

*Plains Indian History and Culture: Essays on Continuity and Change*, by John C. Ewers. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. xxii, 272 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MARY ELLEN ROWE, CENTRAL MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

A collection of John Ewers's journal essays, published in 1968 as *Indian Life on the Upper Missouri*, has remained a standard introduction to the topic and to the work of one of the pioneers in the field of ethnohistory. The present volume continues where the first left off, reprinting twelve papers and journal articles originally published between 1967 and 1981. As is characteristic of Ewers's work, the essays effectively demonstrate his determination to combine native and Euro-American sources, historical and anthropological method, in a unified synthesis. Most of the essays focus on Ewers's primary area of expertise, the peoples of the upper Missouri, though two venture into the southern plains and Texas, and another discusses Osage-Spanish relations.

Some essays in this volume consider important, though predictable, subjects. Thanks to the work of Ewers and others over the past twenty years, much of the first chapter should have a fairly familiar ring: the impact of European contact on native peoples of the northern plains produced a complex and multifaceted dynamic, sometimes very unpredictable, in which the natives themselves were active shapers and participants. A second chapter, as useful today as when it was first published in 1976, argues that through critical use of native and European sources together, it is possible to reconstruct the Indians' perspective on contact and their impressions of the newcomers. Other chapters discuss method and areas of inquiry for evaluating changes brought by the fur trade and massive depopulation to native political and social organization and material culture. Another chapter effectively argues that precontact warfare patterns on the northern plains in large measure determined the nature of Indian-white conflict and alliances in the historic period.

While many of the essays deal with standard subjects in plains ethnohistory, some probe more unusual topics. One chapter is devoted to women's roles in warfare, including that of warrior; another investigates the impact on tribal politics of authority symbols issued by European officials to native leaders. Particularly intriguing are essays on native peoples' use of maps and on folk art produced by fur traders in such varied forms as illustrated certificates for valued customers, trade flags, and wall murals at trading posts. These essays are likely to spark

curiosity and draw the general reader deeper into Ewers's work, while suggesting new lines of inquiry to the specialist.

Each essay is engagingly written, balanced, and free of jargon, an adventure into one corner of plains ethnohistory, guided by a master who has worked in the field for half a century. The insights Ewers brings to each topic reflect his knowledge of and respect for native peoples and their cultures. He also respects the Euro-American observers' honest attempts to understand the Indians. Perhaps the most unexpected chapters in the book include Ewers's efforts to document nineteenth-century collectors of Indian artifacts, and a concluding chapter, "The White Man's Strongest Medicine," which to Ewers means the ability to record and preserve the record of the past in archives and museums. If that topic seems at first glance ethnocentric and self-serving, the depth of Ewers's argument will convince even the most skeptical reader that the topic is at least worth further thought. As an introduction to the field of plains ethnohistory or as methodological models, the essays seem as fresh today as when they were first published. Each demonstrates the value of uniting historical and anthropological method in the study of the past, and each in its own way demonstrates that it is not only possible but immensely valuable to combine native oral tradition, Euro-American written sources, and material culture studies in a unified approach to plains history and culture. A brief sketch of Ewers's career by William Hagan in the foreword is useful in setting the author's work in context.

*Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, by L. G. Moses. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. xvi, 364 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY GLENDA RILEY, BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

This study is broader than its title suggests. Besides images of show Indians, L. G. Moses examines the objections of reformers to the "exploitation" of native peoples. The dialogue between such entertainers as William F. Cody and such reformers as Mary C. Collins forms an important theme.

Ultimately, Moses concludes that employment in Cody's Wild West Exposition, as well as at such fairs as the 1893 Columbian Exposition, gave Native Americans the opportunity to "evoke and even to celebrate their cultures." Moses adds that "playing' Indian could also be viewed as defiance" (277). Other historians, however, argue that in order to earn money show Indians diffused native culture and also

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