

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### **Converting the Rosebud: Catholic Mission and the Lakotas, 1886–1916**

Harvey Markowitz. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. 320pp. Illus. Maps. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$34.95.

When Sicangu Lakotas met Catholic missionaries, Harvey Markowitz argues, they willingly incorporated the “ceremonies that [Father Pierre-Jean] De Smet and other agents of Wakan Tanka” promoted into Lakota beliefs and practices. Tribal members on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, however, found it “unacceptable and absurd” to abandon their own traditions for the “ways and teachings of a *wanikiye* (lifegiver) named Jesus” (p. 182). Markowitz centers his analysis between these instances of Lakota acceptance of Christian elements and support for their own traditions on the northern plains.

The thirteen-chapter work places historical developments at Rosebud within a national historical context, examines the philosophical backgrounds and perspectives of Catholic missionaries and Sicangu Lakotas, and explores the challenges and complicated results of their interactions. The first three chapters connect missionary work and federal Indian policy, reveal emerging tensions between different Christian denominations in Indian country, and link the multiple federal efforts to push Sicangus and other American Indians from sovereign people to wards of the nation. Chapters four through six focus on the evolution of Catholic missionary work in Indian country, including the rise of Martin Marty, O.S.B., to bishop of Dakota Territory; pragmatic Lakota interests in working with “Sina

Sapa” (“Black Robes,” or Catholic priests); and the anti-Catholic programs of Otto von Bismarck in Germany that pushed many German priests to Buffalo, New York, and then the Dakotas. Markowitz’s chapters seven and eight then examine the early pragmatic challenges of setting up Saint Francis Mission in 1886 and the philosophical context of missionaries who promoted American “civilization” processes to lay the foundation for their main goal of religious transformation.

Markowitz’s most significant contributions come in the last chapters that more deeply consider Lakota psychology and philosophy, the pragmatic goals of Sicangu leaders in reaching out to Catholics, and the complications of religious syncretism. He explores the nature of Lakota spirituality when he examines how the “ontological chasm” between the natural and supernatural worlds of Judeo-Christian traditions did not exist in Lakota religious thought (p. 168). Rather, Lakota receptivity to religious emissaries, rooted in their own traditions, prepared them to engage with new spiritual traditions. Pragmatic realities of the era also led Lakotas like Spotted Tail and Red Cloud to work with Catholics to attain more secular goals for their people.

Intercultural communication created opportunities and left room for misappropriation and reshaping of each other’s traditions. Markowitz shows that to gain converts, Jesuit priests often highlighted “superficial similarities” at the cost of “blurring fundamentally different assumptions” about the sacred (p. 209). While priests would voice opposition to Lakota traditions like the *hanbleceya* (vision

quest), they might also appropriate the Lakota term to describe (problematically) their own Catholic retreats to parishioners. Lakota leaders also exerted agency in refashioning Catholic traditions to fit with their own. The annual Catholic Sioux Congresses, for instance, revealed several rituals and structures akin to the Sun Dance.

Markowitz concludes that rather than constituting a formulaic story of assimilation, Catholic work at Rosebud faced challenges on spiritual, social, and cultural levels. Lakotas and Catholics influenced each other. As we have just observed the centennial of the end of World War I, this work, which concludes just prior to the United States' entry into that conflict, provides us with valuable context for understanding the challenges, possibilities, and complexities of intercultural relations in our own time.

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### **The Commanders: Civil War Generals Who Shaped the American West**

Robert M. Utley. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. 256pp. Illus. Maps. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$29.95.

Robert M. Utley ranks as the preeminent historian of the United States Army in the West after the war against Mexico while also standing tall among the present generation of scholars of the larger western experience. Drawing upon over fifty years of research and writing, Utley presents an intriguing assessment of the key commanders of western military departments following the Civil War: Christopher C. Augur, George Crook, John Pope, Oliver O. Howard, Nelson A. Miles, Alfred Terry, and Edward O. C. Ord. All fought with or commanded Union forces during the war, believed that national expansion advanced the cause of civilization, and oversaw campaigns against Indians after 1865. All save Miles (clerk) and Terry (lawyer) graduated from West Point.

Utley's approach to ranking these generals says much about the realities of the western military experience. Important, of course, was fighting Indians—whether leading from the field or overseeing operations from department headquarters. To do so, only Crook had developed unconventional tactics to deal with his unconventional enemies, most notably using pack mules rather than oxen on the campaign and employing large numbers of allied Indian auxiliaries. But his indifferent performance during the Great Sioux War in 1876–1877 and failure to defeat the Apaches in Arizona a decade later meant that his rival Miles, who saw victories in the Red River War, the Great Sioux War, and the Nez Perce conflict, ranks highest in this category.

