

Review

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*Lakotas, Black Robes, and Holy Women: German Reports from the Indian Missions in South Dakota, 1886-1900.* Edited by Karl Markus Kreis. Translated by Corinna Dally-Starna. Introduction by Raymond A. Bucko. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. xvi + 303 pp. Map, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00.

The literature on Native American dispossession grows with every year, and there are times when the historiography of the American West seems in danger of becoming repetitive. *Lakotas, Black Robes, and Holy Women* addresses this problem by revealing untapped sources and new perspectives on the West as the Great Plains increasingly fell under U.S. control.

This monograph focuses on the Catholic missions in South Dakota—the Holy Rosary Mission on the Pine Ridge Reservation and the St. Francis Mission on the adjoining Rosebud Reservation—during the critical years of 1886-1900. Staffed by a handful of Jesuits and Franciscan sisters, many of whom were directly from Germany, these missionaries worked to Christianize and “civilize” the Lakotas. Teaching the young at Indian schools, and administering the sacraments to converts, the missionaries were eyewitnesses to the Ghost Dance on the Pine Ridge Reservation and the tragedy of Wounded Knee.

The structure of the book is fairly straightforward. Raymond A. Bucko, a respected anthropologist and scholar of the Lakotas—and a Jesuit himself—lays out a broad history of Catholic missions to the Lakotas, and makes a number of important observations on the intersection of faith and culture in the mission context. Following this, Karl Markus Kreis outlines the development of the Holy Rosary and St. Francis missions and their overall impact. Kreis details how changes in U.S. Indian policy shaped the Lakota missions as well as what these Catholic missionaries thought about both the U.S. government and their missionary competitors, the Episcopalians. Lakota conversions were motivated by a desire “to save souls from paganism and Protestant heresy,”

Kreis argues, and though Catholic missionaries displayed a condescending paternalism at times, their relationship with the Lakotas was amiable. Before Wounded Knee, for example, Father Johann Jutz attempted to bring the Lakotas and U.S. Army to an understanding, and, even after the massacre, the Holy Rosary Mission served as a safe haven for both parties. This overview ends on page 68; the rest of the book is a collection of primary documents, edited by Kreis and translated into English by Corinna Dally-Starna. Including annual reports, mission journals, and a German-language Catholic missionary magazine, these sources provide an excellent view of Plains life, the Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee, and the complex interrelationships among the Lakotas, Catholic and Episcopalian missionaries, and the U.S. government.

*Lakotas, Black Robes and Holy Women* is neither broad enough to introduce the reader to the literature, nor is Kreis’s material interpretive enough to add to the debate. The monograph serves as an excellent document reader, however: anyone interested in Wounded Knee, turn-of-the-century life in the Great Plains, or the Lakotas will appreciate the book’s primary sources. Finally, Kreis’s bibliography reveals a growing body of German-language scholarship on the Lakotas and the Great Plains. One hopes that scholars will follow Kreis’s and Dally-Starna’s work and begin to integrate the various historiographies on the American West.

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*Policing the Great Plains: Rangers, Mounties, and the North American Frontier, 1875-1910.* By Andrew R. Graybill. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. xiii + 277 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paper.

At opposite ends of the Great Plains, the North-West Mounted Police and the Texas

Rangers emerged in the mid-1870s as key instruments in the extension of state power over distant frontiers. *Policing the Great Plains* reveals how these famous rural constabularies implemented policies designed in Ottawa and Austin to promote the settlement and economic development of the Great Plains. Andrew Graybill argues that these shared political and economic goals ensured that Mounties and Rangers, despite their many differences, helped bring about strikingly similar transformations in Texas and the Canadian Prairies.

By placing Mounties and Rangers in this common history of state and market expansion, Graybill redirects well-worn stories of Mounties and Rangers into more fruitful avenues of inquiry. Each of his four core chapters focuses on a particular stage in the state's absorption of its frontier and the role the constabularies played in that process. The first two consider the efforts of Rangers and Mounties to confine or remove Indigenous peoples and to dispossess people of mixed ancestry in order to appropriate Aboriginal lands and resources for the use of white farmers, ranchers, and entrepreneurs. The final two chapters explore how the constabularies helped to consolidate that new order. By defending cattlemen and ranching syndicates from the protests of the rural poor and helping mining and railroad corporations to suppress labor unrest, he argues, Rangers and Mounties played critical roles in consolidating the nascent industrial economy in the Great Plains.

But these broad transformations should not mask the differences—both stark and subtle—in the specific policies that governments mandated and in the methods Rangers and Mounties used to effect them. After all, there is no Canadian counterpart to the overt violence the Rangers dispensed in their campaigns against Kiowas, Comanches, and Mexicans in South Texas. Graybill carefully untangles the complicated reasons for these differences. Rather than use them to tell parables of Mountie benevolence or Ranger savagery, he draws out more complicated les-

sons about the two forces and the societies that deployed them. By identifying the common threads that unite the histories of the Rangers and Mounties, as well as the disparate strands that set them apart, Graybill's study underscores the value of comparative history. With its careful analysis, extensive research, and broad synthesis, it is a most welcome addition to the burgeoning literature on the transborder history of the Great Plains.

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*Forty Years a Legislator: Elmer Thomas.* By Elmer Thomas. Edited by Richard Lowitt and Carolyn G. Hanneman. Foreword by Cindy Simon Rosenthal. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. xxi + 178 pp. Photographs, notes, index. \$24.95.

Written between 1951 and 1954, this autobiography covers the career of Elmer Thomas as a state senator from 1907 to 1920, as a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1922 to 1928, and as a U.S. senator from 1928 to 1950. Editors Richard Lowitt and Carolyn Hanneman deserve a hearty round of applause for having converted Thomas's original, meandering four-hundred-page-plus manuscript to an intelligible, readable work. Especially valuable to the reader are the editors' endnotes, identifying figures and issues whose political significance has dimmed and offering suggestions for further reading.

Despite his popularity among Oklahoma Democrats and his seniority in the United States Senate, Thomas has escaped the notice of historians. A De Paul University graduate and a member of the Indiana bar, he arrived in Oklahoma in 1900. After a brief stay in Oklahoma City, he moved to Lawton where he divided his time between practicing law and developing the resort town of Medicine Park. In 1907, he was elected to serve in the first Oklahoma legislature. As chairman of the