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More Than Curiosities: A Grassroots History of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board and Its Precursors, 1920-1942. By Susan Labry Meyn.

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The stories of human relationships recounted within this autobiography are those between Slover and professional acquaintances, rather than his immediate family. His lack of detail regarding his family is striking. Records of births, deaths, and marriages are provided, but they fail to give the reader a sense of his personal life. His sense of responsibility, however, is reflected in his determination to provide for his family by any means necessary.

Works on Christian missionaries to the Cherokees have previously been culled from documents related to the American Board of Missionaries and various other church records. With this book, Cloud presents a first-person account of the missionary experience and the politics associated with the Southern Baptist Association. The fact that Slover was the first Southern Baptist missionary to the Cherokees, and that he arrived during the Civil War, serves to highlight the importance of this work to students of nineteenth-century history. Relying primarily on material from secondary sources, Cloud maintains the historical accuracy of this autobiography. The topical chapter arrangements are faithful to the original manuscript and provide a cogent, chronological presentation of Slover's many adventures.

The life of James Anderson Slover was a long one and spanned most of the nineteenth century. His participation in many of the most significant events of the century provides an important perspective of an ordinary individual within the most dynamic era in American history. With a specialization in the history of the American West, Cloud delivers an insightful account of this informative autobiography. Slover witnessed the capitalist transformation of the West and it is to our benefit that Cloud offers this important contribution to students of Indian history, Civil War history, pioneer history, and religious and economic history.

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More Than Curiosities: A Grassroots History of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board and Its Precursors, 1920–1942. By Susan Labry Meyn. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001. 288 pages. \$65.00 cloth.

Susan Labry Meyn's *More Than Curiosities* calls itself a grassroots history of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board and an interdisciplinary "study in American Indian anthropology and American Indian history" (p. xix). Although it delves into the early twentieth-century history of private and public philanthropic and reformist endeavors, it does not implicitly or explicitly deal with Native culture or histories either interpretively or substantively and can scarcely be said to serve Indian anthropology or history as disciplines. However, in drawing heavily upon archival sources—especially René d'Harnoncourt's and Alice Marriott's papers from their years with the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, *More Than Curiosities* does go beyond Robert Fay Schrader's *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy* (1983) in illuminating the personal perspectives and work of key individuals.

Whether this suffices as “grassroots history” is debatable, especially since Native peoples’ own ideas about these programs and the work of the federal government with regard to crafts and craft sales would certainly be of equal or greater value.

Meyn explores the early history and context of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB) through chapters on its so-called precursors, largely in the Southwest; US government encouragement of Native craft production and related economic development; John Collier’s role in the passage of the 1935 Indian Arts and Crafts Act and the foundation of the Indian Arts and Craft Board and its work under Rene d’Harnoncourt; Alice Marriott’s work as an IACB field representative in Oklahoma; the IACB exhibition at the 1939 San Francisco Golden Gate International Exposition; the difficulty of successfully marketing Indian crafts; and congressional and other critiques of the work of the IACB up until 1942. While it pulls together detailed information about personalities, politics, and activities over more than twenty years—especially those of John Collier, Alice Marriott, and Rene d’Harnoncourt—what is most problematic about this study is the author’s willingness to allow this specific treatment to float free of wider contexts of American social history, ideology, attitudes toward Indians, reformers’ and others’ agendas, tourism, cultural representation and construction, and art.

In focusing her work on the IACB and its associated act, Meyn appears to assume that similar work which preceded 1935 must be its precursor. This creates an unfortunate teleology which allows diverse activities related to Indian crafts to be used to explain the rise of federal interests in Native crafts and the IACB as a means to economic development, even when the other activities mentioned arose from different attitudes toward Indians and their place in American society. Among the IACB’s “precursors,” Meyn focuses on work by Kenneth Chapman and Edgar L. Hewett in and around Santa Fe in the 1920s that sought to engage tourists and school that audience in recognizing “authentic” Indian arts and performances. She also mentions less concentrated efforts by White traders at Mille Lacs, Minnesota, who marketed Ojibwa crafts and souvenirs and White missionaries at Colony, Oklahoma, who developed strict parameters for items and designs and constrained Arapaho and Cheyenne beadworkers to make only those items. Yet these latter situations had their own context and motivations that remain largely unexplored but which are clearly different than efforts in the Southwest and those of the federal government in creating the IACB. And contrary to Meyn’s suggestion, not all the abovementioned activities had “helping the Indians” as their primary objective.