Fighting Indians, however, took up only part of the responsibilities of a department commander. As Utley rightly observes, a good administrator could improve the lives of soldiers and promote regional development. After all, the army laid telegraphs, protected railroad construction, employed civilians, and offered lucrative contracts. In the process, it served as the federal government's largest deployable resource in a region that coveted federal dollars. With only tiny staffs to assist them, overseeing large and complex commands over a broad geographical area demanded a careful eye for tedious detail, an understanding of how best to cooperate with one's division commander and navigate War Department bureaucracy, and careful management of resources in an era that saw the regular army reduced from more than fifty-four thousand to less than twenty-five thousand men. Here the irascible and egotistical Miles fell woefully short.

The relatively unknown Augur thus earns Utley's highest overall rating, followed in descending order by Crook, Pope, Terry, Howard, Miles, and Ord. Utley's praise for Augur should surprise few specialists but will undoubtedly shock the general reader. Easily the best administrator of the lot, Augur worked hard, if with little fanfare, to promote civilian development and from his desk effectively supported Indian campaigns

in his departments of the Platte and Texas. We do not know much about what made the man, the only one of those under review who has not received at least one full biography. With a cache of Augur's papers available at the Newberry Library, a smaller collection in the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, letters scattered throughout the papers of other officers in the Library of Congress, and voluminous official documents at the National Archives, Utley's assessment sounds a clarion call for an enterprising author to fill this yawning gap in the literature.

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### **America's Best Female Sharpshooter: The Rise and Fall of Lillian Frances Smith**

Julia Bricklin. William F. Cody Series on the History and Culture of the American West. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. 224pp. Illus. Notes. App. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$24.95.

In this carefully researched biography, the second book in the William F. Cody series, Julia Bricklin separates myth from fact in the life and career of sharpshooter Lillian Smith. Bricklin's biography provides a distinct perspective on how women navigated the "shooting and vaudeville world" (p. 9). To find fame in that world, Smith turned to the common act of "playing Indian," remaking herself as "Princess Wenona."

Lillian Smith learned to shoot through hunting game with her father in California in the 1870s. Before she was ten, her father advertised her abilities in exhibitions where she competed for money. In 1886, the teen-aged prodigy Smith signed on with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, as did Annie Oakley. Smith stayed with William Cody's production for two years before returning disappointed from England, a trip where Oakley proved more adroit at navigating society, gaining media attention, and obtaining sponsorships.

Oakley remains the more well-known and celebrated figure because, unlike Smith, she crafted a persona that followed norms of genteel white womanhood.

Smith continued to make her living as an exhibition shooter in competing Wild West shows. She worked under her father's mediocre management until her second marriage in 1900 to Charles ("Frank") Hafley, a much more effective agent. Bricklin speculates that Smith might have faded into obscurity had she not developed a winning promotional strategy around this time. She created the persona "Wenona," inspired by the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem "The Song of Hiawatha." Assuming the Wenona character played to then-popular cultural stereotypes of the Indian princess who would never fully assimilate and also allowed Smith greater latitude in her act. Over the next two decades, "Wenona" moved between vaudeville and various Wild West outfits.

Smith's career indicates that Wild West shows offered women limited release from restrictive gender norms as illustrated through the different career trajectories and reputations of Smith and Oakley. The biography would benefit, however, from more analysis of the gender dynamics of the business and context on other evolving forms of mass culture.

There are missed opportunities in Bricklin's handling of Smith's "Wenona." The author seems to marvel at Smith's trading of her privileged white femininity to "play Indian" yet is undecided on the implications of this "identity shift." Bricklin argues that this shift was more than a "professional passport" but enabled Smith to "distance herself from her biological family" and develop relationships in the ethnically diverse business (p. 7). Still, it is clear that however completely "Wenona" came to erase "Lillian Smith" on the marquee, Smith continued to capitalize on the privileges of whiteness.

Bricklin grapples with the politics of Smith's persona by noting her intimacy with prominent American Indians in the show trade, which she uses to conclude that

"ethnocentricity simply was not a concern in the times she lived" (p. 132). This claim is poorly supported and troublesome because, as Smith's contemporary Luther Standing Bear observed, "We real Indians were held back, while white 'imitators' were pushed to the front" (p. 131). This otherwise fascinating history of an obscure Wild West entertainer would benefit from deeper analysis and contextualization of the gendered politics of race and ethnicity in Lillian Smith's long career "playing Indian."

