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Indian Country: A History of Native People in America. By Karen D. Harvey and Lisa D. Harjo.

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There seems to be no easy explanation for this contradiction in what appears otherwise to be a painstakingly researched “legend.” Graham later states, “The date of death of Jim Clark/Powers of the Air is unknown. It must have been between 1883 and 1890...” (pp. 122–23). If this estimation is correct, it would rule out the battle between the Sioux and the Grand Island Chippewa as having taken place at an earlier date, unless one assumes extreme longevity for Jim Clark or questions whether he and Powers of the Air were one and the same person.

This one disturbing contradiction and Graham’s disclaimer about the historical legitimacy of his book, contrasted with the painstaking research involved in it, make it difficult to decide if *A Face in the Rock* should be judged on the basis of its effect or on the particulars of its history. If anything, the amount of research packed into this relatively short imaginative history made this reader willing to accept more of the imaginative, as well as some more well-earned commentary from Graham, while the many facts digest. But like Powers of the Air himself, Graham is to be commended for his efforts to preserve a story that would most likely have been lost otherwise.

Graham’s notes on sources show that only one other book has been written about Grand Island, making *A Face in the Rock* a useful illumination of a small piece of history that could probably never be meaningfully reconstructed through fact alone. Graham’s reconstruction is both respectful and affectionate.

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**Indian Country: A History of Native People in America.** By Karen D. Harvey and Lisa D. Harjo. Golden, Colorado: North American Press, 1994. 400 pages. \$27.95 cloth.

This is neither Indian history nor American history, although the authors insinuate one and claim the other. It certainly is not “true history” (pp. xv, 11, and 12), as claimed in one section and disclaimed as impossible in another. Harvey and Harjo have succeeded in patching together a book of contradictions and distortions, with token excerpts, inserts, and quotes that are culturally sensitive. Although the last seven chapters are accurate and usable, the first eleven contain the same old, tired story told from

the Euro-American perspective about what was done to Native Americans. That perspective is supported by the organization of the book according to the public policy of European and American governments, not Native American people.

The authors of *Indian Country* have attempted to consolidate history and culture, but by combining those subjects they have been forced to abbreviate their coverage to the point of distortion. A prime example is the thumbnail sketch of cultural areas (pp. 45–52). Condensation requires a selective process, but selection should be based on logical fact, not whim nor skewed assumptions. While admitting that personal bias was the primary criterion for selection (p. 4), the authors state that they selected only four tribes for examination because of “the sacred nature of the number four in *Indian Spirituality*” (p. 5). That is an ethnocentric statement, ignoring those native cultures in which 7, 11, and 12 were sacred numbers, and supports the idea of a generic Indian spirituality or belief system.

The authors repeatedly promise “another view” or “alternative perspective” (pp. xvi, 1, 14, and 60) and produce neither. The Native American view could have been realized through a number of methods: utilizing tribal oral histories; reading the translation of the symbolically written history of the Lenni Lenape; examining the “winter counts,” which recorded events related to tribal affairs, not what Europeans or Americans were doing. A person should not complain about overdependence on non-Indian or written history if he or she avoids the alternate sources. A fourth method is to avoid Euro-American terminology, such as “Five Civilized Tribes” (p. 4), which is ethnocentric from a non-Indian perspective. The term *Holocaust* is incorrectly used (p. 60), because it means “sacrifice or destruction by fire,” not by disease and warfare, and is usually applied to non-Indians.

The only new perspective presented was the result of expedience, lack of research, and a confused approach. The use of such terms as *eagle feather*, *drum*, and *circle* (p. 14), which are emotional symbols for some Indian cultures, does not compensate for the deficiencies. The authors have not only corrupted Indian history but distorted United States history. For example, the European invasion of the present United States did not begin with the British in 1607 but with the Spanish and Juan Ponce de Leon in 1513 in Florida; the Louisiana Purchase did not occur in 1807 but in 1803; and Bacon’s Rebellion was not a war between colonists and Indians but a revolt of western settlers against the colonial gov-

ernment because they were not being protected from Indian attacks.

Regarding Indian history, the authors often operated on assumptions, not information. The people of the Moundbuilder cultures did not disappear; their cultures changed, but the people remained in the same area (Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Native Americans Before 1492: The Moundbuilding Centers of the Eastern Woodlands*, 1992). The Seminole, as a tribe, were not part of the Moundbuilder cultures because they did not form as a tribe until about 1650. To assume that the Creek were less assimilated than other tribes in the area because of buffer tribes reflects a lack of basic research. European traders were among the Creek by 1680, and many of the Lower Creek, as well as some of the Upper Creek, had parents of European heritage.

