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THE 2013 GREAT PLAINS DISTINGUISHED BOOK PRIZE

R. M. JOECKEL

EDITOR’S NOTE: Blackfoot Redemption: A Blood Indian’s Story of Murder, Confinement, and Imperfect Justice, by William E. Farr, was selected as the recipient of the 2013 Great Plains Distinguished Book Prize. I asked one of the Book Prize judges, Dr. R. M. Joeckel, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, to comment on the book and the selection process. Dr. Joeckel is Professor and Research Geologist, School of Natural Resources, Conservation and Survey Division (Nebraska Geological Survey), as well as Professor in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, and Curator of Geology at the University of Nebraska State Museum.

After long deliberations by members of three subcommittees and the chairs of those committees, the Great Plains Distinguished Book Prize was awarded to Blackfoot Redemption: A Blood Indian’s Story of Murder, Confinement, and Imperfect Justice, by William E. Farr, published by the University of Oklahoma Press. As the chair of the prize committee, I am pleased to state that many fine books were submitted for the competition, and that each of them was meritorious in some way. Nevertheless, Blackfoot Redemption is unique among the submissions—and indeed among the vast majority of accounts of Plains Native American lives in the shadows of the post-Custer and pre-American Indian Movement era—in its well-researched and skillful narrative of what is a singularly incredible story.

A talented writer of historical fiction would be very hard pressed to have woven a more unlikely tale than the utterly true one of Spopee, a Canadian Blackfoot (Blood) convicted of murdering a white hunter named Charles Walmesley in the notoriously anarchic “Whoop-Up” border country of northwestern Montana in 1879. The protracted machinations of the nascent but politically charged judicial system of Montana Territory eventually left Spopee awaiting execution by hanging in early 1881, but unbeknownst to him, his journey into the arcane depths of American history was just beginning. There was to be no hanging after all. An unexpected commutation of his sentence and the inadequacies of the territorial prison system occasioned his internment at the Detroit House of Corrections, some 1,800 miles from the scene of the crime. Less than fifteen months after his arrival in Detroit, the inmate found himself whisked 500 miles yet farther eastward to Washington, DC, to a near-lifetime of confinement at the Government Hospital for
GREAT PLAINS DISTINGUISHED BOOK PRIZE

WILLIAM E. FARR

Professor of History, Emeritus
The University of Montana

Senior Fellow and founding director
of the O’Connor Center
for the Rocky Mountain West

BLACKFOOT REDEMPTION

A Blood Indian’s Story of Murder, Confinement, and Imperfect Justice

Published by the University of Oklahoma Press (2012)

Center for Great Plains Studies
University of Nebraska | www.unl.edu/plains
who, according to a latter-day Native American commentator, “was just like a white guy.” Preoccupied with property, position, money, and the prospect of government benevolence, Spopee didn’t even live for a year beyond his grand “homecoming” to Montana and reunion with a daughter who really never knew him.

As well or better than any other author, Farr manages the narrative transition from Spopee’s trial, his first brush with fame, through his ill-documented and forgotten years of hospitalization, to his headline-grabbing rediscovery and pardon. Farr’s account of Spopee’s anticlimactic demise provides ample basis for the reader to sympathize, yet it avoids pathos and, gratefully, allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusion from the convoluted tale. Although Farr claims he knew for many years “the intriguing if sketchy outlines of the Spopee story, as have others [my emphasis],” that he was able to elaborate, much less bring to life, the story of Spopee is achievement enough. The clarity of his writing and completeness of his factual accounting, together with the tempering of his noteworthy objectivity with a subtle but thoroughgoing empathy, render Blackfoot Redemption truly prizeworthy. Finally, Farr’s epilogue, unlike a host of others, is one actually worth reading.

The incredible story of Spopee is so well framed and related by Farr that it can be viewed as the story of a man, the story of a people, or the story of the changing times. It can certainly be taken as another account of the maltreatment and culture shock of Native Americans in the centuries of dishonor, but it emerges with equal merit as the saga of a single person who, irrespective of his race, culture, means, and social station, is unexpectedly, completely, and irreversibly severed from his frame of reference and becomes, to employ a hackneyed but appropriate phrase, “lost in the system.” Spopee is the forgotten man, many times over, and despite his queer adaptability, he is a victim of his own resilience. Therein lies an object lesson for all of us.
Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri
The Long Civil War on the Border
Edited by Jonathan Earle and Diane Mutti Burke

“A splendid primer that addresses the quintessential political and social issues that defined the fiercely contested western border. Going well beyond the traditional timeframe for the ‘Civil War era,’ it explores not just the antebellum and war years, but also the decades of reflection that followed.”
—Daniel E. Sutherland, author of A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War

“A fine anthology that underscores the central place of Kansas and Missouri in relation to the Civil War. It offers nuanced and wide-ranging explorations of history presented in an entertaining fashion.”—William Garrett Piston, editor of A Rough Business: Fighting the Civil War in Missouri

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funds, while others were equally certain of the reality of the connection and regarded the potential windfall great enough to justify any expense. Scientists in particular were almost unanimously doubtful (and occasionally hostile), and made their views clear in the scholarly organs of their profession. In the end, the experiments failed to prove a definitive connection; indeed, as many had predicted all along, sober assessments of the data yielded little to suggest any causal link between explosions and rainfall. Yet, curiously, this was by no means the end of the theory. Over the course of two decades, a colorful cast of characters, from an eccentric self-titled “general” to a millionaire cereal magnate-cum-social engineer, typified a stubborn core of devoted believers. Each attempted to prove (or make practical use of) the theory by discharging various weapons and explosives at the sky, hoping that raindrops would come down in exchange.

For two weeks in August 1891, the grounds of the “C” Ranch in rural West Texas thundered with the sound of explosions, as a federal government-sponsored expeditionary force hurled hundreds of pounds of heavy ordnance against an invisible enemy. In command of this unusual operation was “General” Robert Dyrenforth, who with $9,000 of congressional funding in pocket was doing his utmost to find out whether, as a bit of folk wisdom ran, the furious tumult and aerial concussions of battle could somehow cause rain. From tiny western hamlets to the metropolises of the East, Americans were fascinated by the sensational experiments. In magazines, newspapers, and journals, some scoffed at what they saw as a fool’s errand and an egregious waste of public funds, while others were equally certain of the reality of the connection and regarded the potential windfall great enough to justify any expense. Scientists in particular were almost unanimously doubtful (and occasionally hostile), and made their views clear in the scholarly organs of their profession. In the end, the experiments failed to prove a definitive connection; indeed, as many had predicted all along, sober assessments of the data yielded little to suggest any causal link between explosions and rainfall. Yet, curiously, this was by no means the end of the theory. Over the course of two decades, a colorful cast of characters, from an eccentric self-titled “general” to a millionaire cereal magnate-cum-social engineer, typified a stubborn core of devoted believers. Each attempted to prove (or make practical use of) the theory by discharging various weapons and explosives at the sky, hoping that raindrops would come down in exchange.

How is it that in spite of the vehement opposition of scientific experts and the ambiguous results of field tests, the theory maintained such a durable and loyal following, and even won federal funding? This essay will attempt to demonstrate that the appeal and resiliency of the concussive
theory of “pluviculture” stems from the fact that its foundation was cultural—rooted in social-political attitudes about the environment and progress—as much or more than it was scientific. In other words, within the United States, the theory established a devoted following and was able to withstand unanimous scientific critique and even practical failures because it originated in powerful and deeply held ideas in the American psyche of the Progressive era.

Foremost among these ideas was the notion of North America as a landscape that ought to be conquered and tamed by Americans as a kind of grand national endeavor—a sentiment neatly encapsulated and expressed by the phrase “manifest destiny.” In terms of the environment, this played out in a large-scale pattern of clearing away the wilderness and putting plow to earth wherever settlers wished to grow crops, with little regard to the local climate and terrain. And where Native groups were seen as an obstacle to progress, colonists and soldiers often waged war against them. The concussion theory, then, offered the psychologically satisfying thought that the struggle to tame the environment and the struggle against the Native peoples were in fact one in the same, and accordingly might be “won” with literally the very same “weapons” and strategies—the detonation of high explosives. For this reason, as we shall see, the language and aesthetics of militarism and conquest permeated the discourse and conduct of concussionist experiments. Furthermore, inflexible determination was elevated as the attribute both necessary and sufficient for success.

The lived experience of the Civil War was another factor that contributed to the resiliency of the concussionist position. The Civil War was a conflict of unprecedented carnage and destruction, of countrymen taking up arms against one another and national unity shattered, and of profound moral questions over the institution of slavery and the status of African Americans in American society. Alongside these heavy issues, however, veterans reflecting on their war experience also very often remembered the precipitation. A rifleman who fought at Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Shiloh, Chickamauga, or Gettysburg, to name only a few cases, would have experienced a drenching rain at some point after the battle’s conclusion. So strong was the apparent connection that it became a matter of general understanding that the concussion of battle would reliably bring precipitation. Hence, when Edward Powers published a chronicle of Civil War battles followed by rain in his 1871 War and the Weather, he was not advancing a novel theory but rather putting into print a conclusion that thousands of Union and Confederate soldiers from private to general had already formed in their own minds. In this way, the concussionist theory appealed to a shared experience lodged in the minds of an enormous cohort of former fighting men. This strong reliance on experience also served to immunize the theory against criticisms based on theories of meteorology and physics.

Even before independence, many Americans had regarded westward expansion as an expression of national progress and personal liberation, a sentiment that grew stronger with the advent of the industrial revolution and its concomitant urbanization in the early nineteenth century. The Great Plains had beckoned would-be settlers from the east to escape the ceaseless toil of the big city and come west to try their hand at agriculture, filling their lungs with the refreshing air of the independent life and revitalizing the national spirit. But where railroads and land barons had promised endless tracts of fecund soil and effortless harvests, geography often failed to match expectations, and in few places was this truer than the Llano Estacado, or Staked Plains, a sprawling, bone-dry expanse of beige that could go months or even years at a time with little to no precipitation. It was in this desperate situation that Americans began dreaming up other ways to bring precious moisture to the land. Some posited that the farmer who took a leap of faith in cultivating marginal land would be rewarded with increased rainfall. As early as 1867, University of Pennsylvania geologist Ferdinand Hayden was suggesting that the mere act of settlement was improving the climate of the West, a sentiment that C. D. Wilbur later summed up in the famous mantra “rain follows the plow.” A similar idea, that the electrical current carried in railroad tracks or telegraph wires had increased precipitation in the
West, was sufficiently believed that John Wesley Powell felt it necessary to include a disproof in his 1878 Report on the Lands of the Arid Region. In view of these facts, the concussion theory emerges as a natural next step in a progression of ideas in which tokens of civilization and progress were imagined to have some power to affect the environment. Concussionism, however, reduced the tokenism in favor of heavy firepower, preferring realist to symbolic thinking.

SETTING THE STAGE

The single most influential text in the story of the concussionism was Edward Powers’s War and the Weather. The book compiled a list of hundreds of battles that had been followed by rain, and the aforementioned wetness of the Civil War provided plenty of grist for Powers’s mill. War and the Weather first appeared in print in 1871, with a second edition appearing in 1890. In the interim between the publications, Powers and others of a similar mentality had persistently memorialized Congress, the army, the navy, and several other governmental offices to contribute funding and weaponry to test the idea, and scored a crucial convert in the person of Illinois senator Charles B. Farwell. Farwell made the cause a pet project, introducing several requests for funding in the Senate, and finally gained traction with his colleagues in 1890, the same year War and the Weather reappeared for a new generation of readers. By that time, the rainy battles of the Civil War would not have been so fresh in the public memory as they had been in 1871, but another factor had had by then emerged to renew the relevance and popularity of the theory: accelerating settlement of the Great Plains coupled with severe and recurring droughts in the late 1880s. At Farwell’s behest, Congress authorized $9,000 to be set aside for testing the strange hypothesis. As nothing of this sort had ever been attempted before, there was some uncertainty as to which branch of the government ought to handle it, but it was eventually decided that the most appropriate agency was the Division of Forestry, then within Jeremiah Rusk’s Department of Agriculture. This decision would put something of a wrinkle in the proceedings;
iel Ruggles, who in 1880 had patented a method of artificial rainmaking involving balloons with attached dynamite charges, and Edward Powers, whose book had been so instrumental in transforming a folk theory into an object of serious scientific inquiry. Rounding out the investigative team was George E. Curtis of the Smithsonian Institution, a meteorologist who, like division chief Fernow, was sharply skeptical of the principle at the foundation of the endeavor.11

EXPERIMENTING BEGINS
Beginning on August 9, Dyrenforth and his party began unleashing their fearsome barrages against the atmosphere (initially at the “C” Ranch and subsequently at El Paso and San Diego, Texas, at the invitation of local businesses and municipal leaders), inflating and exploding several dozen oxyhydrogen balloons and detonating thousands of pounds of explosives over the course of several weeks. Dyrenforth took pains to ensure that the desert trial simulated a battle in both appearance and spirit. In terms of arrangement, the “general” arranged three parallel two-mile-long firing lines in a formation that must have resembled a battery of artillery pieces. On the front line was a row of jury-rigged mortars that were set up as to hurl dynamite and rackarock charges skyward. Supporting the front line was a line of custom-built kites with dynamite charges attached, tethered to the earth by electrical cable that also served to transmit the detonation signal. Finally, in the rearguard of the battalion was the “main line” at which twelve-foot balloons filled with oxygen and hydrogen gas would ascend hundreds of feet in the air to be exploded, like the kites, by electrical signals from the ground.12 But even in the superficial and the intangible details, Dyrenforth adopted a military model, sporting a pith helmet and cavalry boots throughout the investigation. The official party portrait shows the men relaxing on a porch, eight of them topped with helmets to match Dyrenforth’s, and three visibly gripping shotguns.13

PUBLIC RESPONSE
The enormous public appetite for news on the pluviculture experiments is attested by the enthusiasm with which hopeful Americans from the re-
CONCUSSIONISM AS MILITARY PROXY

Clearly, Dyrenforth’s desert venture was more than some parochial sideshow. On the contrary, it resonated with cultural attitudes about the environment, and gives us a window on some prominent modes of thinking about nature and settlement. In more ways than one, the din of the battlefield was very much in the minds of those who undertook, reported on, and thought about the experiments. Dyrenforth himself was clear that his driving methodology in the desert had always been “to imitate the effects of a great battle as nearly as possible.”20 In describing the proceedings, writers made frequent use of military imagery and terminology in their descriptions of elements of the experiment as well as of the entire enterprise, even when the connection was not necessarily an obvious one. “Sounding like the report of a six-inch rifle on shipboard” was the simile offered by a New York Times reporter, describing a trial explosion of one of Dyrenforth’s balloons in Washington, DC.21 A concerned citizen wrote the editor of the Times proposing that something similar to the undertaking in Texas be essayed in the East to relieve the ongoing drought there. “Let the forts on Governors Island, Fort Hamilton, and Staten Island, and the war vessels stationed at the navy yard commence a bombardment, and shake the heavens until the clouds yield rain. . . . Let the Department of War issue an order for a general bombardment,” he wrote, making abundantly clear his preference for heavy ordnance to less bellicose methods such as explosive hydrogen balloons or rackarock-laden kites.22

In yet another article, the writer noted that “the experimenters have maintained a continuous ‘skirmish’ at the field of operation, while the bigger ‘guns’ in the shape of oxygen apparatus and hydrogen generators were being set up.”23 Even in the context of the experiment, the gas generators, which merely supplied the hydrogen and oxygen for the balloons, had little in common with artillery pieces in either purpose or appearance. That the writer at any rate thought of them as guns illustrates the extent to which a strong undercurrent of military power informed understandings of what was taking place on the plains of Texas.

mootest corners of the nation cried out for haste. Henry Holdes, a self-described “poor farmer” from the remote frontier hamlet of Yuma, Colorado, wrote to Secretary Rusk, earnestly offering use of his land for any experiments at no charge, and thoughtfully including a hand-drawn map of his community and a table of meteorological observations.14 In Wichita, where the droughts of the late 1880s had taken a heavy toll, the Daily Eagle pleaded with the secretary of agriculture: “There could hardly be a more opportune occasion for making the experiment. . . . Try it, Uncle Jerry; try it now.”15

The speed with which news from Midland appeared in newspapers nationwide further illustrates the level of national interest. On August 10, a Monday, some twelve hours after the experiment’s opening salvo, rain began to fall and an enthusiastic party member wired Senator Farwell to share the good news; by Thursday, papers from coast to coast were ready to anoint the experimenters as the saviors of national agriculture. The Rocky Mountain News of Denver declared “They Made Rain,” while the Chicago Times proclaimed that the visionary Farwell had “outdone Moses.”16 As the experiments continued, the flood of positive press continued. The front page of the Washington Post announced “Bombs Cause Rain to Fall.”17 “Rain Made to Order” one New York Times front-page headline declared, informing readers that “it began to rain immediately” after Dyrenforth exploded a balloon and a healthy dose of dynamite. Two days later, readers learned that Van Horn, Texas, had experienced its heaviest rain in years, the cloudburst attributed to the party’s weather meddling.18 Not mentioned was the fact that Van Horn is some 180 miles from Midland. Such was typical of the Dyrenforth-friendly press: determined to report successful results, and not about to let facts stand in the way of a good story. Readers scarcely heard that August generally signaled the beginning of the rainy season in the Texas plains, or that fewer than half the barrages had resulted in rain of any appreciable volume (and in at least one of those cases, the Weather Bureau had already predicted rain anyway).19
In addition, besides the literary allusions, there were more literal factors that contributed to the view of the experiments as a military operation. The U.S. Navy supplied the party with iron turnings. Although the turnings were simply scrap metal to be used in the chemical production of hydrogen and oxygen, it is easy to imagine that someone not familiar with the term might have assumed that the navy was supplying Dyrenforth and his party with munitions. When the investigators relocated from Midland to El Paso, they met with the Major James Henton and Lieutenant S. Allen Dyer of nearby Fort Bliss, who put twenty privates from the Twenty-third Infantry at the disposal of the experimenters, which can only have reinforced the public image of the enterprise as a military undertaking.

