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Author

Miller, Robert D.

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After Custer: Loss and Transformation in Sioux Country. By Paul L. Hedren. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011. 272 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

In *After Custer*, Paul Hedren provides a historical geography of the northern Great Plains that identifies the Great Sioux War of 1876–1877 as a catalyst that brought interrelated cultural, economic, and ecological changes to the region. Economic changes, coupled with the imposition of federal authority over Sioux Country, brought cultural changes to the Northern Cheyenne and Sioux during the late 1870s and the 1880s while leading to significant hardships for these Native peoples. Federal control also brought about the conversion of Little Big Horn Battlefield into a national cemetery.

Hedren's recounting of the origins and outcome of the Great Sioux War differs from previous scholars such as Mark Brown, Harry Anderson, and Robert Utley. While he adheres to the view that factors such as the desire for Black Hills gold, the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad, or the government's intention to exert authority over Sioux Country and its inhabitants were primary causes of the war, he finds valuation of the relative importance of each of these issues to be immaterial because all these political and economic objectives were pertinent sources of conflict. Importantly, such objectives shaped the surveys of Sioux Country that General Philip Sheridan and General William Sherman conducted just a year after George Custer's defeat. The generals viewed the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad as a necessary step to encourage Euro-American settlement and economic development of the region while simultaneously enabling the United States Army to expand its authority over Sioux Country. The United States Army could station soldiers at larger posts located near rail lines, and new forts would appear at or near agencies to monitor the Sioux and provide protection to railroad survey crews. Thus Hedren links the extension of railroads across the northern Great Plains with the consolidation of United States Army forts and outposts. American officers viewed this cost-saving measure as a means of more efficiently supervising Native populations on the northern Great Plains.

According to Hedren, when deployment of military power facilitated the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad, it enabled commercial hunters to ship thousands of buffalo hides to regional and national markets, leading to the destruction of the buffalo. Consumers and factory owners desired buffalo hides, leather, and bones for a variety of commercial and industrial purposes, including belts for factory machines, glue, and fertilizer. Even naturalists and conservationists aided in the destruction of the buffalo. Representatives of the Smithsonian and other museums oversaw the killing of additional buffalo to procure skulls, skeletons, and skins for public display, justifying the acquisition of specimens as the only means of permitting Americans to see these

disappearing animals. In turn, the displacement of the buffalo provided an opportunity for open range cattle ranching to proliferate across the northern Great Plains. Railroads connected the region to national markets and facilitated investment in this industry following the end of the financial depression of the mid-1870s. However, the harsh winter of 1886–1887 was devastating and encouraged adoption of the fenced range, where smaller herds received greater care and shelter.

Hedren chronicles well-known events in Sioux and Northern Cheyenne history, including the escape of Northern Cheyenne from Indian Territory, the killing of Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull's return to the United States, the efforts of government officials and reformers to "civilize" American Indians, and the massacre at Wounded Knee. He concludes by tracing the transformation of Little Big Horn Battlefield into a national cemetery. The efforts to preserve the site reflected changing Euro-American attitudes regarding the treatment of the nation's war dead in the wake of the American Civil War. Continued erosion, scavenging by animals, and looting by souvenir seekers convinced members of the United States Army to lobby for a permanent means of protecting the human remains buried there. Ultimately, the War Department authorized the creation of a national cemetery at the site in 1879 that included a large granite monument bearing the names of enlisted men, officers, Indian scouts, and civilians killed in the battle. Hedren contrasts Little Bighorn with the Wounded Knee Massacre site by noting that Wounded Knee remains largely undeveloped, devoid of the interpretative features or visitor amenities found where George Custer and the Seventh Cavalry fell at Little Bighorn.

Overall, Hedren achieves his objective of providing a geographic history of the northern Great Plains and successfully demonstrates how economic changes linked the region to the industrial centers of the Midwest and East. Discussing the varied consequences of the Great Sioux War demonstrates the complexity of the transformations brought to the region and encourages scholars to think about the linkages between seemingly unconnected subjects in order to create more complete histories. Yet a consideration of the historical geography of the northern Great Plains should also include the role of agriculture and the pseudoscientific belief that rain followed the plow. Although existing scholarship provides abundant evidence of how plentiful rainfall encouraged farmers to settle the Great Plains in the years after the Civil War only to meet with economic ruin during subsequent dry years, this confluence of economics and climate is within the scope of Hedren's study and would further his arguments about the interrelatedness of the changes to the northern Great Plains. An overview of the linkages Hedren identifies and an analysis of any underlying commonalities would also benefit the book; such a concluding chapter might analyze the role of capitalism, or evaluate the

overall interactions between market forces and the ecology of the northern Great Plains.

Hedren capably synthesizes a number of primary and secondary sources from the United States and Canada, but he minimizes or ignores certain historical issues. The author questions interpretations that characterize the transformation of the northern Great Plains from the homeland of the Sioux into a center of economic development as an example of colonialism, acknowledging that these scholars raise intriguing points, but ultimately questioning the applicability of the concept as it implies the existence of a premeditated plan to dispossess the Sioux. Hedren's identification of colonialism as a monolithic and homogenous concept neglects the works of scholars such as Frederick Cooper, Ann Stoler, and Laura Briggs, who have demonstrated that colonialism was far from a unidirectional or simplistic relationship between colonizers and the colonized. Colonialism serves a useful means of understanding the transformation of the northern Great Plains by acknowledging the diverse ways in which Euro-Americans tried to reshape Sioux Country and the ways in which Native peoples contested and challenged these efforts. Hedren also overlooks scholarship by Raymond DeMallie and Dee Brown that questions claims by the United States Army about the violent nature of the Lakota ghost dancers. Nevertheless, Hedren employs an engaging narrative style that renders *After Custer* readily accessible to general audiences, and his cogent overview of the transformation of the Great Plains would make this book a useful text for undergraduate courses focused on the American West or nineteenth-century United States history.

Robert D. Miller
San Diego Mesa College

Alternative Contact: Indigeneity, Globalism, and American Studies. Edited by Paul Lai and Lindsey Claire Smith. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011. 400 pages. \$30.00 paper.

Originally published in the September 2010 issue of *American Quarterly*, the fifteen papers and introduction of *Alternative Contact* focus on the new "indigenous turn" in American studies, adding to a cadre of texts that aims to broaden our understandings of contemporary indigenous life and politics. Using settler colonialism as a framework for understanding relations between indigenous peoples/nations and the first-world nation-states that surround them, contributors advocate for a more critical ethnic studies which specifically examines the intersections of indigeneity, nation, and imperialism. Exploring sometimes