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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

*Rocky Mountain Tales.* Edited by Levette J. Davidson and Forrester Blake. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947. Pp. xi + 302. Illustrations) \$3.00.

In most respects I am an average reader. Like the person reading this review, I try to select first the things most important in my field, hoping that they will be well written, interesting, informative, and rewarding for the time spent on them. But I am also a slothful reader, and when the book arrived I filed it on a desk piled high with other urgent unfinished business, where it only increased the weight on my conscience. It was not until I received a dunning note from the editor of this REVIEW saying, in effect, "The thumb screws are now on: please remit!" that I picked up the book—with private apologies to Professor Davidson—and began to read it. From the moment I read the first page until I sat down to write this review, the book has not been out of my hands. That means it does contain the qualities I like.

In a felicitous and cogent introduction the editors ask themselves the basic question, What is there in this Rocky Mountain land that it should grip men's hearts in spite of distance and the blackest times of war? Here is part of their answer:

In the south, perhaps, it is color, the canyon red and mountain green, the yellow valley malpais, the blue of a fathomless sky. There the Rio Grande, Pecos, and Chama roll down from peak sources, meeting first the mesa country below Jemez and Sangre de Cristo ranges, flowing through lava gates and coming at last to desert and the straight New Mexican plateaus spiked with solitary mountain masses which lead out to Texas plains. Along these rivers are Indian pueblos, dun-colored, blending naturally with the earth; Spanish towns, bright with pepper strings and blue windows and doorways; American towns of brick and white stone, rising above their more ancient neighbors. . . . In the north, perhaps, it is shadow and whiteness, the dark of montane forests, the quartz gleam of snow fields below peaks. . . . Valleys here are tall-grass valleys; meadows are park-land, quiet sub-alpine places marked with crystal pools; ridges are spur lines, evergreen juts, sanctuary for the shyest living thing. . . . Between

desert and northern snow lies Colorado, Rocky Mountain core. . . . In this red central land, range on range the Colorado Rockies rise, bastioned, tumultuous, massive granite fists allied with storm and space to beat the travelers back.

To these scenes the book brings the reader, for *Rocky Mountain Tales* is a collection of historical sketches, memoirs, personal anecdotes—some short and some tall—selected from published sources and from popular tradition. Footnotes and index provide helpful documentation, and as one reads quickly the excerpts written by Marcos de Niza, Zebulon Pike, De Smet, Gunnison, Chittenden, Humfreville, and others all the way to Andy Adams, one is pleased by the variety of literary styles and impressed by the diversity of personalities they represent.

The folk characters Jim Bridger and Sergeant O'Keefe receive the greatest attention and space. Sergeant O'Keefe, peerless prevaricator of Pike's Peak in the seventies and eighties, spread more yarns than the United States Signal Corps could intercept or verify. And Jim Bridger, Indian fighter, interpreter, guide, trapper, naturalist, and raconteur, was an all-around blue ribbon Munchausen. Then there is *fofarraw* (i. e., "Flashy talk, cabin or rendezvous life, high-built, roaring fires and trappers lolling back, stars and a white chalk moon overhead, and Rocky Mountain yarns"). The book contains plenty of that, and also tales of the overland trails, pony express riders, stage drivers, fabulous mines, buried treasure, and hoaxes. Much is said of mountain men and other monsters.

It is good to read of these roaring men. But one wonders why there are no Rocky Mountain tales about buxom females as well. Except for mention of one Silverheels, a sullied lady of tender feelings, and a shy lass called Sagebrush Nance, the collection represents a man's world. One notices also the absence of lore important in the lives of some of the men presented; for example, there is nothing about Jim-Bridger's famous feud with Brigham Young. But such faults of omission are usually found with collections of this kind. Certainly the editors cannot offer everything that

every stray reviewer may happen to have on his mind. But enough is enough, and the eight mediocre illustrations do not add much to the book except pages. Nevertheless, the buyer will still get more than his money's worth. For Professor Davidson and Mr. Blake know their Rocky Mountain West and know how to present it; and I, an average reader as busy as Chaucer's Man of Law, know the region better and appreciate it more for having read *Rocky Mountain Tales*.

University of Utah

HECTOR LEE

*Children of the People*. Dorothy Leighton and Clyde Kluckhohn. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947. Pp. xi + 277) \$4.50.