If the experiments were indeed symbolic proxies for real battle, who was the enemy? The Washington Post typified the answer to this question, characterizing the high winds that were playing havoc with the balloon and kite operations as a "powerful and relentless enemy," adding that Dyrenforth and company had nevertheless scored "a fitting victory . . . in their efforts to shake water from the burning winds." Other newspapers identified the adversary as the clouds, the sky, or the atmosphere, but the underlying idea was usually the same: that the environment, unwilling to cooperate with the settlers’ designs upon it by selfishly withholding its vital moisture, was the enemy.

"CAN WE MAKE IT RAIN?"

Another important element that emerges in literature sympathetic to Dyrenforth’s experiments is a characteristic prioritizing of experience over meteorological theory and, furthermore, a feeling that inflexible willpower, rather than scientific method, was the key to success. After all, War and the Weather was not much more than a compendium of battle narratives appended with a dash of tentative meteorological theory. A letter to the New York Times considered the concussive theory "proven" based solely on "the testimony of many general officers engaged in the Mexican war and in the late civil war," while another concerned citizen opined that the results, not the mechanism, should be the main object of interest, declaring "after the thing is done we shall all be in a receptive mood for the explanation of how it is done." In a letter quoted in Scientific American, Senator Farwell explained that his belief in the rainmaking power of concussion came not in connection with any understanding of atmospheric moisture but rather from the "historical and undisputed" understanding that "that after all the great battles fought during the century, heavy rainfalls have occurred." The New York Times, in explaining the influx of rain that had accompanied the desert trials, observed that "[t]he Scientific Person has not been heard from," but that "Gen. Dyrenforth is not a man with a [proof], but a man of ideas."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the "general" in command of the experiments was of a similar mentality. In October 1891, after the investigators’ explosives had fallen silent, Dyrenforth took up the affirmative position in a marquee column for the North American Review entitled "Can We Make It Rain?" Besides the customary chronicle of rain-soaked battles from recent history, Dyrenforth included a battery of testimonial letters from particularly esteemed Civil War veterans to buttress his position. Among these luminaries were Joshua Chamberlain, then-governor of Maine who had been decorated with the Medal of Honor as a brevet major general in the Civil War; John McNulta, Illinois representative and Civil War general; and no less than James A. Garfield, former president and major general in the Union Army. And in his report to Congress, Dyrenforth appended his write-up with six full pages of testimonials from local eyewitnesses who had wandered by to observe the proceedings. When it came to meteorological theory, however, Dyrenforth had not much to say: in that same document, he admitted that although he had received a number of suggested theories as to the mechanism of concussive pluviculture, he was unable to understand many of them. But this was a small matter; crafting a rigorous theoretical basis for concussionism had always been of secondary importance. Rather, a social logic that prioritized empirical observation and bare-bones...
pragmatism informed and supported the reasoning of the concussionists.

In fact, Dyrenforth-friendly literature seems to have been aware of the incompatibility of their criteria of proof—based on experience, common sense, and intuition— with those of the scientific establishment and its functionaries, as the clashing paradigms engendered a simmering but perceptible mutual enmity. When peering across this gulf, pluviculture boosters painted their opponents as elitist snobs and bureaucratic jobsworths, and took a particular relish in narrating their failures.33 One writer, praising Dyrenforth’s proactive use of the congressional appropriation mused that the $9,000 might otherwise have been “squandered” had it instead been invested in the Weather Bureau “which, as everybody knows, is supplied ad nauseum with every sort of weather except the desired or expected sort.” Referencing the forestry chief’s antipathy for the Dyrenforth expedition, the same author scoffed, “Mr. Fernow, we regret to say, thought that Gen. Dyrenforth could not make it rain, and proved that he could not by illustrious names which we will not mortify by citing here any further than may be necessary.” A New York Times columnist looked forward to the inevitable “mystification of the nearest local weather sharp . . . and the forcible overthrow of all the accumulated lore and stock signs of the Signal Bureau and its observers.” The “general” himself apparently felt a similar disdain for bureaucratic naysayers. The ranch-hand cowboys, he claimed in an interview, were far more knowledgeable in weather matters than office-bound meteorologists, whom he derisively called “those special advisory agents of Providence on weather matters.”

As tantalizing as the prospect of rain on demand may have been (or perhaps because it seemed too good to be true), the concussionists’ doubters were many, and made their views known as loudly as the supporters. Forestry Division chief Fernow, thankful to have had the experiment taken off his hands, was nevertheless aghast at the choice of Dyrenforth as the principal investigator. “I strongly advise everybody to have his ark ready for the deluge,” he quipped.37 The volume of reliable information trickling out of Texas increased, and the mediocrity of the results became more apparent. Skeptical newspapers, which probably outnumbered the faithful from the end of August onward as the smoke cleared, characterized the experiments as “absurd, not to say shameless, misrepresentation,” “an utter and ridiculous failure,” and other choice phrases.38 The New York Times—which in August had published its fair share of booster columns for Dyrenforth and company—by November was now playing the experiments for laughs. As the city water reservoirs ran dangerously low, it mused that the National Guard might lend a hand by engaging in some artillery practice—but only as a “jocular suggestion.”39 George Curtis, the meteorologist assigned to the expedition, penned a blistering tirade for the St. Louis Republic, calling the experiment a “miserable farce” and its commanding general “an inexcusable bungler . . . his botchwork a burlesque on science and common sense.”40 Not fully drained of his frustration, Curtis went on the attack again in the following year, writing that to promulgate the concussionist hypothesis was “to reject the light of civilization and to retrograde to a cruder and less rational apprehension of natural phenomena.”41

Though Curtis’s critiques may have been particularly searing, his sentiment was not atypical of his profession. Publications associated with related sciences such as Nature, Science, American Meteorological Journal, and Engineering Magazine, to name a few, printed essays often laced with scornful undertones of varying degrees of subtlety, confidently asserting the impossibility of concussive pluviculture and tearing apart Dyrenforth’s methodology. The Meteorologist declared the theory “low and degrading.”42 Physics professor Alexander Macfarlane, who like Curtis was an eyewitness to the goings-on, hammered out a fulminating critique for the inaugural issue of the Transactions of the Texas Academy of Science, peppered with phrases and terms such as “no better than the medicine man of the Indians,” “useless,” “impostor,” “ignorance,” and “so-called facts and cranky arguments.”43 The acidity of the scientists’ counterattack against the concussionists underscores the epistemological and methodological differences between the two groups.
When Curtis, Macfarlane, and others like them wished to rebut the concussionists, there was no shared foundation of knowledge on which they could construct the kinds of collegial arguments they would have made against a fellow scientist in the pages of Scientific American.

DYRENFORTH’S SUCCESSORS

Public esteem for Dyrenforth reached its zenith in the Texas plains in August 1891 but did not maintain its lofty position for long. The Department of Agriculture declined to renew his appointment as special agent after his term expired the following summer. As concussionism’s critics grew more numerous and vocal, the diehard believers, including Edward Powers, the father of the theory, wasted no time in making a scapegoat of the “general,” blaming the failure of the experiments on Dyrenforth’s shoddy execution. The man once dubbed “General Jupiter Pluvius” now had a new nickname: “Dry-henceforth.”

Yet even as the champion sank into disrepute and obscurity, the cause persisted, with the hallmarks of incorporated militarism and social logic. As the government tests came to an end in Texas, a coalition of local politicians and business leaders came together to pledge to carry on the experiments on their own funding. In 1894, during an especially dry summer, a group of Nebraska citizens formed the “Rain God Association,” a kind of rainmaking militia that raised $1,000 to give the concussion theory a trial of their own. The “Rain Gods” built a 200-mile line of gunpowder firing stations on hilltops along the forty-second parallel, and detonated them simultaneously, to no appreciable effect. In the first decade of the twentieth century, it was not uncommon in times of forest fire for locals to petition their local army or naval base for a barrage to try to bring some rain clouds. The most serious post-Dyrenforth inquiry into concussive pluviculture, however, came about twenty years after the “general” and his party had finally decamped from Texas, but it unfolded in the very same locale as the 1891 trials.

In 1910, breakfast cereal king Charles W. Post’s experimental colony at Post City, Texas, had been up and running for about four years. Located about one hundred miles northeast of Midland, Post and his colonists had thus far eked out meager harvests by experimenting with expensive irrigation systems, cultivating unconventional, drought-resistant crops, and employing dryland farming techniques. Post, however, saw the potential for much more in the land, and after an exhaustive study of rainmaking was convinced that Dyrenforth had been on the right track all along and the concussion theory had merit. “General J.G. Dyrenforth, a well-known scientist and meteorologist . . . left no doubt . . . that the rains were caused by the explosions,” Post proclaimed in a special piece for Harper’s Weekly. “[T]he world, generally, seems to have forgotten that rain could be produced artificially.”

Between 1910 and 1912, Post conducted dozens of experiments, or “battles” as he preferred to call them, at times also employing the terms “attack upon the elements” and “fight with Jupiter”—and in so doing repeated all the characteristic elements of the previous generation’s concussionists. For example, in conducting his trials,
Post directed his managers to try to emulate a battle, and by one account succeeded spectacularly. In 1911 a reporter for the Beckham County Democrat happened to pass by Post City during a “battle” and recorded his impressions:

[Al]ong the verge of cliffs we could see the flash, the clouds of smoke rising and with our ears pierced by the deafening reports we were with Roosevelt at San Juan Hill and were storming the block house. . . . [A]s the increased thundering of the guns seemed to rend the very air over and around us, we thought we were with General Hooker at the Battle Above the Clouds.52

Like his pluvicultural predecessors, Post’s results were at best inconsistent. From the spring of 1911 to the summer of 1913, he waged about twenty-one “battles,” but only half the time did rain follow. Yet his patience for failure was virtually unlimited: after each unsuccessful effort, he would simply fine tune some variable or other and perhaps increase the tonnage of explosives (and on one occasion blame his supplier for faulty dynamite), as if the outcome of the experiment had been a tantalizing near miss. The key to this conviction can be found in a letter he wrote to his managers, castigating them for a perceived lack of interest in the project: “I want extraordinary attention given to this subject,” he insisted, “for it means a very great deal to the country at large, and all of us are included.”53 For Post, then, the “battles” for rain were no less than battles for the fate of the nation, the outcomes of which depended upon man’s ability to master the environment. Though he was far too young to have fought in the Civil War, he made frequent reference to downpours that had supposedly followed the momentous clashes from that conflict, and probably imagined that just as in those battles, unwavering determination would be necessary for victory. “In these experiments we are following a practice that absolutely and unfailingly did produce rain during the Civil War,” he wrote, invoking the socially persuasive power of memory and experience. “Every man who was in battle knows that rain invariably followed the heavy concussions.”54 Nonexperiential knowledge, by contrast, was of less consequence: “I am not so much interested in the scientific as the practical side,” Post wrote. “I am more engrossed in the results than the method.”55 Indeed, Post made clear his distrust of certain naysaying scientists, declaring with certainty (as many optimistic concussionists had done before him) that “the theory of artificial rain making is not the mere chimera that some scientifically inclined men would have us believe.”56

THE SPIRIT OF AMERICAN RAINMAKING

In 1894, Mark W. Harrington, chief of the Weather Bureau, completed an essay for the Smithsonian Institution’s annual report. Titled “Weather Making, Ancient and Modern,” he identified three classes of weather-making efforts from human history, which corresponded to a civilization’s stage of advancement. The first and most primitive of these was the class of superstitious efforts, which originated in formal or organized religious belief. Following this was the class of folklore remnants, which were said to be fragments and vestiges of the first type, yet maintained “a curious persistency in civilized countries.” Finally, the class of physical methods, which Harrington proclaimed was “mainly American and intensely practical,” appealed to objective physical laws rather than psychic impulses as the first two did.57 Harrington sorted Dyrenforth’s escapade into the third category, but as we have seen, a great deal if not most of the logic behind it spawned from social expectations and beliefs. Although its adherents claimed scientific legitimacy, this was more a vulnerability than a strength, as it demanded testable and falsifiable grounds for inquiry. Its great resiliency and durability—its “curious persistency,” to borrow Harrington’s term—came from the fact that it appealed to intuitive and obvious ideas that were firmly anchored in contemporary notions of nature and the “rightness” of the American conquest of North America.

In his Harper’s Weekly essay, Post perfectly encapsulated the spirit that had motivated both him and concussionists past:
In the spring of 1911 crops on the ranch began to need rain. There were no signs of nature that pointed to any immediate conclusion of the drought. There was no method by which I could run irrigation ditches in time to alleviate conditions. It was under the stress of these conditions that I resolved to carry the war into the country of Jupiter Pluvius and bombard him until he surrendered enough rain to save the crops.58

CONCLUSION

Post and the settlers had come to the West with the intention of conquering and reshaping what they found there to suit their needs. When something stood in the way of that vision, whatever it was, Americans relied on their will and strength to smash through the obstacle.

In Post’s experiments, we can discern distinct echoes of the very same driving forces that informed the mentality of the previous generations of concussionists. Where Dyrenforth sported cavalry boots and bestowed upon himself a lofty military rank, Post conducted “battles” and made sure that the Civil War was never far from anyone’s mind in the process. Like-minded Americans picked up on these threads, which we see played out in the frequent and occasionally strained allusions to weapons and battles in contemporary literature. From this we can understand that the prevailing mentality of dominating the continent from the 1890s to the 1910s tended to conflate conquest of the natural world with military conquest.59 As well, from the publication of War and the Weather in 1870 onward, a powerful social logic worked behind the scenes to provide a convincing and durable foundation for the belief—a logic that drew on intuitive and experiential knowledge while downplaying abstract and objective scientific principles.

The persistence of concussionism in the national consciousness illuminates a mechanism by which nonexpert theories about the environment can ostensibly root themselves in “science” yet can withstand both material counterevidence and adamant opposition from the scientific establishment—a phenomenon with clear contemporary relevance. Concussionists from Powers to Post made gestures toward the laws of meteorology and physics but in the main traded in social logic, grounding their arguments in appeals to subjective experience, common sense, folk knowledge, intuition, and the like.

The concussionism craze also illustrates the fundamental contingency of the climate change denial movement. About a century ago, when the socioeconomically Progressive ethos of continual growth and improvement demanded that rain come to arid regions of the country, settlement boosters assembled a quasi-scientific narrative to support the belief that weather was something that could be easily controlled and manipulated through artificial means. However, when the prospect of climate change has shifted from advantageous to potentially catastrophic, followers of a similar conservative doctrine now find it prudent to deny the possibility that human activity could be the cause of climate change, or that such a phenomenon could even exist. The idea common to both cases is that the invisible hand of economic progress will reshape the environment for the benefit of producer and consumer. In this way we see that the latter-day aversion to the possibility of climate change is in no way an essential facet of the American conservatism, but rather is contingent upon the perceived consequences that climate change itself is seen to engender.

NOTES

1. Clark C. Spence and James R. Fleming have contributed probably the most thorough treatments of the subject of “scientific” rainmaking in the United States. To answer the question of why the theory persisted, Spence points to a wave of sympathetic news coverage that immediately followed the first desert volleys. See Spence, “The Dyrenforth Rainmaking Experiments: A Government Venture in ‘Pluviculture,’” Arizona and the West 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1961): 232. While Spence is correct, there are reasons to doubt that the impact of favorable press could have been so great. Consider the not insignificant volume of skeptical press published during the same period, the brevity of the wave (not longer than two weeks), and the fact that the press was almost unanimously against the idea thereafter. Fleming argues that the experiments should be un-
derstood within the pattern of “pathological science,” propelled not by pure inductive reasoning but rather by tacit (and often unconscious) political, social, and cultural norms. See Fleming, Fixing the Sky: The Checkered History of Weather and Climate Control (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 9, 74–75. I believe Fleming’s notion a good one, especially in that it helps explain the surge of positive press noted by Spence. In this essay, I take a position similar to Fleming, but locate and examine the particular historical factors that were in play in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that lent sticking power to the concussive theory of rainmaking. I support this position through recourse to known contemporaneous cultural attitudes and analysis of relevant literature such as newspaper articles and magazine features. Furthermore, I attempt to trace a connection between the mindset of the concussionist stalwarts and the modern anthropogenic climate change denial movement, in order to offer some insight into the mentality behind the latter.

2. Neil Maher’s essay “Crazy Quilt Farming on Round Land”: The Great Depression, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Politics of Landscape Change on the Great Plains during the New Deal Era,” Western Historical Quarterly 31, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 322–24, demonstrates this same ethos at work in the federal rectilinear land allocation program, which until the New Deal imposed a simple grid system on the land west of the Mississippi, deliberately ignoring local topography. Maher shows that one effect of this system was to symbolically flatten and homogenize the terrain of the American west.

3. “Not only has it been my experience that rain follows soon after every heavy cannonading,” wrote a former Union general “but that this was very generally conceded and understood in the army.” Qtd. in Robert G. Dyrenforth and Simon Newcomb, “Can We Make It Rain?” North American Review, no. 419, October 1891, 390.

4. Connected to this, we might also consider the special fondness some Americans have for their constitutional right to bear arms. A hypothesis that firearms could be used as a tool for improving climate would only have further empowered the Second Amendment and thereby struck an appealing chord for a great many Americans.


8. Ibid., 212.

9. Dyrenforth usually styled himself “general,” a title reproduced by most contemporary sources, though others prefixed his name with different ranks such as major or colonel. Spence notes: “Dependable biographical information on Dyrenforth is scarce and complicated by his own fertile imagination and the fact that for purposes of simplification he dropped the ‘St.’ from his name and changed the spelling of the family name from ‘Dyhrenfurth.’” Both variations and some other renderings of his surname occasionally appear in contemporary accounts. See Spence, “Dyrenforth Rainmaking Experiments,” 214n24. Nevertheless, it seems probable that Dyrenforth did indeed serve in the Civil War as a Union major, but no higher. See Fleming, Fixing the Sky, 65.