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### **Tombstone, Deadwood, and Dodge City: Re-creating the Frontier West**

Kevin Britz and Roger L. Nichols. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. 280pp. Illus. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$32.95.

Few towns conjure up visions of the Old West as readily as Tombstone, Arizona; Deadwood, South Dakota; or Dodge City, Kansas. Tourists flock to these communities, hoping to find reminders of a violence-prone American frontier. To fulfill these expectations, residents of these towns have created historical identities based on their violent boomtown origins. "How and why these three communities . . . came to focus on their disorderly pasts" (p. 4) is the main point of *Tombstone, Deadwood, and Dodge City*. This book got its start as Kevin Britz's dissertation. Regrettably, he died before it could be published, but his University of Arizona advisor, Roger Nichols, believed the research was "too good to remain virtually hidden" (p. xi). Nichols then revised, expanded, and rewrote it. Their combined efforts effectively demonstrate how each town transformed into "a living monument to Americans' perceptions of the Old West" (p. 7).

As a comparative study, the book analyzes the similarities and differences of the three communities, which all followed surprisingly

similar paths. The emergence of western characters drew early attention to the boomtowns. As readers of *South Dakota History* know, Wild Bill's death and dime novel dramatizations forever connected Deadwood to violence, giving the town "a wide popular reputation" (p. 30). Community leaders initially wanted to downplay the negative images, fearing they would deter modern development. Those attitudes changed after World War I, however, as Americans became nostalgic for the "Old West" with its seemingly simpler times and began visiting the former boomtowns. Seeing a way to solve economic problems, town promoters embraced their colorful pasts. In Deadwood, boosters opened the Pine Crest tourist camp, marked "Wild West" locations such as Saloon Number 10, and developed the Days of '76 celebration. These actions demonstrated that community leaders had come to accept their town's "special place in American history" (p. 128).

While western movies and television shows brought more tourists, when the "golden age" of Westerns came to an end, each town sought to have its historic importance validated nationally. Deadwood's Adams Museum, national historic landmark designation, and preservation movement, for example, contributed to that location's claim of legitimacy. According to the authors, all three towns received national affirmation of their historical significance by the 1990s. In the process, each had turned its violent past into a profitable "commercial venture" (p. 209).

The authors convincingly demonstrate how history and tourism overlapped and evolved in Tombstone, Deadwood, and Dodge City. People interested in these towns and in tourism will find this book worthwhile, but it is not meant for readers who are looking for exciting shootouts. It is about how the "Wild West" became profitable. While the book is thoroughly researched and well written, several factual errors exist, at least in relation to Deadwood. For instance, 12 August 1876 is given as the day Wild Bill died (p. 38). In fact, he was murdered on 2 August, and there are

other mistakes. Although a cause for concern, these lapses do not outweigh the book's overall excellence.

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### **Indians Illustrated: The Image of Native Americans in the Pictorial Press**

John M. Coward. History of Communication Series. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016. 228pp. Illus. Notes. Ind. Paper, \$29.95.

This book analyzes images of American Indians in the late nineteenth-century illustrated press, primarily *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly*, to expose the medium's influence on white Americans' perceptions. The results are impressive: eight chapters centering on topics ranging from American Indian portraits from the 1850s to Indian and African American cartoons from the 1890s. The images are both art and artifact of white America's ongoing need to categorize Indians. As art, these depictions began as field sketches that underwent multiple interpretations, and usually exaggeration, by professional illustrators tasked with producing commercial images. As artifact, they turned into press-ready engravings overnight and landed in the hands of 190,000 Americans in two weeks.

Most Americans came to know and remember American Indians based on these popular images, the focus of the initial three chapters. Illustrators routinely distinguished between civilized, "good" Indians and savage, "bad" Indians according to the national mood. Indian women were especially ripe subjects for interpretation and were variously drawn as either beautiful Indian princesses or degraded squaws. While no surprise to most modern readers, Coward ably shows how Indian women also became territorial symbols and exotic, romanticized images of ideal motherhood.

