

Book Review by: Walter L. Williams. *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (Jul., 1984), pp. 118-120. Published by: Florida Historical Society.

*Now That The Buffalo's Gone: A Study of Today's American Indians*. By Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982.)

While much attention has been given to Indians of the frontier era, Alvin M. Josephy attempts to rectify this situation by this book on recent Native Americans. Each chapter examines a different theme, using a particular tribe as a case study. Josephy writes well, and his interpretations are well argued. Nevertheless, the first third of the book hardly touches on the twentieth century. In a book about "today's" Indians, too much space is devoted to the colonial era.

In the first chapter, for example, Josephy examines the Seminoles to demonstrate the longstanding Indian will to endure. He writes movingly of the Florida Indians' aboriginal cultures and their resistance to the Spanish, and also argues that there is a significant connection between pre-Columbian Florida natives and the later immigrants who became the Seminoles. This is a good summary of early Florida Indian history, but there are only three pages on the post-1800 period. The author ignores the works of scholars like Harry Kersey, which do show the Seminoles' will to endure over the last century.

Even stranger is the chapter on the theme of white racial stereotypes about Indians. Rather than use any number of examples of stereotyping from recent eras, this chapter bogs down in a detailed account of the 1637 Pequot War. While not disagreeing with Josephy's conclusions, one wonders why he included this chapter instead of devoting more space to New England Indians in the twentieth century.

Chapter three analyzes the deep spiritual basis of Indian culture, by focusing on the Pueblos. After an excellent beginning on the destructive impact of Christian missionaries, Josephy again lapses into an account of the 1680 Pueblo revolt that needs condensing. But once he gets past 1900, the narrative becomes fascinating. The author demonstrates the intense spiritual basis of Taos Pueblo attachment to Blue Lake, showing that this firm grounding kept them fighting for sixty years, against great odds, to get their sacred lands finally returned to them. By chapter four, Josephy is firmly within the scope of his topic, writing on recent Indians' struggle to retain their lands. With a focus on the Seneca resistance to the flooding of their reservation by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, he shows that even though they lost, the Kinzua Dam controversy sparked numerous other tribes to resist. Likewise, Josephy uses the Paiute effort to save Pyramid Lake as an indicator of increasing Indian resistance. The federal government diverted most of the Paiutes' water to neighboring whites, and shamelessly abdicated its responsibility to protect Indian interests. Only after the Paiutes sought outside legal help and began their own court battles did they manage to protect their water rights.

Josephy next analyzes the reassertion of native fishing and hunting rights by attention to the 1960s protests of Washington state Indians. This chapter effectively shows the tangled twists and turns of protracted court battles which have become so important to twentieth-century Indians.

Finally, Josephy uses the Sioux as a case study of the colonial relationship that tribal governments exist in today. He offers a scathing critique of the governments set up under the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. By establishing unfamiliar white-type governments that in some cases undercut continuing traditional forms of government, and by retaining real decision-making power in the Interior Department, such governments ensured white control of reservation resources. Many Indians refused to participate in such shams, thus further factionalizing tribes and creating power-politics cliques. He correctly notes that grassroots protests like the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation were revolts against these oppressive non-representative governments.

For the reader who sticks with this book, the case studies are excellently presented. But the first third of the book needs severe condensing, so that more attention could be paid to issues like allotment, ethnic persistence with acculturation, and Maine and Alaska native land claims.

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