

*Bibliography of the Blackfoot*, by Hugh Dempsey and Lindsay Moir. New York: Scarecrow Press, 1989. Pp. 245.

"Blackfoot" — the very name conjures up images of romance and excitement on the northern Plains. No other tribe has captured, to such an extent, the imagination of writers and scholars throughout history, with the possible exception of the Sioux. It is not surprising, then, to see a bibliography appear concerning just the Blackfoot Nation. What is surprising is that it took so long.

Dempsey and Moir have produced a work that will be of tremendous help to interested readers and scholars. Considerable effort has been made to add to the more familiar list of works on the Blackfoot. The most notable addition to standard references is the inclusion of works by Native authors. Often overlooked, the writings of Native authors have by and large been relegated to the local outlets of tribal newsletters. These insights by individual Native people have never been given their just due. (Until recently this held true for all Native authors. For example, the majority of Clark Wissler's information on the Blackfoot was collected by D.C. Duvall, his Blackfoot ethnographer. Wissler then "interpreted" this information to comply with anthropological standards. In reviewing the original manuscripts of Duvall, Wissler's "interpretations" have often been found to be in error.)

The chapter divisions in this bibliography are helpful, but they should not be taken as definitive. They provide an excellent starting point, but many of the publications can fit into more than one category.

Little-known "gems" are the strong point of this publication. The process of seeking them out is often long and tedious, and the authors should be commended for their efforts. Dempsey and Moir have produced a work that is a necessity for every serious student of the Blackfoot Nation.

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*The Indian Tipi: Its History, Construction and Use*, by Reginald and Gladys Laubin. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. Pp. 350.

This review was not written for the many *afficionados* of Indian lore; they all know the book by heart and have it on their book shelves. The Laubins' book was unique when first published in 1957 and has remained so through nine reprints by the University of Oklahoma Press. In fact, it has become even better with about 140 pages added to the revised edition. The original version is still available in paperback from Ballantyne Books. Undoubtedly this book owes much of its success to its quality, but it certainly helps that Indian know-how appeals to a vast number of "green earthlings."

Over the years the Laubins' book has contributed to the enthusiastic adoption of tipi camping by many non-Indians in North America and in Europe. The book provides "all you need to know about tipis" and then some, for it includes detailed information on making such a tent, its furnishings and decorations, living in the tipi, travelling with it (and with its

long poles), the Native kitchen, the sweatlodge, and much more. There is even a section on Native child rearing. The practical directions are illustrated with many diagrams and other pictures, including eight pages of colour photographs.

However, the uniqueness of this book is due to the firsthand quality of its information, much of it acquired directly from Indian elders who were well versed in the subject. Some of this information will seldom be found in conventional ethnographic studies, which goes to show that interviews in a participatory context tend to bring out their own rich harvest of memories. As far as I know, nobody else has recorded the former use of an *ozan* by the Sioux: a partial ceiling over the beds, serving as a rain cover or awning. Or, consider the observation about how Crow Indian women used to design their parfleche paintings by means of a layout of sticks.

In the early 1930s, when the authors started to attend Indian ceremonials, they had no intention of writing a book on tipi camping. Their interest was in Native dances and their choreography, the study of which kept them on the "powwow circuit" all over the Plains for several decades. Their tipi, painted and furnished in traditional style, was a source of amazement for the Native people, many of whom had never seen such rich trappings, but had only heard of them from their grandparents. Some of these elders were attracted by the beautiful camp of the Laubins, who soon recognized the value of their visitors' reminiscences about their past way of life. The Laubins' dance studies resulted in a successful European tour with their Crow Indian dancers in 1953 and their voluminous publication on Indian dances in 1977. However, their bestseller turned out to be this book on the Indian tipi.

Despite the wealth of traditional information it contains, this book is not an ethnographic study, nor was it intended to be (which may explain why it is hardly ever listed in ethnographic bibliographies). Having lived in tipis for many years and in all kinds of weather conditions, the authors added to the Native information their own experiences and solutions of problems encountered in "primitive" camping and the creation of Indian crafts. In these respects, the dedicated Indian hobbyists may not always go along with the Laubins' suggestions for backrests made of plywood, cardboard substituted for rawhide, beadwork suggested by painting, and so on. Objections are certainly justified where the authors treat sacred tipi paintings and other "medicine" details as mere decorations for anyone to replicate. It should also be noted that several of the Laubins' sketches of sacred tipi paintings are incorrect drawings from photographs and museum collections.

Perhaps most unfortunate is the reprint of the book's first chapter in this revised edition. This chapter is a summary of historical and some prehistorical data on the Plains Indian tipi, written by Stanley Vestal, pseudonym of the late Walter S. Campbell. Most of Vestal's conclusions have been rendered out of date by our greatly increased knowledge of Plains archaeology and ethnohistory. However, many readers will probably skip this essay to get on to the far-less-stuffy discussions of the Laubins. Living in the highrises of the large cities, many of these readers may never be able to

pitch a tipi, but the Laubins know how to satisfy their wishful dreams. Having spent some twenty summers in and around Indian tipi camps, I recommend this book as a reliable and useful introduction to the tipi of the Plains Indians.

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*From the Land of Shadows: The Making of Grey Owl*, by Donald B. Smith. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1990. Pp. 320.

Many white Canadian males who were boys in the 1950s and 1960s lived a legacy that Grey Owl popularized. Summer camps awarded feathers for achievements, and headdress-bedecked camp directors took ceremonial Indian names to foster in their campers a spirit for an out-of-doors and extra-urban, if not actually an Indian, life. Warring house-league hockey teams, the Cree, Blackfoot, Seneca, Huron, Oneida — the Iroquois were always the roughest — faced off each Saturday morning, and not because George Armstrong was the captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs. These cultural practices are worth citing, for they serve to demonstrate that the myth of Grey Owl outlived both him and the posthumous debunking of him as a suntanned white man. Whites still loved to play Indian two or three decades after his death. As if just another version of the Rudyard Kipling/Baden Powell idea of spiritual growth through identification with the animal world, playing Indian inculcated some salutary values, but also unintentionally implanted the notion that Indians and wilderness were the stuff of games, of artifice, of diversion, out of which one was expected to grow. It was a part of the making of men. We live today with repercussions that can be traced back to that ideology, then thought innocent.

Donald B. Smith's exhaustive biography does not go much beyond Grey Owl's own lifetime to pursue the thread that he and his influence wove into the fabric of the English-Canadian character, but Smith makes a thorough job of explaining both how Grey Owl evolved out of fatherless English schoolboy Archie Belaney, reared on a diet of Natty Bumppo, Chingachook, *Two Little Savages*, and Hiawatha, and how, right up until his early death in 1938 at the age of 49, he dodged any declared suspicion that he was not who he claimed to be. Rather than connecting the message of conservation preached by Grey Owl to the contemporary movement and ideology of "endangered spaces," Smith has chosen to present every possible detail of the man's strange life.

Has Smith done his job well? Only a book reviewer would ask this question, for the quality of the biography seems to pale into insignificance when the bald tale of Grey Owl makes such fascinating reading. It being only human to dream of other identities for oneself, the tale of someone who actualizes his dreams is nearly irresistible. What is clear, however, is that Smith has placed on view the findings of his exhaustive search over two decades to interview everyone who knew Archie Belaney/Grey Owl in either of his personae, who had met him even once, who had photographed him