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Daily Life on the Nineteenth-Century American Frontier. By Mary Ellen Jones.

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diminution engulfed the Choctaw and surrounding Choctaw-speaking nations. The author supports this argument with empirical data illustrating the linguistic and cultural ties shared by many groups in the region. Through the examination of oral and written sources the author provides a likely explanation of how Choctaws appropriated culture to cope with their changing environment. This book demonstrates that the formations of political identities through which individuals express how they see themselves collectively, may be powerfully constrained by social and political forces that allow for some identities to be maintained while others are absorbed.

The Choctaw make for an illuminating study of cultural change in pre-colonial North America because, according to Galloway, Choctaw sociopolitical organization shifted many times between the 1500s and 1700s to cope with population diminution, inter- and intra-tribal politics, locational shifts, and changes in their social reality (see chapters 7 and 8). Galloway's interpretation of how the Choctaw came to be is quite clear. By infusing her knowledge of archaeological and cultural data, she points to a way out for those trapped by monolithic conceptualizations of Native American nations and authenticity. In this book she illustrates the intersection between cultural change, cultural evolution, and political identification. With cartographic, archeological, and ethnographic evidence, this multidisciplinary book not only presents controversial and provocative arguments on the origin of the Choctaw, but also provides important new insight on how political identities shape and are shaped by social and cultural change. This book makes a major contribution to anthropology, archaeology, and Native American studies.

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**Daily Life on the Nineteenth-Century American Frontier.** By Mary Ellen Jones. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, Inc., 1998. 269 pages. \$45.00 cloth.

The history of the American frontier fascinates many people in the United States and in various countries around the world. From dime novels to television to movies, many genres have dealt with some aspect of frontier life. In Mary Ellen Jones' *Daily Life on the Nineteenth-Century American Frontier*, however, one will find neither the gunfighter, a popular representation of the frontier period, nor a detailed description of federal and local policies relevant to the development of the American frontier as a region. As the title implies, Jones' focus is on the experiences of those who traveled West to live either temporarily or permanently.

*Daily Life on the Nineteenth-Century American Frontier* begins with a look at what the American frontier means and how it has been defined and studied over time. As Jones explains, the location of the frontier depends on the time period. By no means was there a specific boundary established on which all scholars agreed. That boundary advanced as settlement advanced and did not progress in a fixed east-to-west movement. As Jones and many others have

pointed out, for example, settlement jumped to the West Coast during the time of the California Gold Rush. Only then did the central part of the United States become more settled.

How does one then define the frontier? Jones briefly discusses Frederick Jackson Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," along with the Census Bureau's definition that the frontier was the area in which there were less than two people per square mile. An important acknowledgment Jones makes is that the use of population to define the frontier excluded American Indians.

From that point forward Jones takes readers on a trip through the major and most common laborers on the frontier: the fur trader, the explorer, the miner, the cowboy, the settler, and finally the soldier and his interactions with American Indians. Jones gives a general understanding of life experienced by those engaged in each of these occupations. Overall the reader gains a broad picture of what life was like for these people as she presents the material in a survey methodology.

An important question the author attempts to answer is, Why did these people move west? What were their reasons and motives? Economically driven, the fur trader came out to make a profit through the beaver trade. Many hoping to get rich never realized their dreams, for, as Jones states, most of the wages earned by an independent trapper went to buying supplies for the next season's hunt. Those who came out financially on top generally were the company owners who operated, for the most part, out of St. Louis. Whether a trapper worked for a company focusing on the Missouri or the Rocky Mountain trade, the amount of time and hard work involved usually was not compensated by great financial gain.

Those deemed the explorers by Jones came out for reasons much different than the traders. Jones spends a large chunk of the book discussing Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's trek west, although a few other explorers are mentioned as well. Lewis and Clark's objective and purpose were clear—travel the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean collecting scientific and cultural data along the way. Probably the most famous exploration group to go west, the author details the crew's accomplishments.

As with the traders, miners moved west in search of riches. Never intending to stay, each tried their luck at striking gold. As with the traders, few became wealthy and those who could afford to do so returned east, preferring to forget the experience. As with the fur trade, those who owned the businesses that supplied the provisions were the ones who made the most money. Jones devotes a good portion of the book to the mining frontier, describing how those who chose to try their luck in the gold fields traveled, whether by ship around Cape Horn, by a land-sea route through Mexico or Panama, or by the most common route, over land. Before they ever arrived in California, Jones tells of the happiness and sadness these people experienced just getting to the gold fields.

Although Jones does not explain why the cowboy came west, she does give insight into why the settlers did. The United States has long been considered a place of abundant land and many deemed the frontier a place to claim a piece of land and start a new life. Owning property has always been part of the

American dream, but as Jones explains, "Although the farming frontier of the Great Plains may have fulfilled, for some, the dream of owning property, it was neither an adventure nor an idealized acting out of the Jeffersonian concept of the yeoman farmer" (p. 189). Although life could be extremely difficult for some, their hardships pushing them back east, others chose to stay, trying to hang on to their newly acquired land.

Those who came west to serve in the frontier army did so for a variety of reasons and came from numerous backgrounds. As Jones explains, although the pay was terrible, some viewed the army as a money-making venture while others joined to hide from eastern law by moving west, far from the place of crime. Most recruits came from foreign countries and others joined "because of the lure of the West" (p. 219).

In addition to an explanation of the various groups' reasons for traveling west, Jones provides a general understanding of what life was like once each group arrived. Not only was the pay minimal for most who came out west, but danger was also ever-present on the American frontier. All were potential victims to accidents associated with the work. Various diseases and illnesses took their toll as well. Jones explains that cholera, smallpox, and rheumatism, among others, made life quite difficult for the newly named westerner.

Although Jones does discuss the relationship between these new westerners and American Indians in a few places in her book, her focus on American Indians comes at the book's end. She discusses the impacts of the westward movement and the eventual settling of the frontier on the western tribes and shows how technology, such as the rifle and the railroad, affected the American Indians. The book also discusses treaties and how some treaties were signed by a given tribe. The author tells how government officials designated certain tribal members representatives and caused problems within the tribe. She allows the reader to begin to understand the difficulties "true tribal leaders" experienced while attempting to appease both sides (p. 237).

Finally Jones discusses the reservation system. What was its purpose? What was life like there? What fraudulent activities were present on the reservation? These are important questions Jones explores and their answers must be understood if one is to better understand the frontier as place.

The book's main problem, although infrequent, is the author's use of the words *mixed-breed* and *squaw*. Despite the frequent use of these words in the past, more appropriate word choices would have been better in a recently published book.

Overall Jones presents a general but well-laid-out narrative of the American frontier. She throws in humor throughout the book, all the while explaining the reality of various situations. *Daily Life on the Nineteenth-Century American Frontier* is a good book for those just beginning to learn about the American frontier.

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