

real and illusional temptations so that the exercise of free will became a complex and confusing undertaking."

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JAMES A. CLIFTON. *THE PRAIRIE PEOPLE: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN POTAWATOMI INDIAN CULTURE, 1665-1965*. Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977, 529 pp., \$22.50.

Until very recently, Indian history existed in the doldrums of guilt and ethnocentric misunderstanding. Since Indians were preeminently the great American obstacle to the inexorable process of United States expansion and progress, they have been relegated to the quiet, but nasty, fringes of Euroamerican history. Indians were destroyed or degraded in national chronicles. Sorry remnants of once proud peoples, reservation Indians, the story line goes, remained obstinately and hopelessly beyond the winds of change.

James Clifton's *The Prairie People* contributes materially to dismantling such dominant historical stereotypes. The Potawatomi emerge from his pages as persistent and embattled people whose social style continues to defy the sentimental thinness of American pluralism. The key to Potawatomi history, Clifton argues, is an inward-looking social life which preserves a core population whose centeredness wavers before change, but yet holds firm. Euroamerican culture offers a mart of social possibilities, and the Potawatomi have bought into the larger system in highly individualistic and competitive ways. Though persistently manipulated for Euroamerican purposes, some Potawatomi have countered direct and subtle assimilationist pressures. Resisting vigorously, and as much prey to grasping profiteers among themselves, the Potawatomi have clung to decentralized power and evolved new political forms to encyst community solidarity. The Potawatomi survive because authority remains diffuse as a potential attribute of every member of the inner tribal circle. Clifton holds a firm hand on his twin themes of cultural continuity and change. The Potawatomi are as ever; they seem altogether transformed. For the Prairie Potawatomi, "the great melting pot was a place to cook fried bread, not to lose one's identity in" (p. xv).

Clifton treats his subject comprehensively, though his scope narrows as he ultimately concentrates on one group, the Prairie people, of the surviving tribal fragments. But the largest part of the book considers the tribe before its dispersal in the 1830's. The result is a thorough look at Potawatomi society, culture, and values before contact and its adaptations and migrations as the tribe met the French, English, and Americans in successive

contact eras. The final section follows the Prairie Potawatomi to their present home in Kansas. Throughout, Clifton alternates a narrative history of the tribe's experience with chapters which sketch changing social, political, and economic organization. The result is a richly documented work which makes revisionistic contributions in every chapter. Clifton illuminates the dynamics of French-Potawatomi relations, reexamines the turbulent intertribal politics and religious revitalizations of the thirty years after the American Revolution, and revises our understanding of American treaty diplomacy, removal and reservation policies, and the internal alterations of Potawatomi society.

Clifton's approach to the Potawatomi is frankly ethnohistorical, and it generates a cool precision which characterizes the best of recent Indian histories. Clifton demonstrates that ethnohistory offers a broad avenue to the Potawatomi experience. When even a scanty documentary record is scrutinized for evidence of interplay between social structure and behavior, the historian can suggest the course of cultural processes. Clifton has an eye for such evidence, and he uses folkloric and mythological sources to further estimate the unique ethical boundaries of Potawatomi adaptations. While Clifton does not fully explore the ritualistic context of Potawatomi life, his work suggests that new Indian voices can be found in surprisingly voluminous and written tribal traditions. As Clifton modestly states it, "Neither Potawatomi culture nor history can be understood separately from one another" (p. xv). His book persuades the reader that Potawatomi culture and historical experience are of a single fabric.

Ethnohistory is a pragmatic melange of methodologies, and Clifton concentrates on leadership, kinship political brokerage, and factionalism as the processes which have governed Potawatomi adaptations. As early as the seventeenth century, French relations encouraged the development of political styles linked to diplomatic issues as well as to clan-related concerns. Gradually, external pressures created a class of leaders whose self-defined roles diverged from Potawatomi norms. Intermarriage between Potawatomi women and French, Scotch-Irish, and American traders intensified the separation as bicultural Potawatomi internalized conflicting political values. In the American period, traditional consensual politics and the splintering off of dissident patri-lineages marked the core of Potawatomi independence. New leaders, "chiefs," became increasingly constrained by the authoritarian tenets of American policy: forced sale of land, missionary and bureaucratic interference, "civilization" programs, individual allotment of communal territory, and the confused options of the Indian New Deal.

A peculiarly Indian politics of personality looms large in Clifton's pages. In the first third of the nineteenth century, the traditional Potawatomi leaders successfully used the new "chiefs" as intercultural brokers. Persons of mixed heritage, like Billy Caldwell, played Americans for Potawatomi advantage and

secured far better terms for their lands than would have been otherwise possible. This style of leadership survived only briefly after Caldwell's death in 1841. Thereafter, bicultural individuals vied with each other and with traditional people for power and self-advantage. Technical experts--traders, missionaries, and reservation agents--directed Potawatomi-American relations. Clifton amply reviews the scurrilous nature of such leadership which governed with the support of marginal Potawatomi who had the economic and political know-how traditional people lacked.

Twentieth century Potawatomi struggles derive, Clifton argues, from the attenuation of tribal political processes and from imposed legal norms. *The Prairie People* ends on an ominous note: "Dependence," Clifton says, ". . . was a root fact of their existence, an imperative with which they remained most uncomfortable" (p. 444). Contemporary Potawatomi, Clifton shows, face the challenge of breaking both the culturally and the politically dictated imperatives of their history.

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ROBERTO V. VALLANGCA. *PINOY: THE FIRST WAVE*. San Francisco: Strawberry Hill Press, 1977, 148 pp., \$6.95 paper.

The importance of documenting "oral histories" in print has to be emphasized among all Pacific Asian American groups. Dr. Roberto Vallangca has done a superb job and should be rewarded greatly as an encouragement to others to document the personal histories of the "old timers" who immigrated to Hawaii and mainland United States before the war.

Although the author's introduction to Pilipino history is brief, there are a number of historical accounts in print that chronicle the rich history of the Pilipinos. Dr. Vallangca's even shorter coverage of such topics as humor, marriage, religion and magic, and prejudice makes the book read very fast, but it lacks some depth. However, important and sometimes unique issues are discussed in such a way that the book is strong and memorable despite its briefness. For example, the author offers descriptions of the types of Pilipino humor that made it possible for immigrants to survive the struggles and hardships encountered in the United States. The impact of the marriage laws, forbidding Pilipino and white intermarriage, is also discussed briefly in this section, but is more detailed in later chapters containing the oral histories of the Pinoys. These laws and the denial of