11. Ibid., 216.


14. Henry Holdes to J. M. Rusk, undated but probably early 1891, RG 95 (Records of the Forest Service), entry 123, box 1, National Archives, College Park, MD.


20. Dyrenforth and Newcomb, “Can We Make It Rain?” 396.


25. The trope of “environment as enemy” was already a deeply entrenched one by the 1890s. The
case of the U.S. Army Signal Office provides a good example of this. In 1870 the federal government established the first national weather reporting service from the remnants of the army’s Signal Corps. The goal of the new Signal Office—still under the jurisdiction of the War Department—was largely a continuation of its wartime function of providing intelligence on enemy movements as rapidly as possible, with the difference being that in 1870 the enemy was now weather patterns that threatened to disrupt agriculture, transportation, and commerce in general. Explained its chief signal officer in 1870: “The telegraph can announce meteorological observations, statistics, and reports giving the presence, the course, and the extent of storms . . . and their probable approach, as it would, in time of war, those of an enemy.” James Rodger Fleming, “Storms, Strikes, and Surveillance: The U.S. Army Signall Office, 1861–1891,” Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences 30, no. 2 (2000): 318–19.

26. The article “Producing Rain Artificially” in the British periodical Symons’s Monthly Meteorological Magazine, vol. 26, issue 36 (July 1891), 81, described it as “chiefly composed of accounts of battles followed by thunderstorms and more or less heavy rain—with a few pages of theoretical matter.”


30. The esteemed astronomer Simon Newcomb of Johns Hopkins University took the negative position: “A thousand detonations can produce no more effect upon the air, or upon the watery vapor in it,” he wrote, “than a thousand rebounds of a small boy’s rubber ball would produce upon a stone wall.” Dyrenforth and Newcomb, “Can We Make It Rain?” 401.

31. Ibid., 390–91.


33. This could well be regarded as a particular manifestation of a broad public dismissal of meteorology that prevailed in the late nineteenth century, which regarded the young science as a needless hyper-disciplinization of something simple, intuitive, and obvious. After all, what could a sling hygrometer (or any equally abstruse widget) possibly reveal about the weather that a quick glance out the window or the aching of an arthritic joint could not? Within this schema, the title of “professor” was sometimes applied, usually mockingly, to meteorologists. Bernard Mergen, Weather Matters: An American Cultural History since 1900 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 7–8.


48. Clark C. Spence, The Rainmakers: American “Plu-
experiments rarely failed to draw sizable crowds of bemused and bewildered onlookers, and there can be no doubt that they were spectacular shows for those lucky enough to witness them. But while the amusement factor certainly drew in crowds, it seems doubtful that the show itself was responsible for the tenacious persistence of the concussionist position over the span of years and decades. Indeed, not all those who watched were convinced of the wisdom of what they were seeing. An eyewitness to a 1911 experiment thought the director a little “techied in the head.” Qtd. in Eaves, “Charles William Post, the Rainmaker,” 429.

50. Dyrenforth was, generously, a meteorological dilettante, and certainly had no formal training or professional experience in the field; to describe him as “a well-known scientist and meteorologist” is so grossly misleading as to be essentially the equivalent of a lie, especially in light of the fact that Post claims earlier in the article to have done “exhaustive study” and “years of research” on the topic. Furthermore, if Post did indeed research the topic as thoroughly as he claimed, he cannot possibly have missed the deluge of literature in both newspapers and scientific periodicals that declared the experiments a failure.

51. Post’s “battles” were larger and costlier than any undertaken by Dyrenforth’s party, with hundreds and often thousands of pounds of dynamite (at a total cost of about $2,500) exploded in each trial. Charles Dudley Eaves calculates that Post expended the formidable sum of $50,000 over three years before his death in 1914 and also had plans to continue his battles indefinitely. “Charles William Post, the Rainmaker,” Southwestern Historical Quarterly 43, no. 4 (April 1940): 436.

52. Qtd. in Charles Dudley Eaves and C. A. Hutchinson, Post City, Texas (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952), 131. Dyrenforth’s and Post’s experiments rarely failed to draw sizable crowds of bemused and bewildered onlookers, and there can be no doubt that they were spectacular shows for those lucky enough to witness them. But while the amusement factor certainly drew in crowds, it seems doubtful that the show itself was responsible for the tenacious persistence of the concussionist position over the span of years and decades. Indeed, not all those who watched were convinced of the wisdom of what they were seeing. An eyewitness to a 1911 experiment thought the director a little “techied in the head.” Qtd. in Eaves, “Charles William Post, the Rainmaker,” 429.


54. Eaves and Hutchinson, Post City, 130.

55. Ibid., 127.


58. Post, “Making Rain While the Sun Shines.”

59. Fleming has observed that the militarist dimension of weather modification continues today, having persisted through the twentieth century and grown stronger during the Cold War, as Pentagon scientists dreamed up methods and devices to weaponize the weather at the cost of “declaring war on the stratosphere.” James R. Fleming, “The Climate Engineers,” Wilson Quarterly 31, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 48–49, 60.
Drought or the ever-present threat of it has had a pervasive effect on the region and its people. It molded the region’s settlement patterns, agriculture and commerce, stimulated innovation, aroused conflict between agriculturalists and environmentalists, and fueled litigation between states. Drought shaped how the people of the Great Plains think of themselves and their region and influenced their culture, literature, and art. Today it raises concern about whether the region will have sufficient water for its future.

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In the seventeenth century, when Europeans first arrived in what are now the New England and mid-Atlantic states, they encountered a wide array of indigenous tribes already calling the land home. The new settlers soon realized the importance of shell beads called wampum. Manufactured primarily along Long Island Sound, these beads, shaped from marine shells, could be made into belts or grouped as strings. Though whites failed to grasp the nuances of wampum culture, leading to the generalization of wampum as “Indian money,” they nevertheless recognized its significance in Native American trade and diplomacy. Eventually, wampum came to be used among whites as well, serving as a common monetary unit for Dutch and English colonists.

As the colonies and later the fledgling nation of the United States moved westward, frontiersmen attempted to follow patterns of Native American diplomacy already established. Such patterns included using wampum strings as trade goods on journeys of exploration and fur trading. However, tribes outside the Northeast did not produce their own shell beads, nor did many tribes know about the shell beads of the Munsee, Mohawk, and other tribes. Westward-expanding whites and displaced Native American tribes of the Northeast carried wampum into the lands surrounding the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. In doing so, these travelers introduced the Osage, the Kansa, the Pawnee, and many other tribes to the purple and white shell beads. The varied uses of wampum in the Trans-Mississippi West departed drastically from the established cultural significance of the beads in the Northeast. Although wampum played a traditional role in diplomacy in the West, there it was largely white-driven rather than devised by Natives. Most wampum in the West was used for personal ornamentation, completely removed from the beads’ original spiritual and symbolic aspects. Only in later decades did wampum beads find inclusion in traditional ceremonial objects and then only in limited quantities as components in larger artifacts.
Wampum is a tangible example of the East’s influence over the West in the early nineteenth century. The presence of wampum across the Plains attests to whites’ wide-ranging and successful economic and diplomatic forays into the frontier. The beads’ spread both north and west from a locus on the Lower Missouri demonstrates a gradual process of cultural adaptation between Indians and whites as well as between Native tribes. By examining the written, material, and pictorial evidence, we can utilize wampum as a means to track this intercultural exchange over the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The essentially simultaneous appearance of identical wampum earrings in multiple eastern Plains tribes implies a close-knit intertribal material culture that had common styles and shared indicators of wealth and status. Wampum jewelry became a sign of power and affluence among these tribes, with whom it had a prominent place in formal and ceremonial attire. These Native cultural markers were in turn carried to the East by Indian dignitaries and recorded by portraitists like Charles Bird King, illustrating the cultural adaptations made possible by trade with the East.

This article seeks to trace the spread and varied use of wampum among the Native American tribes of the Great Plains. It first discusses the symbolism integral to northeastern wampum traditions and next examines wampum’s first appearances west of the Mississippi, beginning with French and British frontiersmen and followed by the Lewis and Clark expedition. After wampum’s introduction to the Plains, its usage falls into three major categories: eastern-style diplomatic rituals driven primarily by British influence, application in personal ornamentation and jewelry, and inclusion as a decorative element in sacred and ritual objects of the Plains cultures.

**WAMPUM’S SYMBOLIC VOCABULARY**

Among the Native peoples of the American Northeast, wampum beads held great symbolic and spiritual meaning. For example, historian James P. Merrell calls wampum the “Indians’ customary means of giving words weight.” Words alone held little meaning or trustworthiness in these cultures, even when they came from a person of high social standing. Thus, “true” words were always accompanied by presents of symbolically charged or economically valuable items, primarily strings or belts of wampum.

In these ritual contexts, the beads’ color, “specifically white, red, and black, [was] fundamental to the symbolic meaning or cultural ‘value’ of wampum.” Anthropologist George R. Hamell goes on to describe these colors as they relate to the conditions or states-of-being of those giving the wampum. White beads represent “social states-of-being, exemplifying the desired state of the individual or community, physical, social, and spiritual well-being.” Black beads denote “ritual asocial states-of-being, such as the ‘darkness’ of mourning,” and red-painted beads reflect “antisocial states-of-being,” war in particular. Thus, the colors of beads used in a belt or string corresponded with the particular purpose for which the wampum was intended. A primarily white belt with dark patterns or pictographs communicated a positive social message while a primarily dark or red belt represented less amiable circumstances.

According to Hamell, early settlers “recognized the analogy in the symbolic functions and meanings of [white wampum] beads and that of silver, gold, and diamonds in European traditions.” Not only were these items wealth in terms of monetary value, but they also visibly represented social well-being. Given this cross-cultural correlation, Hamell speculates that these “white, bright, and light things are ‘good to think’” and represent positive ideas of life and “correlated states of physical, social, and spiritual well-being.” If European settlers were aware of these deeper levels of meaning, the more practical understanding of wampum’s use in commencing and ending hostilities took precedence.

**FRENCH AMPUM ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI**

Wampum, though well established among the Indians of the Northeast, was originally a purely regional commodity. European explorers of the late
seventeenth century carried the first wampum to reach the Mississippi River. The French in particular, familiar with the use of wampum among tribes in the Northeast and Quebec, brought wampum strings and trinkets with them as they explored the newly christened Louisiana. One early episode of wampum trade with Plains tribes concerns Father Louis Hennepin, a French priest and companion of René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, explorer of the Great Lakes and later the Mississippi River valley. Hennepin, traveling near the junction of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers in 1680, encountered a war party of Sioux and was swiftly surrounded. That evening, Hennepin and his companions were alarmed to discover that “the majority of warriors were in favor of tomahawking them.”11 To appease his captors, Hennepin offered “several fathoms of French tobacco, axes, knives, beads, and some black and white wampum bracelets,” which the warriors divided among themselves.12 Though less an example of trade than a desperate bribe, this incident is potentially the first introduction of wampum to the Sioux and foreshadows the value placed on wampum by Plains tribes as ornaments, independent of the rituals of wampum diplomacy.

BRITISH WAMPUM DIPLOMACY

While the French can be credited with introducing wampum beads to the tribes of the Great Plains, both Indian and European diplomats brought the practice of wampum belt diplomacy to the region. A complex intercultural “treaty protocol,” based in Iroquois political ritual, “spread in the mid-seventeenth to early eighteenth century to other Native groups and to French, English, and Spanish officials throughout the Northeast, the Great Lakes, and the Southeast.”13 However, the timing of the protocol’s appearance among certain groups is difficult to ascertain.

When the British moved to occupy formerly French-held territory near Green Bay, Wisconsin, they encountered a number of Great Lakes tribes using wampum belts in a manner comparable to that seen on the Eastern Seaboard. In 1761, British lieutenant James Gorrell found his diplomatic efforts stymied when a promised supply of wampum was not available.14 Gorrell quickly learned “that there was a vast number of Indians dependent upon [wampum], more than was ever thought of,” and so he requested wampum be sent from the garrison at Detroit.15 When wampum could not be procured from Detroit, Gorrell had to “borrow of the Indian squaws,” paying them immediately and promising to replenish their stores when the next trader carrying wampum arrived.16 The following year, Gorrell met with members of the Winnebago and Iowa tribes. While the Winnebago delegation offered a wampum belt and declared their peaceful intentions, the Iowa brought nothing. However, they accepted belts from Gorrell “for the return of prisoners.”17 When the chief of the Iowa visited in June 1763, he too came empty-handed, though the British presented him with gifts.18 These interactions between the Iowa and the British illustrate a persistent factor in wampum’s westward spread: piecemeal tribal participation.

Clearly, members of the Iowa tribe understood the rituals of wampum belt diplomacy. Their neighbors the Winnebago fully participated, and Iowa representatives witnessed Winnebago exchanges with whites. The Iowa themselves accepted wampum belts from the British and fulfilled the terms of the agreements they symbolized. Why the Iowa evidently did not present wampum belts to their white or Indian allies is unclear. Gorrell’s first Iowa visitors even apologized for not bringing belts, demonstrating an understanding that the whites expected belts to be presented.19 Though they surely understood the processes and implications of wampum diplomacy, the Iowa could have accepted belts only to humor their white acquaintances. To tribes without existing traditions of wampum use, belt exchanges came about solely in the context of intercultural encounters. The practice’s Native origins were inconsequential; wampum was a British symbol, not an Iroquoian one. Likewise, the British assumed all Indians valued wampum, so they continued to send wampum belts to new tribes, inadvertently introducing many nations to the practice. In this way, cultural misunderstanding spread ceremonial wampum use westward.
There are many different factors that could explain selective participation by the Iowa and other tribes of the area. One reason could be the high cost of creating wampum belts. The Natives of the Great Lakes could not make the beads themselves. Instead, traders would have carried the beads nearly 1,000 miles overland from production centers on the New York coast. Furthermore, creation of wampum belts required a specialized technique of cutting, drilling, and shaping shells— one that may not have been known by the Iowa and neighboring tribes. Practical reasons aside, however, the inscrutable rules of cultural taste and etiquette played a role. The Iowa and other nonparticipating tribes may have simply not valued wampum in the way that belt-making tribes did.

Despite uneven participation by the tribes they encountered, British officials held to established patterns of wampum belt diplomacy in the West well into the nineteenth century. In 1778, army officers hoping to recruit fighters on the side of the crown in the American Revolution sent wampum belts to many tribes, including the Iowa. Two years later, Lieutenant Governor Patrick Sinclair delivered wampum belts to nine tribes, including the Iowa, the Sioux, the Sauk, and the Fox, in order to rally support for the capture of Spanish-held St. Louis. Though none of these four tribes used wampum belts among themselves, each heeded the call to arms. Soon after, British wampum reached the Missouri River where it was used to coerce Sioux bands into alliance with Britain and hostility with American fur traders. In 1817, fur trader Manuel Lisa wrote to William Clark, then governor of the Missouri Territory, warning him that “wampum was being carried with British influence all along the banks of the [Missouri] river.”

INTERTRIBAL WAMPUM EXCHANGE IN THE WEST

Although ceremonial wampum usage in the Iroquoian tradition often corresponded with European activity in the West, wampum exchanges between tribes did occur along the Mississippi. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, tribal leaders in the Old Northwest spearheaded many of these ceremonial uses. For instance, in July 1812, as the War of 1812 began, Tenskwatawa, brother of “the Shawnee Prophet” Tecumseh, “sent each of the western tribes a pipe and a belt of wampum” to call them into council to strike against American frontiersmen.

Tribes migrating from the East also spurred wampum exchanges on the frontier, though not always with full participation from western tribes. Members of the Delaware tribe, wampum makers originally from New Jersey and New York, settled in Kansas in 1829. Conflicts between the transplanted Delaware and their new Plains neighbors began swiftly. In 1833, John Treat Irving Jr., nephew of author Washington Irving, attended a peace council between the Delaware and the Pawnee at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas. In council, a Delaware warrior named Sou-wahnock “presented a string of wampum to the Wild Horse, as being the most distinguished warrior of the Pawnee nation.” Wild Horse made a speech of thanks and goodwill but offered no wampum or other gifts in exchange. The degree to which Wild Horse and his fellow Pawnee understood the significance of the wampum is unknown. Even with the original practitioners of wampum diplomacy demonstrating its rituals, wampum exchanges failed to find a true cultural niche among the tribes native to the eastern Plains.