The author then examines the mechanics

of producing these illustrations in the popular press specifically for a white, urban, and eastern audience. In chapter four, Coward employs the career of Theodore Davis, special illustrator to *Harper's Weekly* best known for his after-the-fact illustrations of Custer's Last Stand, as a case study. In one of the book's most telling examples of image manipulation, Coward compares Davis's illustrations and first-person description of an 1865 attack on a stagecoach with two later accounts. At each step, there is a clear and easy falsification of the visual facts to meet audience expectations. Fifteen Indian attackers became hundreds, and illustrators conveniently dropped the attackers' white leader from later drawings. In another instance, Davis described but chose not to sketch the plight of a cowboy whom Indians had tortured to death. Subsequent accounts, however, graphically depicted the mutilated cowboy and made him the centerpiece of their chosen narrative. This casual progression of "facts" culminating in searing images of Indian savagery highlight the power of the popular press both to create and perpetuate Indian stereotypes.

Coward's final chapters describe a telling trajectory for these stereotypes within a national narrative. The greater the perceived Indian threat, the more negatively the popular press presented Indian subjects. These portrayals reached their expected crescendo just after the Little Bighorn and then again prior to Wounded Knee but declined rapidly as the Indian threat diminished. Coward proves his point in a novel way. He compares cartoons of Indians after Wounded Knee to cartoons of African Americans in the same journals. After Wounded Knee, American Indians were consistently portrayed more sympathetically than African Americans. Blacks were citizens with rights, and as they more effectively exercised those rights, they replaced Indians as the objects of national jest and ridicule.

In all, this book is an engaging example of "visual history" done well. It will appeal to readers broadly interested in the Great

Plains, as those tribes figure prominently in every chapter and are the subject of well over half of the sixty-two popular press images reproduced in the book.

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### **Ohiyesa: The Soul of an Indian.**

Directed by Jesse Heinzen. Dakota Eastman Productions, 57 mins., 2018. DVD. Home Version, \$29.95. Educational Version, with Study Guide, \$225.00.

Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa) (1858–1939) is well known in the annals of American Indian history. His rise to prominence is truly remarkable. This documentary, *Ohiyesa: The Soul of an Indian*, covers many aspects of his career and life. Kate Beane, a Flandreau Dakota and public historian at the Minnesota Historical Society, serves as the film's principal narrator. Ohiyesa is her great-great granduncle, and his brother, clergyman John Eastman, is her great-great grandfather. Several of Ohiyesa's other descendants also appear in the documentary.

The documentary presents an overview of Ohiyesa's life, tracing his early years of training in traditional Dakota ways to his abrupt entrance into white educational schools at the age of fifteen, and, ultimately, receiving his medical degree from Boston University School of Medicine in 1890. Several aspects of his subsequent life are less well covered, however, including his professional career as a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) employee. Ignored is his employment as an outing agent at Carlisle Indian School, as a government physician on the Crow Creek reservation, as director of a government project to rename Sioux Indians, and as an Indian inspector. In nearly all these positions, he had problems with his superiors. His first government job was at the Pine Ridge reservation in 1890, and his role there during the Wound Knee Massacre is covered well. Discussion of Ohiyesa's difficulties with the Indian agent,

however, leaves the impression that he was entirely correct in the dispute, ignoring the fact Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association and future president Theodore Roosevelt supported the agent in the controversy. The question that should be asked is: Could Ohiyesa have succeeded as an educated Indian working for the BIA during this time period? Additionally, he was not successful when he tried to open a medical practice in Saint Paul, Minnesota, after he left Pine Ridge. Ohiyesa's work with the YMCA and the Boy Scouts of America is also discussed.

Ohiyesa's books and lecture engagements became the main source of income for him and Elaine Goodale Eastman, whom he met at Pine Ridge, and their growing family. Tensions between husband and wife increased as the years passed. Her roles as a major editor of his publications and manager of his lecture engagements could have been better emphasized. Financial problems continued to haunt the couple even after they opened a summer camp in New Hampshire in 1916. They separated after Ohiyesa had an affair that produced a daughter in 1919. More could have been mentioned on his life and activities in the 1920s and 1930s.

Beane stresses an indigenous perspective, oral tradition, and family reflections as ways to better understand Ohiyesa. To be complete, the program should have included comments by relatives of his daughter born out of wedlock, who called herself Bonno Hyessa. They, too, are proud of him. Additionally, the fact that Ohiyesa was an acculturated rather than an assimilated Indian who practiced syncretism (blending his spiritual and cultural beliefs with aspects of white society) could have been better emphasized.

Finally, the program is visually appealing. Those wanting a more thorough and balanced account of this fascinating individual can consult the publications of Theodore D. Sargent and this reviewer.

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**The New Deal's Forest Army: How the Civilian Conservation Corps Worked**

Benjamin F. Alexander. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. 192pp. Illus. Notes. Ind. Paper, \$19.95.

