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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

The Hopis: Portrait of a Desert People. By Walter Collins O'Kane. Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1953. Pp. xii, 267, 24 color plates. \$5.00.

The Hopis: Portrait of a Desert People is a popularized account of the culture of the Hopi written by an amateur. It adds little or nothing that is new to our knowledge of this voluminously documented group and one wonders why it was ever published.

The work follows standard monographic form and includes material on family, social organization, economics, craftsmanship, religious practices, acculturation, language, etc. The author has managed to convey, through the use of anecdotes and episodes, a fairly convincing picture of everyday life and some feeling for the yearly round. The accounts of the secular sides of medical practice, eagle and turtle hunting are interesting as far as they go. The handling of religion, acculturation and linguistics is less than superficial. Throughout, an attempt is made to create an ideal picture of the life of a native people, ignoring the tensions which characterize these and other Pueblo groups. In this connection, much good description is often marred by philosophic digression which can only be presumed to be projections of the author's thinking, since they do not appear inherent in the data.

W. W. HILL

University of New Mexico.

The Road to Santa Fe: The Journal and Diaries of George Champlin Sibley and Others Pertaining to the Surveying and Marking of a Road From the Missouri Frontier to the Settlements of New Mexico, 1825-1827. By Kate L. Gregg. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1952. Pp. viii, 280. \$4.50.

The Santa Fe Trail became of especial importance to United States frontiersmen after Mexico's separation from Spain in 1820/21 when trading restrictions with Mexico

were removed. Word of the new arrangements got around quickly. Merchants from Missouri and Kentucky moved into the Southwest, among them William Becknell, sometimes called "Father of the Santa Fe Trail." This Franklin, Missouri trader made profitable expeditions to Santa Fe in 1821 and 1822. The volume of traffic to Santa Fe increased so rapidly in the next years that one may consider the Trail as well established by 1824.

At about this time in our national history occurred a juncture of "men and motives" which laid the basis for a survey of a road to Santa Fe, a trail now being considered inadequate. Among the motives may be listed United States interest in the Southwest, dating back to the genesis of "Manifest Destiny" prior to the War of 1812, and the great increase in the volume of trade with Santa Fe in the early 1820's with the need for safeguarding this trade from marauding Plains Indians. Among the men who should be mentioned are Thomas Jefferson, who as early as 1807 had projected a road through Creek and Spanish territory from Georgia to New Orleans; the indefatigable Senator Thomas Hart Benton who urged that a road to Santa Fe be surveyed on the basis not only of the argument available in the Jefferson precedent but also in a wide variety of appeals ranging from moral uplift to commerce; and finally, George Champlin Sibley, who turned out to be the man of the hour for making the actual survey, though a humble man, withal.

In March 1825 President Monroe signed the bill which provided ten thousand dollars for the survey and for marking the road, and another twenty thousand for negotiating a right of way with the Indians. Dr. Gregg now tells the story of this survey through the journal and diaries of Sibley, Joseph Davis, and Benjamin Reeves as well as in five introductory chapters, a Report of the Commissioners, an Appendix, and extensive footnotes. A bibliography, a reproduction of a portrait of Sibley, end maps, and a sketch of Ft. Osage (p. 197) improve the meaning of the volume. Curiously there is little in the introductory section on Reeves or Davis, though their diaries are used, nor does a careful study of the entire volume reveal much additional on these other "authors" (see note 50, p. 240 on Davis). It is probable

that Dr. Gregg considered that the Davis and Reeves journals speak for themselves, and that she would have to center upon Sibley who "from the start took the initiative in the work of the Commission, wrote the history of the project, made the government report—in truth saw the surveying and marking through to a finish when his colleagues long since had grown tired of dust, heat, prairie flies, and buffalo meat and refused longer to bother themselves with Benton's road to Santa Fe . . ." (p. 10).