Meyn’s thesis is that “efforts to assist Indians” in the Southwest during the 1920s served as a model for efforts later carried out by John Collier and others through the IACB, but what is clearly lacking here is an explication of the diverse American attitudes held toward Native people, efforts to “civilize” them, and the nature and perception of Native arts and craft, many of which operated simultaneously after 1900. Even in the Southwest, non-Native attitudes and programs for development were not consistent: some sought to save Indians as people, some were far more interested in the creation and collec-

tion of high-quality Indian art, and others aimed to assist Indian households economically by securing better prices for Native-made items. Superficially, the actions carried out to serve these interests might resemble one another but were still vastly different in their intent. Altogether, there does seem to have been a tendency to see Indian art as a unique thing worth saving by creating markets for better products, even while other social trends would have eliminated Indian people as culturally and socially distinct. Unfortunately, all of this remains unexplored in this book.

Although Native people—especially in the Southwest—participated heavily in making and selling crafts for the curio trade through traders such as the Fred Harvey Company and supported themselves by doing so, there existed a perception that these curios were “inauthentic” and that growth of the curio trade implied the demise of Native “traditional” arts. Taken with Collier’s belief that Indians were national treasures worth preserving (rather like the Grand Canyon), that they were part of US national identity, and that Native people should be encouraged to be part of American society but not American culture, what becomes difficult to explain is how Native people and cultures that were thought to have such tremendous intangible value to American society had to also produce and sell craft items to prove that value day after day.

Within this book, there is a definite tendency to judge the IACB, its work, and the individuals involved according to their intent rather than the success of their supposedly novel efforts. Nor does the author tease out how the IACB’s work actually resembled that of the Indian traders it sought to disempower. Although Indian traders were criticized for shaping Native craft into salable goods by encouraging the curio trade, those involved with the IACB failed to see that their own work also dictated to Native people what would or would not sell, set and applied idiosyncratic standards, and suggested new product lines that used Native skills but were clearly made to mimic American housewares rather than find ways to make products of Native design into desirable commodities through attention to creating markets for them. The internal contradiction here is that Native people were expected to make the transition to wanting to make money from their crafts but were not thought to be independent enough to do so according to their own desires. The result was an attempt to industrialize Native craft production, not encourage artistry.

The work of the IACB sought to create a better market for high-quality Native crafts, but in many cases, *quality* was defined by IACB field representatives according to their own tastes or to develop a product that could be produced consistently and in large quantities to support the greater market demand that the IACB also hoped to cultivate. Through exhibits and other means, the IACB also hoped to create an appreciation for Native art and thus create markets for higher priced goods but unto itself this ignored generalized American ideas about inequality and the public’s mentality and expectation that Native crafts—in the way they were most often marketed as souvenirs—should be affordable or even cheap because Indian labor could not be considered equal to that of Whites. Simultaneously, the IACB failed to

recognize that Americans in different parts of the country held different attitudes toward Indians and that elevating southwestern Native crafts did little except reinforce a growing perception that Indians in the Southwest were the only “true” Indians left. The public’s ability to see Native cultural diversity was also hampered by the fact that the IACB exhibition at the 1939 San Francisco Golden Gate International Exposition included no photographs of contemporary Native life but instead exhibited crafts and craft demonstrators in ways more typical of ethnographic rather than art exhibits.

Overall, Meyn draws upon examples that originate in the Southwest but, as part of the research for the dissertation this book is based on, she conducted oral history interviews with Native artists and others “to comprehend the Indian viewpoint” (p. xii). Summaries of interviews with these eleven individuals are presented as an appendix and include individuals associated in some way with the IACB as well as a larger set of Chitimacha basket-makers who were not. The substance of these interviews or what IACB might have meant to the Native people involved is not integrated with the author’s discourse on the IACB, nor could this small attempt have even begun to address Native peoples’ thoughts on the subject or the tremendous diversity of their individual and collective experiences.

Altogether, the author has made an effort to confine her subject to what she has called the grassroots history of the IACB but, as suggested above, this cannot begin to address the social and political complexities inherent in early twentieth-century politics and federal programs directed at Indian people. Similarly, our understanding of the IACB will not be complete until we begin to examine how Native people themselves saw and were affected by these policies from their implementation to the present.

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Native America Collected: The Culture of an Art World. By Margaret Dubin. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001. 184 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

As Margaret Dubin points out, very few available treatises deal with both historic and contemporary Native American art collecting. *Native America Collected* is one. It provides a good overview of the relevant themes and issues. It covers museum and anthropological collections; private collections; tourism; and the legislating of the art market, as well as the written history of Native American art as related by critics and art historians. Obviously, Dubin casts a wide net for a relatively short volume and as such no one section provides an in-depth examination. The chapter titles suggest separate treatment of discrete categories, but certain issues reappear throughout the book, so that a new layer is added to the inquiry each time. As a result, the reader becomes aware that these issues are thoroughly enmeshed, and that the usual academic distinctions between them do not reflect the realities of the art world.