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Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia. Edited by Mary B. Davis.

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distraction when extended to four pages. In a later section the author attempts to ascertain the impact on Molly's life of anthropologist Frank Speck, who encouraged her to pursue a university education and invited her to live with his family temporarily. Perhaps because Molly's diaries of the period have not survived, this impact is suggested by tracing the relationship of Speck with Gladys Tantaquidgeon, a Mohegan classmate of Molly's. Despite the author's efforts to integrate Tantaquidgeon's life story with Molly's, the account becomes a digression.

Conversely, given the restrained nature of Molly's quoted diary entries, there are instances when the reader hungers for more. Molly's reaction to her husband's confession of an affair is reported thus: "Venting her fury and frustration in a letter to Jean, she accused him of betrayal. . ." (p. 234). Had the intensity of these feelings been reported in Molly's own words, the reader might have gotten a little closer to the essential Molly Spotted Elk.

Although there are innumerable volumes on the history of the Penobscots and on Americans in Paris during the 1930s and 1940s, and there is a considerable body of literature on cabarets and speakeasies in the 1920s, all of which are cited in the excellent bibliography, there is a critical lack of work on Indians in show business. The author relies heavily and effectively on such sources as oral histories, unpublished papers, newspapers of the period, and nightclub reviews in *Variety* to provide this vital context. *Molly Spotted Elk* is unique, not only in integrating these historical contexts but also in allowing the previously muted voices of individual Indian performers to be heard.

Diana Meyers Bahr

**Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia.** Edited by Mary B. Davis. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994. 787 pages. \$95.00 cloth.

Arguably the most commonly asked question recited like a mantra by schoolteachers everywhere whenever the subject of American Indians arises is, "Where can we find out more?" The question speaks, of course, to the continuing need for an adequate teaching guide or resource book covering a broad range of Indian subjects at an introductory level. Editor Mary Davis has taken a major step toward addressing this question by creating an encyclopedia of

American Indian life. Anyone who ever has felt frustrated thumbing through the *Britannica* or *Americana* by their scant coverage of American Indian topics now has real cause to rejoice.

As suggested by the title, the encyclopedia confines itself to Indian subjects in the twentieth century. Even with this constraint, the thickly packed book still contains upwards of seven hundred pages. In standard encyclopedic format, the subjects are arranged alphabetically and cover a broad range of topics, including entries for individual Indian nations and wider cultural and political issues. A sampling of headings includes civil rights legislation, basketry, photography, law, literature, land claims, Indian health, educational policy, and tribal museums. Entries for the individual nations provide a brief historical overview and generally numerous subheadings such as land claims, tribal government, resources, and contemporary life and activities.

A great advantage of the work is that it provides a convenient point of departure for further inquiry. At the end of each entry is a short bibliography intended as a guide to additional investigation into the subject. This will be very useful to students and teachers in particular, as they begin to pursue more in-depth coverage of given topics.

The 296 contributors to the work are listed alphabetically in a separate section. Of these, 118 are Indian.

Due to space limitations in an already bulging compendium, the editors apologetically confine the nations featured to those that share a United States border. The subject headings likewise address U.S. / Indian relations but do not include Canada, Mexico, or other parts of America in which native people reside. Nevertheless, a total of 203 nations (called *tribes* in the Articles by Subjects index) are listed, many in the form of confederations, thus bringing the total number significantly higher.

Happily, the editors did not mandate United States federal recognition as a requisite for inclusion in the encyclopedia. Although this represents a significant statement in connection with the issue of sovereignty and one that should be emulated in more works, it still was disappointing to note that, almost without exception, only nations that had achieved at least state recognition were considered. The coverage for North Carolina, for example, encompasses the Cherokee, Coharie, Saponi, Lumbee, and Waccamaw. However, half a dozen others were omitted, the largest of these being the Meherrin and the Eno-Occaneechi, all of which represent legitimate Indian communities that have identi-

fiable histories and consider themselves nations, with or without the dubious honor of U.S. sanction.

The encyclopedia is very thorough in its coverage of twentieth-century events. The entries are written clearly and in a style that is sophisticated enough for professionals yet capable of being read by students as well. In addition, the entries refreshingly attempt to be apolitical; it is clear that the editors strove for objectivity when discussing issues that are anything but neutral.

By far the strongest criticism of a work that otherwise provides an enormous amount of useful information is that, in its attempt to be apolitical, it unavoidably takes a political stance. Although the entries for individual Indian nations cover such topics as economic development, current political structure (generally BIA), and social services, very few entries include aspects important to traditional people in defining the essence of their own nations. Little is offered in the way of describing who the people are and what they mean to themselves. Indian nations are more than the sum of government programs. In the end, one wonders what actually distinguishes one nation from any other if the distinctive values actively maintained by each are not mentioned.

Despite these concerns, I highly recommend *Native America in the Twentieth Century* as an extremely useful resource. In particular, I would urge teachers and school librarians to acquaint themselves with the work, and I am quite certain that all who do so will readily find it a necessary educational tool and an indispensable part of their collection.

Lee Miller

**Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde: A History of Cultural Primitivism.** By W. Jackson Rushing. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 250 pages. \$39.95 cloth.

W. Jackson Rushing argues both that the Euro-American concept of Native American artifacts as "art" is a twentieth-century idea inextricably tied to the development of modernism, and that modernist American painting from the period 1910 to 1950 in turn owes a great intellectual and stylistic debt to Native American art. Rushing's book makes an important contribution to the field of American modernist art, where even William Rubin's major exhibition and catalog "*Primitivism*" in *20th Century Art* (1984)