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## REVIEWS



**Basket Diplomacy: Leadership, Alliance-Building, and Resilience among the Coshatta Tribe of Louisiana, 1884–1984.** By Denise E. Bates. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. 354 pages. \$65.00 cloth and electronic.

*Basket Diplomacy* offers an exceptionally well-researched and detailed account of the history of the Coshatta people of Louisiana. Substantially expanding the limited literature, Denise Bates seamlessly merges archival historical research and interviews with Coshatta tribal members. Bates's text contributes a significant examination of historical struggles relevant to Indigenous peoples throughout the southeast. Each chapter richly details the dominant issues of the late-1800s to the mid-1980s. Throughout the book, Bates describes the battle with the whims and inconsistencies of government policy changes. She contextualizes Coshatta history within the social, cultural, and historical context of Louisiana and the wider southeast. Bates shows how the Coshatta people advocated for themselves not only to survive extreme challenges but to become major actors on the Louisiana political and economic stage. In the process, Bates takes an insightful view towards cultural continuity and change, emphasizing creative ways the Coshatta people adapted while maintaining cultural integrity. Her account of the Coshatta church, for example, foregrounds Coshatta views on Christianity and the central role the church played in their community to bring people together and preserve the Koasati language.

The author provides a brief overview of Coshatta involvement in the Creek Confederacy and their early migrations to Louisiana, providing ample resources for additional research. Here her text complements Charles Hudson's extensive work on the southeast and accounts Ethridge and Shuck-Hall's edited volume, *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South* (2009). The book then follows the Coshatta people to their early settlement in Louisiana, where they petitioned for and acquired privately held homesteads. Their efforts towards land ownership would later resurface as they struggle with the federal government over recognition. On issues of race and politics in the federal recognition process, Bates's work resonates with that of other scholars, such as Brian Klopotek's *Recognition Odysseys: Indigeneity, Race, and Federal Tribal Recognition Policy in Three Louisiana Indian Communities* (2011).

As Bates's account continues through the early-twentieth century, building on previous literature such as Nicholas Peroff's *Menominee Drums: Tribal Termination and Restoration, 1954–1974* (1982) and Donald Fixico's *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1955–1960* (1986), she describes the Coshatta people's efforts to obtain federal services to address poverty, health care, education, and more. Yet under the termination policies of the 1950s, the federal government discontinued their services, as they did with other tribes like the Menominee and Alabama-Coshatta,

exacerbating the challenges the Coushatta faced. Tribal leaders navigated the war on poverty in the 1960s, and sought first state, and then federal recognition, as well as reservation land to place in federal trust. They initiated revenue-generating strategies that began as a store for pine needle and cane baskets and developed into a more extensive tourist enterprise. Women basketmakers enabled leaders like Ernest Sickey to gift baskets that helped create and solidify alliances. Their economic development efforts would benefit the entire area, eventually culminating in the largest land-based casino in Louisiana. Bates's text makes apparent the initiative, resourcefulness, and hard work of tribal leaders like Ernest Sickey, Solomon Battise, Jackson Langley, and Jeff Abbey. With others, they built relationships with government officials and regional allies, worked with intertribal organizations, and collaborated with anthropologists, linguists, and other scholars.

Bates focuses on their "strength-based" leadership, in line with other works like Kenny and Fraser's *Living Indigenous Leadership: Native Narratives on Building Strong Communities* (2012) and Gipp et al.'s *American Indian Stories of Success: New Visions of Leadership in Indian Country* (2015). While Bates's account focuses on male leaders, her emphasis on the importance of baskets brings attention to women and suggests further directions for future research into Coushatta women's histories, lives, and perspectives. Early on, women supported their families by trading baskets for food and supplies. Bates connects Coushatta basketmakers to wider trends in nineteenth century markets for Indigenous art and cultural tourism, as discussed, for instance, in Molly Mullin's *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art, and Value in the American Southwest* (2001) and Meyer and Royer's edited volume, *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Approaching American Indian Cultures* (2001). Bates points to the growing importance of baskets in the 1960s and 70s in attracting tourists, bringing wider attention to the Coushattas, and highlighting their cultural survival and identity. In the 1970s, in particular, women like Edna Lorena Abbott Langley, Rosabel Sylestine, and Marian John gained widespread notice for the Coushattas via traveling basket exhibits sponsored by the Department of Interior's Indian Arts and Crafts Division. As Bates says, "The Coushatta harnessed art to promote social and economic change" and to educate a wider public (181).

