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traditions and concerns. She does not forget, then, that most of those who read the autobiographies are doing so because of their interest in the Indians.

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Snowbird Cherokees: People of Persistence. By Sharlotte Neely. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991. 178 pages. \$30.00 cloth.

How and why ethnic culture persists are common questions in anthropology. The specific field setting of Sharlotte Neely's newly published study, however, may not be so familiar. Neely's work with the Snowbird Cherokee of North Carolina is the first since Smithsonian ethnographer James Mooney recognized the need for such a study over a century ago. Such long neglect seems inexplicable, because, as Neely explains, Snowbird is the ideal subject for an examination of adaptive strategies in practice. The community is unique, not simply because it is the most traditional of the Eastern Cherokee groups but because it has remained so even though it is geographically removed from the main body of the Eastern Cherokee and is scattered among the non-Indian communities of Graham County, North Carolina. How, then, have the people of Snowbird managed to maintain their traditional culture yet adapt enough to secure their position in such a difficult environment?

In answer to this question, Neely offers her analysis of two events. In the first, an internal political battle, she emphasizes the role of ethnicity among the Snowbird Cherokees and follows the adaptive process as they try to preserve their political power. Neely balances the divisive atmosphere of the first example with the unity and celebration of the second, the annual Trail of Tears Singing.

In addition to the community's geographical isolation from other Cherokee, Neely explains, the Eastern Cherokee tend to "type each person (they meet) somewhere along a red-white continuum" (p. 97). Given these realities, one might expect Neely to focus on relations between Indians and non-Indians in the Snowbird region. However, Neely contends that non-Indians are not a threat to the Snowbird community, because they cannot legally interfere

in the affairs of the Eastern band or acquire traditional Cherokee lands and benefits. By contrast, nontraditional Cherokee or Cherokee of minimal blood degree ("white Indians") may dramatically affect traditional communities such as Snowbird. Thus intra-ethnic rather than interethnic conflict provides the tension throughout much of Neely's work. The internal political conflicts that are the natural results "of any ongoing social process of adaptivity" seem to highlight these negative feelings (p. 72).

A second source of tension during such events arises from the conflict between political realities and the traditional, nonaggressive value system known as the Harmony Ethic. This system discourages aggression, competitiveness, and selfishness; yet each of these traits might be considered essential to political survival. Even so, the intensely traditional Snowbird Cherokee managed to preserve both this spiritual tradition and their place in the economic and political worlds of the Eastern Cherokee.

The politically independent Snowbird community usually elected two traditionalist Cherokee to represent their interests at the Eastern Cherokee Tribal Council. Such representation assures the presence of traditional values among the Eastern Cherokee and helps secure federal and Cherokee grants and development for the Snowbird community. Thus one can understand their alarm when a neighboring community of nontraditional Cherokee seized the council seats normally held by Snowbird traditionalists in the biennial election of 1973.

The Snowbird Cherokee finally regained some measure of their former power after years of tense public meetings, legal battles, and unusually assertive behavior. In doing so, they might seem to have violated the essential values of the Harmony Ethic. But anthropologist Murray Wax has noted that among the Western Cherokee, aggressiveness, which might otherwise be objectionable to the traditional Cherokee, finds favor when it is viewed as a collective effort in defense of one's community. Neely recognizes similar behavior among the people of Snowbird as "a kind of pragmatism and a continued emphasis on harmony" (p. 97). Thus the Snowbird community maintains the delicate balance between spiritual tradition and political/economic survival by acting in common rather than as individuals. Neely emphasizes the importance of shared experience in her account of a second event.

If the biennial elections are a time of intra-ethnic tension and hostility, the annual Trail of Tears Singing is the extreme opposite. This modern (1968) tradition serves as a time of healing and

reunion for the Eastern Cherokee. White Indians mingle with full-bloods and non-Indians alike, and all celebrate the Cherokee heritage and mourn as a community the tragedies of the Indian removal. The event has equal significance as Christian fellowship, because, like their non-Indian neighbors, many Cherokee are fundamentalist Christians. The blending of traditional Cherokee costume and language with what amounts to a gospel singing marathon speaks volumes about the way the people of Snowbird have reconciled modern and ancient Cherokee traditions. The simple act of singing a hymn unites the participants in ways anthropologists may never fully understand. Yet clearly, as Neely suggests, apart from its spiritual effect, *Amazing Grace* sung in the Cherokee language simultaneously celebrates thousands of years of Cherokee life and strengthens ties to the non-Indians of the southern Appalachian mountains. One hesitates to call such honest spirituality an "adaptive strategy," but the result, if only a by-product, is a more secure place for the Snowbird community among its neighbors. Unfortunately, the most pressing threat to the traditional culture of the Snowbird Cherokee comes from within.

The unwillingness of new generations to marry only full-blood Cherokee and to learn and preserve their language translates into a declining number of Cherokee speakers and community members of maximal-blood degree. Yet, in her final chapter, Neely offers hope for the survival of Snowbird's Cherokee traditions. The friends she made while living among the Snowbird Cherokee continue to act assertively in defense of their community. One woman actively resists opposition to a local labor union. Another learned to teach the Cherokee language and now inspires Snowbird children to continue this tradition. Yet another preserves the selfless values of the Harmony Ethic by providing Snowbird children with affordable school supplies. One cannot understate the importance of such individuals to cultural persistence. As important as the community is, ultimately the individual weighs membership benefits against drawbacks and decides whether to preserve or abandon tradition.

Overall, Neely's study offers a convincing, if brief, glimpse at the mechanism of cultural persistence. The study's only significant flaw is that its primary examples are seventeen years out of date. This can lead to confusion over terms such as *current*, which may indicate 1975 or 1991. To be sure, Neely's work is a vivid account of the community in the early to mid-1970s, and her final chapter contains the recent (1990s) examples of the traditional

women mentioned above. Still, one can only wonder how the intervening years and varying popular attitudes towards Native American culture have affected the whole community. Considering her ability to "see" into the heart of the community, one hopes Neely will return to Snowbird and continue this study of a people in motion.

In the interim, readers might examine Neely's contribution to *Indians of the Southeastern United States in the Late 20th Century* (J. Anthony Paredes, ed., 1992). Here one may find much to recall *Snowbird Cherokees*, although Neely offers more up-to-date information on the Eastern Cherokee as a whole, especially concerning the economic impact of bingo. This essay may be viewed as a valuable supplement to Sharlotte Neely's long-anticipated study of the remarkable Snowbird Cherokee community.

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Yellowstone Command: Colonel Nelson A. Miles and the Great Sioux War, 1876–1877. By Jerome A. Greene. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. 333 pages. \$35.00 cloth.

The Great Sioux War of 1876–77 is most remembered for the "last stand" of George Armstrong Custer, which continues to be discussed and debated in numerous publications. It is commonplace for histories to mention that, after Custer's defeat, the government concentrated military forces in the Northern Plains region and soon subdued the Sioux. Events most often related in the military victory include the battle of Slim Buttes, the attack on the Northern Cheyenne by Ranald S. Mackenzie, and the negotiations leading to the surrender of Crazy Horse, all credited to General George Crook, who received the nation's acclaim. Until now, the military effort involving the troops commanded by Colonel Nelson A. Miles in the Yellowstone region of Montana after the defeat of Custer's troops has not had a serious, detailed examination. Jerome A. Greene, a historian with the National Park Service, previously published an account of Crook's fight against American Horse at Slim Buttes. Here he continues the task of relating the aftermath of the Little Big Horn battle, narrating the activities of Miles's Yellowstone command and concluding that it was decisive in finalizing the army's victory in 1877.