

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.

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American Indians Dispossessed: Fraud in Land Cessions Forced upon the Tribes. By Walter H. Blumenthal. (Philadelphia: George S. MacManus Company, 1955, pp. 200. Appendix and bibliography. \$3.75.)

"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.

The author asserts: "This has been a factual recital No flourishes of style or memorable passages adorn the presentation. The record of double-dealing is eloquent without purple prose" (p. 185). This is hardly an accurate statement, however, because the volume is liberally sprinkled with such "flourishes of style" as: "this deception was perpetrated"; "that [the treaty] . . . was fraudulent in intent is indubitable"; "no scruples restrained his [William Henry Harrison's] remorseless pressure, prevarication, and deceit in victimizing the tribes over whom he had browbeating sway"; "no iota of moral compunction entered into the dispossession of the Indians"; "sordid motives . . . permeated with fraud"; "relentless white intrusion"; "fraught with . . . sordid manoeuvres"; "sordid blackguardism"; "orgy of fraud"; and "orgy of exploitation" (pp. 14, 17, 35-36, 58, 37, 48, 53, 97, 99, 111).

According to the author, his findings are from "documentary sources, augmented by findings of reliable authorities" (p. 185), which he variously describes, for example, as "without a peer in the legal angle of Indian Affairs" (p. 176), "a foremost authority" (p. 166), "a prime authority on the frontier history" (p. 116), "a careful and qualified regional historian" (p. 112). As accurately as these labels may describe the historians and writers concerned, however, quoting them out of context sometimes conveys the wrong impressions.

American Indians Dispossessed presents a picture that is completely negative. It does not present the whole story. It rejects as inadequate and unsatisfactory every effort that has and is being made to right the wrongs herein depicted. It offers no constructive suggestions to improve the situation. The reader is inclined to gain a feeling of hopelessness and futility for the Indian and a sense of purposelessness for the volume.

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The Meaning of America; Essays Toward an Understanding of the American Spirit. By Leland D. Baldwin. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1955, pp. 319. Maps and bibliography. \$4.00.)

The title of the volume would seem to imply an essay of something like two hundred pages, more or less, but the subtitle, "Essays Toward an Understanding of the American Spirit," suggests something different. The headings selected