

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Bartley Milam: Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. By Howard L. Meredith.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2nf3n4n9>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 9(4)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Clark, C. B.

Publication Date

1985-09-01

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

might be more self-conscious in providing the Hopi's concept of their world and the categories of person who occupy it, Dockstader's portrait is both accurate and detailed.

The bulk of the book, however, is historical. Dockstader reviews the archaeological data which might suggest the indigenous growth of masked dancing among the Hopi or its antecedent cultures in the Southwest, paying particular attention to the pictographs, petroglyphs, and some of the more suggestive kiva murals from Awatovi. It is impossible to establish a continuity of form, much less meaning, with earlier visual expressions, and Dockstader is careful in his speculations. Following there is a review of the literature from the Coronado expedition through the period following the Pueblo Revolt and the later destruction of Awatovi for any references to Kachinas or masked dances. The period between 1700 and 1875 is accurately termed a period of "isolation." By the end of the 19th century, however, the reservation was established, schools and trading posts appeared, and a major growth occurred in the trade and importation of objects and materials which had a clear impact on the decoration of Kachina masks and the costumes of the dancers.

Dockstader's negative assessment of change is most noticeable in his account of Hopi culture in the 20th century, a "half-century of oppression, persecution, controversy, and internal dissent." Yet it may be noted that although attempts at allotment were made, no Hopi land was allotted. Missions were given government support, but few Hopis were converted and no dances were suppressed. Dockstader's description is most valuable for the largely first hand account, which includes the new chapter prepared for this edition, of the period from 1930 to the present. Here Dockstader takes comfort in a "Renaissance" in Hopi religion and the realization that the Kachina continues to be meaningful ("Significant") in Hopi life and thought.

Louis A. Hieb

University of Arizona

Bartley Milam: Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. By Howard L. Meredith. Muskogee, OK: Indian University Press, Bacone College, 1985. 157 pp. \$10.00 Paper.

The twentieth century has increasingly become a field for ethno-historians dealing with the American Indian. The focus in the United States has tended to be on the New Deal period or the Termination era, with a gap for the intervening 1940s. The few exceptions include the autobiography of Clinton Rickard, *Fighting Tuscarora* (1973) edited by Barbara Graymont, the brief biography of Sam Akeah in Peter Iverson's *Navajo Nation* (1981), Roy Myers's Santee Sioux work, and some life histories of Indians in that decade. Howard Meredith's biography of Jesse Bartley Milam offers a much-needed and unique assessment of the changes within Oklahoma tribal government leading up to and through the 1940s.

Intertwined in this family biography of Milam is the internal governmental history of the Cherokee people, not just in the 1940s but throughout their tortured relationship with the United States. The biography focuses especially on the crucial changes which took hold within that nation during the full impact of allotment before the turn of the century, after statehood, and later, particularly during the many twentieth century strains on tribal existence. Meredith demonstrates that far from being completely crushed, the Cherokee molded their new life on the pattern of the old, tracing the painstaking path by which Cherokee government revived. The author emphasizes the residual sovereignty that had always existed but was hidden beneath layers of frontier indifference and federal bureaucratic interference. He introduces the reader to the aggressive pride of the Cherokee seminary graduates and their association's involvement in Cherokee national affairs into the 1920s and on to various legal claims meetings, eventually resulting in the renewal of Cherokee government in 1938 and the selection of Milam as the elected compromise leader. Milam had been born in 1884, attended the Cherokee National Male Seminary, married a Female Seminary student, and was a restricted Indian until age 23, when he went into petroleum and banking in the vicinity of Chelsea. During his service to the Cherokee tribe, Milam was involved in the retribalization of the national government, especially from pressures to approve the Grand River Dam, assisted in reviving Cherokee language and culture studies, supported Cherokee historical studies by Emmet Starr and the beginnings of a national tribal museum and archives, and was instrumental in the formation of the Five Tribes' Inter-Tribal Council and the Indian Claims Commission,

as well as the National Congress of American Indians. Milam also persisted through the time of drastic World War II cuts and the wartime removal of Cherokee families from lands appropriated by the Army for Camp Gruber. He helped lay a solid foundation for later successes in tribal cattle projects, land claims, and Arkansas River bed litigation.

Bartley Milam reflects its sources in the family-held archives and publication by a small press. The wealth of family manuscript materials is ably supplemented by congressional sources from the University of Oklahoma, Indian-Pioneer Papers interviews, as well as Cherokee National Museum collections at Tahlequah, those in the Gilcrease Institute, and sources from the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library. The author married a Milam descendant, and the cooperation of the family is evident. There are no figures on the size of Milam's oil fortune, and little on his other business activities. Some of the intended photographs are not included, represented by the blank pages that await them. There are some typographical errors and repetition in the text. The Arkansas charter of the Bank of Chelsea is mentioned twice (pp. 12 and 21) and the fact that Milam served on the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society is also mentioned twice (pp. 34 and 48). The author and the Indian University Press at Bacone College, however, are to be commended for their efforts in producing the work despite the many constraints facing any small press.

Howard Meredith has produced an insightful discussion of the evolution of one modern tribal government at a critical time in its existence. More attention is needed in scholarly literature to tribal officials who consistently devoted time and energies to the success of their nations, bearing the brunt of sustained opposition. Milam's legacy is visible for all to see in today's thriving Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma.

C. B. Clark

The Newberry Library

Indian Leadership. Edited by Walter Williams. Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1984. 93 pp. \$9.95 Paper.

This volume provides an able glimpse at selected aspects of United States Indian leadership through the twentieth century.