LEWIS AND CLARK’S WAMPUM DIPLOMACY

Commissioned in 1803 by Thomas Jefferson to explore the newly purchased Louisiana Territory, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark spread wampum farther west than ever before. Lewis’s supply lists featured an entry for five pounds of white wampum to serve as “Indian presents.” Expedition documents refer only to white wampum, except for one small mention of blue or purple wampum traded to the Nez Perce in exchange for horses. The captains primarily used wampum, along with tobacco, medals, and American flags, as part of their standard gift package to Indian chiefs and dignitaries. In contrast to previous
British and American wampum diplomacy, Lewis and Clark distributed plain strings of wampum, not wampum belts. Wampum's inclusion as part of the expedition's supplies indicates that the captains knew its value as a staple of diplomacy in the East. However, if Lewis and Clark intended to replicate such diplomacy in their Indian encounters, they were unsuccessful. The explorers presented Indian gift packages with great ceremony involving lengthy speeches from the captains, shooting displays, and, inadvertently, presentations of Clark's slave, York.30 None of the expedition's diarists note the Native leaders' reactions to the wampum, only that it was given. Although the chiefs made speeches of their own and amicably smoked with the captains, none reciprocated the gift of wampum in the form of strings or belts. If these men attributed symbolic meaning to the strands of white beads, their thoughts were lost amid the excitement of trinkets, tobacco, and Clark's “turrible” servant.31

As the Corps of Discovery moved farther west, Native reception of wampum grew colder. Tribes living along the Columbia River had never seen wampum before, but they had developed very specific preferences for the beads they would accept, preferring blue glass trade beads above all others. In January 1806, Clark wrote of the Clatsop tribe, “The best wampum is not so much esteemed by them as the most inferior beads.”32 An incident in April 1806 illustrates that wampum was not a universal commodity. The captains purchased a canoe from an Indian man along the Columbia for six fathoms (thirty-six feet) of white wampum. However, the man returned the following day with the wampum in hand, demanding his canoe back.33 Unlike on the Atlantic or the Great Lakes, where a belt of wampum could end a war, on the Pacific Coast wampum was meaningless. Between its lack of trade potential and its lackluster reception as a diplomatic gift, wampum benefited Lewis and Clark very little during their journey. In fact, the expedition would have been better served by jettisoning the wampum in favor of extra blue beads, which among the Indians could, as Lewis wrote, “be justly compared to goald [sic] or silver among civilized nations.”34

UNITED STATES INDIAN FACTORY SYSTEM

Upon Lewis and Clark's return to St. Louis in 1806, travel and trade by white Americans boomed in the West. In the following decades, two major powers struggled for economic control of the region, and both utilized wampum to do so. Beginning in 1795 and continuing until 1822, the United States government operated the Indian factory system, establishing trading posts to supply Native peoples with otherwise unavailable goods. Though the posts themselves were called factories, they were in actuality more like small military garrisons and produced no manufactured goods. Overseen by a division of the War Department, the factory system's goals were diplomatic more than economic, with the government hoping the Natives “would show their appreciation by being friendly to the United States and refraining from engaging in war.”35 The Louisiana Purchase opened a vast number of new trade opportunities for the factory system, allowing it to expand beyond the American Southeast. In 1804, Congress approved a sum of $15,000 to extend the system into the new territory and $100,000 for the construction of new trading posts.36

As the factories expanded into the Louisiana Territory, fur-trading companies arose as a sort of private counterpart to the federal Indian factory system. In contrast to the government program's diplomatic intent, the companies' goals were wholly economic. Spearheaded by entrepreneurs like John Jacob Astor, fur companies grew to become influential players in the economy, government, and Native relations in the West.

In both the federal and private systems, day-to-day operations looked largely similar. Customers could purchase items on credit and pay it back through the sale of furs. Native customers' tastes and whims almost entirely dictated trade-good selections. A change in available wares or a shortage of a particular item could cause trade to halt entirely. To prevent disputes and loss of profit, the head of each post was responsible for ordering only goods that appealed to the locals and their specific requirements. For this reason, the
ledgers and letter books of the various posts provide an invaluable resource for tracking wampum usage in the Plains.

Although factory logs do not include which customers purchased wampum or the purposes for which it was used, the amounts and prices recorded give an indication of supply and demand on the frontier. In 1808, a thousand white beads of wampum cost $1.75, and a thousand gray or purple beads cost $3.00. Ora Brooks Peake, in *A History of the United States Factory System, 1795–1822*, notes that the factory system used nearly $1,500 of wampum annually. However, records from Fort Osage on the Missouri River in 1810 show a stock of $1,523.98 of wampum at that factory alone. Compared to other beads commonly traded at the factories, wampum was quite expensive. A pound of sky-blue glass trade beads cost $0.43 in 1810; 1,000 grains of wampum (wampum was sold by number of beads or “grains”) cost $3.00. The willingness of the federal government to pay such a premium for a comparatively small amount of product speaks to wampum’s place as a staple of Indian trade. Additionally, two other types of decorative shell products made their way to the Plains—moons and hair pipes. Moons were round, flat discs shaped from shells with a diameter of around three inches. Hair pipes were long, thick white shell beads often threaded onto lengths of hair, hung as ear adornment, or combined to make breastplates. Because these ornaments were made of materials similar to wampum, traders often called them “wampum moons” and “wampum hair pipes” despite their not being true wampum. After the Civil War, hair pipes and moons superseded traditional wampum beads as adornment among Plains tribes.

Over time, Indian buyers grew to prefer beads larger than the traditional ones used in wampum belts. Existing specimens range from 0.5 inches to 1.1 inches, twice to four times the size of traditional, or “council,” wampum, which typically measured close to a quarter inch in length. Indian trade officials, in a purchase order written in 1815, requested wampum beads to be “of a large size and the white should be as free of a yellow cast as possible.” By 1818, such demand for wampum existed that its price had more than doubled, and agents for the factory system and for John Jacob Astor’s American Fur Company struggled to purchase any from their East Coast suppliers. In February of that year, Ramsay Crooks wrote to Astor saying, “I have spoken to a man who promises to procure us Thirty thousand [beads]; though the competition for the article runs so high, that I put but little faith in his promise.” The federal government had no better luck. Superintendent of Indian trade Thomas McKenney wrote to employee Joseph Lopes Dias, a purchasing agent in New York, that he would double Dias’s commission on any wampum he managed to acquire, because wampum was “so troublesome to procure and claiming the same attention as articles the amount of which would far exceed that of wampum purchases, and with much less trouble.” The high demand for wampum even necessitated that the beads be sent to

![Fig. 1. Large “Campbell” wampum, which was manufactured by whites (A). Traditional belt, or “council,” wampum (B). Drawing by Devon Hanbey.](image-url)
factories via mail, rather than the typical ships and wagons, to save time.47

WAMPUM AS PERSONAL ORNAMENTATION

The large volume of wampum reaching the Great Plains led numerous tribes to find new applications for the beads. Most prominently, Plains tribes used wampum to create jewelry, primarily earrings and necklaces. The earliest evidence for wampum-bead earrings among Plains tribes comes from portraits painted by Charles Saint-Mémin of Osage tribe members. Though the precise dates are unknown, Saint-Mémin’s subjects sat for the portraits between 1805 and 1807, when a number of Indian delegations toured Washington, DC.48 Saint-Mémin’s Chief of the Little Osages, Osage Warrior I, and Osage Warrior II depict men of the Osage tribe wearing simple ear ornaments of strung wampum. The strings consist of alternating blue and white beads that hang through large slits cut in the men’s ears. First documented in these portraits, this style would later appear among nearly all the tribes of the Lower Missouri.

A decade later, white explorers began to document instances of Natives belonging to other nations wearing earrings similar to those seen in Saint-Mémin’s portraits. Physician Edwin James accompanied Major Stephen Harriman Long on an army expedition in 1819 to further explore the lands between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains. James’s account mentions that among the men of the Kansa tribe, “the outer cartilage of the ear is cut through in three places, and upon the rims, thus separated, various ornaments are suspended, such as wampum, string beads, silver or tin trinkets, &c.”49 Saint-Mémin’s Osage portraits potentially show three such ear slits, though wampum strings hang from only one. James later encountered a similarly ornamented member of the Otoe tribe, with “a profusion of wampum about his neck, and suspended to his ears.”50

Two years after James’s journey ended, German aristocrat Duke Paul Wilhelm of Württemburg began his own tour of North America. The duke recorded a more detailed description of Kansa jewelry, writing, “The ears of both sexes are perforated four times lengthwise, and in every incision hangs a bundle of blue and white porcelain sticks, which are valued highly by these Indians. The richer among them wear strings of such porcelain sticks around their necks.”51 Wilhelm’s term of “porcelain” was used in his original German manuscript, a borrowing from the French, who used the word to refer to wampum. In contrast to James’s notes and Saint-Mémin’s portraits, Duke Wilhelm claims Kansa women slit and ornamented their ears in the same fashion as the men of the tribe and that the ears are cut in four places, not three. Wilhelm observed members of the Iowa nation wearing wampum jewelry in this style as well.52 Wilhelm also writes that among the Pawnee, “sticks of porcelain, such as are sold by the traders, are considered of great value, and they wear them in their ears, around their necks, and around their wrists.”53
WAMPUM IN INDIAN PORTRATURE

Though Edwin James and Duke Paul Wilhelm provide some indication in their accounts of how far wampum jewelry spread, neither expedition brought back pictorial evidence. Fortunately, beginning in 1822, Thomas McKenney commissioned Washington portraitist Charles Bird King to paint members of visiting Indian delegations for the federal government just as Saint-Mémin had done fifteen years prior. Across a twenty-year period, King painted more than 140 portraits of dignitaries from over a dozen tribes. King’s first subjects, arriving in the spring of 1822, came to the nation’s capital “as part of an elaborate scheme designed to influence the Upper Missouri tribes to accept peaceably American expansion into their country.” Where written sources like James’s and Wilhelm’s journals lack detail, King’s portraits show with precision and clarity how the Natives living along the Missouri used wampum as ornamentation.

Black (or blue) and white wampum earrings in the style described by James and Wilhelm appear in more than a dozen of King’s Indian portraits, worn by members of five tribes: Iowa, Kansa, Otoe, Pawnee, and the merged tribe of the Sauk and Fox. Among those wearing the earrings, the style is very much the same. Each ear has one large cut in the earlobe and holes around the ear’s outside edge. In every case, the wampum strings follow an alternating pattern of black and white beads.

Variations in this style of ornamentation include the number of holes in the ear and the...
length of the wampum strings looped through each hole. Monchonsia, a Kansa Chief, shows its subject with very tight loops of wampum in his ears. Compare this to the long, loose loops worn by the subjects of Choncape, or Big Kansas, and Nowaykesugga, both Otoe. Intriguingly, King’s portraits also depict women wearing wampum earrings. Hayne Hudjihini of the Otoe and Rantchewaime of the Iowa appear in their portraits wearing earrings in the same style as the men of their tribes. Though Duke Wilhelm mentioned only Kansa women wearing wampum in their ears, King’s portraits prove the women of other tribes did so as well.

Perhaps most importantly, King’s portraits demonstrate not just how wampum jewelry looked but what it meant to the people who wore it. The Native American dignitaries who toured Washington, DC, did not do so as a sightseeing trip. In the nation’s capital, government hosts treated these men and women as they would have treated visiting foreign heads of state, culminating in a meeting with the “Great Father,” President Monroe. The Indian delegates wore their finest clothes and adornments during their time in Washington. As chiefs, great warriors, and the wives of such high-ranking men, the representatives were the wealthiest members of their tribes, and they dressed to
make their wealth and power known. The prevalence of wampum among them demonstrates its role as a status symbol—something meant to impress, like the gold and precious stones so valued in white society. The visitors wore this finery during their meetings with the president and donned it again to have their portraits painted by Mr. King, intending to leave a lasting reminder of their personal and tribal importance.

Furthermore, the widespread use of the alternating black and white pattern, with equal numbers of both colors of beads, indicates a break from the northeastern understanding of wampum bead-color symbolism as described by Hamell. Alternating strings of dark and light beads have no precedent in Iroquoian usage, nor do exclusively white or black strings appear in western contexts as they did in the Northeast. Following the northeastern color model, Indian dignitaries should have worn white earrings to correspond with the friendly diplomatic atmosphere and to communicate the wholeness and well-being of the Indian delegation. This is not the case, however. Chiefs and warriors, men and women—all wore alternating black and white beads. In the West, evidently, the dark beads lost their association with asocial emotions and strained diplomatic circumstances. Instead, the beads were used freely in an ornamental capacity to contrast with the bright white beads and the tanned skin of the Native wearers.

Another notable painter of Indian portraiture began his work ten years after Charles Bird King and differentiated himself by visiting his subjects in their tribal lands. George Catlin arrived in St. Louis to begin his western journey in 1830, carrying his brushes and paints with him. From 1832 to 1834, he made a grand two-year tour of forts and villages. Along the way, Catlin painted hundreds of portraits with unusual speed, potentially painting 170 portraits in five months in 1832.57 Though this speed allowed Catlin to produce an impressive array of portraits, it often impacted the level of detail included. Plains anthropologist John C. Ewers noted Catlin’s tendency to depict the necklaces of his subjects “in a very sketchy manner” and this criticism applies equally to Catlin’s treatment of earrings and other adornments.58 The minimal brushwork Catlin used for beaded necklaces and ear ornaments complicates the process of identification, but at least three dozen of his portraits feature wampum jewelry.

Where Charles Bird King’s portraits demonstrated the geographic extent of wampum ornamentation in the Plains, George Catlin’s portraiture shows wampum’s heightened availability and popularity. In at least three Plains tribes, a majority of Catlin’s subjects wear wampum bead earrings. While among the Pawnee, Catlin painted thirteen men’s portraits. Of the twelve extant today, eleven feature wampum strings as ear ornamentation. The Otoe, neighbors of the Pawnee, had five men sit for Catlin. One portrait is lost, but three of the four remaining show wampum in their subjects’ ears. Similarly, six of Catlin’s ten paintings of male Osage show wampum earrings, though some works include multiple subjects for a total of nine tribesmen wearing wampum. As with King, a minority of Catlin’s portraits featured women. Of these, only the Ponca woman Bending Willow, a chief’s wife, wears wampum ear ornaments.

George Catlin recorded his experiences in the West on paper as well as on canvas, penning the two-volume *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians; written during eight years’ travel (1832–1839) amongst the wildest tribes of Indians in North America*, or simply *North American Indians*. Letter 27 in volume 1 includes a lengthy footnote by Catlin describing wampum’s history and manufacture, focusing on its monetary and ceremonial usage. Unlike other visitors to the West, Catlin noted the difference between the larger wampum worn as adornment by Great Plains tribes and the smaller beads used for wampum belts. Catlin’s understanding is flawed, however, as he claims “the same materials for [wampum’s] manufacture are found in abundance through those regions [the Upper Missouri].”59 He mentions the commonplace nature of wampum on the Lower Missouri but asserts that

The Fur Traders have ingeniously introduced a spurious imitation of it, manufactured by
While Catlin rightly recognized that whites manufactured the wampum of the Lower Missouri, he misapprehended its materials, its method of manufacture, and its intent. Apart from the aforementioned larger size of white-made, or Campbell, wampum, the two types were essentially indistinguishable. Certainly Catlin was correct in his statement that traders had “flooded the whole Indian country with wampum,” but in no way did the imported wampum “destroy the

value and meaning” of existing wampum. First, the areas visited by Catlin had no traditions of wampum manufacture—the required shells could not be found there. Second, Catlin’s complaint that “original wampum” could “very rarely be found” speaks not to the corrupting effect of new wampum but to the scarcity of the ceremonial wampum with which Catlin, as a Pennsylvanian, would have had familiarity. From Catlin’s perspective, less expensive wampum purveyed by fur traders reduced wampum to an ornament instead of a ceremonial good, when in truth the traders introduced wampum to lands and peoples previously without it. Misunderstandings aside, Catlin’s summary provides a useful overview of wampum distribution in the first half of the nineteenth century: virtually absent on the Upper Missouri and westward but abundant on the Lower Missouri.
SPREAD OF WAMPUM JEWELRY

Following the lead of Duke Paul Wilhelm was another German nobleman, Prince Maximilian of Wied, who toured the American West concurrent with George Catlin’s travels. Maximilian’s first encounter with wampum came early in his journey, when he met a group of men from the Sauk and Fox tribes in St. Louis. Of the encounter, Maximilian wrote, “Their ears are pierced along the upper edge with three or four holes, and from them hang short strings of blue and white wampum, like tassels. They wear similar strings of many strands about their necks.”62 On some of the men, “the rim of the ear had been cut loose” in the style of the subject of Saint-Mémin’s Osage Warrior I; Maximilian compared this practice to the Botocudo tribe of Brazil, which he visited prior to arriving in North America.63

Farther into his voyage, Maximilian met a mixed group of men from the Iowa, Otoe, and Omaha tribes who “had pierced their ears with several holes along the edge, in which they wore blue and white wampum strings.”64 Evidently, these piercings intrigued the prince because he sketched a picture of one of the men’s pierced ears with the wampum ornaments removed.65

In addition to the common style of wampum ear jewelry, Maximilian noted a unique style among the Crow tribe of the Upper Missouri in modern Montana. Rather than looping wampum through holes in their ears, men of the tribe wore “several feathers hanging down [beside] each eye with long azure and white strings of beads.”66 Maximilian’s use of “beads” rather than “wampum” indicates that the ornaments worn by the Crow were glass trade beads, not wampum shell beads. However, later writers indicate that the Crow retained this style but integrated wampum beads as they became available. American Fur Company employee Edwin Denig wrote ethnographical reports on the tribes he dealt with at Fort Union near the Montana–North Dakota border. Writing in the 1840s, Denig recorded that next to their ears the Crow “suspended several inches of wampum.”67 In 1851, nearly twenty years after Maximilian’s visit to the Crow, Swiss artist Rudolf Friedrich Kurz wrote of the tribe, “In their hair they hang hollow tubes of white and violet-colored porcelain (wampum), and about their necks they wear long ropes of the same ornaments.”68

By 1835, wampum’s utility as a trade good was such that stores on the edge of Indian country sold it to travelers unaffiliated with the government or the fur companies. In June of that year, Sir Charles Murray, an Englishman on tour in the tradition of German nobility, stopped for provisions in Liberty, Missouri, before continuing to the prairies. While there, Murray purchased wampum along with “other trifles for presents.”69 Murray does not note who suggested that he carry wampum on his journey, but it served him well—Murray later presented some to a friendly Pawnee chief and paid for the services of guides with wampum.70

WAMPUM IN PLAINS
CEREMONIAL OBJECTS

Although wampum never attained widespread symbolic or ceremonial significance in the Plains,
its use as ornamentation eventually led to its inclusion as a component of other ceremonial artifacts. Members of Plains tribes commonly smoked long-stemmed pipes as part of ceremonial occasions. Native artists intricately decorated the pipe stems, which could be separated from the pipe bowls. Five specimens of such pipe stems—two at Harvard University’s Peabody Museum and three at the National Museum of Natural History—have strings of wampum hanging along their lengths.

