

anthropologists and Indians. There are no neat answers to be found, here or anywhere, but at least the authors have raised and addressed a number of critical issues. Among a wide range of essays from both American Indians and anthropologists in part three, "Ethnography and Colonialism," readers will find discussions of topics ranging from the rights of Indian peoples to refuse to be "researched" to the anthropological construction of the "authentic Indian" earlier in this century. Again, there are no neat answers in this century-long quagmire of relations, but the essays here invite both the casual reader and the serious scholar to immerse themselves in the current debates.

The Indians and anthropologists represented in this book all speak to the tremendous impact Vine Deloria Jr. has made on scholarship over a thirty-year period of upheaval in the academy. I highly recommend the book to all readers with an interest in current trends of scholarship by, for, and about American Indians.

Rethinking American Indian History, edited by Donald L. Fixico. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. x, 139 pp. Notes, index. \$35.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY JOSEPH E. TAYLOR III, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Since the launching of the journal *Ethnohistory* in the early 1950s, American scholars have been asking new questions and applying new research methods to Indian history. Their efforts have transformed our understanding not only of Indians but also of colonial, southern, mid-western, and western history. The image of the vanishing Indian has itself faded away, replaced by a remarkably active and ambiguous figure. The old dichotomy of tradition versus acculturation has also faltered. Indian societies and cultures now seem far more complex, diverse, and historical than previously assumed, and, as strange as Indians and non-Indians sometimes were to each other, cultural exchanges nevertheless occurred all the time. The result, we are learning, was occasionally the creation of "middle grounds" where mutual incomprehension gave way to shared understanding and a new reality for both groups.

Unfortunately, what has occurred in American history generally has not extended to Iowa. Iowa historian L. Edward Purcell recognized this as early as 1976 when he lamented that "Indian history is one of Iowa's neglected stepchildren" (*Indian Historian* 9 [1976], 13). Sadly, Purcell's complaint is still valid. Even Dorothy Schwieder's recent and much heralded *Iowa: The Middle Land* (1996) relegates Indians

to a brief introductory chapter that, aside from unfortunate retellings of the Black Hawk War and the Spirit Lake Massacre—two events Purcell criticized as seriously overemphasized in Iowa history—portrays Indians as noble but tragic and passive victims of white expansion. After that, except for a single, surprising sentence about the Meskwaki casino on the penultimate page, Schwieder simply ignores Indians, including in two otherwise commendable chapters on Iowa's cultural diversity. Indians are *still* missing from Iowa history.

How historians can begin to rectify this deficiency is the subject of a new anthology of essays edited by Donald Fixico. In *Rethinking American Indian History*, leading scholars synthesize recent scholarship and disciplinary approaches. Their efforts constitute a first-rate and much needed primer for undergraduates and senior scholars alike. James Axtell begins the collection with a concise introduction to the fields of Indian history and ethnohistory. Ethnohistory has a complicated and obscure past, but its core emphasis on multidisciplinary research informs all of these essays. William T. Hagan, Glenda Riley, and Fixico follow Axtell's lead by discussing the most influential works in Indian history.

The writers also discuss important historiographical and methodological issues in the field. Axtell, Theda Perdue, Richard White, and Angela Cavender Wilson explore various problems associated with historicizing nonliterate cultures. As White notes, the central task of historical inquiry is learning to ask the "right questions" (87). Wilson goes one step further to argue that who and what historians question are also important. Oral history is a crucial resource in nonliterate culture, yet most historians eschew it in favor of supposedly more objective written sources, even though highly subjective non-Indians created the vast majority of those records. As a result, Wilson insists that "the field should more appropriately be called non-Indian perceptions of American Indian History" (101). She has a point, as she also does, along with Riley and Perdue, when discussing the field's lingering gender imbalance in both subject matter and production. Indian history is still male-centered, and its stories remain disjointed because of the importance of gender in Indian culture. It is folly, the authors argue, to attempt an explanation of thoroughly integrated societies by examining only half of its members and even fewer of its social principles.

Unlike much of the polemical scholarship that accompanied the initial wave of "new Indian history" (and other fields) during the 1970s, *Rethinking American Indian History* is a refreshingly constructive critique. The essays by Axtell, Perdue, White, and Fixico are particularly

good, and glitches are minimal. Hagan uses the "new western history" as an unnecessary straw man; Riley's mountain of citations on western women seems out of place; and Wilson's important lessons about oral history and interviewing Indians are sometimes overshadowed by her insistence that Indians become gatekeepers of their past and that history serve Indian purposes. In the larger scope, however, these are minor problems. This is a highly useful collection of essays that should be read by anyone interested in Indian history, and especially by those concerned with Iowa's neglected Indian past. One need look no further than Douglas E. Foley's *The Heartland Chronicles* (1995) to realize that Iowa has its own middle grounds in places such as Tama and, perhaps, elsewhere.

Researching Western History: Topics in the Twentieth Century, edited by Gerald D. Nash and Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. ix, 220 pp. Notes, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY DAVID M. WROBEL, WIDENER UNIVERSITY

Gerald D. Nash and Richard W. Etulain's most recent coedited collection should become a standard reference work for every scholar, teacher, and student of western history. The volume's contributors provide thorough summaries of scholarship on twentieth-century topics, outline a plethora of research possibilities, and provide voluminous notes, citing not only book and article literature, but, in some cases, pertinent archival collections, too.

Nash begins his essay on economic history with apologies for its lack of scope and then proceeds to provide an insightful, informative, and thorough overview of the field and its possibilities. However, after calling for studies marked by objectivity and detachment, he ironically ends up taking some undetached potshots at recent revisionist scholarship. In charting new courses in environmental history, Thomas R. Cox offers myriad possibilities, but perhaps overemphasizes the need to find alternatives to anthropocentrism (historians are, one assumes, interested in environments because humans live in them). Still, this is only the most minor criticism of another very insightful essay.

Roger Lotchin's overview of western urban history is the book's strongest essay. He offers a clear thesis—"major American cities have been geographically conservative and culturally dynamic" (54)—and then provides a sweeping and artfully integrated overview of the West's urban past and the many opportunities for interpreting it.

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