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Five Years a Dragoon ('49 to '54): And Other Adventures on the Great Plains. By Percival G. Lowe.

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even the complex less so. Certainly readers without training in statistics are advised to proceed cautiously, lest they sink in a quagmire of standard deviations, correlation coefficients, slicing parameters, and polyhedral eccentricities.

If the author's technical vocabulary constitutes a barrier to comprehension for the nonspecialist, his style presents another kind of obstacle, or at least an annoyance. Among the more conspicuous examples of this fault are the occasional failures of agreement between subject and verb ("This constant variation . . . form the basis for archaeological studies of culture change" [p. 102]), the inconsistent use of "criteria" as both singular and plural (both illustrated on p. 123), and the tendency to run sentences together with only commas to separate them, or with commas plus connectives like "however," "therefore," or "in fact." If the message is of value, then it deserves better packaging.

Despite its limitations, the message contained in *Objects of Change* is valuable. Even allowing for the atypicality of the Arikara tribe, its response to white contact is worth close examination, as is that of any group undergoing a similar experience. And even though the historical record alone provides a reasonably accurate picture of that response, substantiation from the archeological record is welcome. Perhaps an accumulation of such studies will lead to a synthesis directed toward a wider audience than this book is likely to reach.

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Five Years a Dragoon ('49 to '54): And Other Adventures on the Great Plains. By Percival G. Lowe, with an introduction and notes by Don Russell and a new foreword by Jerome A. Greene. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. 384 pages. \$14.95 paper.

This combination reminiscence/diary by Percival G. Lowe has been a classic since its first appearance in 1906, a status solidified by its republication by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1965 as a hardcover book. The present paperback printing by the same press most assuredly preserves the book's reputation, and its lower price will, one hopes, enable it to reach a greatly expanded readership.

The continuing designation of the work as a classic results from a fruitful interaction of several factors. The first factor, of course, is Percival G. Lowe himself. Possessed of a literacy level all too rare, Lowe writes with grace and precision, and his narrative flows smoothly and easily. In addition, the facts that Lowe was an enlisted man rather than an officer and that he served prior to the Civil War set his account apart from most of the others that are available.

The second factor consists of the events that constituted the major portion of Lowe's life. As both a soldier and a civilian freighter, he either participated directly in or was on the periphery of an impressive number of historically significant happenings. From the great treaty councils with the tribes of the northern and southern Plains at Forts Laramie and Atkinson, to the expedition against the Cheyenne commanded by E. V. Sumner, to the cholera epidemic at Fort Riley, to the so-called Mormon War, to the Colorado gold rush—Lowe was "present and accounted for" and thus able, in most instances, to provide both information and perspective for the contemporary reader.

After his five-year enlistment was up, Lowe freighted for the army. In 1859, he went into private business for several years. By marrying into a slave-holding family and simply living in the Missouri/Kansas area, he risked severe losses because of the "Border War." Lowe sold out and went to work for the government again until the fall of 1863, when he again became a contractor. His last major project was furnishing beef to the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies in northwestern Nebraska in 1877.

The reader's interest will be increased further by Lowe's continuing and almost continuous association with individuals whose names were either already exceptionally well known or would be in the future. He had, for example, much more than a passing acquaintance with the legendary mountain man Jim Bridger (whom he admired greatly) as well as with a young cavalry lieutenant who was destined for both glory and death on the battlefield—J.E.B. Stuart.

In addition to Bridger, Lowe knew such mountain men/Indian traders as Thomas Fitzpatrick, Andrew Drips, and William Bent. During his civilian career, he bought property from W. H. Larimer, the founder of the city of Denver (in which Low constructed the first frame store) and sold his train of mules and wagons to John Wesley Iliff, who was already on his way to becoming "The Cattle King of Colorado."

Serving in the pre-Civil War army, Lowe crossed paths with much more than a random sample of future generals, some destined for continued service in the United States Army and others in the forces of the Confederacy; among the names on the list Lowe might have compiled would be E.V. Sumner, Philip St. George Cooke, Simon Bolivar Buckner, Eugene A. Carr, John Sedgwick, Albert Sydney Johnston, FitzJohn Porter, and Winfield Scott Hancock (in addition, of course, to J.E.B. Stuart, who has already been mentioned). Lowe also noted that he saw John Brown once on the streets of Lawrence (he was not at all favorably impressed with the man's appearance) and fortunately absented himself from that city the night before it was savagely raided by William Clarke Quantrill.

The final factor that has contributed measurably to the standing of Lowe's account in the historical community is the introduction and notes supplied by the late Don Russell. Anyone who was familiar with Russell's service of four decades as editor of the Chicago Westerners *Brand Book* will not be surprised at his work here. The introduction, which is simply superb, encompasses three distinct parts. The first segment presents background on Lowe himself and is relatively short, because, as Russell notes, Lowe largely took care of that matter himself. The second segment describes in some detail the organizational structure and pattern of the United States Army between the end of the Mexican War in 1848 and the outset of the Civil War in 1861. The final section of the introduction involves a very careful discussion of the meaning, importance, and frequency of the award of brevet commissions. Russell's treatment of this complicated and occasionally controversial military practice is the best this reviewer has seen.

In addition to an introduction, Russell also provided invaluable notes throughout the volume. Far from being obtrusive, they provide the reader with detailed information about the people whose names appear in the text. Fortunately, the University of Oklahoma Press opted to use the footnote format rather than the endnotes that are in common use today. As a result, Russell's information is readily and easily available to readers.

Throughout the book, Lowe's admiration for the military is pronounced. With the exception of the "bad actors" whom he encountered (and with whom he seems to have dealt most effectively), that admiration includes most of the men with whom he served. In truth, Lowe's description of his army comrades suggests that legendary film director John Ford's depiction of the

frontier army had at least some grounding in fact.

Lowe's verbal treatment of Native Americans indicates that he was very much a man of his times. Nonetheless, while he thought many Indian practices "savage" (the war dance he observed in a Sioux camp, for instance), there is no question that he admired many of their qualities (particularly military, of course). At the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty Council, he was so impressed by the discipline of the Snake—warriors, women, and children alike—that he described it as "a lesson for soldiers who might never again see such a grand display of soldierly manhood, and the lesson was not lost. Every dragoon felt an interest in that tribe" (p. 67). On another occasion, he described a war party of Cheyenne by observing that "[o]ne would think them all picked men, from twenty to forty years old—perfect specimens of the finest and handsomest Indians on the plains, in war paint, fierce and confident-looking. . ." (p. 33). Finally, in connection with a description of the martial qualities of the Kiowa and Comanche, he stated flatly, "To say that such men given equal arms and supplies, are not the equals, as rank and file soldiers, of any race known to history is bald nonsense" (p. 89).

This book, one of the best of its kind, belongs among the holdings of anyone with an interest in the history of the trans-Mississippi West during the nineteenth century.

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Wampum Belts and Peace Trees: George Morgan, Native Americans and Revolutionary Diplomacy. By Gregory Schaaf. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Press, 1990. 272 pages. \$27.95 cloth.

In the biography of George Morgan written by Max Savelle (1932), Morgan is presented as a merchant entrepreneur, a land speculator, an Indian trader, and a forest diplomat. "Colony builder" is the most expansive designation given Morgan by Savelle. Gregory Schaaf, however, departs from the traditional approach by depicting Morgan as a visionary peacemaker working with dedicated Native American leaders to build a lasting peace on the western frontier. Schaaf bases his reinterpretation on an unpublished manuscript, reportedly a missing section of the journal that George Morgan kept at Fort Pitt from April to November 1776.