One of the Peabody’s pipe stems resides in the museum’s Lewis and Clark collection, though without attribution to a particular tribe. From the pipe stem hang five strings of white wampum. The wampum beads are belt-sized (approximately 0.25 inches long) and of the style typical of the early nineteenth century. This pipe stem, as with the wampum strings held by the museum, belonged to the collection of Charles Wilson Peale, an artist and naturalist to whom Lewis and Clark donated a number of relics from their expedition. Unfortunately, Peale’s ledger provides no physical description for any of the fourteen pipe stems he received. Peabody researchers recognized the pipe stem’s wampum strings and blue ribbon wrapping as ornamentation William Clark added to a pipe received from Broken Arm, chief of the Nez Perce. This explanation makes a good deal of sense. The scarcity of wampum in the Trans-Mississippi West at the time of the expedition makes it less likely that wampum would be an original part of this pipe stem.

The second Peabody stem provides more details of its provenance. This stem has four strings of purple and white wampum attached, but most importantly, it has writing on it that appears to explain its origins. On one end of the pipe, written in ink, is the inscription “Wah ma de Sappa Chief-2 of the Wahpacoota Sioux at St. Peters—June 20th, 1831.” “Wahpacoota” is a rendering of “Wahpekute,” one of the bands of the Santee Sioux who lived in southern Minnesota. Thus, “St. Peters” would refer to St. Peter, Minnesota, previously the location of an Indian factory that would have made wampum available to nearby tribes. This pipe also came from the Peale collection, having come to Peale from a Colonel J. H. Hook. With this information, a potential narrative emerges wherein “Wah ma de Sappa,” a secondary chief of the Wahpekute, presented Colonel Hook with the pipe stem at the conclusion of a diplomatic encounter. Unlike the Lewis and Clark stem, the Wahpekute stem provides no indication that the pipe stem’s original Native owners did not add the wampum.

Similarly, the three pipe stems housed at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, likely come from diplomatic encounters between representatives of the federal government and the Sioux. Attached to two of the pipes are strings of white wampum, while the third has strings of mixed purple and white beads. The Smithsonian Institution lists all three as originating with the Sioux and coming to the natural history collection via the War Department. Thomas McKenney, first superintendent of Indian trade, then superintendent of Indian affairs, gathered the War Department’s Indian collection during his tenure. As head of Indian trade, McKenney authorized the head of each factory to barter up to $100 of goods to obtain “curiosities peculiar to the tribes trading at his post.” As a result of this zeal for collecting, McKenney’s 1826 journey to Fond du Lac in modern Wisconsin is a likely time for their acquisition. In 1840, the National Institution for the Promotion of Science inherited the War Department collection but only held it until 1861 when the newly founded Smithsonian absorbed the National Institute.

That wampum was used to decorate pipe stems reflects wampum’s original application in diplomatic circumstances. Wampum’s usage here is ornamental though not without its own symbolism. Just as King and Catlin’s subjects wore wampum in their ears to show their social status, wampum strings attached to pipe stems likely fulfilled a similar purpose. A long pipe stem with multiple strings could require a few feet of wampum. Such a display would have been expensive, and to give such a lavishly decorated pipe as a diplomatic gift would communicate the wealth and stature of the donor chief and his tribe.

From the time of wampum’s introduction to
the Trans-Mississippi West in the seventeenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, wampum use fluctuated with changing political, economic, and cultural factors. British officials popularized ceremonial wampum belt exchanges, but as Great Britain’s control of the region slipped away, wampum belts largely fell out of use. Lewis and Clark carried wampum farther west than it had ever been before, but they discovered its lack of ceremonial value along the Missouri. The United States Indian factory system and fur-trading companies established wampum beads as a trade commodity in the Plains, where it subsequently became a popular means of ornamentation. Furthermore, wampum jewelry acquired connotations of wealth and power, becoming a status symbol immortalized by painters like Charles Bird King and George Catlin in their Indian portraits. Wampum’s position as a symbol of wealth carried over to traditional ceremonial goods, leading members of Northern Plains tribes to ornament sacred pipe stems with strings of wampum. Over more than two centuries, use of wampum by the Native peoples of the Plains varied greatly. Although wampum’s applications and meanings often changed, the shell beads never fell into insignificance.

NOTES

2. Ibid., 92.
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6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 51.
10. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
18. Draper, Collections, 1:38.
19. Ibid., 1:25.
20. Blaine, Ioway, 64.
21. Ibid., 67.
23. Ibid., 116.
32. Ibid., 6:215.
33. Ibid., 7:50.
34. Ibid., 7:253.
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37. Ibid., 65.
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39. Inventory of Property on Hand, December 31, 1810, Miscellaneous Accounts 1808–23, Osage Factory, Factory Records, Records of the Office of Indian Trade, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Record Group 75), National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
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42. Hanson, “Campbell Wampum,” 3.
43. Ibid., 2.
46. Peake, *Factory System*, 44.
47. Ibid., 65.
50. Ibid., 14:277.
52. Ibid., 318.
53. Ibid., 390–91.
55. Ibid., 21.
56. Ibid., 29.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
63. Ibid., 1:374.
64. Ibid., 2:82.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid., 2:207.
69. Sir Charles Augustus Murray, *Travels in North America during the Years 1834, 1835 & 1836, including a summer residence with the Pawnee tribe of Indians in the remote prairies of the Missouri and a visit to Cuba and the Azore Islands* (London: R. Bentley, 1839), 248.
70. Ibid., 425, 443.
73. Peake, *Factory System*, 44.
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**Gary R. Entz** is a historian who previously taught at McPherson College in Kansas. He currently teaches at Nicolet College in Wisconsin. His articles have appeared in the *Journal of Mormon History* and *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Great Plains* and in edited volumes.
Historically, Indian–white relations have been marred by mistrust and dishonesty. This is especially true in numerous land dealings between the United States government and the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota people of the northern Great Plains. Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court noted, “A more ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealings will never, in all probability, be found in our history.”

Our focus here is to chronicle and analyze the tragic diminishment of the Great Sioux Reservation, first established by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. The land loss progressed with the Homestead Act of 1862, Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, Act of 1877, Allotment Act of 1887, Act of 1889, the Wheeler-Howard Act, the Pick-Sloan Flood Control Act of 1944, and the Indian Land Consolidation Act. Today, the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota people remain committed to reversing this trend by reacquiring lost tribal lands and reestablishing the prominence of their culture, language, customs, values, and beliefs. What we present is a multifaceted approach for tribes to consider in reacquiring lost lands. Although outright purchase of land is an option for any tribe, Brian Sawers recommends, because of the high cost of land, that tribes “rely on incorporation and eminent domain to consolidate ownership and control allotted lands in a tribal enterprise.”

THE CHANGING PLAINS

Prior to white contact, the Lakota/Nakota/Dakota people lived in a great expanse of the Great Plains, ranging from Wisconsin to Wyoming, Canada to Nebraska. Historically, occupation of this great expanse of land was necessary for survival because the more western of the tribes, the...
Lakota, relied almost exclusively on bison migrations to furnish all their needs. Joseph Marshall (Sicangu Oglala Lakota) called this dependence on the bison “the focal point of our survival.”

Tom McHugh describes a way of life where many tribal members feasted on raw liver, kidney, tongue, eyes, testicles, belly fat, and other parts of the bison. Other uses of the bison include skin for robes, hair for lining or stuffing, horns for spoons and ladles, bones for arrow-making tools, teeth for ornamentation, large intestines as containers, and dung as fuel. Unfortunately, as settlers, gold seekers, railroads, and others moved west, the buffalo migrations were forever altered. Settlers and white hunters killed thousands of the bison, leading to their near extinction. According to Marshall, by the year 1900, “there were probably less than fifty bison south of the forty-eighth parallel, or the border between Canada and the United States. Without the bison, my ancestors lost a literal and figurative source of strength.”

As the United States expanded westward, negotiating treaties with the numerous Indian nations to acquire land became a cornerstone of expansionist policy. Frank Pommersheim succinctly described this process: “The Indians usually agreed to make peace and cede land—often vast amounts of it—to the federal government in exchange for a cessation of hostilities, the provision of some services, and, most important, the establishment and recognition of a homeland free from the incursion of both the state and non-Indian settlers.” Even without the buffalo, the land was still essential to Native identities, culture, and survival.

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 figures prominently in the establishment of the Great Sioux Reservation. Signed on September 17, 1851, this treaty reinforced the premise of peaceful relations and the desire to end hostilities between Indian tribes on one side and white settlers and the U.S. military on the other. Notably, the treaty further delineated the boundaries for the newly established Great Sioux Reservation: the Missouri River, Platte River, Powder River, and Heart River. This massive expanse of land totaled about 60 million acres. The Indian nations were to select principals or head chiefs, and for those tribes agreeing to sign the treaty, they were promised “the sum of $50,000 per annum for the term of 10 years, with the right to continue the same at the discretion of the President of the United States for a period not exceeding five years thereafter, in provisions, merchandise, domestic animals, and agricultural implements.” It seemed the people had finally achieved their “homeland free from the incursion.”

The next important legislation that affected the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota people was the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862. This act allowed for any person who was head of a family, at least twenty-one years of age, and a citizen of the United States to make claim on one quarter section of land (160 acres). But this seemingly innocuous act became increasingly important in later years when surplus reservation lands—acres left over after each person received his or her 160 acres—were sold to the United States government at a reduced rate. The government in turn sold the surplus lands to homesteaders, thus bringing about a phenomenon known in Indian country as “checkerboarding,” the intermixing of allotted land and surplus land, creating a noncontiguous land base for the tribe.

THE TREATIES

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 was in many ways the quintessential negotiation between the U.S. government and the Brulé, Oglala, Miniconjou, Yanktonai, Hunkpapa, Blackfeet, Cuthead, Two Kettle, Sans Arc, and Santee bands of Sioux. In discussing the Indian Peace Commission of 1867–68, Kerry Oman detailed the significant accomplishment of the commission in not only in bringing together the various tribes and government officials but also in securing an end to hostilities in the Great Plains. “Their efforts helped end Red Cloud’s War upon the Northern Plains, and, as a result of their reports and recommendations, they greatly influenced federal Indian policy.”

Signed on April 29, 1868, the treaty’s Article 2 reestablished the Great Sioux Reservation as identified in the first Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. Once again, the government, motivated...
by westward expansion and the desire to acquire land, was compelled to negotiate with the Lakota in large part due to the successful raids conducted by Red Cloud and Crazy Horse along the Bozeman Trail. This period of conflict was known as “Red Cloud’s War.” Oman underscores the magnitude of this tumultuous period saying that “For the only time in history, the U.S. army was giving in to the demands of a ‘hostile’ Indian leader.” Ironically, it was both Red Cloud (Oglala) and Spotted Tail (Brulé) who did eventually sign the 1868 treaty.

While the treaty contained several historically important provisions, those that affected land diminishment included Articles 3, 6, 11, and 16. Articles 3 and 6 delineated land division. Specifically, a tract of 160 to 320 acres was assigned to each head of the family to be used for farming, despite the fact that the government clearly knew western South Dakota was “a dry region with poor soils, where even subsistence gardens fail in many years.” Article 11 directed that the Indian tribes withdraw all opposition to the construction of railroads then being built in the Plains, permit the peaceful construction of any railroad not passing over their reservation, withdraw all opposition to the construction of the railroad built along the Platte River, and withdraw all opposition to the military posts and roads established south of the North Platte River. Finally, Article 16 declared the country north of the North Platte River and east of the summits of the Big Horn Mountains to be unceded Indian territory, where “no white person or persons shall be permitted to settle upon or occupy any portion or the same; or without the consent of the Indians first and obtained, to pass through the same.”

With the 1868 treaty, the Lakota people hoped their land diminishment had finally ended, but that hope was dashed only a few short
The Indian Defense Association of the 1880s was one of the few (if not only) Indian reform groups to argue for allowing Native Americans to choose whether they wished to have their land allotted. In general, reformers came to see allotment as the panacea for the problems of American Indians. The idea that individual ownership of property was the key to individual virtue and hard work was so widespread that it achieved virtually unquestioned acceptance. This prevailing faith in private property was translated into a widespread belief in allotment.

Despite the opposition of a few, support for the allotment system became nearly universal. Reformers saw a need to give Native Americans individual title to the land as well as open the land to individual settlement.

Some accepted the idea that land should be used and thought that protecting Indian ownership of unused land would encourage idleness. Others recognized the intense desire of white settlers to acquire Indian lands and hoped that allotting lands would remain in Indian hands. Some reformers, including Senator Dawes, were aware of the pressure by whites to acquire Indian lands.

On February 8, 1887, Congress passed the Allotment Act of 1887, also known as the Dawes Act, which led to one of the most substantial exchanges of land from Native Americans to whites. The act was a concerted effort to shift the Indians from a life of hunting to one of farming, the chief feature of the government’s Native American policy. Many saw the Dawes Act as a way to integrate Native American Indians and non-Native American Indians. Jill Martin summarized this hope for integration:

Proponents argued that allotments would move the Indians along on the path to civilization. Many people believed that breaking up of the tribal and communal existence was the best way to advance and “civilize” the Indians. Once the Indian received his own land,
and received all the benefits from working the land, he would realize the benefits of capitalism over communalism, and would be on the road to assimilation.24

Under this rationale, “the Dawes Act generated little debate in either the House or the Senate,” and the bill was passed.25 The land was divided into individual allotments under the general authority of the president; however, the act excluded the Five Tribes and the Osages, as well as a few others. “Each adult received three hundred twenty acres and each child received one hundred sixty acres.”26 This land was to be placed in trust for twenty-five years for the sole use of the Native American receiving the allotted land. “At the end of the end of the trust period, an allottee was to receive a patent-in-fee, which gave him or her unrestricted title to the allotment (title in fee simple). At the time of allotment, an allottee also became a citizen of the United States.”27 Land was also set aside for agency, school, and church use.

One very detrimental side effect of the Dawes Act was that it broke up reservations and opened the land to non-Indian acquisition. After allotments were selected by Native Americans, the remaining land or surplus was sold to non-Indians at a fixed price, with the proceeds going to the government. The money went into a trust fund held by the government, with a percentage of this fund earmarked to pay for the establishment of a public service infrastructure on the reservation in order to hasten the process of assimilation of the Native American tribes.

“The Dawes Act was compulsory. A tribe could not elect to remain unallotted, and an individual could not refuse to accept an allotment.”28 The act also encumbered transfers of land, restricting when and how an allottee could lease, sell, or mortgage an allotment. Often, tribes were supposed to approve allotment agreements, but Congress had the final decision.

The reformers, however, were not concerned with what Indians wanted or what they might think about allotment. An Indian who resisted assimilation into white society was wrong, and hence his or her preferences could be disregarded. If necessary, the reformers were willing to use coercion to bring about what they viewed as socially beneficial results.29

Ultimately, the Dawes Act ended what remained of the Great Sioux Reservation, dividing it forever into separate reservations. These newly established reservations were: Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Lower Brule, and Crow Creek. Each head of a family received an allotment of 320 acres, and the provisions of the Dawes Act, relative to the sale of surplus lands to the government, continued for four years.30

**EVOLUTION OF THE DAWES ACT**

In 1891, Senator Henry Dawes himself introduced an amendment to the act, which would provide eighty acres of land for each adult instead of the original acreage allotted only to the head of the household. This amendment would allow divorced women to keep land in divorce settlements. It also "stipulated that the secretary of the interior was to establish regulations for the leasing of allotments when an allottee 'by reason of age or other disability . . . could not personally and with benefit to himself occupy his allotment or any part thereof.'”31 Thus, Dawes created a way for Native Americans to lease out their allotments, which would be widely practiced by the turn of the century on many reservations.32

The Sisseton and Yankton Sioux were the first to take their allotments after 1892.33 Between 1904 and 1915, surplus lands on reservations west of the Missouri were sold, and the Standing Rock Reservation was entirely opened for allotments. “The last opening occurred in 1911 when Mellette and Bennett counties [in South Dakota] were opened.”34

Another major legislative change occurred in 1901 when the secretary of the interior was given authority to sell heirship allotments. Heirship allotments were those allotments still under trust status when the original allottee had died. Originally, an allottee was not allowed to will his [or her] allotment, so when he died, the
land was divided among the heirs according to the state law in which the land was located.\textsuperscript{35} This led to allotments becoming fractionated, with some having multiple owners or with one person owning several small shares of more than one allotment.

According to Carlson in \textit{Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land}, “The role of the tribes was reduced further in 1903, when the courts held that tribal approval was not necessary for the disposal of surplus lands”\textsuperscript{36} Then, in 1906, the Burke Act changed the restrictions placed on Native American Indian landholdings. This act provided that each allottee would be dealt with individually, and citizenship would be withheld until the allottee was declared legally competent to manage his or her own affairs. It also provided that individuals could be declared competent before the twenty-five-year trust period ended, or if individuals were declared incompetent the trust period could be extended. Those who were declared competent were able to sell, but became simultaneously liable for property tax, a concept most knew nothing of (12). This led to a significant problem: “The Office of Indian Affairs acknowledged that most . . . wanted to sell their land immediately” (13). Many others lost their land to unpaid property tax liens.

By 1934, the allotment plan was ended. It had been deemed a failure because “it did not improve the welfare of Indians or succeed in making them into ‘self-supporting’ citizens” (19). But by then, the damage had already been done: “at the time of allotment, ‘. . . the Indian land base amounted to 138,000,000 acres. Between 1887 and 1934, about 60 percent of this land passed

\begin{map}
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\caption{Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs.}
\end{map}
Fig. 1. Construction of John Barse home. Sisseton Agency, approximately 1936–41. Identifier RG 75 Image no. 28, National Archives at Kansas City, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1965 ARC Identifier 185770.

