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REVIEWS

Aboriginal Cultural Adaptations in the Midwestern Prairies. By James A. Brown. New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1991. 312 pages. \$70.00 cloth.

More than a decade ago while attending a conference on Western Oneota ceramics in Red Wing, Minnesota, I was lounging in a library at the conference hotel when a young local newspaper reporter entered the room with James B. Griffin, acknowledged dean of eastern North American archaeology. They sat down and began an interview, paying no attention to my presence. After some preliminary questioning, the reporter cut to the chase and asked what Dr. Griffin thought about the Red Wing conference, and what might be its lasting contribution to the archaeological discipline. Dr. Griffin took a quick glance around the room, saw (or did not see?) only me, and replied in a pseudoconspiratorial tone, "Every generation discovers sex."

James A. Brown's 1965 dissertation has been reproduced by Garland as part of a collection of outstanding dissertations brought together in a series called *The Evolution of North American Indians*, edited by David Hurst Thomas. Brown's dissertation, originally titled "The Prairie Peninsula: An Interaction Area in the Eastern United States," has been previously available most frequently in the form of fourth-, fifth-, or sixth-generation Xerox copies, usually passed down from mentors to students. The Garland edition is a space-friendly hard cover book, printed on acid-free 250-year paper, that makes Brown's seminal work available to a wider

audience. Brown's is the only volume in the Garland series that deals specifically with the archaeology of the North American mid-continent.

Except for a new preface written by Brown summarizing archaeological progress in the region since the dissertation was deposited at the University of Chicago, the book appears to be a facsimile of the original typescript and is therefore perhaps overpriced. Production values are below average by current standards, and all the warts of the original—written before the age of personal computers—are present. Typographical errors are common but not overly distracting, while Brown's syntax is sometimes difficult to follow; most cartographic renderings are cluttered, and a few references are missing from the bibliography. In short, purchasers will probably like the content better than the packaging. I suspect this book was published for use in graduate level seminars, and it should find its niche. Given its price, however, savvy students probably will beat a path to Kinko's and spawn a new batch of first-generation Xerox copies, but they will want to add this volume to their bookshelves when they acquire the resources of maturity.

I am not self-conscious in recommending the book as a prerequisite for anyone interested in working at Midwestern archaeology. It will be read with profit by anyone seriously studying Mississippian, Oneota, or contact-era cultures of the region. But those, like Brown, who prefer to think deeply with broad perspective will find the book especially rewarding. This work leaves one with the impression that the author probably has forgotten more archaeology than most of us are apt to learn.

In the first few chapters, after an obligatory review of culture systems theory, Brown lays the groundwork for his chorographic hypothesis set up around two formal studies of archaeological materials. Chorography is a technique geographers use to map or describe particular regions. In this work, Brown provides a synoptic overview of the cultural and ecological characteristics of his study unit, the Prairie Peninsula. This easterly extension of tall grass prairie, covering a large area of the upper Midwest from Minnesota to Missouri and from western Iowa to Indiana, became established around 5,000–3,000 B.P. under the influence of a warm Pacific climatic regime. Brown correctly identifies the region as more than a homogeneous grassland, however, describing it as "a geographical area of particular structure and associated characteristics that is relevant to its associated cultural adaptation. There

is both a large proportion of prairie and open vegetation and a minor complement of closed forest. The distribution of vegetation resembles a mosaic of forest and grassland, in which both communities are everywhere at hand" (p. 41).

During the contact era, as dispossession of traditional territories became a redundant pattern among the eastern tribes, the Prairie Peninsula became a temporary or permanent home to many of the displaced groups. Brown's concise ethnological profiles of all the early historic-period tribes that had inhabited the region is a highly commendable feature of the book. With the historic-period human adaptation to the region defined, Brown moves on to the crux of his thesis, the region's late prehistoric archaeological complexes.

In the primary test of his chorographic hypothesis, "to explore the correspondence of cultural phenomena with areal distributions relating to the Prairie Peninsula," Brown considers late prehistoric cultural data in terms of a two-stage problem, divided into a dependent variable and independent variables. The selected dependent variable, a classification of shoulder designs on ceramic jars and shouldered bowls, was chosen for its primary functional context in indirect adaptation. An objective of the dependent variable analyses was to determine if a "distinct and measurable" Oneota style could be defined and to determine its systemic relationships. In developing his classification, Brown clearly identifies and illustrates dozens of design elements, units, and motifs that remain very useful to current ceramicists. From his analysis of the dependent variable, he concludes that "Oneota style differs from the non-Oneota in the preponderance of repetition of vertical elements, the simple repetition of more rectilinear units rather than curvilinear, and in the presence of the very distinctive 'abaca' repetitive pattern" (p. 147). He also determines that the "primary functional context of the style zone is with the indirect sociocultural adaptation and indicates a regional zone of cultural interaction that is associated with the Prairie Peninsula" (p. 148).

Independent variables, which were used to show how other categories confirm the areal distribution of the dependent variable, consisted mostly of artifact categories that have primary functional context in direct and indirect adaptation. These include stone, bone, and shell artifacts, and ceramic vessel shapes. Artifact functions were inferred through analogy, their recovery context, and internal evidence such as patterns of wear. This section, in

effect a crash course in the function and areal distribution of a variety of artifacts commonly found in Midwestern archaeological sites, will become a handy reference. Based on analysis of the independent variables, Brown determined that, among sites in the Prairie Peninsula, both direct and indirect adaptations "relate to specific contexts that have widely different distributions. Further, it is apparent that an attempt to mold this geographic situation into a single monolithic classification would founder" (p. 189). Rather, distinct but overlapping adaptive areas and areas of interaction are perceived that unite local traditions and override distinctions founded in direct adaptation to the natural and social contexts. Brown designates this phenomenon "the Prairie Peninsula interaction sphere" (p. 191).

Brown's volume concludes with an adaptationist perspective that he now admits is dated, but the work as a whole is not. Archaeologists now working in the Midwest are still treading ground first walked by Brown; only now are the cultural mechanisms responsible for the Prairie Peninsula interaction sphere beginning to emerge (e.g., Emerson and Lewis, eds., *Cahokia and the Hinterlands*, 1991; Stoltman, ed., *New Perspectives on Cahokia: Views from the Periphery*, 1991).

This work was written before the "summer of love" and Woodstock, at a time when the sexual revolution was in its infancy. There is now a new generation about the land who would do well to read Brown's thirty-year-old tour de force. In the process, they might get lucky and discover sex. Older scholars will probably realize anew how subliminally dependent they have been on this succulent first fruit of the New Archaeology.

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After the Trail of Tears: The Cherokees' Struggle for Sovereignty, 1839-1880. By William G. McLoughlin. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994. 470 pages. \$39.95 cloth; \$17.95 paper.

This posthumously published narrative by William G. McLoughlin offers an interesting historical analysis of United States-Cherokee Nation relations. McLoughlin's stated emphases are the relative