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To Be Indian: The Life of Iroquois-Seneca Arthur Caswell Parker. By Joy Porter. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. 310 pages. $34.95 cloth.

To Be Indian is the first full-scale biography of Arthur C. Parker, the long-time "museologist" (a word he coined) at the Rochester Municipal Museum, also known as the Rochester Museum and Science Center. Authored by a British scholar Joy Porter, senior lecturer in American history at Anglia Polytechnic University in Cambridge, *To Be Indian* is a remarkable achievement with a few frustrating limitations.

One of the book's most remarkable assets is the breadth of its scope, which draws from published work about Parker to previously unpublished documents and photographs from his descendants. Porter has assiduously plumbed everyone alive who knew Parker, or who has had reason to know of him. This list includes some people who, for political reasons, very rarely speak with each other. It is a rare acknowledgements page, for example, that thanks both William N. Fenton, long known in some precincts of academia as the "Dean of Iroquois Studies," and Ray Fadden, a Mohawk culture bearer. Both have entered their ninth decade of life, both are very well known in Iroquois circles, and neither has seen eye-to-eye about much of anything for decades. Porter's advantage as an outsider is that she has been able to tap the memories of both, and very well.

As Fenton points out in his foreword, Porter, who completed a doctoral dissertation on Lewis Henry Morgan, mastered the printed sources on Parker, then traveled to upstate New York to seek out people who had known Parker (including both Fenton and Fadden, among others), as well as members of Parker's family, notably his daughter Martha, who granted access to scrapbooks and other personal papers heretofore not examined by other scholars. "She has caught the spirit of the man," writes Fenton, "and for one who knew him, brings him to life" (p. xiii).

Porter's disadvantage as an outsider is that she occasionally transfers historical circumstances to the present in ways that can be revealing of how little she knows of present-day conditions. On page 51, for example, the author makes a general statement in the present tense stating that the Iroquois adopt most ethnologists who work among them. Not in our lifetime, they don't, and in significant part because Fenton ruined the reputation of many anthropologists by printing photographs of False Face (Grandfather) masks in one of his books against the emphatic wishes of his traditionalist hosts.

Despite such very occasional errors, Porter brings Parker to life:

> Although not tall, at perhaps five feet six inches, he cut a dignified figure in his smart clothes with his dark hair and hazel eyes winking out from under his trademark fedora. Some thought he looked quintessentially "Indian;" others thought of him as "white." However they encountered him, people seemed to have warmed to Parker because of his skill at putting them at ease. A lover of puns and word games, he was friendly, with a charming sense of humor. (p. xvii)

Parker was best known as a museum director, but he also was a prolific writer, with roughly 500 published and unpublished works, ranging from books to journal and magazine articles, radio scripts, plays, and others. Parker was, remarks Porter, what many people today would call a workaholic.

Porter's portrait of Parker is richly detailed, delineating a man walking the cusp of Indian and non-Indian worlds (he was one-fourth Seneca), a person always acutely aware of the interplay between the two. He was both a one-thirty-third-degree Freemason as well as an adopted member of the Seneca Bear Clan.

Porter describes a man who was intensely aware of prevailing ideological winds, with special attention throughout much of his life to a eugenic point of view that went severely out of intellectual fashion after Hitler's Nazis took its tenents to especially cruel extremes between 1933 and 1945. Before the Meriam Report (1928) and the Indian Reorganization Act (1934), Parker voiced doubts that Native Americans could maintain their cultural identity in the midst of popular demands for a breakdown of reservation land bases (through the allotment acts and other measures) and a suffocating assimilationalism. Parker's views before 1920 (at roughly age forty) definitely come to us from another era. Thus, they contain some assumptions that may surprise younger readers.

When Parker favored restrictions on immigration to reduce the proportion of the "less fit," Porter writes that he was "simply following a fashion" (p. 30). After all, the author writes, Woodrow Wilson and George Eastman (of the Eastman-Kodak fortune) made similar statements. Later in the book, however, Porter raises doubts as to whether even the sterilization of 2 million "defectives" by the Nazis provoked Parker to "begin a fundamental reassessment of his deeply held assumptions about 'race' and human development" (p. 215). Until his retirement in 1946, after the end of World War II, Parker continued to "mull them over in print" (p. 215). At one point, Porter quotes Parker as arguing for "the preservation of racial type—that of the Aryan white man." He held forth against "indiscriminate blood-blending and inharmonious race contacts" (p. 137). At roughly the same time, circa 1920, Parker, according to Porter, "accepted a new imperative—white cultural and racial perpetuation" (p. 137).

Within a decade, however, the intellectual wind began to shift, and Parker started to shift with it. Native self-determination and preservation of identity became fashionable by the 1930s. Parker ended his professional life best known for popular innovation in museums, which he called "the university of the common man." On his death in 1955, Parker was recalled very warmly by Ray Fadden, who wrote to Martha Parker that "the Chief," as he often was called, "was a great person, desiring nothing for himself, and ever ready to do good for everyone, no matter who" (p. 241). Obscuring his earlier doubts about Native American cultural survival and his eugenic ruminations, Parker's affectionate personality won out in the end—a tribute to his essential humanity, which is more than ably chronicled here by Joy Porter.

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