In the analysis of any society, one of the first prerequisites is that the approach be impartial, if it is to have any lasting value. This characteristic is one of the outstanding qualities of the present book. Here we have the Navaho Indian culture portrayed with apparent understanding and fairness, and without romantic embellishments. Although this work is in a sense a companion volume to *The Navaho*, previously published by the same authors, it can be read quite independently of the latter.

The book has been written as part of the Indian Education Research Project and consists of two main sections. Part I, "The Individual and His Development," gives an account of Navaho experiences and training from the time of birth and life on the cradle board (which is still widely used), through the days of old age. The second part, "Testing the People's Children," presents the results of mental and physical tests given to a selected group of Navaho children, of ages six through eighteen.

The reader, upon finishing these pages, feels that, to some extent at least, he really knows the Navaho people (insofar as this is possible without actually living among them). He feels that, if suddenly placed in their midst, he would respect them, and could act so as to be himself respect-

ed. He realizes that there are great individual differences among Navahos; that their problems are complex and constantly changing; that most Navahos cherish some very irrational beliefs—just as most of us in other societies have irrational beliefs of other kinds; that in certain respects the Navaho way of life is, by the standards of others, highly inefficient. On the other hand, he is ready to admit that this strange culture is, in some ways, in advance of his own. The above points, in part conclusions from the data, and in part reactions of the reviewer (and probably of other readers as well), testify by the forceful impression they make, to the skill of the writers in interpreting this Indian culture to outsiders.

Where the authors analyze Navaho customs and personality in general terms, a really excellent job has been done. However, where attempts have been made to apply more precise methods to this task, and to compare behavior patterns in Navaho and white cultures, the results are somewhat disappointing. For example, chapters seven and eight, those dealing with "attitudes," "interests," and "personality traits," leave one with the feeling that much energy has been expended for meager returns. One improvement that could easily have been made, would have been to indicate the numbers of cases on which percentage figures were based. This was not done in the chapters mentioned, with the consequence that it is not possible to attach any definite significance to the group differences cited. But in general, where descriptions of personality patterns seem to yield few significant findings, this does not represent a failing on the part of the authors. It is due, rather, to the undeveloped status of personality testing, the inapplicability to Navaho culture of a few more or less exact personality measures which do not exist, and to the methodological difficulties of comparing personality patterns in different societies. The authors would undoubtedly be among the first to point out that such analyses abound in obstacles, and would probably choose to justify their enormous labor by the fact that they have at least made a beginning toward the clarification of

this problem. Thus, there can be arguments both for and against the procedure adopted. However, some persons might feel that if relatively exact measuring instruments are to be used, there would be considerably greater returns for time invested if the tests were first standardized for the society being studied, even though this would require additional work.

There are a few points which, to the reviewer, appear as slight blemishes on an otherwise scholarly and vitally interesting treatment. In a few of the descriptions of native customs and behavior the statements seem repetitious. Several references to the relative importance of the first few years in child development (pp. ix, 30-31, 111) seem in a measure contradictory, and in part, go beyond evidence now available. One might question the assertion (p. 32), "Navaho practice tends to make children better able to look after themselves, so far as the external world is concerned." The question (p. 41) concerning the times at which "each aspect of the Navaho view of life is . . . 'built in' to the child," seems quite untestable considering the individual variability and the long time intervals involved in the learning of cultural behavior patterns, which, in turn, are probably never static. In the discussion of the study of Navaho children by the Rorschach and Thematic Apperception Tests (p. 128), the statement that, "the basic patterns of their individual personalities were clearly revealed," may convey a false impression as to the exactitude of these methods.

The above criticisms, however, are quite minor when one considers the quality of the book as a whole. The authors should be commended for having been critical in forming conclusions, and in having left many questions open, rather than yielding to the temptation of making more sensational statements in the absence of sufficient evidence.

In view of the previous statements concerning difficulties in obtaining quantitative estimates of personality traits, it should be pointed out that the authors have achieved considerable success in presenting a convincing "non-quantitative" treatment of the interplay between personality and cul-

tural heritage for the Navaho society as a whole, and for certain selected Navaho communities. Another outstanding contribution of the book lies in its description and keen analysis of Navaho child training, which is in so many respects different from that generally found in other American communities.

In this volume, the cultural anthropologist, the social psychologist, and the sociologist will find material useful as a background for further studies, and anyone who hopes to work with the Navahos or with their problems will doubtless agree that here is an important guide. The general reader will value the book for such things as the light it sheds on the origin of superstitions, the useful insight it gives into methods of child training, and the sympathetic picture it presents of a highly interesting group of people.

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