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(p. 232). Once again, Levy takes what could be a rather unpopular opinion, but one that is well-supported by his thorough and thoughtful scholarship. Interestingly, Levy doesn't believe that the Blessingway version will ever fully replace that of the Coyote-Begochidi tradition, "if only because so many readily-available published works on the subject encourage a variety of other interpretations" (p. 231). In saying this, he may be overestimating the importance of published ethnographic works for Navajos. The evidence here suggests that the dual cultural tradition Levy identifies is not at all salient to Navajos themselves, who do not view their culture as the product of Pueblo influence on an older Athabaskan heritage. In any case, Levy is quite successful in demonstrating the ongoing coexistence of (and to some extent, conflict between) the two traditions. *In the Beginning* is among the most important analyses of Navajo myths and culture to appear in years. Whether one agrees with all of Levy's opinions or not, he has produced a provocative work that is not to be missed.

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The Indian Reform Letters of Helen Hunt Jackson, 1879–1885. Edited by Valerie Sherer Mathes. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. 372 pages. \$39.95 cloth.

Rather than allow readers to rely solely on her previous biography of Helen Hunt Jackson, *Helen Hunt Jackson and her Indian Reform Legacy* (1997), Valerie Sherer Mathes has compiled Jackson's letters "to provide a readable document reflecting the intensity of Jackson's passion for Indian reform" (p. xix). Mathes and the University of Oklahoma Press are to be commended for making these primary documents available to researchers and other interested readers. Mathes has combed dozens of manuscript collections and conducted thorough research on her subject to provide necessary background. A cumbersome format, a perplexing selection and editing process, and a lack of critical distance from her subject slightly mars Mathes' collection, but the book will undoubtedly help researchers concerned with Indian affairs and reform in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Mathes divides her book in half. The first section includes letters related to Jackson's interest in the Poncas' removal and to the writing of Jackson's major non-fiction work, *A Century of Dishonor*. The second half of the book contains letters related to Jackson's campaign on behalf of the Mission Indians of California and the publication of Jackson's most famous fictional work, *Ramona*. The letters included in this volume do indeed reveal Jackson's growing passion for justice for Native Americans as well as her adept writing skills. For example, her letter to the editor of *The Tribune* in 1879, written in the form of ten questions, all beginning with "How many of the American people know...?", represents a brilliant critique of federal Indian policy (pp. 32–37). Similarly, Jackson's letter to the editor of the *New York Times* in 1879 regarding the situation of the Utes in Colorado serves as

a masterful condemnation of US politics and policies (pp. 51–52).

Most of Jackson's letters to the editor are truly worthy of publication. Some, however, become tedious when she quotes government reports at length. Readers may also wonder why Mathes chose to include the accompanying correspondence in which Jackson makes behind-the-scenes appeals to editors to print her letters. Many of these letters are dull and add little to the book.

While Mathes only includes letters written by Jackson, she refers to the rich correspondences between Jackson and the following figures: Carl Schurz, the secretary of the Interior during the Ponca removal; Senator Henry Dawes, architect of the General Allotment Act of 1887; Mary Sheriff, a schoolteacher at Saboba in the San Jacinto Valley of California; S. S. Lawson, an Indian agent among the Mission Indians; and Jackson's husband, William Sharpless Jackson. Mathes' text may have been more clear, readable, and revealing if it had included some of the letters written to Jackson by these various correspondents. For example, it is clear from one of Jackson's letters to her husband that he had rebuked her for criticizing the Indian Bureau and for behaving like a man. It would be intriguing to read Jackson's husband's words rather than Jackson's alone.

Furthermore, Mathes informs her readers that she has edited certain parts of Jackson's letters. She claims to have cut out virtually all parts irrelevant to Jackson's Indian interests. This decision seems to rest on the notion that one's interests can be neatly parceled into separate topics. It may have been more compelling to provide a full picture of Jackson to see how her other interests entwined with her concern for Indians. Despite the many monographs on white reformers concerned with Indians in this period, we still lack a full picture of what motivated many reformers to take up the Indians' causes, and we also need an understanding of how the assumptions they brought with them from other aspects of their lives colored their perceptions of and interactions with Native peoples.

In particular, it would be interesting to know more about how Jackson's gender and class position affected her work. Despite Mathes' careful editing of anything "irrelevant," we still get glimpses of the ways in which Jackson had to carefully negotiate her way as a woman activist. If she wrote as a "sentimentalist" (read: woman), her work would not be taken seriously by policymakers. But when she wrote as a "cool-headed man," she risked being upbraided by her husband as well as by Senator Dawes and probably countless others. It is in this realm of gender that Mathes could do more to fill in her readers. How was it possible for a white woman, and indeed a whole organization of white women (the Women's National Indian Association), to take on the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the late nineteenth century? How did Jackson's perception of womanhood influence her views and action on behalf of Native Americans? Why did Jackson approve of and recommend only women as government schoolteachers?

Mathes not only neglects gender- and class-specific questions regarding Helen Hunt Jackson, but she also shies away from any criticism of her heroism. In her unwavering intent to present Jackson as an important figure in late-nineteenth-century Indian reform, Mathes lacks a critical distance from

her subject. There is, of course, much to admire in Jackson. We learn, for example, of the way in which she pored over tedious land documents in California in order to successfully invalidate two white settlers' who had cut off water to Cahuilla Villagers in San Isidro Canyon.

Yet one could also point to other aspects of Jackson's Indian reform work that may, intentionally or not, have had negative consequences for Native peoples. For example, despite her willingness to speak for Native peoples, Jackson seems to have had only the most minimal experience speaking with them. As Michael Dorris pointed out, after her first trip to California, Jackson described the Native peoples there as "loathsome, abject, and hideous" (introduction to *Ramona* [1988], p. ix). Like some activists of the nineteenth century who hated slavery and disliked African Americans, Jackson seemed more interested in Indians in the abstract sense. This tendency, as is so readily apparent in the assimilation era as well as the years of the Indian New Deal, often leads to grave disaster for Native peoples.

And *Ramona* did not so much raise the consciousness and conscience of America regarding California's Mission Indians as it created an enduring mythology regarding California's past and its Spanish, Mexican, indigenous, and *mestizo* inhabitants. Mathes seems to feel that were she to introduce anything negative about Jackson, she would undermine her project. Far from it, by showing the complexities of Jackson's thoughts and actions, readers would gain a better understanding of Indian reform in the late nineteenth century and the role of white women in this movement.

Overall, I recommend Mathes' collection despite its shortcomings. The extent of Mathes' research is remarkable and the introduction to each section is strong and captivating. It is worth wading through the daunting and sometimes extraneous amount of material to arrive at some of Jackson's brilliant passages. Mathes has contributed a real resource to those interested in Native American history, federal Indian policy, the Indian reform movement, and women's history in the late nineteenth century.

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Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound. By Alexandra Harmon. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998. 393 pages. \$40.00 cloth.

Like all social histories, this carefully researched and written narrative reconstructs the history of the American Indian people of the Puget Sound basin from a particular viewpoint. Paraphrasing Alexandra Harmon, this work is foremost a story of regional ethnic relations between the 1820s and 1970s, and the effect of those relations on people's self-concepts and self-presentations. According to the author, the text is in essence a history of the meaning of certain words. She notes that such labels have connotations of naturalness and permanence, the precise assumptions she wants the reader to set aside.