

Book Reviews

All communications regarding book reviews and review copies of books should be sent to Book Review Editor, *South Dakota History*, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217.

The North American West in the Twenty-First Century

Ed. Brenden W. Resnik. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. 420pp. Photos. Illus. Cloth, \$99.00.

Since Gerald D. Nash first insisted that there was a twentieth century American West that was both significant in its own right and an indicator of where the nation was headed, historians have been scrutinizing the “modern West” with increasing rigor. Contemporary historians see Western history as a continuum in which modern issues stem from historical events. For this anthology Brenden Rensink asked young and veteran scholars of the “modern West” to demonstrate both the continuity and divergence over time of issues in today’s American West.

Divided into five sections, the essays first address “Environmental Reckonings.” Jennifer Dunn demonstrates how Libby, Montana, is overcoming toxic pollution and the loss of its mining base to focus on public health and heritage tourism. Studying the Great Plains Agricultural Council, David Vail finds that agricultural scientists, policy makers, and farmers developed effective rescue plans and solutions to alleviate risk and vulnerability in the twentieth century, but major change is needed for the twenty-first.

“Indigenous Lands and Sovereignty” explores how lack of understanding of Indigenous cultural heritage and rights impacts modern issues involving Indigenous sovereignty. Marcus Macktima demonstrates how past federal Indian policies

are facilitating efforts to mine and develop Apache land. Soni Grant also explains how “competing jurisdictions” ignore traditional Navajo rights and permit fracking around Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

In “Urban and Rural Transformations,” Stuart Leslie and Layne Karafantis examine the hidden costs of bringing high-tech industry to town. Lindsey Passenger Wieck uncovers how San Francisco Latinos fight gentrification and use art to maintain their cultural presence. On Colorado’s Western Slope Jeffrey Widener demonstrates how agritourism educates the public while saving farmers’ heritage and livelihood from development.

“Migrant Lives and Labor” vehemently decries the issues surrounding migrants and immigrants in the modern West. Ivón Padilla-Rodríguez details the human cost and legality of the politically charged issue of incarcerating undocumented children. Similarly, Taylor Cozzens exposes the legal struggle to protect migrant farm workers and their communities from dangerous pesticides and waste facilities. In contrast, Ernesto Sagás outlines how Mexicans forced to migrate north by the North American Free Trade Agreement found jobs in the Colorado resort industry and are prospering in their strong new communities.

Part 5 presents three unresolved political issues that the West continues to “wrestle.” Chelsea Ball demonstrates modern western women’s struggles to revive the Equal Rights Amendment and obtain their states’ belated ratification. In a similar vein, Peter Boag unfolds Washing-

ton State's legislative struggle to extend civil rights protections to LGBTQ peoples, revealing their increasing acceptance and determined opposition. Andrew Gulliford expertly uses the current conflict over the Bears Ears National Monument to illustrate how daunting juggling the competing interests of local economies, oil and gas development, tourism, Indigenous cultural rights, prehistoric artifacts, and Euro-American landowners in the twenty-first century can be.

Although a few lack objectivity, these wide-ranging, well-researched essays accomplish Rensink's goal of pulling modern Western scholarship into the twenty-first century and demonstrate the continuing power of historic events to shape the modern American West.

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Dakota Modern: The Art of Oscar Howe

Ed. Kathleen Ash-Milby and Bill Anthes.
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,
2022. 208pp. Photos. Illus. Cloth, \$50.00.

Dakota Modern: The Art of Oscar Howe documents the groundbreaking artwork of Oscar Howe (1915–1983), a member of the Yanktonai Dakota in the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ (Sioux) culture and one of the most innovative Native painters of the twentieth century. The exhibition and accompanying catalog span forty years of the artist's career, beginning with Howe's early explorations in the Storytelling style in the 1930s through the development of his mature style from the 1950s to the 1970s. In addition to the high-quality reproduction of approximately 150 original paintings and murals, many of which have not been seen publicly before, the exhibition catalog includes photographs and ephemera that

illustrate Howe's efforts to defend the rights of Native artists to choose their own artistic style.

Dakota Modern, produced by the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, complicates familiar stories of modernism and confounds simplistic notions of identity and culture. The exhibition catalog details the ways in which Howe merged Očhéthi Šakówiŋ aesthetics and European modern abstraction to challenge harmful stereotypes that defined "authentic" Native art forms as timeless, anti-modern, and primitivistic. The catalog also details the ways in which Howe used modern art styles to conserve and communicate Indigenous knowledge, practices, histories, and philosophies. For example, in his essay "Očhéthi Šakówiŋ? Traditions and Multiple Modernisms," Bill Anthes describes how the repeated circular and straight lines in Howe's work simultaneously recall the geometric abstraction of Cubism and the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ spiderweb designs and beadwork that symbolize unity, truth, and righteousness.

While Howe presents visual statements of hope and perseverance in his artwork, he rarely depicts a specific historical moment. Instead, many of his works provide an insider's view of Očhéthi Šakówiŋ traditions. For example, in their essay "From Sun Dance to Sioux Christianity," Janet Catherine Berlo and Emil Her Many Horses analyze paintings depicting rituals of transcendence and renewal, including a collection that illustrates Sun Dance rituals practiced by peoples across the Great Plains which, in the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ culture, also involve rites of blood sacrifice. By communicating these rituals through flat, fractured planes, Howe aimed to broaden the definitions of Indigenous and modernist art.

