

Direct quotations from European fur traders on such questions as Indian leadership (p. 90) would have benefitted from ethnological analysis and interpretation.

The concluding chapter begins with a statement that Fort Chipewyan became the regional focus for "trade, transportation and the complex group of personal relationships..." (p. 141). James Parker has successfully outlined the mechanics of the fur trade at Fort Chipewyan. However, he has made little or no attempt to demonstrate these "personal relationships," either between Indians and traders or among the Europeans themselves. *Emporium of the North* could be recommended for those readers interested in a basic introduction to the fur trade or to the regional history of Fort Chipewyan. Unfortunately, those looking for a new contribution to current fur trade historiography will be disappointed.

Paul C. Thistle

Curator, The Sam Waller Little Northern Museum
The Pas, Manitoba

Cree Language Structures: A Cree Approach, by Freda Ahenakew. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1987. Pp. 170.

This book constitutes a nontechnical introduction to the grammar of the Plains Cree dialect. It is intended primarily as a tool for teachers of Cree, and is meant to be accompanied by Ahenakew's *Stories of the House People* (1986), a collection of spontaneous stories by Cree speakers. Ahenakew, who is herself a native speaker of Cree, points out that existing books about Cree structure, all of which are written by nonnative speakers, often present among their grammatical examples sentences which are in fact awkward or unnatural (among other related problems); and she argues that the language is best taught by the use of readers containing dialogues or texts representing spontaneous speech by native speakers. She proposes, for instance, that examples from such texts be employed to illustrate various points of grammar, and throughout the book she demonstrates how this can be done, using examples from *Stories of the House People*. She also brings her own intuitions as a native speaker to bear both in making generalizations about Cree grammar and in providing further examples beyond those in the texts, and this constitutes one of the great strengths of this book: it contains a number of interesting comments and observations which are not, to my knowledge, made anywhere else in the existing literature on Cree. Particularly significant is a lengthy section on different syntactic uses of the particle *ôma*, "this" (pp. 143-59).

Cree is a highly inflected language in which nouns and verbs take a complex set of prefixes and particularly suffixes. These express a variety of aspects of meaning, some of which would be expressed by independent words and/or by words governing word order in a language such as English or French. Most of Ahenakew's grammatical discussion deals with this inflectional system. The bulk of the remainder comprises a short look at the syntactic behaviour of that class

of Cree words which is not inflected (particles).

Ahenakew describes the different inflectional forms carefully, clearly and in detail, in a nontechnical way easily comprehensible (I would judge) to a reader with no background in linguistics. Various complications involving the pronunciation of words when suffixes are attached are examined; here, Ahenakew is very thorough, providing more details than Wolfart and Carroll in *Meet Cree: A Guide to the Cree Language* (1981), the other major nontechnical introduction to Plains Cree, and the material is well presented.

There is, however, one flaw with this section of the book: in the case of some grammatical oppositions (e.g., where words must take one of two possible inflectional alternatives), Ahenakew inadequately explains the semantic and/or syntactic basis of the opposition. For example, nouns must occur in either "proximate" or "obviate" form, and verbs can take either of two opposing types of agreement suffix (the "independent" mode and "conjunct" mode suffixes); in both cases, little is said about the basis of the alternation or about the contexts in which it is appropriate to use one alternative as opposed to the other. But without this knowledge, mastery of the inflectional forms by themselves is of limited use.

The chapter focussing on the syntactic behaviour of particles contains much interesting material and much new material never before described in print. Unfortunately, however the chapter is unsatisfactory in certain respects. In particular, the information in it is not very well organized. For example, the particle *ôma* occurs in noun phrases. The basic material describing this is divided into three sections, headed "*ôma* in object noun phrases," "*ôma* in indirect noun phrases," and "*ôma* in subject noun phrases" (pp. 144-47). However, the observations made about the actual occurrence of *ôma* inside a noun phrase are identical in the three sections; for example, we are told in each section that *ôma* can stand by itself without a noun, and in two sections that *ôma* can either precede or follow a noun. Thus the role of the noun phrase in the sentence does not in fact seem to be relevant to the use of *ôma*. The organization of the information, however, gives the impression that it *is* relevant and, further, involves unnecessary repetition of information. Moreover, most of the generalizations made in each of these sections are not about *ôma*, but rather about the syntactic behaviour of subject, object or indirect object noun phrases, or about the form of clauses. For instance, we are told (p. 145) that an object noun phrase containing *ôma* may occur either before or after the verb; but in fact this would be true of any object noun phrase, not only one containing *ôma*; it is a fact about Cree word order in general, not a fact about *ôma*.

Ahenakew might have done well to include a short section concentrating simply on basic aspects of syntax, such as word order, how questions are formed, or how subordinate clauses are expressed. Although a great deal must be omitted in a short introductory volume, such matters as these seem so basic as to deserve some special mention. As it is, some information along these lines is included,

but it is "buried" in the discussion of constructions involving particles and is often not very clearly expressed.

A further problem is that the analyses are sometimes open to question, or at least insufficiently explained. For example, it is not clear why the two example sentences at the top of page 155 should be considered illustrations of "factive" *ôma* rather than being "equational" sentences (they differ from various similar "equational" examples on pages 149-51 only in word order); and it is not clear that in examples given on page 158, *ôma* should, as suggested, be considered a "complementizer" (why not analyse it as a pronoun coreferential with the embedded clause?).

Two further points warrant discussion. First, the nonlinguistically trained reader should be aware that this book does not discuss the basic sound system of the language or how the orthography is to be interpreted; for this, one must look at *Stories of the House People* (pp. 113-21) or, as is suggested there, the first chapter of *Meet Cree: A Guide to the Cree Language*. Second, the lack of word-for-word translations in the Cree sentences given as examples will at times make it difficult for any reader with no previous knowledge of Cree to understand the discussion. However, this would not constitute a problem for the teachers, who would presumably be native speakers of Cree, for whom the book is primarily intended.

In conclusion, this volume has its flaws, but I should nevertheless stress that it provides a most valuable tool for Cree pedagogy, and that it constitutes a significant contribution to the existing literature on Cree grammar.

Deborah James
Division of Humanities (Linguistics)
Scarborough Campus
University of Toronto

Among the Sioux of Dakota: Eighteen Months' Experience as an Indian Agent, 1869-70, by D.C. Poole. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988. Pp. 235.

This book was originally published in 1881. At the time, it attracted little attention and enjoyed only a limited print run. It has now been republished by the Minnesota Historical Society in order to rescue it from obscurity. Raymond J. DeMallie, the director of the American Indian Studies Research Institute (University of Indiana), provides an excellent introduction to the new edition, placing the book's content in context and identifying its historic importance.

The author, DeWitt Clinton Poole, was a captain in the American army detailed in 1869 to serve as agent on the Whetstone Indian Agency, near Yankton, Dakota Territory. The agency, established by treaty a year earlier, had been