Fig. 2. Home of Moses Williams. Sisseton Agency, approximately 1936–41. Identifier RG 75 Image no. 42, National Archives at Kansas City, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1965 ARC Identifier 185770.
were dealt with as individuals” (15). This did not mean that Indians who had trust status had greater freedom than those without it, because money obtained from the lease or sale of allotted land could be controlled by the agent, and the assault by the agents on what they considered to be heathen practices continued. . . . A result of the detailed regulation of Indian policy was an increase in the administrative costs of Indian affairs. (15)

In 1917, as a result of these increased administrative costs, Commissioner Cato Sells announced another shift in federal treatment of Indians and their trust status. He stated that “the government intended to reduce the number of allottees in trust status. All individuals of greater than one-half Indian blood were immediately declared competent and given patents in fee” (16). All others of Indian descent were to be deemed competent on an individual basis through competency commissions (16).

The rules for granting fee patents would be changed again in 1920 by Commissioner Charles Burke when public opinion was spiked by the “rapid loss of Indian land” (16). In 1928 a report was published after a study had been conducted by independent staff headed by Lewis Meriam with the cooperation of the Department of the Interior. The study had “surveyed conditions among American Indians both on and off the reservations and made numerous recommendations for improving federal policy and improving its administration” (16). This report “painted a bleak picture of the economic position of most Indians. . . . [T]he commission thought the assistance given Indians in learning new occupations had been grossly inadequate” (17).

The Meriam report went on to explain that the goal of teaching Native American Indians to manage their own affairs had failed and that current policy was primarily concerned with property. It also stated:

The fundamental requirement is the task of the Indian Service to be recognized as primarily educational in the broadest sense of the
Fig. 4. Log cabin home of John Max, Sisseton Agency. Identifier RG 75 Image no. 39, National Archives at Kansas City, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1965 ARC Identifier 185770.

Fig. 5. Mr. and Mrs. Amos King, daughters and grandson, Sisseton Agency. RG 75 Image no. 122, National Archives at Kansas City, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1965 ARC Identifier 185770.
word...devoting its main energies to the social and economical [sic] advancement of Indians, so that they may be absorbed into the prevailing civilization, or at least be fitted to live in the presence of that civilization at least in accordance with the minimum standard of health and decency. (17)

Unfortunately, it was clear that Native Americans had not been properly protected and that conditions had actually become worse under the Allotment Act of 1887.

**STEPS FORWARD AND STEPS BACKWARD**

A shift in the other direction finally occurred in 1934 when Congress passed the Wheeler-Howard Act, also referred to as the Indian Reorganization Act. "In June 1934 the Wheeler-Howard Act, giving the Indians a greater degree of self-government, became a law, and the Indians voted to accept the act. Only 192 out of 262 tribes had voted in its favor. Nevertheless, because a majority had voted in favor, the allotment process ended for all tribes. The Indian Reorganization Act repealed the Allotment Act of 1887 and provided a number of positive changes in Native American policy.

According to George D. Watson Jr., two of the best changes were the enactment of tribal courts and enabling tribes toward self-governance.

When Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), the federal government abandoned its assimilation policies. Section 16 of the IRA, aimed at restoring the status and authority of tribal governing bodies and tribes, allowed them to draft their own constitutions and laws and establish their own justice system. This law profoundly influenced tribal governments and tribal justice systems.

Under the IRA, the government bought back land that had been taken away from Native Americans and redistributed it to the tribes. According to Watson,

The Wheeler-Howard act authorizes appropriations of $2,000,000 a year for the purchase of land for Indian use, grants to Indian tribes the right to organize and obtain federal charters of incorporation, provides $250,000 a year for educational loans, abolishes allotments of Indian tribal land to individual Indians and helps Indians to adapt themselves gradually to the ways of the white man.

The law also authorized a revolving credit fund of $10 million to make loans to incorporated tribes, and it gave the secretary authorization to help Indian tribes adopt written constitutions and exercise other powers. It was believed that by doing so, Indians would be better able to make an adequate living and work out tribal problems on their own. The tribes were encouraged to organize and form cooperative associations to undertake farming and stock raising. They were allowed to borrow funds from the government to carry out economic projects and were encouraged to form new political organizations that would be entirely under their own control. However, these governmental concessions would not guarantee a better life for those on the reservation, and, in fact, "shortly after the close of World War I, the Indians of South Dakota entered a pitiable struggle for existence."

Many of the people bartered Native American heirlooms, moved out of their homes, which had fallen into disrepair, and moved into secondhand army tents. The only jobs on the reservations at that time included working a few weeks on road crews or helping white ranchers during cattle roundups. Their land, which was "semi-arid even in lush years," was hit hard during the drought. The limited cattle that remained were slaughtered in a style reminiscent of the buffalo-hunting days.

Government work projects revived their spirits, however, and the old dances and community living eventually returned with the rains. On some reservations, the Repayment Cattle Program put many families back into ranching.

Cattle are issued to young men on the promise that, as the herd is increased, part of the increase will be returned, until full repayment is made in cattle. These, in turn, are issued to some other deserving young men. From 1935
to 1948, the number of cattle owned by Indians on the reservation increased from 3,144 to 17,338.\(^{46}\)

But in 1944, the Pick-Sloan Flood Control Act of 1944 set tribes back again. It authorized the construction of numerous dams and modifications to previously existing dams and levees across the country with the promise of benefitting both Indians and non-Indians through controlled management of the Missouri River on six fronts: recreation, hydroelectricity, water supply, navigation, flood control, and wildlife.\(^{47}\) This project would once again change the face of reservation land.

The Corps of Engineers built five mainstem projects that destroyed over 550 square miles of the best tribal land in North and South Dakota and dislocated more than 900 Indian families. Most of this damage was sustained by the five Sioux reservations. . . . Standing Rock and Cheyenne River, reduced by the Oahe project; Yankton, affected by Fort Randall Dam; and Crow Creek and Lower Brule, damaged by both the Fort Randall and Big Bend projects.\(^{48}\)

“With much of their land within the reservoir area of the Oahe project in the Missouri River development program, the Indians demanded the right to negotiate with the Federal Government for the sale of land being flooded. In 1950, Congress made such a provision.”\(^{49}\)

Although the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) had been told of the plan to enable severance of flooded land from the reservation, they had chosen not to resist its passage. Thus, from 1954 to 1957, Congress engaged in negotiations and awarded settlements that would provide compensation to the tribes; however, there was little recourse available for individual families. Any money claimed would come from the fund for the rest of the reservation and be paid only to the tribe.\(^{50}\) More compensation, including the relocation of people and their property, as well as the rehabilitation and restoration of reservation facilities and services, would be awarded from 1958 to 1962. But this compensation would be far less than what the Sioux had hoped for. “The Missouri River Sioux tribes have received therefore almost none of the benefits that were supposed to be provided by the Pick Sloan Plan, but they have suffered a great deal as a result of its implementation.”\(^{55}\)

FRACTIONATION AND REACQUISITION

In the years since the Pick-Sloan Flood Control Act of 1944, several different solutions have been proposed to both reacquire lost tribal land from the reservations and consolidate land divided beyond repair. For example, with the enactment of the Indian Land Consolidation Act (ILCA), the government first attempted to force all Indians with a less than 2 percent interest in the land to sell it back to the government, which would in turn sell it back to the tribe.\(^{52}\) However, this policy was challenged in *Hodel v. Irving*, and the U.S. Supreme Court held that no matter how small the interest, a forced sale is still an unconstitutional taking.\(^{53}\) Thereafter, land was consolidated through ILCA on a strictly voluntary basis.

Section 2205 of ILCA allows for the establishment of tribal probate codes and rules for acquisition of fractional interests by tribes. Subject to secretarial approval, any Indian tribe may adopt a tribal probate code to govern descent and distribution of trust or restricted lands located within that tribe’s reservation or land subject to the jurisdiction of that tribe. Without these codes, and without educating tribal members of the danger posed by fractionation, Section 2205 can actually make the problem worse. For example, Sawers reports that the majority of Indians die without a will:

Absent a will, interests of less than 5% descend with a right of survivorship, leaving the entire interest to one person. Interests greater than 5%, however, descend as tenancies in common. Although the stated policy of the Act is to reduce fractionation, this provision will encourage fractionation until every interest is less than 5%.\(^{54}\)

Likewise, Jessica Shoemaker highlights the problems associated with fractionation, a phe-
nomenon whereby “a single tract of land is shared among multiple owners in undivided interest.”55 Shoemaker cites comments made by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1987:

Tract 1305 [on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Lake Traverse Reservation] is 40 acres and produces $1,080 in income annually. It is valued at $8,000. It has 439 owners, one-third of whom receive less than $.05 in annual rent and two-thirds of whom receive less than $1. The largest interest holder receives $82.85 annually. The common denominator used to compute fractional interests in the property is 3,394,923,840,000. The smallest heir receives $.01 every 177 years. If the tract were sold (assuming the 439 owners could agree) for its estimated $8,000 value, he would be entitled to $.000418. The administrative costs of handling this tract are estimated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs at $17,560 annually.”56

This illustrates how fractionation has not only diminished individual Indian landholdings to virtually worthless interests but also magnified the administrative costs of managing the land to the point that it far outweighs its value to the owners. This scenario benefits no one.

Sawers recommends an alternative plan to address the continued fractionation of land interests, thereby enabling “improved control by individual Indians.”57 It would allow Indian landowners to acquire, exchange, or trade interests of the same parcel. One reservation has enacted just such a plan (albeit with great administrative burden):

[T]he Pine Ridge Reservation has organized an exchange to allow allottees to consolidate their landholdings by trading with the Tribe or other allottees. Exchanging interests require nine bureaucratic steps, involving both the Tribe and BIA. The majority of trading is not between individuals, but between individuals and the Tribe.58

Another plan proposed by Sawers is that of partition, which allows for the dividing of property into individually owned interests. Sawers believes partition “would allow homeowners to secure marketable title to their homes” and that “[p]artition and liberalized exchange would ameliorate the problems associated with fractionation.”59

Reacquisition is another solution to the diminishment problem. Most recently, with the advent of the Cobell v. Babbitt litigation and subsequent settlement, more money than ever before has been set aside to reacquire lost land and consolidate land through ILCA.60 But some point out that the money has been available for years with little to no progress. In other words, even with the influx of available funds from Cobell, the reacquisition is taking too long because tribes cannot force individuals to sell, regardless of whether they are Indian or non-Indian. Thus, the slow progress through ILCA does not seem to be keeping pace with the fractionation rate.

Another solution offered by Sawers and others is condemnation through eminent domain.61 The common example of eminent domain is where the government condemns privately owned property, called a “taking,” to build a new highway. Then the government pays the original owner fair market value of the land taken. The same could be true for the tribe. The tribe could forcibly “take” the fractions of land from its individual members, pay them the fair market value of the pieces taken, and then reacquire use of the land for tribal purposes.

Obviously, the biggest drawback of this method is that it involuntarily divests the original owner of his or her property rights. Sawers suggests three strategies for the tribe to use to placate those members affected by eminent domain. First, “[t]hose affected by eminent domain could be given priority in leasing, even over other tribal members.” Second, the tribe “might grant tribal members usufructory rights, so that those who lost land might still be able to gather berries, for example, on ‘their’ land.” And third, the tribe “should permit access for recreational or religious observance.”62

While these interests may seem minimal, emotions run high, as evidenced in the pre-Hodel era, as well as the stalemate with the Black Hills settlement resolution.63 The farther west one travels, the more traditional the tribe, and the
more highly revered are all ties to the land. The Midwest reservations are some of the most highly fractionated in the nation, but for these reasons, some speculate that no tribe would ever force its owners to sell, regardless of compensation. The tribe would be seen as no better than Congress if it did so.

Another drawback is determining where to draw the limits of such power. Can a tribe exercise its sovereign government power of eminent domain over nonmembers or even over non-Indians? Some believe it can, so long as the tribe’s exercise of civil authority is exerted within the confines of the reservation and the conduct sought to be regulated “threatens or has some direct effect on the political integrity, the economic security, or the health or welfare of the tribe.”

Sawers offers yet another, perhaps more viable, alternative in the form of incorporation of the tribe. In other words, the tribe incorporates and takes the small fractions of land owned by various members as capital contributions. The tribal members then become owners of the tribal corporation and are issued shares of stock in that corporation. The corporation’s profits are then paid to its member owners in the form of dividends proportionate to each owner’s investment. Ultimately, both the tribe and the member owners win. While the tribe does not reacquire lost land, it does reacquire productive use of the previously fractionated land. Likewise, the members retain their ownership interest while receiving income they otherwise would not have had.

In the decades since the Dawes Act, the allotment system and subsequent fractionation has weakened and diminished tribal lands. But education for estate planning and the enactment of ILCA have helped to stem the tide. Now to turn that tide, as suggested by Sawers and Shoemaker, tribes have several options to reacquire lost land or, at a minimum, consolidate existing land. Tribes can make progress, whether through outright purchase of land, the exercise of eminent domain, or the use of tribal incorporation. With the help of funds from Cobel, tribal land interests may finally start seeing some improvement.

Our goal has been to provide an overview of the important treaties, acts of Congress, legislation, and recent court cases impacting the tribal land interests of the northern Great Plains, and in particular, those of the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota. We have reviewed possible solutions for tribes to reacquire lost land or consolidate fractionated land. Beginning with the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 that established the Great Sioux Reservation and continuing through contemporary efforts to reacquire lost lands by outright purchase, eminent domain, and tribal incorporation, many Great Plains American Indian tribes remain committed to reestablishing, or at least preserving, what remains of reservation landholdings.

NOTES

17. Philbrick, The Last Stand, 4.
21. Ibid., 8.
22. Ibid., 9.
23. Ibid., 9.
28. Ibid., 10.
29. Ibid., 60–70.
32. Ibid., 13.
33. Ibid., 79.
34. Barker, Our State, 190.
36. Carlson, Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land, 10. Further citations to Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land are given in parentheses in the text.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
46. Ibid., 26.
49. Lawson, Dammed Indians, 27.
50. Ibid., 97.
51. Ibid., 193.
54. Jessica A. Shoemaker, “Like Snow in the Spring Time: Allotment, Fractionation, and the Indian Land

58. Ibid., 407.
59. Ibid., 407.

62. Ibid., 425.
67. Ibid., 431.
The Great Plains Art Museum announces a Call for Artists for its second biannual juried exhibition focusing on Native American life and culture in the Great Plains.

This exhibition, to open in June 2014, will include individuals whose work expresses the texture of Native American life in the Great Plains today. Exhibited works will be selected by a jury with $5,000 in awards chosen by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Awards include exhibition prizes from the Great Plains Art Museum, Sioux City Art Center and the Woodland Trails Art Gallery in Winnebago. Other awards include Best in Show, Best 2-D, Best 3-D, Best Student (or non-professional), Most Innovative Use of Media and Viewer’s Choice.

The deadline for entry is February 15, 2014.

Find a map of the Great Plains region and submission details at www.unl.edu/plains/gallery/contemporary-indigeneity.shtml or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Great Plains Art Museum, 1155 Q St., Hewit Place, Lincoln, NE, 68588-0250. For questions, contact Alexandra Alberda at greatplainsartmuseum@gmail.com or call 402-472-6220.

Support for the exhibition was provided by the Nebraska Arts Council. Support for the awards was provided by Ho-Chunk, Inc.

Left, from the 2012 Contemporary Indigeneity exhibit: H. Kenneth Dalgarno, Stone Angel; Isaiah Russell, Pow-Wow Propaganda; Leonara Joseph, Intricate Dreams

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BOOK REVIEWS

Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History. Edited by Susan A. Miller and James Riding In. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011. ix + 280 pp. Photographs, tables, notes, index. $65.00 cloth, $45.00 paper.

Susan Miller and James Riding In position this anthology as the first to collect historical work from Native scholars participating in an “Indigenous discourse” – an academic conversation “rooted in North American Indigenous thought” and, they claim, global Indigenous thought. If your essentialism alarm bells are ringing, it is for good reason. Ignore the alarms long enough to work your way through the entire anthology and you will find rich, complicated, vibrant historical analysis and critique from Indigenous historians working in Canada and the United States.

The introduction and framing essays by Susan Miller in part 1 elaborate on the idea of an Indigenous paradigm in the historiography of Native North America. Although clothed in essentialist language and thinking, her essays provide some provocative and vital analysis. By the end, the authority of the works collected here will force you to productively rethink aspects of Miller’s framing essays advocating for methodologies that centralize Native historical narrative and experience.


Of particular interest to Great Plains historians are the essays by Elizabeth Cook-Lynn and Waziyatawin, both of which deal with separate aspects of the 1862 Dakota Conflict and its aftermath. Scholars interested in jurisdictional issues in the Plains—whether over land, bodies, or tribal status—should examine the essays by Vine Deloria Jr., both Riding In essays, and Miller’s essay on the status of Seminole freedmen. Miller’s essay and Donna Akers’s on Choctaw removal both illustrate the complications that arose and continue to haunt communities when the Southern Plains became a site of removal for southeastern tribes; together, they succeed in reminding historians of community mobility and interconnectedness beyond the Plains biome. Finally, Matthew Jones’s essay on the Otoe-Missouria encounter with Lewis and Clark provides an intervention for those who may focus on the journeyers and not on the realities of the peoples who lived in the landscapes through which they journeyed.

On many levels, this anthology presents compelling and provocative material. The weight and power of the collected scholarship make it well worth reading.

ANGELA PARKER
Native American Studies Program
Dartmouth College


This two-volume work sets out to chronicle and analyze the process of change experienced by the men of the Corps of Discovery as they traveled through the homelands of diverse American Indian cultures on their way to the Pacific and back. Doubtlessly, an undertaking as bold and arduous
as the Lewis and Clark expedition altered those who experienced it. One could examine these changes a variety of ways. Here, author William Swagerty focuses on the intersection between Euro-American and Native American cultures—the point at which white men traded aspects of their culture for those of the people they had been meeting. Swagerty, drawing on previous work on transculturization—a process of integrating elements of an outside culture by individuals rather than societies—terms the process Indianization.