Bates describes how the Coushatta people redefined narratives about them in the popular media to subvert stereotypes and build wider awareness about Coushatta history and culture, sovereignty, and federal recognition. She also shows how they reshaped their relationships with scholars and researchers from intrusive to more equitable and collaborative. For example, Bates describes Hiram Gregory's efforts to teach ethical and accountable research methods to his students and act as an advocate for Louisiana Indigenous peoples by testifying in court cases and assisting with grants and federal recognition petitions. Bates fits these specific details into the broader shifts of the 1970s towards more positive relationships between southern tribes and academics, as Theda Perdue describes, for example, in her interview with Greg O'Brien (*The Native South: New Histories and Enduring Legacies*, 2017).

While Bates' account ends in the 1980s, David Sickey's epilogue takes us to the present. As Coushatta tribal chair, Sickey notes that Bates achieves a model for ethical

and accountable scholarly collaboration with Native communities. *Basket Diplomacy* complements accounts of earlier eras and sets a foundation on which accounts of more recent times may build. Bates's work accompanies the literature on Indigenous relationships with state and federal governments, the federal recognition process, and Indigenous leadership and activism amidst oppressive racial hierarchies, as in the Jim Crow era. This book is relevant to anyone studying or researching southeastern groups who have had to navigate similar historical circumstances such as the Choctaw, Chitimacha, Houma, Tunica-Biloxi, and Seminole. Her account complements texts such as Katherine Osburn's *Choctaw Resurgence in Mississippi: Race, Class and Nation Building in the Jim Crow South, 1830–1977* (2008). Enriched with previously unpublished photographs that amplify her sensitive, three-dimensional, and humanizing portrait of Coshatta people, Bates's work is a worthy successor to that of scholars such as Theda Perdue, Clara Sue Kidwell, Anthony J. Paredes, and Donald Fixico.

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**The Colonial Compromise: The Threat of the Gospel to the Indigenous Worldview.** Edited by Miguel A. De La Torre. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2021. 196 pages. \$95.00 cloth; \$45.00 electronic.

Like many other scholars of Indigenous religions, I was first introduced to George Tinker's work in graduate school. I read *Missionary Conquest* (1993), urged by my advisor, and included some of Tinker's quotations, terminology, and ideas in my thesis. His definition of "colonization" and use of "cultural genocide" stood out to me as particularly powerful. I was reminded of the power of these words again while reading *The Colonial Compromise*, a collection of essays celebrating the major scholarly contributions of George E. Tinker. In a theme pursued by many of the contributors to this volume, much of the book stresses the significance of language, the history of important concepts, and the usefulness of certain terms.

Edward P. Antonio is interested in investigating and interrogating some of the key concepts found within the title and subtitle of the book, specifically *compromise*, *threat*, and *gospel*. The premise of this first chapter is that compromise and threat acted as the means through which Christianity and colonialism "operated in the encounter between Indigenous peoples and Europeans" (5). In support of his claim that Indigenous compromises were how Indigenous peoples rejected European colonial power, Antonio argues that analyzing these terms is important because colonialism works through these concepts, these categories are morally loaded terms, and the terms have "conceptual dimensions that call for theoretical analysis" (5). In a similar vein, Ward Churchill's chapter focuses on the meaning of the word *genocide* and its relationship to colonialism. Unlike Antonio, however, Churchill is concerned with the importance of proper naming and never mentions the gospel or Christianity. Although