

## *Warrior Nations: The United States and Indian Peoples*

By Roger L. Nichols

(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. Pp. 237. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. Paperbound, \$19.95.)

Roger L. Nichols's *Warrior Nations* is, in essence, military history written from both an Indian and an American point of view. While the book's organization is chronological, only eight of the most brutal encounters in American history are included—the struggle for the Ohio Valley, Jackson's suppression of the "Red Sticks," the Arikara War of 1823, the Minnesota-Dakota Conflict of 1862, the Cheyenne Arapaho War of 1864-1865, the Chiricahua Apache War of 1861-1872, and the Nez Perce War of 1877. All of these conflicts have some similar elements, but Nichols has not chosen them primarily for their comparative aspects. Instead, he challenges a prevailing model of military history that focuses on government policy, congressional activity, the Office of Indian Affairs, the moods and actions of army officers, and even the aggressiveness, or what has recently been called the "settler sovereignty," of white pioneers. Nichols focuses on the complexity of tribal, village, and even band politics and the rationale for conflict, in order to provide a better analysis of many of the most important conflicts in history. In some ways, this book is a throwback to such general histories as *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1971), *The Long Death* (1964), or *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (1963). But Nichols has provided a much sharper and

more objective understanding of these tragic events.

The basic conclusion of the study comes early. The earliest white colonists began the massive invasion of Indian lands; as millions of Europeans arrived, conflict over the land was inevitable. "Warfare could not have been avoided," the author concludes, "even if all interracial dealings had been honest and fair, or even if the federal system for dealing with tribal peoples had worked flawlessly" (pp. xii-xiii). But what made conflict even more compelling, according to the author, is that the United States seems to revel in war—Nichols notes that nineteenth-century wars with Indians have only shifted in subsequent centuries into conflicts with peoples outside the country. It was, then, a warring nation of Europeans that encountered tribal societies that were themselves often bred of warfare.

Most readers will lack knowledge of the Arikara War of 1823. Nichols provides a convincing narrative that demonstrates that the conflict erupted over increased trade competition for furs, and from the precarious position of these Indians in relation to the Teton Sioux and the more northern Mandan and Hidatsa. In a similar fashion, Nichols analyzes the events that led up to the Minnesota-Dakota War of 1862—not well known to historians either—noting the causes

rather than the actual fighting that followed. Nichols's second foray into conflict over the Plains deals with the Cheyenne-Arapahoe War of 1864-1865, examining how Dog Soldiers, miners, and territorial militia clashed over land and hunting ground.

This book is designed for classroom use, and it is a welcome addition to a literature that has far too often focused on the battles rather than the causes of ethnic conflict. While some will quibble with the author's

failure to tell particular stories, the purpose of the study is not to provide an inclusive survey but to offer an insightful analysis of the "wars of aggression" that led to the conquest of North America by Europeans and to the Native Americans' loss of a homeland.

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### *Issachar Bates: A Shaker's Journey*

By Carol Medlicott

(Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England, 2013. Pp. 424. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Paperbound, \$35.00.)

In 1801, at age forty-three—after he had served as a Revolutionary War soldier, helped settle the New England frontier, and fathered nine surviving children—the hard-drinking, blunt-speaking Issachar Bates joined the celibate Shaker community at New Lebanon, New York, along with his wife and most of his family. Just four years later, Bates, Benjamin Seth Youngs, and John Meacham were dispatched by the northeastern Shaker leaders as the first Shaker missionaries to the areas of the Midwest impacted by the Kentucky Revival. For the more than three remaining decades of his life until 1837, Bates pursued a remarkably peripatetic and productive career as a preacher, community leader, song-

writer, dancer, and poet. During that time, he traveled some 38,000 miles throughout the frontier Midwest, often on foot, helping to attract as many as a thousand converts to the Shaker faith and setting up or leading, with varying degrees of success, Shaker communities in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana.

In her riveting narrative and analytical biography, *Issachar Bates: A Shaker's Journey*, historical geographer Carol Medlicott brings to life this remarkable man's many struggles and achievements, placing them within the complex frontier environment in which his spiritual and temporal life developed. Throughout her lively account, Medlicott seamlessly juxtaposes excerpts from Issachar's