

Book Reviews

the Cherokee Nation verged on civil war. Eventually, tempers cooled. And in 1846 a new treaty was signed in President Polk's office, at which time Ross shook hands with Stand Watie, the leader of his opponents.

Peace, however, did not prevail. The American Civil War began, and the Cherokees were forced to take a side. Pressured by pro-Southern tribal members led by Watie, confronted with generous Confederate promises as well as the ominous threat of nearby Confederate troops, and determined to maintain the tribe's fragile unity, Ross signed a treaty with the Confederacy. But Ross soon regretted this alignment and led many of his followers into Kansas, pledging his support for the Union. After the war, however, federal authorities, while negotiating a new treaty with the Cherokees, used the fact that Ross had signed a treaty with the Confederacy to support their demand for the Cherokee Nation to cede some of its land to the government. Ironically, they also supported Watie and his faction's demand that the tribe be officially divided into northern and southern branches. Ross would not accept such requests and he lost this battle. Ross died on August 1, 1866, but ten days later the Senate ratified a treaty which recognized only one Cherokee Nation and kept its land intact.

The years during which John Ross served as principal chief of the Cherokee Nation constituted a period of frustration, transition, and dissension for the beleaguered Cherokees. Extensively documented and partially based on previously unused sources, *John Ross, Cherokee Chief* is the most authoritative biography of Ross to date. Furthermore, it offers a poignant view not only of Cherokee tribal politics but also of the relationship between the Cherokee Nation and the federal government from 1812 to 1866. This work is a welcome addition to the literature on the history of the Cherokee and of the American Middle Period.

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The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture 1665-1965, by James A. Clifton. Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977. pp. xx, 529. \$22.50.

Professor Clifton has produced both an exciting and an exasperating volume. Most subtitles reveal and limit the scope of the author's subject matter; in this case it expands as well as explains. Clifton sets out to do nothing less than delineate the social, economic, political, cul-

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tural, and military history of the Potawatomi—over a period of three centuries. Given the propensity of most historians, ethnographers, and anthropologists to severely limit their studies of Indian tribes to the chronological eras prior to the reservation and post-reservation experiences, the author performs a real academic service by dealing with the entire history of the tribe. Unfortunately, despite containing a wealth of detailed scholarship and insightful analysis, *The Prairie People* ultimately falls short of becoming the authoritative work that it might have been.

The author's chief problem lies in the subject itself. The Potawatomi were inhabitants of the Lake Michigan region in the seventeenth century when Clifton's narrative begins. These Algonquians subsequently migrated, sometimes under duress, to the present states of Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin and later farther west into Iowa, Kansas, and Oklahoma and north into the Canadian province of Ontario. During that process the Potawatomi were continually and inextricably involved with the affairs of numerous other tribal groups, the French, Spanish, and English colonial powers, and finally the national governments of the United States and Canada. While the book claims to deal primarily with the so-called Prairie Band "because they are the most culturally conservative of all modern Potawatomi" there is an enormous amount of information offered which concerns the other tribal bands and communities. The result is that the author's very readable prose and superb organization cannot quite overcome the reader's impression that the researcher bit off a larger bite than could be comfortably digested in a single volume.

Considering the availability of R. David Edmunds's recent work on seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth century Potawatomi history, one wishes that Clifton had summarized briefly the better-known aspects of the tribe's earlier existence, retained the excellent social and cultural descriptions of the pre-1830s period, and concentrated his efforts on the more recent period. This would have eliminated the imbalance of relegating the tribe's history after 1905 to a mere forty pages. Professor Clifton visited the Potawatomi Kansas community, the Prairie Band, in the 1960s for three years and did research among the Wisconsin, Michigan, and Canadian tribesmen in the 1970s. Most general readers and scholars alike would have appreciated more exposition arising from those experiences and less on such topics as the Potawatomi involvement with the colonial wars, the War of 1812, and early United States Indian policy which have been treated fulsomely elsewhere.

Iowa readers and historians should be gratified at the complete

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treatment of the Potawatomi sojourn in their state. Located in the extreme western portion of Iowa, the United Bands Reserve included six clusters of villages settled along the river valleys in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Most of the tribesmen living there hailed from northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin; they combined to form the Prairie Band, culturally conservative which later took up residence in Kansas.

In describing the Prairie People's Iowa reservation experience and their previous and later migrations, Clifton reveals a re-revisionist thesis. He deplores the recent sympathetic revisionist historical and anthropological writing about Indians, which he suggests "tends to be shallowly moralistic . . . and excessively maudlin, patronizing and condescending toward Indians of the present." His descriptions of Potawatomi interfacings with Euro-American peoples and governments are devoid of the attitude that the tribe was simply a helpless, guileless victim of a frontier juggernaut. Analyzing the pattern of relationships between Potawatomi and Americans from 1796 to 1837, he concludes that the "basic paradigm was one of reciprocal exploitation, each party expecting and taking something of value from the other."

Clifton's writing is studded with similar provocative statements and analysis. Many of these passages are extremely valuable and, in the case of his postscript on the 1970s Indian style of radicalism, largely accurate and certainly courageous. Scholars will be particularly impressed with the material on the mixed bloods and intermarried citizens of the Potawatomi and their characterization as "intercultural brokers." Whether or not the reader agrees with the author's conclusions and the framework within which they are couched, he must come away from *The Prairie People* intellectually stimulated.

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The Worlds Between Two Rivers: Perspectives on American Indians in Iowa, edited by Gretchen M. Bataille, David M. Gradwohl and Charles L.P. Silet. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1978. pp. ix, 148. \$7.95.

This is a book with a purpose. Gretchen Bataille writes that the editors "hoped that this collection and bibliography will help inform educators, students, and concerned people about the Indian in Iowa—the historical and contemporary Indian." (129-30) Guided by the conviction that "education seems to be the key to a new understanding and awareness for both Indian and non-Indian people," (129) the editors

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