Although Howe's work catalyzed change in how Native art was perceived in the

mainstream art world, his work has been relatively unknown. Born on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation in South Dakota, Howe learned Očhéthi Šakówiŋ traditions from his grandmother during his youth and was exposed to modernist traditions during his undergraduate and graduate studies. Howe served as a faculty member at the University of South Dakota from 1957–1979 and designed the famed murals at the Corn Palace in Mitchell, South Dakota. When, in 1958, Howe's abstracted image of drum beats in "Umine Wacipi" ("War and Peace Dance") was rejected from a juried exhibition of Native art because the work was not "Indian" enough, Howe responded with a letter that boldly asserted his artistic independence from outdated perceptions of Native art. Howe's impassioned response inspired generations of Native artists to advocate for artistic innovation and freedom. The *Dakota Modern* exhibition and catalog advances Howe's legacy as an innovative artist, educator, and advocate.

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The Imperial Gridiron: Manhood, Civilization, and Football at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School

Matthew Bentley and John Bloom. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. 266 pp. Photos. Illus. Appendix. Index. Cloth, \$65.00.

This book is noteworthy not only for its scholarly contributions, but also because it originated from a commitment John Bloom made to Matthew Bentley's family to revise and expand Bentley's dissertation for publication after his tragic passing. As one of Bentley's committee members and an authority on the history of Indian school athletics, Bloom was an obvious choice

to see this promising work through to completion. In doing so, he was guided by constructive suggestions Bentley received from manuscript reviewers, as well as Bentley's insightful critiques of Bloom's earlier work. The result is a valuable contribution that is truly the collaborative product of two fine scholars.

Rather than offering a comprehensive history of the football program at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, which exists elsewhere, the authors provide a succinct and compelling analysis of the contrasting ways successive Carlisle superintendents used football to pursue their objectives and, in so doing, promoted competing conceptions of manhood. For school founder Richard Henry Pratt, football was mainly a public relations tool through which players proved they had attained a level of civilized manhood at this assimilationist institution. They did so through displays of self-restraint and sportsmanship on the gridiron. Pratt stayed with this athletic mission even though his efforts were compromised by racist media coverage and his superiors' increasing cynicism about Carlisle's "civilizing" mission.

After Pratt's dismissal in 1904, his vision was scrapped by successors who were more interested in using Carlisle's famed football program as a cash cow. To increase ticket sales, they and Coach Glenn S. ("Pop") Warner played to racial stereotypes depicting Indigenous athletes more as physical marvels than as civilized sportsmen, and they adopted a win-at-all-costs management philosophy. The outsized and corrupt football program they built undermined Pratt's vision and contributed to student complaints about institutional abuses that elicited a 1914 congressional investigation and ultimately led to Carlisle's demise.

One of the book's important contributions is its deep and nuanced analysis

of that 1914 investigation, particularly regarding the tone and impact of student testimonies. The basics of this story are well known, but the authors offer a fresh take by arguing that students turned the tables on school administrators by employing Pratt’s discourse of civilized manhood to call out Warner and Superintendent Moses Friedman for their own uncivilized behavior—Warner for his abusive hyper-masculinity and Friedman for his administrative weakness and perceived lack of manly authority in his marriage. Although students may have savored the irony of the moment, certain language they employed and criticisms they leveled suggest they had internalized some mi-

sogynistic and bigoted attitudes while at Carlisle. These included their expressions of anti-African American attitudes and, specifically regarding Friedman, antisemitism as well. This discourse played well with the congressional audience, spelling Friedman’s quick demise, but also led to the de-emphasizing of a football program that, despite its abuses, had been a source of pride for many students. Under Oscar Lipps, Carlisle’s administration returned to an emphasis on promoting civilized manliness, but without football as integral to that purpose.

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Announcements

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society, provides financial support for the work of the society in preserving and interpreting the state’s rich past. The foundation offers numerous giving opportunities for donors who wish to leave a legacy of history for future generations. For information on making a contribution or bequest, please contact the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217; telephone, (605) 773-6001.

Ted Spencer has retired as director of the Historic Preservation office after ten years of outstanding service to the state of South Dakota. Jenna Carlson Dietmeier has been appointed interim director of the Historic Preservation office. We thank Ted for his service and wish him the best in retirement.

David A. Wolff and **Brad Tennant** have retired from the South Dakota Historical Society Board of Trustees. Tennant, appointed to the board in 2007, has researched, written, taught, and presented on a variety of Northern Great Plains topics as a history professor at Presentation College since 2001. Wolff, elected to the board in 2008, was an associate professor of history at Black Hills State University and is an award-winning author focusing on Black Hills, mining, South Dakota, and western history. We thank both men for their valuable service to the South Dakota State Historical Society.

The 31st West River History Conference will be held 5–6 October 2023 in the historic mining town of Lead, South Dakota. For more information, visit westriverhistoryconference.org.

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