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Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century. By John R. Finger. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. 235 pages. \$35.00 cloth.

John Finger offers a meaningful, cross-cultural, interdisciplinary study of the Eastern Cherokee in the twentieth century. He begins with clearly defined divisions of scholarship emphasizing political, legal, and economic perspectives but provides a critical overlay of social and cultural changes as well. In addition, Finger, a member of the history faculty at the University of Tennessee, approaches the Eastern Cherokee chronologically, with a clear understanding of past, present, and future. The text includes an integration of Cherokee studies and changing United States Indian policy. These elements provide a framework of givens within an Anglo-American point of view.

The author enriches his study with a Cherokee frame of reference. In the preface and in the beginning chapter, there are several important references to community that are critical to understanding the nature of Cherokee perspectives. One such significant statement is, "The Cherokee reservation is a small community where most people know one another and memories are long (p. xvi)." This is followed by the important insight that

[t]hey [Cherokee people] had a common sense of community with other residents and had developed institutions of mutual assistance

Ancient Kituwah on the mountain flanks near present-day Bryson City, was supposed to be the mother town of all Cherokees (p. 6).

This common heritage associated with place is critical to all understanding of Finger's interpretation of events. These statements offer a useful summary of the RGA, or *elohi*, the continuous oral and written traditions of the Cherokee people passed from generation to generation. (A dual language edition, Cherokee and English, of the *elohi* exists in *A Cherokee Vision of Elo* published by the Indian University Press in 1981.)

The intellectual life of the Cherokee people stems from their expressive language, which reflects the traditional culture and its view of the world. Logical analysis arises from Cherokee grammar. The central feature of Cherokee is the verb form, which reflects life as action and pays much more attention to detail than

English does. It notes different priorities, a different way of perceiving and interpreting the world.

Utilizing this framework, Finger emphasizes the study of two major themes. The most significant of these is the continuing effort to retain Cherokee identity. A second theme is the complicated and uncertain legal status of the Eastern Cherokee tribe within the context of federal and state law.

Finger's selection of research materials provides a solid basis for his work. In a useful bibliographic essay, he indicates that his research utilized a variety of interpretative studies of the Cherokee Nation. *Cherokee Americans* is placed into context by reference to two particularly important published works. The first is Finger's *The Eastern Band of Cherokee, 1819-1900*, published by the University of Tennessee Press in 1984. A second work necessary for understanding the present work is James Mooney's *Myths of the Cherokee*, originally published in 1900 by the United States Government Printing Office as one of several papers accompanying the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution for 1897-99. It is assumed that the reader of *Cherokee Americans* is familiar with the content of these other volumes.

Primary materials utilized in this study include the extensive records of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs; documents and reports contained in the Congressional Serial Set; the Governors Papers at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History; individuals' papers in various manuscript collections; and materials published in English language newspapers, including the *Cherokee One Feather*, published weekly by the tribe. But what sets this book apart from most other Cherokee studies is Finger's use of Cherokee oral sources. He points out the importance of these by indicating that "no scholar can really get a 'feel' for the Cherokee recent past and their current prospects without repeatedly visiting the reservation and making contact with tribal members from all walks of life (p. 235)."

Through this broad base of research, Finger progresses from knowing the subjects of history and legend to experiencing the events and understanding the feelings. History and myth come alive in his writing and are carried into the present as Finger relates the development of the Eastern Cherokee in the twentieth century. The reader gains an understanding of the exploitation of resources in 1900, with per capita payments through a paternalistic system, and of an uncertain legal status confused by lack of United States citizenship, status as federal wards, mixed state and federal jurisdiction

in measured terms. Complications of poor sanitation and diseases such as typhoid, scarlet fever, measles, influenza, whooping cough, and pneumonia are described with objectivity. Finger details these difficulties as they parallel each breakthrough in education, sanitation, health care, economic developments of the twentieth century.

In all of these areas, Finger notes the strengths of the Cherokee: They retain their cultural foundations—exhibited in ball play, crafts, dance, and spirituality—as well as their language, with its logic and perspective.

Cherokee cultural foundations become the focus of economic development through tourism: the creation of the Cherokee Historical Association, the outdoor drama “Unto These Hills,” the Qualla Arts and Crafts Cooperative, the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, and the Oconaluftee Indian Village. In each of these developments, the Eastern Cherokee band preceded other Cherokee groups in Oklahoma and served as their model.

Finger notes that attitudes differ toward the Cherokee in the East and those in the West. He concludes that “Eastern Cherokees retain more of their myths, legends, and traditional dances, and their version of the ball play (p. 182).”

Cherokee Americans allows for parallels between past, present, and future and between history, myth, and personal experience. But the views expressed in the book grow beyond the idea that the past merely informs the present. Finger understands that the past lives in the present. His text moves the reader to overcome old codes and to collapse divisions that serve as intellectual barriers. Finger’s conclusions provide truths extending beyond the historic ethnocentricities that have inhibited understanding in other studies of the Cherokee in the twentieth century.

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Interpreting the Indian: Twentieth Century Poets and the Native American. By Michael Castro. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. 221 pages. \$12.95 paper.

Michael Castro’s *Interpreting the Indian* is the first book-length critical study of the many ways Native American culture has affected American literature, especially poetry. Laudably, he recognizes that this impact has sometimes occurred through misun-