one may find additional information concerning trade, land
control, and intertribal relations and movements on the
New York-Pennsylvania frontier.

Two introductory articles precede the records. Leder has
written a brief sketch of the career of Robert Livingston and
an explanation of the disposition of the Livingston records.
Paul A. W. Wallace in a second article gives a brief outline of
the history of the Iroquois. Both articles, while brief, are
adequate for introductory purposes.

The documents themselves are arranged in chronological
order with italicized introductions giving the name of the
speaker and date. This arrangement is sometimes confusing
to the general reader who may be following a particular
topic. There is no index, and while there are occasional
explanatory footnotes, additional explanatory material in the
footnotes would be beneficial. Pictographs explaining the
legend of the founding of the Five Nations are scattered
throughout the text. These are of dubious value and add
little to the book. A glossary of Indian tribal names used
within the documents is also provided.

Butler University

Allan J. McCurry

The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, With Comparative
Material From Other Western Tribes. By John C.
Ewers. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American
Ethnology, Bulletin 159. (Washington, D. C.: Govern-
ment Printing Office, 1955, pp. xv, 374. Plates, figures,
appendix, bibliography, and index. $2.75.)

Historians and ethnologists have long been intrigued
with the significant influence of the European-introduced
horse on the culture of the North American Plains Indians.
Attention has heretofore been focused, however, on the dif-
fusion of the horse among the Plains tribes. No detailed an-
alysis of the horse complex as it existed in the nineteenth-
century culture of a specific Plains Indian group has been
attempted prior to Ewers' present excellent monograph.

The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture divides naturally
into three parts: (1) An introductory ethnohistorical discus-
sion, carefully documented, of the dates and manner of the
acquisition of the horse by Plains and Plateau peoples from,
ultimately, two southern sources of diffusion (Santa Fe and
San Antonio); (2) a large body of descriptive field data on
Blackfoot wealth in horses; care, breeding, and training of
horses; gear; the use of the horse in camp movements,
hunting, and war; the part played by the horse in trade and recreation and as a factor in Blackfoot social relations and religion; (3) two general chapters on the influence of the horse on a specific Plains Indian culture, and on the Plains Indian horse complex as a whole. A short appendix describes the use of mules among the Blackfoot.

Comparative material on the horse complex in Plains and Plateau cultures other than Blackfoot is presented in footnotes and brief comparative sections within the main part of the study. Much of Ewers' comparative material is drawn from documentary sources rather than from ethnographic reports—which in itself indicates what Ewers explicitly points out, that "For the entire Plains area there has been an appalling lack of detailed analysis of the horse complex" (p. xi).

The generally interested reader will find parts (1) and (3) of Ewers' study especially rewarding, and it is difficult to envisage any American-trained ethnologist or student of American history ignoring these sections. Once having read them, it is safe to predict that many scholars, even though hard pressed for reading time, will sample a goodly number, at least, of the descriptive sections of (2). The chapter on wealth in horses among the Blackfoot and other tribes (pp. 20-32), read in conjunction with a short section on the horse as a factor of social status (pp. 240-244) serves to underscore what many ethnologists have found among various present-day Plains groups—namely, that possession of horses on a noneconomic level is still a prestige factor among Plains Indian groups.

In making his study of the horse complex Ewers utilized three avenues of approach—ethnographical field work among the Blackfoot over an extended period of time, extensive ethnohistorical research in published documentary materials, and examination of museum materials. The successful combination of these three methods makes his monograph a definitive work. Its originality is attested by the fact that, now the study is published, one wonders why such an obviously significant subject was suffered to remain so long neglected by American ethnologists, particularly by those concerned with the cultures of the Plains Indians and historical questions relating to these cultures.

A study of the European-introduced horse among the North American Indians in general remains to be written. Although the horse may have had most spectacular influence on native cultures in the Northern Plains region, it is safe to
assume that in the Southeast, in the Eastern Woodlands, and in the Great Basin—to name only a few other areas—the introduction of the horse also affected native cultures to a greater or lesser degree. For the wider study of the horse in native North America, Ewers’ work could well serve as a model of method and presentation.

Indiana University

Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin


"It makes little difference . . . where one opens the record of the history of the Indians; every page and every year has its dark stain. The story of one tribe is the story of all, varied only by differences of time and place; but neither time nor place makes any difference in the main facts."

Although this quotation is not from Blumenthal’s _American Indians Dispossessed_, it might well be. And it could appropriately be written as a dust jacket blurb for the volume. The present work is in many respects an appendage to the source of the quotation, Helen Hunt Jackson’s _A Century of Dishonor_, written some three quarters of a century ago. Mrs. Jackson’s purpose was to provoke solicitude for the Indian; and her book was largely responsible for organization of the Indian Rights Association and indirectly responsible for the Dawes Act.

It seems as though Blumenthal has a purpose in mind. On each successive page he builds his case and piles up evidence to support it. Had the book been published a decade earlier one might readily have surmised the author was lobbying for federal legislation to compensate the Indians for all they had suffered and lost over the years, possibly to establish an agency such as the Indian Claims Commission, which was created in 1946. After some one hundred and sixty pages, however, this commission is mentioned briefly and summarily dismissed: “the result [of the Commission] has been a clutter and legal tangle, baffling to the layman, and dilatory if not obstructive so far as justice to tribal claims is concerned” (p. 164).

_American Indians Dispossessed_ is apparently not intended to be other than a damning indictment of a not-too-pleasant aspect of the frontier advance in American history.