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Review of *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives* Edited by Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack

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Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives. Edited by Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996. x+351 pp. Photos, tables, figures, notes, index, and references. \$32.95 cloth (ISBN 8061-2816-X).

The ten essays in *Native Americans and Wage Labor* provide an excellent source for information regarding the participation of Native Americans in labor markets in the United States from colonial times to the present. The editors' introductory essay reviews the literature showing that wage labor by Native Americans is not a recent phenomenon. It was crucial to the survival of some Native groups when other means of sustenance were removed. At particular times and places, Native labor was also crucial to settlers who needed to harvest crops, construct railroads, or build mines. Many of these examples are furnished by essays in the book, starting with Harold Prins's documentation of the role of Mi'kmaq Indians in providing seasonal labor for the Maine potato harvest prior to mechanization. James McClurken describes how the taking of land and property by settlers forced Indians in Michigan to join the labor market. Alice Littlefield's study of the graduates of the Mt. Pleasant Indian School in Michigan shows how the school attempted to and succeeded in recruiting Indians to the non-Indian world of

work. In an effort to complement the view that the taking of Indian land contributed to the wealth of the expanding settlers, John Moore provides estimates of the surplus value appropriated from Cheyennes who sold buffalo robes or moccasins and worked as seasonal farm laborers.

Four essays address Native labor market participation in the Southwest. Martha Knack shows how the Paiutes of Utah and Nevada began to work for settlers, a decision in many cases caused by the depletion of their subsistence land base. Settlers claimed key watering locations as private property, and some Indians even guided prospectors to gold. As a result, the Indians of the Great Basin supplemented restricted hunting and gathering with agricultural wage labor. A similar pattern occurred in Death Valley, documented by Beth Sennett. People of the Laguna Pueblo, site of a major uranium mine after World War II, became accustomed to the ways of the non-Indian labor market by working for the railroad company that crossed their lands; remarkably, their access to wage work was a condition of crossing the land. As with the pattern in Michigan and the Great Basin, Indians of San Diego County entered wage work as their land base was expropriated by settlers, often becoming workers on the farms that they had themselves developed. Patricia Albers concludes the book with a critical examination of the stereotypes that obstruct an adequate understanding of the ubiquity and importance of Native wage labor.

The contributors to this volume succeed in their goal of demonstrating the importance of wage labor in Native American history. Although this economist would expect that land expropriation would force native peoples to other alternatives, others may be surprised at how frequently Natives worked for wages. By paying attention to local details and labor market structures, the authors also show how labor market discrimination occurred and disappeared, depending on circumstances. The first and last chapters provide useful theoretical perspectives, and the shared bibliography is wonderful. **Ronald L. Trosper**, *Native American Forestry Program, Northern Arizona University*.