

2 Book reviews of Southeastern Indians Since the Removal Era

Christopher Arris Oakley, *Native South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), p.61.

In 1945 scholar Julian H. Steward concluded that “the Indian is virtually extinct in the eastern United States.... It is solely a question of a few years before the last survivors will disappear....” Steward was not alone in his belief.... But Steward, like many others before and after him, underestimated Southern Native American resilience and perseverance.... As Walter L. Williams wrote in 1979, “Southern Indians are not on a ‘road to disappearance,’ and it is time to ask if they ever were.”

Review of *Southeastern Indians Since the Removal Era*. Walter L. Williams, ed. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979. In the *American Historical Review* v.87 June 1982, pp. 860-861.

It is an often overlooked fact in American Indian history that there remains a resident native population in the Southeast portion of the United States.... There is little to document their history and historians have paid scant attention to them. This collection of essays attempts to bring forward the history of these groups. Although written largely by anthropologists, the essays are well-written and well-researched histories....

All of the essays bring the status of these native groups up to date.... The tendency of non-Indians to lump blacks and Indians together is a major theme of the book. Another theme is that considerably more research on the Southern tribes is necessary.... The essays are of high quality. The authors have consulted the major archival sources and have also done considerable fieldwork.

Robert A. Trennert Arizona State University

Tennessee Historical Quarterly v.40 n.1 (spring 1981): 105-107.

Southeastern Indians Since the Removal Era is well-illustrated with maps and photographs, and the bibliographic essay which follows the text is comprehensive and insightful. Professor Williams succeeds admirably in calling our attention to southern Indians, informing his readers about their past, and challenging scholars to further research....

When the most populous and powerful Indian groups were forced west of the Mississippi River [in the 1830s], remaining southeastern Indians faced two major problems: how to maintain their Indian identity in a society which was becoming rigidly biracial and how to hold on to their land. The white power structure insisted that Indians accept designation as “colored” and patronize institutions established for blacks. Most Indians, however, refused. The results were increased hostility from the white community, and public services, medical care, and particularly education inferior even to that provided for blacks. Although some states supported separate Indian elementary schools, few established high schools or colleges for groups other than whites and blacks. Lack of education compounded the problem of poverty which resulted from a steadily shrinking land base. Whites obtained Indian land illegally through force or fraud, and legally for nonpayment of taxes or by legislation which denied inheritance rights of children whose parents had not purchased marriage licenses. Gradually Indians were pushed into the most undesirable areas of the South, such as swamps and mountains.

One way in which Indian groups have coped with these problems has been to seek federal recognition of their status as Indians and protection of their land.... The civil rights acts of the 1960s have prohibited discrimination against Indians and have brought greater educational and economic opportunities.... [These] have produced an interesting paradox: group identity seems to be strengthening while assimilation into white society is increasing.

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Theda Perdue

Louisiana History v.21, n.2 (spring 1980), pp. 205-207.

This book will be welcomed by scholars for presenting an uncommon aspect of the Native American experience and demonstrating the need for further research in the field.

Oklahoma State University

Michael Everman

Reviews from GOODREADS:

There were several articles of interest to me, but learning about Robin Hood type outlaw Henry Berry Lowry in the article about the North Carolina Lumbee just blew me away. I devoted a blog entry to him called "An Afro-Native Robin Hood" that can be found at <http://www.maskedpersona.blogspot.com>

From the article about the Louisiana Tunica, I discovered information about their blind chief Volsin Chiki. I wish there were a plethora of web pages about him so I could devote a blog entry to him as well. He sounds fascinating.

I was saddened to learn about all the tragic losses of the Louisiana Houma in the

article dealing with them. There is a marker in Congo Square stating that the Houma once held ceremonies in the vicinity. Unfortunately, war with the Tunica and disease decimated them and they lost their lands for failing to marry in accordance with white laws. According to the Napoleonic Code, property can't be passed to offspring of parents who weren't legally married. Another fact that I learned from the Houma article is that the biracial Afro-Houmas are called Sabines.

I consider this book an important resource for readers interested in this subject.

There's not a single criticism of this book to make, except that it is old, almost as old as I am. I was afraid it would not mention the small tribes of Eastern North Carolina, but there was about as much as is known (or was in 1979). The different situations of the different tribes makes for fascinating comparisons. It makes it pretty clear to me that I may never know what blood I have, since the mixed-up regions that two lines of my family mysteriously dead-end in were not only tri-racial, but were also formed by remnants of tribes from Algonquian, Iroquoian, and Siouan language groups. North Carolina had all kinds!