Without adequate maps it is difficult to comprehend the journey of such immense geographic scope. The seven good maps in the two volumes are essential to a visual understanding of the expedition’s various routes, the location of Plains tribes, and the origin of Corps members. Several tables present detailed data about the expedition members’ interaction with Sacajawea, their diet, and their ultimate fate. Far more numerous are the illustrations, although these are uneven in their usefulness. Reproductions of journal entries are only useful when they contain illustrations. Since many representations of the Corps’ journey are fanciful, created long after the event, their value here is questionable. Several seem to contribute little to our understanding of the book’s argument.

An important precursor to this work is the classic Lewis and Clark among the Indians by the author of this book’s foreword, James P. Ronda. This 1984 publication was the first serious study of the expedition’s interaction with Natives. Ronda traced the Corps’ journey chronologically; Swagerty approaches the material more thematically. Thus we have chapters on outfitting, food, technology, and transportation, and even “caressing.” With Ronda’s book, scholars of the Plains could move to those chapters chronicling Lewis and Clark’s time in the region. In Swagerty’s volumes those interested in a specific region or Native culture will have far more difficulty exploring their interest.

This work of 770-plus pages contains incredible detail; at times one could wish for less. Casual readers or those expecting a study of Native interaction might chafe at forty-five pages devoted to the material culture of white America. I’m not sure I agree with the author’s assertion that to understand the Corps’ changes in clothing style I need a twenty-six-page review of military dress back to the America Revolution. Although its research is impressive and its content exhaustive, this study will not meet the needs of those looking for an insightful examination of the interactions between two cultures. Because it focuses on the lives of the white explorers, readers seeking an understanding of the influencing Native cultures should look at Lewis and Clark through Indian Eyes, edited by Alvin Josephy (2006). Similarly, Lewis and Clark and the Indian Country: The Native American Perspective, edited by Frederick Hoxie and Jay Nelson (2007), offers readers an intriguing look into the cultures on the other side of the Indianization process.

At the end of this two-volume work, the reader is still left with the question “So what?” While no one believes that two years of contact with Native peoples would leave an individual entirely unaltered, neither can we take at face value Lewis’s assertion that he had been “completely metamorphosed” into a “complete Indian.” Swagerty admits that neither Lewis nor Clark nor many of their men took cultural changes back home with them. In fact, although Lewis had little time to construct a postexpedition legacy, Clark left a troubling record of callous indifference toward the fate of those Native people he administrated. It seems that the process of Indianization, while an interesting culture phenomenon, left little impact on history. The Indianization of Lewis and Clark does what its author says it will—“focus on the material and cultural adaptations by a small group engaged on a diplomatic and scientific mission across western North America.” What I’m not sure it does is substantially alter our understanding of the expedition and its place in American history.

CLARISSA W. CONFER
Department of History
California University of Pennsylvania

Jim Garry’s recent publication offers a meticulous assessment of the Corps of Discovery’s arsenal. One of Garry’s goals centers on correcting outdated information from well-known books, about the Corps and the weaponry the men carried, especially Carl P. Russell’s Guns of the Early Frontiers (1957). The author acknowledges that historians have continuously advanced the scholarship on the Corps’ weaponry, but misconceptions about the arsenal still exist, muddying the historical record. He encourages readers to view his book as a tool for placing the expedition and the weapons of the early nineteenth century in an accurate historical context.

The volume contains ten concise chapters, introduced by a brief discussion of the commissioning of the Corps and the preparations for the two-year journey. Each chapter reviews one type of weapon: the Model 1795 musket, swivel guns, blunderbusses, short rifles, pistols, edged weapons, and ammunition. Garry includes a chapter on John Shields, the Corps blacksmith, and another on the gun trade. The book’s appendixes offer a detailed list of the guns carried by specific people and an essay on weapon maintenance.

Most interestingly, Garry analyzes the misunderstandings surrounding the Corps’ carrying of the Harper’s Ferry Model 1803 rifles (or short rifles). Part of the discourse on the short rifles stems from the lack of sources from Harper’s Ferry. However, Garry decisively states that the Corps could not have carried the Model 1803 rifle. He reviews correspondence from Secretary of War Henry Dearborn to the superintendent of Harper’s Ferry, Joseph Perkin, in which Dearborn gave Perkin one month to provide Meriwether Lewis with rifles. In this short time, Perkin did not have the supplies in stock to make a rifle from scratch, but he did have the 1792 contract rifles. Garry argues that the gunsmiths modified the 1792 contract rifles and suggests that these served as prototypes for the Model 1803 rifle. Also, Dearborn did not approve the design for the Model 1803 rifle until after the Corps departed on their expedition. Other historians suggest that Lewis obtained the short rifles in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh, but Garry rejects those arguments for lack of evidence.

Overall, readers will find the book entertaining and informative. Garry succeeds in translating mechanical jargon on weaponry into coherent description. Weapons of the Lewis and Clark Expedition advances the historiography; by correcting misconceptions, it will have far-reaching appeal.

Brooke Wibracht
Department of History and Geography
Texas Christian University


When strong tensions exist between cultures, small incidents can have grave consequences. Thus, in August of 1854, when a Sioux Indian living near Fort Laramie, Nebraska Territory, found a lame cow and killed it to feed his family, a sad chapter began. The cow’s emigrant owner complained of his loss to the fort’s commander, and Lt. John Grattan was soon on his way to a Sioux encampment to demand that the thief be turned over to face justice. As a cannon rolled into place to reinforce his demand, violence broke out, and thirty soldiers, including Grattan, soon lay dead. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis viewed the event as a deliberate and unprovoked attack, and the following year ordered Brig. Gen. William Harney into the field to punish any Native Americans he could find and remind them to stay clear of white roads and settlements. On September 3, 1855, Harney attacked a camp of a few hundred Sioux hunting buffalo, killing eighty-six of them at the Battle of Blue Water Creek in what is now western Nebraska. Over the following year, Harney traveled through the Northern Plains and hammered out a treaty with a number of bands.
Although the treaty was never ratified, it was nonetheless held over the Indians’ heads for years as a prerequisite to receiving their annuity goods.

As the discovery of gold in Idaho Territory brought increased travel through Sioux lands in 1862, tensions peaked again, this time to the east in Minnesota. Once more, the triggering incident was trivial. In the midst of a crop failure and impatience with the late arrival of annuities, the theft of eggs from a white family escalated to their murders. In the paroxysm of violence that followed, commonly known as the Dakota Uprising of 1862, some 500 white settlers were killed. Though already hard pressed by the Civil War, the United States military mounted a vigorous response.

In June 1863, Brig. Gen. Henry Sibley entered Sioux territory from the east with 1,400 infantry and 500 cavalry soldiers. The plan was to drive the fleeing enemy before him into the waiting forces of Brig. Gen. Alfred Sully, who was to ascend the Missouri from Fort Pierre. Low water in the Missouri River prevented Sully from moving his troops; however, with the extraordinary mobility of the Sioux and the extent of their territory, it is unlikely that such a “hammer and anvil” plan would have worked anyway. Sibley engaged the Sioux in three battles on his way west; few casualties were suffered by either side. Finding nobody at the appointed rendezvous, he returned to Minnesota, destroying what enemy property he could find on the way. Sully finally took the field in late August. His only engagement of consequence took place on September 3 when he came upon some 600 tepees, whose owners were hunting to secure winter stores. Known variously as a battle or a massacre, some 200 Sioux were killed at Whitestone Hill and their property destroyed. Sully led his men into western Dakota Territory again in 1864 where he engaged the Sioux a few times and, in December, negotiated the release of Fanny Kelly, a white woman who had been taken prisoner by the Sioux in July.

The Indians’ response was complicated by the internal tension between those who urged the pursuit of peace and accommodation and those advocating all-out war. Terrible Justice offers a well-nuanced analysis of this aspect of the uprising, along with a careful description of the various Sioux bands and their interrelations. While the campaign proceeded, the U.S. government was suffering from its own internal conflict, with the Department of War and the Indian Bureau often working at cross-purposes.

Terrible Justice is thoroughly referenced and well illustrated with photographs of all the main players. Given the detailed descriptions of the military actions involved, the two maps included are not sufficient to support the text.

Many sources refer to the Indian Wars as beginning in 1866, leaving the events of 1862 quite separated from the larger picture. The geographical distance of Minnesota from the western theater contributes to the sense that the conflict there occurred in isolation from the broader cultural and military history of the Northern Plains. Doreen Chaky’s book provides an excellent remedy to this misconception, tying a wide range of events together to create a coherent and comprehensive picture. This in itself makes it a welcome addition to any library of the history of the West.

STEVEN C. HAACK
Lincoln, Nebraska


Villages on Wheels is the culmination of historian Stanley B. Kimball’s more than fifteen years’ research on and long career as a scholar of the Mormon Trail. When he died in 2003, his wife, Violet, a writer, photojournalist, and occasional student of the trail herself, completed the project. This social history, a detailed examination of the everyday aspects of creating and maintaining a mobile society, is the result of their collaboration. Based upon “hundreds of journals”—mostly located at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ Church History Library in Salt Lake City, the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at Brigham Young University, and the Western Americana Archives at the University of Utah—Villages on
Wheels is organized topically, with a slight nod to chronology across the span of the book. It offers a unique glimpse into the ways the lives of Mormon travelers were shaped by the overland trail, a transitory period in which traditional conventions and daily routines were suspended in deference to the realities of constant mobility.

Despite the upheaval the trail represented, the Kimbals pay close attention to the ways the travelers attempted to maintain order and preserve social norms. Their study’s strength lies in the various lenses through which they seek to view and understand the seemingly mundane aspects of life. In the chapter on “Young Pioneers,” they cover such topics as recreation, toys, parties, pranks, pets, lost children, and death. In the chapter on “Intimate Mormon Family Life,” the more delicate aspects of life on the trail, such as bathing, bodily functions, flirting, marriage, divorce, childbirth, child care, and illness all receive attention. Some aspects of the book demonstrate the ways Mormon travels were similar to their counterparts on the Oregon and California trails (trade, food, weather, accidents, disease, death, burials), while others highlight the travelers’ lives as religious people, such as speaking in tongues, evil spirits, prayers, sermons, and miracles.

Villages on Wheels is a narrative history aimed at a popular audience. While students of the trail will find fascinating anecdotes and quotes from Mormon journals, scholars will be disappointed in its lack of citations, bibliography, or source notes of any kind.

W. Paul Reeve
Department of History
University of Utah


Biographers of Theodore Roosevelt have long been aware of the significance of the time he spent in the Badlands of Dakota Territory during the 1880s. After an initial visit in 1883, Roosevelt returned the following year, this time overwhelmed with grief. Earlier that year he had experienced unimaginable personal tragedy when his beloved wife, Alice, and his mother died on the very same day. A few months later TR returned to western Dakota by train, bound for a landscape he hoped would bring him solace, healing, and renewal.

Over the next several years, Roosevelt returned to the Badlands for weeks or even months at a time, relishing the oddly shaped yet magnificently beautiful region around the Little Missouri River. Here he found plentiful game—deer, elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, cougar, bear, and grouse. He arrived just in time to hunt the bison, which had been hunted nearly to extinction in prior years. On his hunting forays he was often accompanied by Bill Sewall and Wilmot Dow, onetime guides from Maine whom he hired to join him in Dakota. His hunting experiences in Dakota awakened in him an awareness of the importance of conserving game animals, and in 1887 he helped found the Boone and Crockett Club, the oldest wildlife conservation organization in North America.

Mindful of rising cattle prices, expansive grasslands, and free open rangelands, TR saw an opportunity in the burgeoning cattle industry. Soon he became part of a network of ranchers, boosters, and such characters as the Marquis de Morès, a French aristocrat and soldier. From his Maltese Cross and Elkhorn Ranches, Roosevelt played an important role in the Little Missouri Stockman’s Association, joined in cattle roundups, and contributed to efforts to track down rustlers, even arresting three of them himself. All the while he enjoyed being adorned in buckskin, breaking horses, and having time to read, write, and explore the Badlands. Initially scorned by some locals as “Four Eyes”—his glasses suggesting to them he was physically weak—TR proved his mettle by plunging into the hard work of the roundups and by punching out a bully at a bar in Mingusville, Montana. Eventually, he sold his ranches and herds after the severe losses he took following the brutal winter of 1886–87.

The subject of Roger Di Silvestro’s book has been treated by several other biographers and by
Hermann Hagedorn in his 1921 *Roosevelt in the Bad Lands*. Still, a newly crafted treatment of Roosevelt’s Badlands years is welcome. By incorporating recent scholarship and by drawing liberally on TR’s numerous letters and published writings, Di Silvestro has produced a fully documented and engaging narrative of this crucial time in Theodore Roosevelt’s life before he became president.

MARK HARVEY
Department of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies
North Dakota State University


Geographers Yossi Katz and John Lehr’s new book on the Hutterites provides an in-depth analysis of the social life of one of the four branches of the Hutterite Church in North America, the Group 2 Schmiedeleut. In many ways it is also an informative introduction to Hutterite life in general.

Katz and Lehr provide detailed explanations of virtually every aspect of Hutterite life in the province of Manitoba. This includes social and political organization at the colony and inter-colony levels, religious and cultural traditions, the impact of space and how it is employed (with helpful charts and images), as well as economic structures and developments. There are also discussions about how Hutterites use leisure time and about relationships with non-Hutterites. One chapter is devoted entirely to Hutterite women. The book also deals with the “runaway” phenomenon as well as the impact of globalization and other social and economic changes on colony life and operations.

Five appendixes contain impressive material. Of the book’s 430 pages, 161 are devoted to a single appendix that provides an English translation of Hutterite Church ordinances between 1762 and 2009. But this is also problematic, limiting what can be said about Hutterite history and the diversity of beliefs and practices across the North American Hutterite community. In the short historical section, for example, the Hutterites are described as “Christian perfectionists,” which is somewhat confusing since the word “perfectionism” usually implies Christian theological understandings not associated with the Hutterites.

Even more disconcerting is the fact that the book is not really a general study of all branches of the contemporary Hutterite community. Of the 50,000-plus Hutterites in North America, for example, nearly two-thirds are members of the often more conservative Lehrerleut and Dariusleut branches (whose colonies are located primarily in Montana, Alberta, and Saskatchewan), groups this book spends limited time on. And Katz and Lehr focus primarily on the more conservative of the two Schmiedeleut groups.

Not nearly enough attention is given to the vast differences between Hutterite branches, or even between colonies within the same branch, all of which anthropologist Max Stanton and I review in detail in *The Hutterites in North America* (2010), a text not referenced by Katz and Lehr. Austrian historian Astrid von Schlachta’s *The Hutterites between Tirol and North America* (2006) is also not mentioned, nor is my 2009 biography of Hutterite leader Paul Tschetter, one of the two delegates sent from Russia to “spy out the land” for all Hutterites in the summer of 1873.

In general, not enough attention is given to the progressive Schmiedeleut Hutterite group (Group 1; a division occurred in 1992) nor to the Dariusleut and Lehrerleut communities, nor in many ways to American (as compared to Canadian, and more specifically, Manitoban) Hutterites. Manitoba Hutterite colonies were evidently the ones most visited, and thus, through this work, their members become spokespersons for all Hutterites. Even the book’s photographs appear to come substantially from the Group 2 Schmiedeleut.

It is also significant that discussion of the relationship between Hutterites and the Bruderhof communities (the Hutterites and Bruderhof were merged institutionally from 1931 to 1955 and again from 1974 to 1994) relies on sources primar-

If you are an African American, a Mexican American, or a progressive Anglo who grew up in Texas in the past century, reading Brian Behnken’s book, filled as it is with examples of the state’s racism, is sure to tear off a few old scabs. Behnken’s main objective, however, is to explain the factors that kept black civil rights activists from working with their Hispanic counterparts to reduce racial segregation and discrimination.

One factor, Behnken argues convincingly, was geography: the battleground for the black struggle was in the eastern part of the state, the Mexican-American battleground hundreds of miles away, in the Rio Grande Valley. A more insidious factor was binary racialism. In Texas, a person was either black or white. For much of the twentieth century—until the 1960s—Mexican American leaders chose to pursue a “whiteness strategy.” Making common cause with blacks would have compromised Mexican Americans’ preferred identity. “Let the Negro fight his own battles,” said League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) president Felix Tijerina, whose politics reflected his segregationist attitudes. Blacks responded in kind, buying into the negative stereotypes that white racists had devised to justify their oppression of Mexican Americans.

There were a few racially enlightened heroes in this political drama, among them University of Texas professor George Sanchez and U.S. representative Henry Gonzales. But the villains greatly outnumbered the heroes, and in Behnken’s view, some of the state’s governors were among the most vile.

Behnken’s political history brings us up to 2008, when African Americans generally supported Barack Obama during the Texas primary while Mexican Americans offered Hillary Clinton broad support. Mexican Americans wound up supporting Obama in the 2008 general election (supporting him even more strongly in 2012).
What of the future? What is missing from the book is prognosis. Are these two groups doomed to keep repeating the past? Could the Texas experience offer lessons for other regions of the country, particularly for Great Plains cities such as Topeka and Kansas City, Kansas, where demographic changes are likely to heighten black-brown conflict? Behnken’s story about Texas is carefully researched and well written, but it provides little guidance for addressing the tensions that are likely to arise in these venues.

EDWIN DORN
Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs
University of Texas at Austin


This thorough study of the American West takes as a given the region’s contested and continuously shifting identity among scholars as well as among artists, activists, and government agencies. One of Robert Dorman’s many contributions to the field in Hell of a Vision is his decision to chart the formations of these multiple Wests alongside each other, from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the present day.

