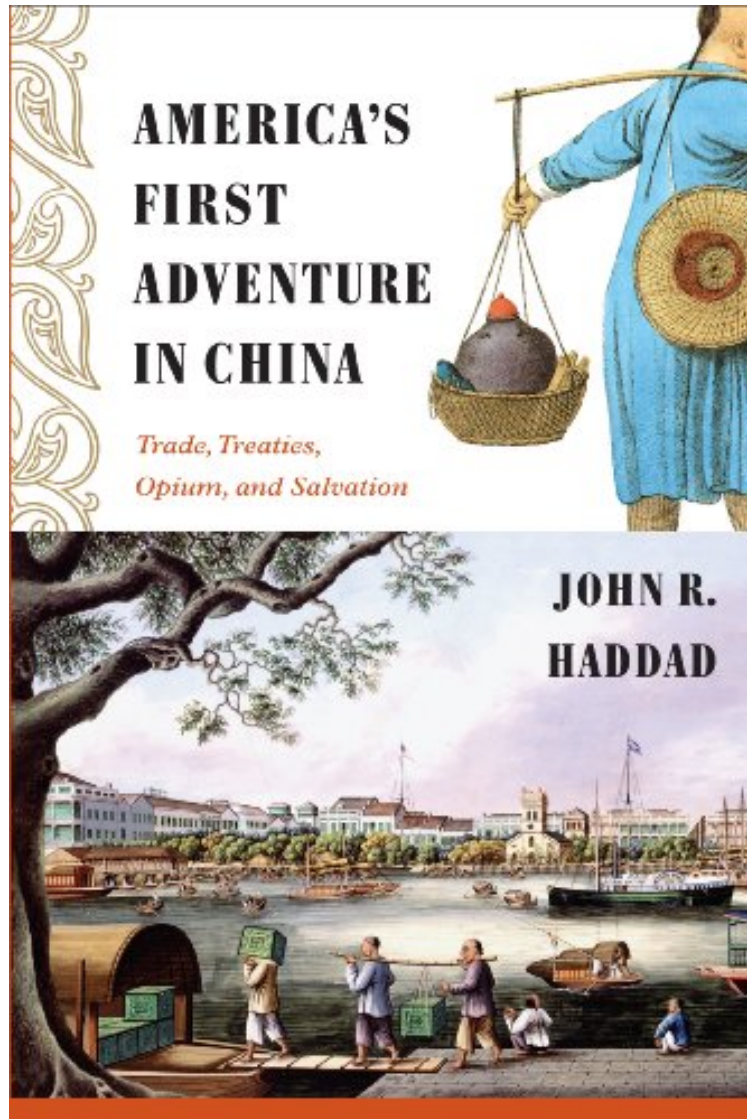


(Mobile book) America's First Adventure in China: Trade, Treaties, Opium, and Salvation

# America's First Adventure in China: Trade, Treaties, Opium, and Salvation

*John R Haddad*

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**John R Haddad : America's First Adventure in China: Trade, Treaties, Opium, and Salvation** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised America's First Adventure in China: Trade, Treaties, Opium, and Salvation:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Solid research, clear writing, and novel perspectiveBy Charles JD KupferWhat a pleasure it is to read this book, which not only supplements but improves the tone of current US-China studies. Haddad's archival research is the firm foundation for the entire project. His prose is naturally graceful and

unaffected. His startling insight is that there were major differences between the American and European -- especially British -- experiences in China, dating from the late 18th Century, and the Chinese were quickly aware of these. Thus, foreigners were not some homogenous band in the eyes of their hosts. American voyagers were not simply pawns moved around the globe by some impersonal historical force like 'imperialism.' Instead, they were a varied set of colorful individuals with differing motivations. Of course profit and power played a big part in their quests, but so too did imagination: they had dreams of China which, while often subjective or inaccurate, prompted them to make a global trek. They fervently believed that Cathay was a magical place where they could find what they were seeking. The biographical sketches of these explorers/entrepreneurs/adventurers/idealists/opportunists make each one come alive. Sketches reveal the interior and exterior lives of figures such as a surgeon operating on Chinese patients and winning the esteem of their families (Peter Parker); a missionary-merchant motivated to spread the Gospel while making a profit (DWC Olyphant); a diplomat sensitive to the richness of Chinese culture (Caleb Cushing); or an introspective commissioner seeking to resolve his own ambivalence about the Opium Trade (Samuel Wells Williams). Through analyzing their correspondence and records, Haddad proves that there were many sides to those who introduced themselves, and the United States, to China. He also shows the mutuality of interests at work, since the Chinese were intrigued by visitors who were at first glance similar to the British, but who turned out to be operating from a different cultural and commercial playbook. Haddad shows empathy for his subjects while exercising sharp critical judgement. Sino-American relations make for a huge topic, and one which badly needs this kind of scholarship. We can see that the relationship dates back to the earliest phase of the United States, and that both Chinese and American ideas influenced the ways in which the relationship evolved. Far from being some new Twenty-first Century story, as too many contemporary writers contend, the Sino-American saga turns out to be centuries old. Plenty of self-proclaimed experts would do well to study up on the story Haddad tells here. Anyone wanting to understand the USA-China relationship should start here. As an additional bonus, the book is FUN to read, since Haddad's dry but appropriate humor often peeks through. This is an instant 'book of record' on a major subject!

In 1784, when Americans first voyaged to China, they confronted Chinese authorities who were unaware that the United States even existed. Nevertheless, a long, complicated, and fruitful trade relationship was born after American traders, missionaries, diplomats, and others sailed to China with lofty ambitions: to acquire fabulous wealth, convert China to Christianity, and even command a Chinese army. In *America's First Adventure in China*, John Haddad provides a colorful history of the evolving cultural exchange and interactions between these countries. He recounts how American expatriates adopted a pragmatic attitude—as well as an entrepreneurial spirit and improvisational approach—to their dealings with the Chinese. Haddad shows how opium played a potent role in the dreams of Americans who either smuggled it or opposed its importation, and he considers the missionary movement that compelled individuals to accept a hard life in an alien culture. As a result of their efforts, Americans achieved a favorable outcome; they established a unique presence in China; and cultivated a relationship whose complexities continue to grow.

"John Haddad has written a subtle and spirited book, which takes America's first experiences in China as a means to explore the early years of the United States as an independent nation. This is a book about the magic of money and the ingenious ways that American business grandees reacted to the ever-shifting promises and disappointments of an emerging Asian market. It is also a book about religion, diplomacy, financial systems, arms manufacture, families under stress, ship-building, and opium. It is an absorbing tale, with many contemporary echoes." —Jonathan Spence, author of *The Search for Modern China*