At any rate, the book is an important and useful addition to literature on the trans-Mississippi West. Sibley's almost complete lack of "literary style" may seem to some dull, but the patient reader will suddenly realize that he is learning about a persevering man, devoted to his task, who performed a very arduous service without fanfare, and who deserves to be much better known than he is. When the survey was finished the commissioners could state in their report "That they have Surveyed, located and Marked out, a Road from the Western frontier of Missouri, to the confines of New Mexico, and from thence to the frontier Settlements of New Mexico. That they have located the Road upon the best practicable Route that exists; and that the whole is Sufficiently marked out by natural and artificial conspicuous objects, and by the tracks of the numerous caravans that have passed on it, to prevent in future, any the least difficulty in the commercial intercourse between the western parts of the United States and New Mexico, Sonora, and Chihuahua (*sic*); in so far as a direct and most excellent Road from Missouri and the Mexican Settlements is considered useful in promoting that object." (pp. 203-204).

THEODORE E. TREUTLEIN

San Francisco State College.

California. By John Walton Caughey. Second edition. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953. Pp. xiv, 672. \$9.00.

Occasionally there appears an almost perfectly balanced account of an American State or region, so comprehensively, clearly and thoughtfully written that the critic finds it difficult to discover any flaws in it, literary or otherwise. That is

nearly the case with John W. Caughey's history of California, which for more than a decade has been generally accepted as the standard one-volume work on the subject.

In the second edition of this fine work, the author has tried to bring his story down to date with chapters on the period during and since the Second World War. There is also some alteration and enlargement of earlier chapters and an appraisal of new contributions to the steadily growing list of Californiana. In effect, the five closing chapters of the 1940 edition have been worked over and enlarged into nine new chapters, covering the growth of California over a period of thirteen years.

Most writers on California, past and present, have a tendency to gild and glamorize its story. Caughey, however, is well aware also of the problems of California—such as population, labor, water-supply, transportation and pressure politics—which have become more acute since the early forties of this century. It is refreshing to find such impartial, judicious and loyal treatment of both the strength and potential weaknesses of the Golden State.

There seem to be no important errors in text or interpretation. But a somewhat defective map used in the first edition is reproduced (p. 75), showing a number of mistakes in the location of places and areas in Mexico. The illustrations and maps are fewer, less pertinent and less interesting than those of the first edition. That fact does not detract, however, from the consistently high quality of this excellent volume.

RUFUS KAY WYLLYS

Arizona State College.

The Time of the Gringo. By Elliot Arnold. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1953. Pp. 612. \$4.95.

Of necessity a good historical novel is hard to write. The author must operate within a framework of actual events, some of his characters must be real people, and he is therefore limited in what he can do. In *The Time of the Gringo*, Elliot Arnold has conformed to all the requirements and has done a fine job.

The book is placed in that period just prior to, and during the first part of, the American occupation of New Mexico, and Mr. Arnold's history is accurate. One wonders if the small details of background are as authentic as the principal events. It seems, at times, as if the uniforms were a little too magnificent, the dwellings a little too well built, the whole a trifle too clean. But this doubt appears only upon a critical second reading; when first read the story sweeps along, carrying all before it. The principal character, Mañuel Armijo, Governor of New Mexico, is magnificently drawn. Against him the others, real and fictional, cannot but lose stature. Villain, conniver, lecher, hero, Mañuel Armijo, as Mr. Arnold draws him, is a colossus.

It is not often that an historical novel is as well written as *The Time of the Gringo*. Costain can do it, so can Shellabarger, but neither better than Arnold. Recommended reading.

BENNETT FOSTER

Albuquerque.

Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest. By Ella E. Clark. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953. Pp. xii, 225. Maps, illus., source notes, bibliography, glossary. \$4.50.

