BOOK REVIEWS

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Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime That Should Haunt America
Gary Clayton Anderson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. 472pp. Epilogue. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, $29.95.

Gary Clayton Anderson has published widely on American Indian history, including two works nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. In his latest book, Anderson uses the definition of genocide established in international law since 1948 to explore and redefine the four-hundred-year conflict between native peoples and European Americans. In a sweeping overview that touches on most major clashes, Anderson concludes that the violence perpetrated against American Indians does not fit the legal definition of genocide. Instead, he contends that the term "ethnic cleansing" best describes the conquest of Native America.

Anderson argues that modern international definitions of genocide allow scholars to place the dispossession of American Indians into a global context. He points out that mass killings in World War II Europe, 1970s Cambodia, and 1990s Yugoslavia and Rwanda are classified as genocide because in each of those cases, state-sponsored violence attempted to exterminate an entire people. Anderson marches through the history of native dispossession using the contemporary legal description of genocide to reexamine well-known processes, ideas, and events, such as Indian removal, treaty-making, American westward expansion, the Plains Indian wars, and government assimilation policies. In each case, the author reminds the reader that although violence did occur, it was not systematic, organized, or on a scale that can be labeled as genocide.

Ultimately, if historians rely on international legal definitions, Anderson's argument has merit. While native peoples died in large numbers from disease, those killed by intentional state-sponsored violence were few in comparison with twentieth-century examples of genocide. In some ways, however, Anderson is handcuffed by legalistic descriptions of genocide because atrocities such as the attack of New Englanders on the Pequots in 1637 or the murder of several hundred California Indians in the Mendocino War of 1859 do not match the criteria in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Once Anderson committed to using the 1948 definition, genocide ceased to be a useful term to describe the history of Indian-white relations in the United States.

This book is sure to attract attention and stir debate. Some readers will say that the author is brutally honest. After all, American Indians did not vanish in the wake of conquest. The federal government never delineated or directed an avowed extermination policy but, rather, sought ways to assimilate and even protect native peoples at times. Others, however, will be infuriated with the denial of an American genocide. Critics might point to atrocities such as the Sand Creek and Wounded Knee massacres as examples of genocide targeting American Indians. (Wounded Knee, often used as an example of genocide, is only briefly mentioned in the book.) Still others might argue that "ethnic

cleansing" is just another term for cultural genocide.

Anderson makes no excuses for the soldiers, militias, and private citizens who murdered, raped, and brutalized native peoples. He condemns these atrocities and labels them as "war crimes" or "crimes against humanity" that would warrant prosecution in today's world. The book's subtitle indicates Anderson's belief that whether it is called genocide or ethnic cleansing, the subjugation of native peoples was criminal and all Americans should be aware of this dark chapter of their history.

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Americans Recaptured: Progressive Era Memory of Frontier Captivity

Molly K. Varley. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. 240pp. Epilogue. Apps. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, $34.95.

During the Progressive Era (1890–1916), Americans faced the increasing pressures of urbanization and modernity as the frontier officially "closed." One means of defining American character was to publish and republish Indian captivity narratives, a distinctly American genre (and a misnomer, as author Molly K. Varley explains). Varley argues that remembering European American captives gave progressives an opportunity to portray themselves as victims rather than perpetrators of frontier violence. The narratives justified white expansion and the dismantling of American Indian cultures.

In Chapters 1 and 2, the author focuses on local commemoration of captives through ancestral and geographical links. Smaller communities, fearing that they would become obsolete in modern society, used commemoration efforts to gain national recognition and reaffirm their importance in the formation of American identity. Both chapters use singular captivity narratives as an investigative keyhole to understand this process. Showing the depth of Varley's research, Chapter 2 examines Buffalo, New York, philanthropist William P. Letchworth's commemoration of Mary Jemison (1743–1833), who lived most of her life with Seneca Indians in upstate New York, to demonstrate the power the frontier wielded over American identity. When Letchworth failed to convert his country estate sixty miles southeast of Buffalo into a haven for indigent boys, he turned to historical preservation instead, donating the estate to New York State in 1906. Only after Letchworth installed memorials to Jemison and the Senecas did New York turn the property into a park.

Chapter 3 combines the narratives from the first half of the book with that of Abbie Gardner Sharp (1843–1921), whom Dakota Indians captured in northwestern Iowa in 1857, to explore how progressives used captivity narratives to define American identity. Varley argues that commemorations reclaimed these white captives as Americans even if they stayed with their captors by choice or advocated for Indian rights, as in the case of Gardner Sharp. As Varley notes, progressives believed that remembering these violent interactions benefitted American society. The staunch morality of the captives influenced their captors and thus expedited the assimilation of Indians into the dominant society.

Varley's final chapter introducing the concept of the "Manly Mother" is perhaps the most interesting element of her work. She argues that progressives viewed women as inherently more "American" because they "were more naturally focused on the needs of the community" (p. 131). The Manly Mother archetype used a rigid "moral gyroscope" to adapt to new situations in her captivity. She may have performed traditionally male roles, but only when men were absent. Manhood, then, was defined by character, not just gender. Furthermore, her frontier life placed her at great—yet justified—risk as she expanded the nation and the collective American good.

