

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

The post-removal era is introduced by Gerard Reed's "Postremoval Factionalism in the Cherokee Nation." His essay is followed by editor King's own "The Origin of the Eastern Cherokees as a Social and Political Entity" which dispels the erroneous conception that "today's Eastern Cherokees are descendants of those who fled to the mountains and eluded federal troops in 1838 . . ." (p. 176).

The final three essays discuss the numerous Cherokee problems encountered in the post-removal period. In "William Holland Thomas and the Cherokee Claims," Robert W. Iobst chronicles Thomas's ten-year struggle to secure promised federal compensation for Cherokee property lost through removal. This essay is most enlightening as it exemplifies the long-term, frustrating, and usually futile attempts undertaken by many individuals and groups to compel the federal government to live up to its treaty obligations. The general decline of the Eastern Cherokees brought about by the disruptive effects of removal is treated in John Witthoft's "Observations on Social Change Among the Eastern Cherokees." The final essay by Albert L. Wahrhaftig and Jane Lukens-Wahrhaftig, "New Militants or Resurrected State? The Five County Northeastern Oklahoma Organization," demonstrates that the concept of Indian "militancy," at least among this group of Cherokees, was actually a logical outgrowth of a traditional value system and cultural thought processes. The authors' essay is enhanced by first-hand field observation and personal involvement with this organization.

This is an excellent book.

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The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire, by R. David Edmunds. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978. pp. 275. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95.

This volume, printed in *The Civilization of the American Indian Series*, is a well researched narrative account of the Potawatomis from the early seventeenth century through their removal from the Old Northwest in the decade of the 1830s. The story of the Potawatomis follows a predictable pattern of contact and alliance with the French colonial empire, eventual shift of allegiance to the British, and gradual

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displacement and forced relocation by the Americans. As pawns of the competing white mercantile, military, and colonizing systems, the Potawatomis' actions differed from those of their neighboring Algonkian and Siouxan tribes only in detail.

It is the attention to detail in which this text, the author's dissertation, excels. Unfortunately, for the most part, the details dominate the narrative at the expense of analysis. The year-by-year chronology of white and Indian interaction leading to milestone events, such as the establishment of Fort Duquesne in 1754 or the Battle of the Thames River in 1813, obscures the general trends or central themes. Further, the lack of analysis jeopardizes central arguments. For example, Edmunds consistently notes Potawatomi fidelity to the French cause without attempting to show the tribe's motivations. Did the French consider the Potawatomis "the wisest and most obedient of all the Indians" (p. 53) because they were economically and militarily dependent on the French by the mid-eighteenth century, or because the Potawatomis perceived (and concurred with) the rationality of French policies more clearly than other tribes? While inferences may be made, they all may not support the author's thesis.

The details also seem to bog down the account in the main, leaving room for only occasional bursts of vivid expository writing, such as the saga of St. Clair's defeat in 1791 by a combined force of Potawatomis, Shawnees, Miamis, and other allied tribes. Style suffers from the resulting uneven tone and pace. A factual error is evident in the short summary of the Black Hawk War. The treaty of 1804, disclaimed by Black Hawk, was signed in St. Louis, not Vincennes.

The last two chapters, dealing with the series of land cession treaties and the removal of the Potawatomis to the trans-Mississippi West, are the strongest. The rapid advance of American settlement after the close of the War of 1812 drove the tribe from its land so swiftly that one chief complained in 1821 that "the plowshare is driven through our tents . . ." (p. 220) before tribal villages could relocate. Edmunds gives excellent treatment to the rise of the mixed bloods to tribal leadership and how their personal fortunes grew as they signed away their tribesmen's landed heritage.

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