If this review could be devoted exclusively to a discussion of the form of this book, it would be a pleasant task indeed to write it. The University of California Press has again produced a beautiful volume, the principal merit of which lies in its being graced by the illustrations of an exceptionally talented artist-anthropologist, Robert Bruce Inverarity. Now Director of the Museum of International Folk Art at Santa Fe, Inverarity has specialized in the art of the Northwest Coast Indians. His illustrations which accompany the present collection of tales are gracefully executed designs, each a gem, decorating, as appropriately as possible under the circumstances, texts which would have far better remained unadorned. It is a pity that so much editorial and artistic talent were lavished on so worthless a book, and it

would be regrettable if this disproportion of form and content were to mislead the general reader for whose benefit it was evidently put together.

What the author, who teaches English at the State College of Washington, has done is to take some hundred tales of various Northwest Coast tribes, mostly "from government documents, old periodicals, old histories . . . from manuscripts of Oregon and Washington pioneers," as well as from such respectable anthropological reports as those of Boas, Dixon, Sapir, and the like, and rewritten them for what the blurb on the jacket—and what a handsome jacket it is—calls "their entertainment value." Not only did she condense and excerpt, but she also "developed" and "restored," and, therefore, it seems questionable whether, as it is claimed, "the tales reveal much about the mind of the native American," or whether, as seems more likely, they reveal something of a tourist mentality. One of the most singular assumptions the author makes is that a tale will especially appeal to "the general reader" because it was recorded by his amateur colleague, "the general listener"; the implications of this assumption are hair-raising in their logical conclusion.

The tales are organized under five principal headings. In addition to the miscellaneous concluding section, they are, "Myths of the Mountains," "Legends of the Lakes," "Tales of the Rivers, Rocks, and Waterfalls," and "Myths of Creation, the Sky, and Storms." Less than a quarter of the collection is original, and all sources are scrupulously acknowledged. A bibliography of printed works and primary sources, and a glossary, in the Webster transcription, are appended. The tribal map and the map of the geographical features mentioned in the tales are clear and competent.

THOMAS A. SEBEOK

Indiana University.

Changing Military Patterns of the Great Plains. By Frank Raymond Secoy. Locust Valley, New York: Monographs of the American Ethnological Society, XXI, 1953. Pp. vii, 112. Maps, bibliography.

Mr. Secoy's study presents no field work to which the student of history or of anthropology would turn for new data. Facts available elsewhere in more detail and in over-all context are here presented in the form of brief meaty summaries, which may give one—in skipping from one subject to another—a sense of disjointedness. But these summaries are the data marshalled to illustrate two new, important, and very interesting theoretical points which he sketches in the first section and carefully, if succinctly, discusses in the conclusion. The first of these points should be of equal interest to historians and anthropologists: it covers the diffusion of horse and gun, separately, from two different points of contact between Indians and Whites and the eventual merging of the horse-pattern with the gun-pattern in producing the typical Plains Indian culture of the late 19th century.

The horse was primarily a contribution of the Spaniards, although at times it actually traveled ahead of them through the eager acceptance of this new mode of transportation by peoples of the southwestern high plains. Spanish interest in the Southwest was colonization and in the typical close control exerted by the Crown the safety of settlers was emphasized. Guns were withheld from Indians as far as possible. Horses, as well as sheep and cattle, also were withheld at first but soon became objects of barter as well as of theft. The animals thrive and reproduced well on the open ranges, and permitted the tribesmen mobility and increase of hunting range never before enjoyed. Their use gave rise to new military patterns which utilized old native weapons and new items of armor copied in leather from Spanish metal and hide prototypes. Security was so increased as to temporarily encourage the possibilities of horticulture, although as soon as enemy tribes likewise acquired horses, the sedentary periods required by farming became unsafe and hence undesirable.

The people of the northeastern plains, in contrast, saw little of the horse, which did not flourish in that area and whose usefulness was greatly inhibited by the type of terrain. The French and the English with whom Indians of that area came in contact were interested mainly in fur trade,

not in settlements. Guns were important not only as trade objects but also in permitting Indians to obtain the coveted furs. Greed for pelts largely overshadowed reflections that the guns might function equally in warfare. Actually, except when opposing nations stirred the Indians against each other, warfare with Whites appears to have been at a minimum until the period of large western migrations. Tribes of the northeastern plains modified their aboriginal pattern of warfare to permit the more individualistic use of firearms.

