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Peer reviewed

Tribes and Tribulations: Misconceptions About American Indians and Their Histories. By Laurence M. Hauptman. (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1995. xvi + 164 pp. \$37.50 cloth, \$15.95 paper)

Laurence Hauptman begins his book by explaining that it "emanates from a quarter-century of classroom teaching about Native Americans" (p. xv). Indeed, the nine chapters in this book, such as "The Missionary from Hell" and "Warriors with Attaché Cases," read like elaborated lectures. A typical pattern for a chapter is one in which Hauptman identifies some contemporary "misconception"—whether this is prevalent in the popular culture, in Indian culture, in the historical profession generally, or among a specific group of scholars (or combination thereof); he then sets

the issues in historiographical context before presenting his own evidence, frequently in the form of biographical sketches. In a chapter on colonial history, for example, he contests the claim of a much glorified frontier Indian fighter named John Underhill as a "hero." In another, entitled "There Are No Indians East of the Mississippi," he traces the experiences of eastern peoples in their bid for federal recognition in the late twentieth century. Often contentious and morally indignant, Hauptman fearlessly tackles controversial topics such as whether the Indian experience can be termed "genocide" and the role the Iroquois played in shaping the U.S. Constitution. As the book educates about blindspots and misconceptions, spans topics from imagery to policy, and is organized chronologically from the colonial to the modern era (with a compensatory emphasis on eastern Indians), it is clearly geared for college teaching. *Tribes and Tribulations* reflects the debates regarding the "white man's Indian," which Hauptman and other veterans of the Indian history wars have participated in during the last quarter-century.

The book is lively and informative but unsystematic in its argumentation. The "major underlying theme" of the disparate essays, Hauptman vaguely says in his introduction, is "language" (p. xiii). Elsewhere, he identifies the "misconception that Indian policies were paternalistic by nature" (p. 63) as a theme running through the early chapters. Neither claim is clear or convincing. The diffuse definition of "misconception" to cover a multitude of sins compounds his difficulty in making the book coherent. In the chapter "Playing Indians," for example, he ambitiously undertakes to attack institutionalized racism in latter- and modern-day organized sports as well as in the movie industry, setting up the Indian as "mascot" as his straw man. As his evidence, he presents biographical sketches of Jay Silverheels, the actor who played Tonto in the popular Lone Ranger serial, and Francis Sockalexis, a professional baseball player for whom the Cleveland Indians team was named. The dissimilarities of these two men in terms of their professions, life experiences, and historical impact complicate the analysis. Hauptman demonstrates that Sockalexis suffered terribly from rather brutal stereotyping at the turn of the century. In the 1950s, however, Silverheels succeeded in projecting a more savvy, if somewhat ambiguous, Hollywood image of the Indian.

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