

**The Osage Ceremonial Dance I'n-Lon-Schka.** By Alice Anne Callahan. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990. 172 pages. \$19.95 cloth.

The *I'n-Lon-Schka* or "playground of the eldest son" is a ceremonial Osage dance event practiced annually in June at the Osage reservation communities of Pawhuska, Hominy, and Grayhorse. Author Alice Anne Callahan explains that this dance event was borrowed from the Ponca and Kaw and adopted by the Osage people in the late nineteenth century. While the dance resembles the Omaha Grass Dance, Callahan claims that it is a distinctly Osage celebration of masculinity, honor, community, and the sacred. The author's description suggests that this ceremonial occasion is central to the Osage definition of themselves, because it reflects as well as reinforces and creates the Osage ethos and worldview.

The author's descriptions and explanations are augmented by several helpful drawings, maps, and musical notations. Her discussions of song ownership and the treatment of the drum are particularly intriguing. She also offers a full discussion of various roles and the work of the organizing dance committee.

If, as Callahan suggests, the oral record of this event is becoming more difficult to maintain, her detailed description may be valuable to the Osage people. As a contribution to the study of non-Western music, dance, and ceremony, however, it falls short. There are many problems, but the primary one is that Callahan somehow is unaware of the work done in these areas over the past thirty years. Since 1960, the entire field of dance ethnology has developed, but Callahan does not use the contributions of even one contemporary dance ethnologist. It is particularly surprising that she ignores the work of Gertrude Kurath, who was one of the founders of the field and the author of many articles and books about Native American music and dance.

Similarly, Callahan seems unaware of the important understandings of ceremonial behavior that have come from symbolic or interpretive anthropology in the past twenty years. The work of Clifford Geertz, for example, could have helped Callahan make sense of the significant symbolic dimensions of this event.

In the field of ethnomusicology, Callahan is a little better informed and more current, but even here her most recent reference is fifteen years old. In the areas of music, dance, and symbolism, tremendous advances in method and theory have occurred.

These contributions would have given Callahan some fresh perspectives and insights with which to explore, for example, movement quality or the communication of symbolic meaning within a cultural context.

Although Callahan presents some historical context, it is very sketchy, and many important questions go unanswered. For example, she states, "At a crucial time of the Osages' removal to Indian Territory, they turned away from their old ceremonies, which were no longer serving them. . . . They turned instead to two new ceremonies . . . the *I'n-Lon-Schka*, and the peyote religion" (p. 18). The reader is not given more information about this "crucial time." One is left wondering if the *I'n-Lon-Schka* was part of a classic religious revitalization movement and speculating about the specific circumstances that would drive a people to such a departure from their "old ceremonies."

Context is lacking elsewhere as well. The reader is told that the *I'n-Lon-Schka* is held in three reservation villages, yet these communities are never described, so the reader has difficulty situating the *I'n-Lon-Schka* dance arbors. Also Callahan states several times that the *I'n-Lon-Schka* has been successfully maintained because the Osage people have established a land base and economic independence, but she never presents any land base or economic data, nor does she explore this interesting relationship between economy and the retention of ceremonies. Further, the reader is told that the Ponca come to sing for the Osage *I'n-Lon-Schka* and that other Native Americans participate, but the relationship—the physical or social distance between these groups—is never discussed. Because of these contextual omissions, the book contains a description of dance, music, and costume that, for the most part, is severed from its full cultural context. A total picture of the event is never achieved.

Finally, the author makes some false generalizations that indicate that her exposure to Native American music and dance is rather limited. For example, she states, "The *I'n-Lon-Schka* is one of the few authentic ceremonial dances remaining in the United States today" (p. 98). Not only is this simply not true (the Native Americans I worked with in the Southwest would laugh at such a claim), but she never stops to question what she means by *authentic* nor what she means by *traditional*, another ambiguous term employed throughout the book. Is something authentic or traditional if it began one hundred years ago but not twenty-five years ago? How long must a dance be practiced

before it becomes authentic or traditional? How much outside influence can be present before an event is no longer authentic or traditional? The fact is, cultural expressions like music and dance are never static or free from the influence of other cultures.

Callahan is to be commended for her efforts at producing a detailed description. It is never easy to put into writing a complex multidimensional event like the *I'n-Lon-Schka*, but with some exposure to the current world of ideas about dance, music, and ceremony and with more attempts at full contextualization, this description could have been much richer and more revealing about the Osage people. With a broader perspective, Callahan could have used the *I'n-Lon-Schka* as a vehicle or lens through which to view Osage culture in twentieth-century America. In the process she could have contributed to our general understanding of how Native Americans and other groups communicate what is important and meaningful to them through dance, music, and ceremony.

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**Native North Americans: An Ethnohistorical Approach.** Edited by Daniel L. Boxberger. Dubuque, IA.: Kendall/Hunt, 1990. 430 pages. \$25.95 paper.

Boxberger's text goes a long way toward solving a dilemma that I encounter each time I teach a general course in North American Indian studies: Is it best to take a broad historical sweep that submerges cultural differences? Or to favor an in-depth tribal approach that leaves out whole sections of native North America in order to concentrate on specific tribes? Or to take an artificially academic approach and try to reconstruct aboriginal North America in some kind of "traditional" ethnographic time warp, where change does not intrude upon the picture? Obviously, none of these approaches is very satisfactory, but to combine them also poses difficulties. Comprehensive texts such as Spencer's and Jennings's *The Native Americans* (1977, Harper and Row); Harold Driver's *Indians of North America* (1969, University of Chicago); or Alice Kehoe's *North American Indians* (1981, Prentice-Hall) present a welter of facts through which the student must sift. Wendell Oswalt's *This Land Was Theirs* (1988, Mayfield) relies upon