As time passed, the Post-gun—Pre-horse complex moved toward the south and west at the same time that the Post-horse—Pre-gun complex was moving out to meet it. The merging of the two resulted in the pattern of firing from the backs of horses running in a line past the enemy, recorded by Whites on the Santa Fe Trail and elsewhere. A series of maps illustrating the progress of horse and gun frontiers at successive intervals between 1630 (date of the earliest adequate documentary data on the area) and 1790 are of great aid in the reader's visualization of culture changes from the dynamic viewpoint set forth in this study.

The second point made by Mr. Secoy, one perhaps of more specific concern to anthropologists than to historians, concerns "certain inadequacies in the culture pattern concept, both as it has been applied in general and in the Plains area in particular." This concept, introduced by Ruth Benedict in 1922, Secoy neatly defines as concentrated upon a limited aspect of culture, "the part of any given culture that tends to form a system which is not only self-contained within this culture but which is also self-determining with respect to its next phase of development." When new elements chance to be introduced from the outside, the existent pattern presumably determines either their complete rejection or the type and degree of acceptance. But the three warfare patterns, Post-horse—Pre-gun, Post-gun—Pre-horse, and Horse *and* Gun, explains the author, each were widespread and basically alike wherever found. Hence the military pattern of any one tribe would appear to be part of a larger system involving the military patterns of all those tribes which engage in battle with each other. In the struggle for survival

any new developments in efficiency by one must be copied by the others if they are not to risk quick destruction or enforced retreat into new areas. This suggests that the culture of the tribe is of less effect in determining its military pattern than outside influences, and Secoy concludes that for investigations of such portions of a culture the culture pattern concept is "an ineffective tool."

On this point we must take issue in part. Granting that in such matters as warfare, and perhaps to a lesser extent in trade, the outside contacts involved must determine to a large extent the gross manifestations of the complex as seen in each tribe, other aspects of the total pattern will be found to vary appreciably if those tribes actually represent different cultures. Such features of difference, not covered in this monograph, would involve the relative importance of warriors in each tribe; the specific uses of war trophies—such as use of scalps in bringing rain, warning the owners of enemy approach, or as a medicine when chewed and the spittle mixed with clay to be taken in water; the types of war trophies taken and any entailed ritual; the types of functions considered appropriate as duties for warriors when not involved in battle; the type of purification for warriors who have killed; the participation of women in scalp dances or in care of scalps; the taboos concerning wives or families of warriors before, during, and after battles; etc. One basic point of similarity or of difference in the warfare pattern would be the attitude of the tribe toward warfare as such: for defense, for conquest of lands, slaves, or food, or as the paramount diversion of life.

Unless *all* of the traits within the military or any other culture pattern were identical in characteristics and in native evaluation between two or more tribes, the patterns should not be considered to duplicate each other. All anthropologists agree that as two or more tribes, nations, or cultures continue to interinfluence each other, whatever their type of contact, they become increasingly like each other through shared traits, and the rapidity with which various types of traits are accepted varies greatly. Basic techniques of warfare are shown by Secoy's study to be accepted as

quickly or even more quickly than the traits of material culture usually placed first in acculturation expectancy. But the identity of warfare or military *pattern* between tribes carrying cultures of appreciable difference remains open to question, unless one uses a much more limited definition of *pattern* than Benedict and most other anthropologists employ.

As a historical study covering not only tribal changes, conflicts and movements, but also the effect of horse and gun on the balance of power and on the fur trade, this paper is both interesting and stimulating reading. Even the footnotes quoting passages from early sources are worthy a glance from either professional or layman. And—to readers whose hobbies touch on early firearms and their use—the appendix entitled “The Use of the Flintlock Muzzle-Loader on Horseback” provides a delightful final dividend.

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