In addressing the Cherokee "Trail of Tears," Harvey and Harjo follow the timeworn, mistaken assumption that the entire nation was forced out of the East. One hour of good research would have told them that many Cherokee had already moved west and that most of the deaths along the trails resulted from disease, pneumonia, and malnutrition (Russell Thornton, *The Cherokees: A Population History*, 1990). The forced removal directly resulted from internal factionalism among the Cherokee, which was aggravated by Americans. The Ridge faction signed the removal treaty, and the Ross faction refused to leave (Thornton).

Besides including erroneous information, the authors omitted facts, which resulted in an incomplete picture. When relating that Wampanoag chief Massasoit signed a treaty in 1621 with the British, they failed to state that his people had been weakened by an epidemic of bubonic plague between 1617 and 1619. The insinuation that the Powhatan Confederacy was formed as a defense against the British invasion is incorrect; it was formed many years before as a defense against the Monacan Confederacy of Siouan-speaking people in western Virginia, as well as against attacks by the Susquehanna and the Iroquois from the north.

In addition to twisting events, Harvey and Harjo present radically biased segments that are as wrong as the distorted histories about native people written by Euro-Americans. They state that the Iroquois were "asserting their sovereignty" (p. 98) over other tribes in the region. That is a benign phrase for invasion and conquest. Tell the thousands of Erie, Tobacco or Neutral, Illinois, Shawnee, and Wyandot people whom the Iroquois killed that it was only assertion of sovereignty.

The authors should have completely avoided writing the chapter on "Reading, Writing, Understanding and Teaching History." First, they evidently are not historians but administrators. Second, the elements of the chapter contradict their method of writing the book. Third, this chapter is depressing for the reader, because "Factual Accuracy Is Unattainable" and "Truth Is Impossible" (p. 13). History is not a science, because we study human history and human action is based not only on logic but on emotions, which are unpredictable. Alternative perspectives can be realized through the questions that we ask the sources, the interpretations we draw, and our frame of mind, not the quantity of material.

The authors portray the Indians as living in a never, never land of long ago, a statement that shows how much Harvey and Harjo conform to the American social psyche. Their declaration that Indians have an "intimate relationship with the land" (pp. 44, 52, and 58) is a false generalization, in the wrong tense; they should have added, "Indians should. . . ." In the past, Native Americans did have a special relationship with the earth and nature, and traditionalists still retain that psychological and spiritual bond. Meanwhile, most Indians have been assimilated into the American capitalistic society and are Christians who do not consider the earth sacred. Present-day Indians live in houses, drive cars, use refrigerators, and work in such fields as logging, mining, construction, and others, which are destructive to the environment. In the excerpt the authors quote from a speech by Wilma Mankiller, she was speaking about "human beings," not just Indians (p. 52).

Harvey and Harjo should have chosen a different subject or conducted more research and analysis of their information. Or they could have come to Fort Peck Community College, where we do teach Indian history from the Indian perspective. I agree that Indian histories and cultures should be taught in more schools, but, if we are going to teach those subjects, let us not corrupt and twist them to make us Indians appear to be totally innocent victims. The perpetuation of the victim syndrome fosters defeatism.

We should present history from the Native American perspective and not just in relation to what was done to our ancestors by Europeans. For example, what were the Timucuan tribes doing when Ponce de Leon landed in Florida? Indian history is realized when European invasion, exploration, and settlement are placed in a secondary position to such things as intertribal relations,

Indian culture changes, and events within and among the tribes. Place the Indian in the role of the main actor, not in a supporting role. Part of the ignorance among Indian youth is caused by their parents' lack of awareness of their own heritage and culture, because Indian history is not being written nor taught.

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**Molly Spotted Elk: A Penobscot in Paris.** By Bunny McBride. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995. 360 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

*Molly Spotted Elk: A Penobscot in Paris* is a book that requires careful reading for a full appreciation of its richness of detail, both personal and historical. These details are the result of two significant factors: the author's access to Molly's remarkable diaries and the impressive research. The author notes, "Molly's diaries withstood an intensive veracity test when held against oral histories and personal correspondence, as well as written and photographic records. . ." (p. xvi). When these diaries are set into historical contexts provided by the author, the result is a first-rate documentary in a neglected area of American Indian studies, that of Indians in show business.

The remarkable character of Molly's diaries is dramatically depicted in the fact that she continued to write in them even immediately following a traumatic separation from her husband, who was forced to flee Nazi occupation of his native France. "After a sleepless night haunted by thoughts, tears, memories and the vivid face of J. [her husband] with tears in his eyes . . . I felt desperately alone with Jean [her young daughter]. . . . [After] those sad moments of farewell I would not have wanted to live much longer. But there was and is Jean" (p. 265).

This entry is unique in divulging deeply felt emotions in a diary that otherwise yields meager insight into the very private, wary, even impenetrable Molly. Despite the pervasive masking of emotions, the facts of Molly Spotted Elk's existence justify the author's assertion that her life "defied the stereotype of a woman born in the early years of this century—particularly of an American Indian woman" (p. xiv). Independent and ambitious, she performed in vaudeville at age fourteen, studied Flaubert, H.G.