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of what will certainly be a standard on the Native peoples of southern New England for many years to come.

Jenny Hale Pulsipher
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Nez Perce Women in Transition, 1877-1990. By Caroline James. Moscow, ID: University of Idaho Press, 1996. 245 pages. \$49.95 cloth.

Evolving out of a 1990 photographic exhibit of the same name, *Nez Perce Women in Transition, 1877-1990* is an impressive compilation of photographs, historical and anthropological records, biographical narratives, and original interview material documenting the lives and dramatically changing circumstances of the women of the Nez Perce Nation. As such, this work is invaluable as a reference book and as a comprehensive source for information about all aspects of Nez Perce life. Subject areas include traditional and contemporary subsistence and domestic tasks, including women's arts such as painting and basketry; women's changing political roles; family and kinship structures; religion and education, both traditional and transitional; the impacts on Nez Perce women of important historical events like the acquisition of horses and the encroachments of outsiders, as well as the participation of women in these events; and issues faced by Nez Perce women in the modern world.

Much of the information in this book has been gleaned from older and often obscure works that tended to focus on Nez Perce men, but contained enough references to the women to give some hint of their daily round. The author has done a good job of extracting these bits of information and presenting them here in a coherent fashion. As a reader and researcher of Plateau ethnography myself, I appreciate how few and far between significant references to women can be in a body of material that is itself rather sparse. The Nez Perce are probably the best-known of the native societies in this region, but the Plateau area remains unknown and underappreciated by much of the world.

The author's discussion of the roles and experiences of women during the 1877 Nez Perce War is especially valuable because it is rare—to outsiders, that is. Nez Perce women themselves are acutely aware that two-thirds of the 700-plus people who made the 1,100-mile journey were women and children,

and only one-third were warriors. Nez Perce oral history has preserved many of the heroic incidents involving women throughout the non-treaty bands' desperate attempt to reach Canada. The story of the pregnant wife of Wahlitits, who shot and killed the slayer of her dead husband before being killed herself, is legendary among those who study the war, and is one of the incidents featured at the Big Hole National Battlefield in Montana. James also recounts the bravery of other women, survivors as well as victims, who made the long flight with Joseph and the other leaders. At the final stand and surrender at the Bear's Paw mountains, more than 300 women and children surrendered with Joseph and about 90 men. Several women interviewed for this work point out that contemporary commemorations of the Nez Perce War tend to forget how many women were involved, and suggest that they, too, should be honored as "warriors."

This book is one of the best and most thorough photographic records of a single Indian tribe that I have seen, with photographs spanning the entire time period indicated in the title. Other recent photographic essays like *Women of the Native Struggle* by Ronnie Farley, portray contemporary Indian women, but from many groups, and some earlier works such as *With One Sky Above Us* by M. Gidley, document life on just one reservation (in this case, the Colville Reservation in Washington), but are limited in chronological depth. It remains unusual to find photographic collections that are "honest," that is, unaltered in the darkroom or the studio, showing ordinary people doing real-life things, and documenting material and cultural changes over time, rather than clinging to stereotypical notions of traditionality. This particular collection was compiled with the extensive help of Nez Perce people, who examined and commented on the various selections. When the photographs were exhibited in Boise, Idaho, in 1990 as part of state centennial celebrations, the exhibition was viewed by over 3000 people, 200 of whom were Nez Perce.

It is an ongoing concern of mine that so many works about and photographic depictions of Native Americans seem to end around 1900, or try to show twentieth-century Indians doing only "traditional" activities and using only "traditional" items. *Nez Perce Women in Transition* is quite refreshing in its portrayal of contemporary women in the modern settings that define our twentieth-century American existence—kitchens, classrooms, hospitals, gymnasiums, tribal offices, even Vietnam. The last couple of chap-

ters of the book are particularly important for the information about the roles of Nez Perce women today: their contributions to their communities, their tribe, and the society at large.

This leads me to extol what is perhaps the author's most valuable and original contribution to the literature about the Nez Perce Indians and Native American societies in general: the interviews. This book is replete with lengthy excerpts from James' extensive interviews conducted over many years with Nez Perce women (and men) of all ages and perspectives. The interview material adds many important new ideas and voices to the growing record of Nez Perce life, and reveals in depth the joys and concerns of so many Nez Perce individuals. To her credit, the author lets people essentially speak for themselves, and does not attempt to over-edit the variety of thoughts expressed by her informants, even when they clearly do not agree among themselves about some topic. The richness and complexity of Nez Perce people's views preserved here helps to humanize this and other Native societies, and to dispel notions of some uniform and predictable worldview expressed by "*the Indian*."

My one disappointment with this book lies not so much in what it does, but in what it does not do: there is almost no analysis or theoretical framework offered by the author as a way of understanding Nez Perce women's lives at a deeper level. The same interviews that are so important to the telling of this story also present an intriguing set of possibilities for a scholarly analysis of the overall "transition" experienced by Nez Perce women. There has been a surge of works in recent years on ethnicity and ethnic transformation, the politics of identity, Native American social issues, and the changing roles of women on the global stage, but few of these are incorporated here. Because the author and several of her key mentors are anthropologists, I find it curious that there is this lack of a social science perspective and analysis.

The main themes that James addresses in this book include the idea that women, in general, play critical roles in the history and development of any society, and that women have always been key players in Nez Perce society in particular, even if the most prominent and public political roles have been held by men. Others have recently examined the relatively high status of women in traditional Plateau societies, and both the author and her informants take this high status, somewhat uncritically, as a given. A perceived lowering of their status in the modern world is explained by some women in terms of the effects of westernization; says one interviewee, "[There] seems to be kind of a west-

ern type of mentality within our own tribe about women. I hope someday it will change" (p. 215). And yet many of the women express concern that some "modern" activities on the part of women threaten the Nez Perce men: behaviors deemed "untraditional" for women, like drumming, are "causing the men to lose their identity," according to one interviewee (p. 219). Another woman tells the author that in the past "it was women who were the providers, and it still is their position to be providers," but then states that today, "women who should be home providing parenting to the young children have to be at jobs" and that this has "degenerated the family social system" (p. 219).

It is these types of intriguing and seemingly contradictory remarks that I would have liked to see examined more carefully by the author. What do tradition and modernity actually *mean* to Nez Perce women? How are these meanings incorporated into their ongoing processes of identity, and how do Nez Perce women's identity (or rather, identities) contribute to the functioning and survival of the Nez Perce society as a whole? Having asked these questions, I concede that it is unfair to criticize another author simply for not having written the same book that I would have written. Caroline James has produced a truly valuable resource with a clear and detailed text and a moving collection of photographs. It would make a fine addition to a library reference section or Native American collection, and would be particularly useful in courses about Native peoples, women's and American history, and gender relations. I applaud her careful and thorough compilation of these important materials, and recommend *Nez Perce Women in Transition, 1877-1990* to anyone interested in this fascinating group of people at this time in human history.

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People or Peoples; Equality, Autonomy and Self-Determination: The Issues at Stake of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. By the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development. Montreal, Canada: ICHRDD, 1996. 199 pages.

When I was asked to review this book, I found myself confused by the long title, disappointed that no index was included, over-