The primary texts examined here range from the canonical to the unexpected. Dorman’s archive begins with John Wesley Powell’s maps of the “Arid Region,” produced in 1891 for the U.S. Geological Survey. He later turns to novels by Willa Cather, Owen Wister, Mari Sandoz, and Rose Wilder Lane; films from Sergio Leone’s spaghetti westerns to Brokeback Mountain; and numerous federal legal documents, including the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 and the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988. Through these interdisciplinary sets of readings, Dorman demonstrates how the development and modification of the nationalist West—the West as defined by the federal government and perceived by the nation as a whole—gave rise to what he calls the Old West culture industry, only to be supplanted by less mythologized representations of the region in recent decades.

While Hell of a Vision opens with Powell’s panoramic views of the Great Plains and the Rockies from the top of Long’s Peak, Dorman’s investigations of political and cultural change in the more contemporary West focus on the local (urban planning in Portland, Oregon, for example) as much as the regional (the Sagebrush Rebellion, in which conservatives across the Plains and mountain states opposed federal land-use restrictions). No matter the scale of the case study, though, several antagonisms emerge throughout the book: the agrarian West vs. the wilderness West, government intervention vs. self-determination (most notably during the Dust Bowl, when the Great Plains was America’s “disaster zone”), and consumerism vs. conservation, to name a few.

These tensions are accurately reflected in the book’s subtitle, and Dorman ably traces the many lives of regionalism, both as a critical term and as a way of living, throughout the West’s encounter with the modern world. Especially engaging are his discussions of western regionalism as a corrective ideological stance, first against a nationalism that sought to erase cultural difference, and then, in the book’s final chapter, against the de-territorializing effects of globalization. Dorman is careful not to endorse a strident form of regionalism, though, and his balanced perspective throughout the work makes it a useful addition to existing scholarship on the modern West.

ALLEN FROST
Department of English
Stanford University


Given the emphasis that advocates of bioregionalism have historically placed on principles of decentralization and localization in the develop-
ment of more ecologically sustainable modes of inhabitation, it is perhaps not surprising that no wide-ranging survey of bioregional literary criticism has appeared on the scene until now. This is a shame, however, because it turns out that examining bioregional practices across cultures and places yields a wealth of new ideas about how to live more sustainably in one’s home place. In The Bioregional Imagination, readers finally have access to a much-needed set of comparative perspectives on bioregionalism, ranging from the implementation of bioregional ideas in the Pacific Northwest, where bioregionalism has long had a foothold in shaping how people envision their relationships to place, to locales farther afield, including Italy’s Po River Valley, Nigeria, Ireland, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and even the imaginative landscapes of speculative fiction. There are also essays that answer the call for more adequate theorizing of bioregional identity in large cities, and chapters that attend to landscapes where the marginalization of nonhuman nature and certain human populations has often made place attachment difficult.

One of the most important contributions the collection makes to scholarly discussion resides in its engagement with bioregionalism’s critics. Rather than burying their heads in the sands of localism, the volume’s editors and a number of its authors (see, for instance, Pavel Cenkl, Anne Milne, Bart Welling, Libby Robin, and Erin James) acknowledge that thinking about principles of reinhabitation without attending to global phenomena is no longer tenable, particularly in an era of climate change, global trade, and the growing threat of invasive species. Given these changes, how do we decide what does (and does not) qualify as “local”? How are alterations in the climate challenging conventional ideas of bioregional stability? How might bioregionalism be expressed via literary form as well as content? And further, how do we address forms of global movement that are not voluntary?

To that end, several essays take up what might seem to be primarily local issues and emphasize their translocal causes and effects, whether manifested in changing game populations in the circumpolar Arctic, environmental displacement in Nigeria, or Kentuckian communities that are ground zero for debates on mountaintop removal. If we use electricity, or drive a car, or miss the signs and songs of seasonal wildlife that once seemed commonplace, what happens in these places should matter to us. In this vein, I suggest that the essay Great Plains readers might find most intriguing is one that initially seems the most geographically distant: in her study of Australia’s Red Centre, Libby Robin provocatively argues that in an increasingly arid and unpredictable world of seasonal fluctuation, mobility, rather than forms of rooted dwelling more commonly associated with bioregionalism, may become an important survival skill. If 2012’s drought is any indication of future trends in the Great Plains, it might be increasingly necessary to look to other bioregions for clues about how to live more sustainably in our own place and time.

JENNY KERBER
Department of English
University of Toronto
and as one of the grasslands’ important scholars (see her Prairie: A Natural History, 2004), Savage provides ample information on geological, ecological, and genetic deep history of the Plains. Eastend anchors a popular T. rex Discovery Centre where visitors learn about eons of the earth’s permutations. The nearby Cypress Hills, ever changeable, fill Savage with wonder and spiritual satisfaction. Still, her book is entitled A Geography of Blood, and however resonantly powerful the juxtaposition of hills and valley through this beautiful region of Saskatchewan, Savage recognizes disturbing layers of loss and violence. Pondering a geological unconformity that marks the erasure of 30 million years, she asks a geologist “where all the lost land had gone.” A geological erasure, a provoking metaphor, compels her to consider cultural unconformities, the gaps in history that cover disturbed lives.

This part of Saskatchewan, where contact between First Nations people and Europeans led to irrevocable change in the Plains, bears the vestiges and scars of recent human history that is anything but benign. Savage’s family settled in this part of Saskatchewan, a place where many humans had lived before. “It is characteristic of the prairies that things hide in plain view,” she comments, and the marks of human passage are among those hidden objects. Stone circles that she and Keith encounter mark a “spectral village,” a slim record of history that could “have been lost . . . sans stories, in anonymous rock piles” had a farmer’s machinery displaced them. Savage is determined to uncover human unconformities and silences, stories that discomfort the progressive face of settlement mythos. The second half of her narrative incisively presents the cruel strategies of displacement that governments on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel pursued to take over country that for millennia had supported Indigenous communities. Massacre sites, resistant encampments, and modern prisons memorialize the struggles of surviving First Nations.

Sacred places continue to draw Cree, Nakoda, Siksika, and Métis people homeward to the Cypress Hills. Savage honors their stories and “home truths.” As a daughter of settlement, she hopes for connection among all people of this place. A realist, she completes her story with words of caution: “This is a story that has to be marked: To Be Continued.” Hers is a bluntly lucid account of the affective landscape around Eastend, a town that continues to inspire writers and to offer lessons that illuminate and chasten.

SUSAN NARAMORE MAHER
College of Liberal Arts
University of Minnesota–Duluth


Beginning in the 1950s, Arizona collector James T. Bialac assembled an extensive and eclectic collection of Native American art, consisting of approximately 2,500 paintings and 1,500 kachina dolls, baskets, jewelry, pottery, and sculptures. The collection represents several regions, with particular strengths in the southwestern and southeastern United States and the Southern Plains. Produced by the University of Oklahoma in recognition of Bialac’s donation of his collection to the university’s Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, the catalogue provides an overview of this assemblage, featuring images of selected works and accompanying essays.

The essays detail James Bialac’s collecting interests and the ways in which he built his collection over a period of more than fifty years. Although he primarily focused his efforts on contemporary Native art, the collection includes a few ledger drawings produced in the 1880s by Northern Cheyenne and Navajo artists. Readers with interests in the Great Plains may particularly appreciate the paintings by Southern Cheyenne artist Dick West; Kiowa Five artists Stephen Mopope, James Auhiah, and Monroe Tsatoke; Oklahoma artists Acee Blue Eagle, Woody Crumbo, Carl Sweezy, and T. C. Cannon; and Paul Goodbear from the Northern Cheyennes. They may also be interested in Mary Jo Watson’s introductory description of the unique history of the University of Oklahoma’s involvement with Native American artists—particularly the Kiowa Five—beginning in the 1920s under the leadership of Oscar B. Jacobson. Rushing’s essay provides valuable historical and cultural contexts for specific works as well as insights into the backgrounds and motivations of particular artists.

The catalogue features spectacular color photographs of each work and an attractive design that features many full-page images. Additional publications on the Bialac collection would benefit from further discussion of the historical, cultural, and personal contexts for specific works, along with contributions by Native American artists and writers who could provide, perhaps, different perspectives on this significant art collection.

**Emma I. Hansen**

Senior Curator, Plains Indian Museum
Buffalo Bill Historical Center
Cody, Wyoming


As the reality sets in that Native Americans have not become the *vanishing race*, their continuum of artistic excellence is underscored in the collection amased by Alan and Berte Hirschfield. *Living with American Indian Art* documents how these avid collectors have integrated a broad range of cultural materials into a private Wyoming home, reflecting their collecting passion and broad interests. From the Tlingit baskets to the Zia pottery to the Cheyenne buckskin dresses, the Native arts found in the Hirschfield collection are exquisite works, in keeping with Alan Hirschfield’s mantra, “When you see something beautiful, buy it!”

Gaylord Torrance lends the book a scholarly voice in his foreword recounting the evolution of the western ranch house with historical photos of environments related to the Hirschfield home. “In such a context,” Torrence writes, “the significance of the objects was transformed; although harking back, they no longer served as functional items. . . Their deepest meaning, perhaps, had come to stand for a profound and shared sense of place.”

Hirschfield reiterates this point, recounting that he and his wife anticipated the need to display their growing collection as they built their log home. *Living with American Indian Art* provides a glimpse into the Hirschfields’ residence with art in situ. Garth Dowling’s elegant photography of both the residence and the art anchors the book with beautifully detailed illustrations, broadly organized by medium. The collection is built mostly from Plains materials dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, art made at the height of the artists’ mythically constructed cultural doom. Brought publicly into dialogue with each other through this publication, the items featured in the catalogue serve as evidence that these cultures were in a state of adaptation—using new materials (seed beads) and forms (valises)—but not in a state of artistic demise. As these materials—Plains beaded cradles and shirts and many objects like them—entered the collecting market, it was not unusual for their provenance to be lost in the shuffle between dealers and owners. Hirschfield attended to collecting these histories, when possible, providing interesting documentation for some works in his collection, such as the historical black-and-white portrait photographs of Nellie Gates’s family (Yanktonai Sioux, North Dakota) with their beaded valises, including the one in the collection pictured with Gates’s daughter.
Given the book’s beautiful layout, the catalogue would have benefited from more scholarship about the art. Despite anecdotal historical references and cultural context, including that provided by Terry Winchell, most of the writing reflects the collector’s autobiography and lends little more than explanation of how he came to build his collection. One can hope that the collectors will seek out public venues where they will share these extraordinary examples of Native creativity.

HEATHER AHTONE
Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art
University of Oklahoma


The patrons of Saturday-night Texas dance halls still two-step to the music of Bob Will’s and his Texas Playboys, more than thirty-five years after
Wills’s death. Jean Boyd is one of the Texas music authors who has mythologized Wills in her previous “We’re the Light Crust Doughboys from Burrus Mills”: An Oral History (2003) and The Jazz of the Southwest: An Oral History of Western Swing (1998). In her newest book, Dance All Night: Those Other Southwestern Swing Bands, Past and Present, Boyd puts the spotlight on lesser-known practitioners of the music that Wills pioneered along with his Light Crust Doughboys’ partner Milton Brown in the early 1930s. But such performers will forever remain in the shadow of Wills. The book’s title borrows a line from one of Wills’s most famous songs, “Stay All Night, Stay a Little Longer.” Indeed, such is Wills’s stature that a section of this book focuses on the various incarnations of the Texas Playboys that have continued to perform after his death in 1975.

Boyd writes that western swing transcended the popularity of Wills and his West Coast counterpart, Spade Cooley: “Western swing bands dominated local airways and dancehalls in every town and rural setting throughout the Southwest in the 1930s. . . . The purpose of this book is to discuss the other western swing bands, the ones that did not garner national fame, but were local sensations to thousands of Southwesterners looking for entertainment and good dancing during the years of the Great Depression and World War II.”

This is an engagingly written, carefully researched book that tells the story in episodic fashion of such accomplished but lesser-known bands as Bill Boyd’s Cowboy Ramblers and Hank Thompson and the Brazos Valley Boys. These bands, while not as influential as the Doughboys, the Playboys, or Milton Brown’s Musical Brownies, are well worth the respectful chronicling they receive here.

Dance All Night is very much a musician’s book, even including a generous section of musical analysis and notations. Handsomely designed and hefty, it offers a generous section of choice photographs capturing the spirit of a musical genre that enjoyed its peak of popularity in the 1930s and 1940s, but remains vibrant today.

JOHN MARK DEMPSEY
Department of Mass Media, Communication, and Theatre
Texas A&M University–Commerce
NOTES AND NEWS

CALL FOR PAPERS

Great Plains Quarterly is seeking essays for a new section of the journal devoted to raising important and even controversial questions related to scholarship and life in the Great Plains. These essays will undergo a limited peer-review process and are not expected to include extensive citations. The purpose is to publish editorial essays, position papers, and other narratives that will contribute to the conversation about the Great Plains experience. For additional information, or to submit a paper for consideration, please contact the Editor, Charles A. Braithwaite, at cbraithwaite2@unl.edu.

SIXTH ANNUAL LAKOTA DAKOTA NAKOTA LANGUAGE SUMMIT

2013 will mark the Sixth Annual Lakota Dakota Nakota Language Summit. Over the last five years more than 2,000 people representing nearly seventy tribes from the United States and Canada participate in the summit and continue to communicate through the Lakota Dakota Nakota Language Network. November 14, 15, and 16, 2013, are the dates for the Sixth Annual Lakota Dakota Nakota Language Summit, which will be held at the Ramkota Best Western Hotel and Convention Center in Rapid City, SD. The Lakota Dakota Nakota Language Summit is a yearly gathering where language educators, learners, and advocates can share language-teaching and/or language-learning strategies, techniques, models, methods, resources, materials, and technologies that are out there that can be used to be successful in creating a new generation of speakers as well as a generation of second-language learners that can help to ensure that our languages are continued on into the future. Throughout the year the unity created through the summit is sustained through the Lakota Dakota Nakota Language Network where summit participants can communicate with each other and Tusweca Tiospaye can keep everyone updated on language workshops, development of new materials and technologies, and general support on this important work. For additional information, please contact Michael Carlow Jr., Founder-Director, Tusweca Tiospaye; telephone: 605-867-5193, e-mail: mike@tuswecatiospaye.org. You may also visit the website at http://www.tuswecatiospaye.org.

THE FORTY-NINTH ANNUAL WESTERN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The Department of English at the University of Victoria will be hosting the Western Literature Association’s annual conference on November 5–8, 2014, in Victoria, British Columbia. The conference theme is “Border Songs.” The WLA returns to Canada remembering two very successful past Canadian meetings (Vancouver in 1995 and Banff in 1998). The conference title, “Border Songs,” comes from Jim Lynch’s cross-border novel. Topics of the conference will include West Coast literatures (and comparative studies of them), First Nations/Native American literatures, storytelling, and song. Additional information about the 2014 conference, including a call for papers, will be available at http://www.usu.edu/westlit.

PLAINS PHOTO PROJECT

The Center for Great Plains Studies at Emporia State University is host to the Plains Photo Project. This is an online gallery for images related to all aspects of the Great Plains. The gallery strives to be a repository for scholarship of the life and culture of the Great Plains. The variety of images, whether historic, scientific, nostalgic, or simply beautiful, reflect the breadth of Great Plains life and culture. Amateur and professional photographers, researchers, scholars, dwellers, and visitors are invited to submit photographs to the Center.
for inclusion in the online gallery. Images should be accompanied by a brief explanation including location, date, and photographer contact information. Submissions should be sent as jpeg or tiff files to sbrinkma@emporia.edu. The Center will not be able to return original photos sent through the post. As this is a nonprofit educational venture, no payment is available. However, all photographers will receive full credit on the website. For additional information about the Plains Photo Project and the Center for Great Plains Studies at Emporia State University, please visit http://www.emporia.edu/cgps/index.html.
UPCOMING THEME ISSUE
NO. 179, AUTUM 2013
Ethnobotany of British Columbia: Plants and People in a Changing World
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FEATURED ARTICLES
FROM NO. 177, SPRING 2013

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UCLA’s *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* is a quarterly academic publication dedicated to scholarship about American Indian peoples. AICRJ publishes articles and reviews of recent work from a variety of disciplines, including history, literature, health, anthropology, sociology, political science, and others.

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The Quarterly welcomes the submission of manuscripts and essays that are both solidly researched and engagingly written. In all cases contributions must be free of specialized jargon so that they can be read, understood, and appreciated by persons in other academic fields and by interested laypersons. All manuscripts are given double-blind review.

We do not accept articles previously published or currently under consideration by other journals. Authors in doubt about what constitutes prior publication should consult the editor.

Total length of manuscripts, including notes and illustrations, should not exceed 14,000 words or 30 pages, but shorter contributions will be preferred. All copy, including endnotes (no footnotes, please) and captions, should be double spaced. References in the endnotes should conform to the mode specified in The Chicago Manual of Style (16th ed. rev., 2010) or the “GPQ Style Sheet” and “GPQ Images Style Sheet” on the website.

Electronic submissions via e-mail are encouraged. Manuscripts and images submitted by mail should be accompanied by a CD-R disc formatted for IBM PC and the article in MS Word. Images must be 300 dpi tif or eps files. All correspondence on editorial matters should be addressed to: Editor, Great Plains Quarterly, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 1155 Q Street, Hewit Place, P.O. Box 880245, Lincoln, NE 68588-0245; e-mail: gpq@unl.edu; website: www.unl.edu/plains.

Cover image: Detail of portrait of Hayne Hudjihini, an Otoe, from The History of the Indian Tribes of North America, 1844. Lithograph after Charles Bird King.

FREDERICK C. LUEBKE AWARD
The Frederick C. Luebke Award is offered annually for the best article published in Great Plains Quarterly during a volume year. All articles submitted to the Quarterly are eligible for the award. Judges are drawn from past winners and the Publications Committee of the Board of Governors for the Center for Great Plains Studies. The award is presented at the Center for Great Plains Studies’ annual Fellows meeting and includes a cash stipend of $250. Frederick C. Luebke was the founding editor of Great Plains Quarterly.

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