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**Review of *To Change Them Forever: Indian Education at the Rainy Mountain Boarding School, 1893- 1920* By Clyde Ellis**

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boarding schools, and off-reservation boarding schools. In recent years historians have paid increased attention to the educational story, with most of the focus being on schools of the off-reservation variety. What has been missing is a first-rate study of a reservation school. Thanks to Clyde Ellis's exceptionally fine study of the Rainy Mountain boarding school, we now have one.

One of the most distinctive aspects of this book is its multi-layered perspective. First, Ellis never loses sight of the fact that the fate of the Rainy Mountain school, built to serve the Kiowas living on a section of the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation in southwestern Oklahoma, was ultimately dependent on the whims of policy-makers and bureaucrats in Washington, DC. In two excellent chapters, one that sketches the assimilationist vision of Indian reformers in the last two decades in the nineteenth century, and another that examines the retrenchment from that vision during the progressive era, Ellis, with a sure hand, creates the longer policy contexts for understanding the trials and tribulations of a single school. On another level, he skillfully describes the life course of the institution itself. Here one encounters the parade of employees who passed through Rainy Mountain—superintendents, teachers, matrons, farmers and seamstresses—whose special obligation it was to “civilize” the Kiowas. Here, too, one gains an appreciation for the extent to which the quality of school life was dramatically affected by the poor physical conditions that beleaguered this budget-starved institution for most of its existence. Issues of cultural conflict aside, Kiowa children suffered as well from inadequate food and clothing, overcrowded dormitories, and health-threatening water and sewage systems. Finally, Ellis tells us what it was like for the students who attended the school. Here, Kiowa voices come to the fore, describing the daily grind of institutional existence including the harsh disciplinary procedures administered to runaways and violators of the “English only” rule. In this chapter, Ellis draws upon oral history

*To Change Them Forever: Indian Education at the Rainy Mountain Boarding School, 1893-1920.* By Clyde Ellis. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996. Maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. xix + 250 pp. \$28.95.

A central element of late nineteenth-century Indian policy was the use of schools as instruments of forced acculturation. Toward this end, a three-tiered system of education emerged consisting of day schools, reservation

sources wherever possible so that the reader can begin to appreciate fully what it was like for Kiowa youths to be caught up in an institution designed to "change them forever."

Through it all, Ellis poses the question of the school's long-term significance for Kiowa identity. What will surprise some is his conclusion that despite their resistance to the assimilationist program, many Kiowas came to view the Rainy Mountain School as an important bridge to a changing world in which selective adaption to white ways was a necessary price for continued tribal survival and Kiowa identity. Pursuing the nuances of Ellis's intriguing argument in this regard is just one reason to read this book. Gracefully written, well grounded in the scholarly literature, and sensitive to Kiowa voices, this is an insightful, absorbing study, worthy of attention by scholars and students alike interested in the Native American experience.

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