

so much to the nation. Reading this book reminds us of those huge contributions.

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The Wild Frontier: Atrocities During the American-Indian War from Jamestown Colony to Wounded Knee. By William M. Osborn. (New York: Random House, 2000. Pp. xv, 363. Appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.95.)

The Wild Frontier presents two themes that affected the history of Indian-white relations across the United States. The first is essentially cultural. Opening chapters deal with traditional aspects of tribal life—including war tactics, territorial-defense techniques, and cultural proclivities, both positive and negative (such as a lust for cruelty during times of distress). According to William M. Osborn's analysis, tribal governments were somewhat desultory but suitably democratic. Traditional cultures featured a commitment to family life that included a tendency to indulge the children and celebrate the elders. Yet families sometimes killed infants and abandoned elders along the trails. Seemingly callous aspects of tribal behavior surfaced mainly during confrontations with immigrants who displayed no regard for tribal circumstances and sensibilities. Ordinarily, tribal members tempered hardship with humor and displayed respect for nature. The most obvious deficiency in Osborn's cultural analysis is a failure to describe the importance of spirituality and religious practices.

Osborn's second theme is his detailed description of atrocities perpetrated by tribal groups and non-Indians, covered in five chapters (pp. 93-245), from precolonial times to the end of the nineteenth century. Final chapters explain that the success of federal troops in fighting Indians, benefits written into treaties, and regulations included in federal statutes settled behavior on both sides of the racial confrontation. The text closes with a superficial description of federal policy history and the question of "Where We Are and Where We may Go," which must be answered by the tribes and not by external forces of culture and government.

Osborn is an attorney who relied almost entirely on fewer than ninety books and no original research—the strategy of a lawyer instead of a professional historian. He used snippets of information published by many authors, amateurs as well as professionals, without regard for variation in the reliability of their books. Nevertheless, his text contains a potpourri of data and description that provides a legitimate portrayal of cultural aspects in the history of Indian-white relations.

Osborn's text addresses Indian-white affairs across the United States, and it should interest general readers in every state because the themes apply to all tribal environments from coast to coast. Scholars who have read most of the sources listed in the bibliography and are capable of critiquing the information they contain should see this as a helpful reference work. Librarians who serve the interests of general readers or scholars should regard *The Wild Frontier* as an essential addition to collections that feature ethnic history.

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Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans.

By Anthony F. C. Wallace. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1999. Pp. ix, 394. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$29.95.)

A major thrust of recent scholarship on Thomas Jefferson is that he was a man with inconsistent, paradoxical, and even hypocritical beliefs. Consider, for example, Joseph J. Ellis's award-winning character study, which describes Jefferson as an *American Sphinx* (1997). Now historical anthropologist Anthony F. C. Wallace joins the chorus by arguing that Jefferson's "contradictions," which "have been most conspicuous in his handling of the issue of slavery and in his disregard of constitutional restrictions on executive power," manifest themselves also "in his conduct of Indian affairs" (p. 16). Jefferson, after all, maintained a lifelong interest in Native American culture and tendered expressions of benevolence—and even admiration—toward Indians. Yet his vision for the future left little room for them. As Wallace notes, in 1801 he shared with James Monroe his hope that someday all of North America would be inhabited by "a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, and by similar laws" (p. 17).

Despite some heavy breathing that connects "ethnic cleansing" (p. 20) and "cultural genocide" (p. 276) to Jefferson's Indian policy, Wallace deserves credit for providing a fairly evenhanded explanation of its origins and rationale. Although, like many of the leading members of his generation, Jefferson speculated in western lands, Wallace attributes his posture toward Indians to motives other than self-interest. The War for Independence taught the young statesman that Indians and their warriors could undermine the republic, a view that seemed to spark in him not only fear but also fascination. Wallace's account of the decade following the Revolution provides an impressive analysis of Jefferson's explorations into Native American language, technology, history, and culture. Beginning in the 1790s, however, Jefferson's concerns became less academic and more geopolitical. The British, French, and Spanish threatened America's frontiers, and