Ultimately, Varley leaves the field open to apply her methods to Spanish and French captivity narratives and acknowledges a gap

in captivity literature west of the Missouri River. Though using individuals as entry points into the analysis is compelling, it does raise questions about the representative nature of the narratives. However, Varley's well-researched volume will force readers to reconsider their own local commemorative monuments and the era in which they were erected.

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Global West, American Frontier: Travel, Empire, and Exceptionalism from Manifest Destiny to the Great Depression

David M. Wrobel. Calvin P. Horn Lectures in Western History and Culture Series. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013. 328pp. Illus. Maps. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, $39.95. Paper, $29.95.

David Wrobel suggests that, contrary to popular belief, many nineteenth-century travel writers understood and described the American West as part of larger global processes akin to those unfolding in other zones of imperial expansion. This global perspective only subsided in the twentieth century, when the vast majority of writers cloaked the region in frontier rhetoric and searched for the last true bits of the Old West. The historical shift, from "global West" to "American frontier," gives structure to an impressive book that achieves multiple goals. Wrobel's work reanimates the field of travel writing as a useful analytic tool and explores the origins of the American road-trip genre.

Wrobel supports this transformation thesis by examining the writings of domestic and international travelers (primarily British) both in the American West and throughout the world. Many of these writers, such as Jack London, John Muir, and Theodore Roosevelt, need little introduction, but Wrobel uses their texts (including some lesser-known selections) to show that not all travel works necessarily suffer from an "imperial gaze" or the detrimental effects of travelers and tourists on the "other." Many travelers' texts did, in fact, reveal alternate ways of viewing the West. By giving travel writing another chance, Wrobel establishes that the West *did* look different to many nineteenth-century travel writers, and this fact should complicate how historians describe then-prevailing notions of the region.

The real payoff comes in the last few chapters, as readers see the former "global West" transform into a uniquely American region. Early twentieth-century travelers looked for fragments of a bygone frontier on their automobile journeys. The United States government similarly "rediscovered" the region through the New Deal's Federal Writers' Project. These western impulses ultimately coalesced into the national road-trip genre, in which writers like John Steinbeck and William Least Heat-Moon searched for America.

Wrobel's study is ambitious, erudite, and well written, though a more rigorous treatment of nationality might have offered additional insights. For example, in his analysis of a "global West" in Part One, Wrobel focuses primarily on nine authors: two American, one German, one Austrian, and five British. The book discusses the travels of American authors George Catlin and Mark Twain outside the United States. A question thus arises: Wouldn't these authors naturally discuss the American West from a global perspective, either because of their foreignness to the region or their travels outside of it? It could be revealing, for example, to compare these narratives more systematically with those of east-coast Americans traveling the Far West. In Part Two, the author gives priority to seven Americans, one Italian, and one Briton. This shift in the balance of the authors' nationalities—from foreigners to Americans—may therefore account for the perceived difference in the travelers' characterizations of the region.

This observation does not indicate a weakness of the book but rather one of the many ancillary questions Wrobel's notable

study raises. It deserves wide readership for its ability to situate globally a region that remains studied and understood far too often as a uniquely American space.

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Old Blue's Road: A Historian's Motorcycle Journeys in the American West

James Whiteside. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015. 296pp. Illus. Maps. Notes. Ind. Paper, $19.95.

In 2005, James Whiteside, a history professor retired from the University of Colorado at Denver, purchased a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, christened it "Old Blue," and began to ply the roads of the American West. Whiteside's account of his journeys is part travelogue, replete with colorful characters, roadside attractions, regional food and drink, and travel routes. The author's appreciation of the West is deep and was cultivated over many years. "I have lived my entire life in the West," he states, "and, as a historian, I have read and written and lectured about the region's history" (p. 2).

Old Blue's Road is clearly and consciously authored by a historian of the modern American West. The major themes covered in a typical college course are faithfully addressed in the book: scarce water resources and the West as a "hydraulic society"—check; the modern West as an industrial society—check; defining the West as place or process—check; powerful interests imposing their will on the weak—check; "new" versus "old" western history—check; assessing the strengths and weaknesses of Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 essay on the West—check. Whiteside frequently invokes leading regional historians by name in the text, endnotes, and index and lays out major historiographical arguments. Much of the history written about the West over the last quarter century has been rather political. The author's politics are sprinkled throughout this book, as seen in his evaluations of President George W. Bush and Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo. In a sense, *Old Blue's Road* is a highly personal account of a professional historian.

The book will probably be most attractive to those interested in the history and historiography of the American West. Readers hoping to find a paean to motorcycles, motorcycle culture, or motorcycle travel will likely be disappointed. While Whiteside's motorcycle is named in the title and a picture of the bike adorns the front and back covers, little of the book's contents are about "Old Blue" itself or the unique experience of encountering the West on it. The author recounts purchasing the bike and learning how to ride it, but after those first few pages, references to the motorcycle mainly report conversations with people reacting to him traveling so far on a two-wheeled vehicle.

It is common for retiring college faculty to offer "My Last Lecture" or "The Lecture I Never Gave" in a public forum, in which they reflect on their careers, issues of importance, paths not taken, challenges faced, and so forth. *Old Blue's Road* serves such a function for Whiteside, allowing him to address challenges (like struggling with university administrators), savor successes, and give an overview of his scholarly field as he sees it. Just as those public addresses find an audience, so, too, will this book.

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