For me, one of the most fascinating programs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal is the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), in particular because I worked as assistant director of a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) camp during the summer of 1977. The YCC is a direct descendant of the CCC; for a historian, the threads of time run deep.

The CCC was Roosevelt's favorite project. The preservation and rehabilitation of the nation's forested lands and extensive watersheds had occupied his attention as a landowner and as governor of New York. As president, he brought his interests in conservation to the White House and incorporated them into a national program that both improved America's lands and employed thousands of young men across the country during the worst economic depression it had faced.

Located across the nation, CCC camps operated under the authority of the United States Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture or the National Park Service in the Department of the Interior. The CCC's recruits followed military-style discipline and worked on a variety of projects while living in camps that provided hearty meals and educational opportunities.

Benjamin Alexander, who teaches American history at the New York City College of Technology, provides an informative history of America's "tree army." The book is divided into five chapters, with each one answering a basic question. These include "how the CCC came about," "how boys and men joined the CCC," "how enrollees labored and learned,"

"how enrollees spent their leisure time," and "how the coming of war spelled the end of the CCC." Alexander notes that not only did the corps employ young men, it also hired veterans and included African Americans and American Indians. Between 1933 and 1943, over three million enrollees took part in its programs.

Alexander does not ignore criticisms of the CCC. Labor unions worried about the wages paid to enrollees. Some people worried about the military overtones of the camps and the possibility that it thwarted individual freedoms. Still, Roosevelt persevered, and the program flourished. Enrollees not only carried out forest restoration programs, they built parks, visitor centers, museums, camp and picnic grounds, and roads and bridges. Many of the edifices are still utilized today, and the nation's parks, both state and federal, bear the mark of the CCC.

The author's organizational method is outstanding for general readers with little or no knowledge of the CCC as well as appealing to readers who have read extensively about the Roosevelt presidency. Photographs are scattered throughout the text. The notes make fascinating reading and reflect the author's extensive research in archives, use of published sources, dissertations and theses, academic journals, biographies, and primary sources including the CCC's own newspaper, *Happy Days*.

This volume will be of interest to all readers. The next time you visit a state park with a rustic lodge, take a long look at the bronze plaque noting that it was built by the CCC and be sure to say "Thank you."

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## Book Notes

**Brave Hearts: Indian Women of the Plains.** By Joseph Agonito. Lanham, Md.: TwoDot, 2017. 344pp. Illus. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$24.95. Written for a general audience, this book illuminates the diverse experiences of twenty-two Plains Indian women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**A Brief History of Nebraska.** By Ronald C. Naugle. Lincoln: History Nebraska, 2018. 143pp. Illus. Map. Ind. Paper, \$14.95. In this slim volume, the author presents a concise overview of the environmental and human history of the region that is now Nebraska.

**A Cycle of the West.** By John G. Neihardt. Annotated by Joe Green. Introduction by Alan Birkelbach. Bison Classic Annotated Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 780pp. App. Ind. Paper, \$44.95. Neihardt, the first poet laureate of Nebraska, focused much of his writing on the land and historical figures of the American West. His five epic poems are presented here in a new edition.

**Fort Meade: Peacekeeper of the Black Hills.** By Roberta Sago and Lee Stroschine. Images of America Series. Mt. Pleasant, S.C.: Arcadia, 2018. 128pp. Illus. Biblio. Paper, \$21.99. Historical context accompanies the numerous images in this pictorial history of the former military post in western South Dakota.

**Great Plains Literature.** By Linda Ray Pratt. Discover the Great Plains Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 168pp. Illus. Map. Ind. \$14.95. Pratt explores the influential literature of the Great Plains to understand both the region's historical and modern issues.

**Great Plains Politics.** By Peter J. Longo. Discover the Great Plains Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 127pp. Illus. Map. Ind. \$14.95. The importance of community in Great Plains political history and culture are shown through the lives of six political figures from the region.

**The Killing of Chief Crazy Horse.** Edited and Introduced by Robert A. Clark. Commentary by Carroll Friswold. Bison Classic Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 150pp. Illus. Ind. \$19.95. The editor brings together three eyewitness accounts, each one providing a different perspective on the chaotic events surrounding the death of the famed Oglala Lakota chief Crazy Horse.

**Out Where the West Begins, Volume 2: Creating and Civilizing the American West.** Philip F. Anschutz with William J. Convery. Denver: Cloud Camp Press, 2015. 392pp. Illus. Sources. Ind. Cloth, \$34.95. This work highlights the influence of more than one hundred leaders in American military, political, and cultural history on the development of the American frontier.



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