trade will repay close reading. 48 bw illus., 4 maps. (Mar.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From BooklistTaylor's *William Cooper's Town* (1995) won American history's most prestigious prizes, the Pulitzer and the Bancroft. Interest will accordingly be elevated for his examination of settler-Indian relations in what became upstate New York and Ontario. Two figures weave through Taylor's meticulous history of five decades following 1760--Mohawk leader Joseph Brant and missionary Samuel Kirkland--but the germinal personality is William Johnson, the British Indian superintendent until his death in 1774. Johnson's diplomatic acumen with the Six Nations of the Iroquois confederacy was a remembered reference point at treaty councils over these decades. A protege of Johnson's, Brant and his sinuous life as a cross-cultural broker tie together Taylor's narrative, which exhaustively accounts the customs and results of these councils. Their invariable consequence was a further encroachment on Iroquois lands, and Taylor evenly explains how the Iroquois attempted to control white settlement through leases rather than outright cession or war. This frontier history will engage general readers with its acute portraiture and turbulent themes of acquisition and dispossession. Gilbert TaylorCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A superbly researched work of history... forces us to look anew at the American Revolution from a tragic and necessary perspectiveThe Washington Post Book WorldMeticulously researched...by immersing us in its details Taylor makes us see the Iroquois as active shapers of American history, and their struggle to keep their homeland as part of our shared American past.San Diego Union-TribuneIn this dramatic, precise account [Taylor] describes an American Revolution with dire consequences for native peoples. . . fascinating. . . [A] stunningly alternative American Revolution.The Boston GlobeFormidably researched, and display[s] a breathtaking intellectual understanding.The Denver Post