



*The True Spirit and Intent of Treaty 7*, by Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildebrandt, Sarah Carter and Dorothy First Rider. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996. Pp. xx, 408.

*The True Spirit and Intent of Treaty 7* is a welcome addition to the literature that examines the interaction between Indian people and the government of Canada. In the past the discussion of treaties has come for the most part from academics, politicians, and legal experts. This book is unique in that it allows the Indian voice to be heard. Even more unique is the fact that the book allows the elders of the Treaty 7 region to have a significant voice. It is pointed out in the first paragraph of the book that the primary aim of the work is "to provide an opportunity for the elders to speak" (p. vii). The book is divided into three main parts — the first part allows the elders to speak and give their account of Treaty 7. This account includes both discussion of what was agreed to in the 1870s and what promises have been or not been fulfilled today. The second part of the book includes an analysis of the elders' words, including comparisons to what has appeared in the literature concerning Treaty 7. The third part of the book is a collection of biographies of the elders, researchers, translators and interviewers.

The first part of the book, which records in written form the elders' interpretation of Treaty 7, is a unique addition to what is known about Treaty 7 and treaties generally in Canada. The elders' evidence presented in the first part of the book is not based on the interpretation of any one elder but rather draws on expertise from all of the First Nations elders from the Treaty 7 region. There is testimony from the Blood, Peigan, Siksika, Stoney Nakoda and Tsuu T'ina nations. Elders from all of these First Nations describe their understandings of the actual making of Treaty 7, the pre-treaty life of the Treaty 7 First Nations, the First Nations perspectives of Treaty 7 and the post-treaty life of Treaty 7 First Nations. This is a very important contribution to the available scholarship as a formerly silent voice is now heard in the literature. Who better to comment on treaties than those who have had to deal with them in their daily lives?

The second part of the book also makes an important contribution to the understanding of Treaty 7. This section is broken down into seven chapters that put Treaty 7 into context both politically and historically, by comparing the academic interpretation that exists to the elders' interpretation. What is interesting to note is that a majority of the academics whose work was consulted corroborated the evidence that was put forth by elders in the first part of the book.

Some may want to question the validity of the elders' interpretation of Treaty 7, arguing that since it is passed down from generation to generation orally, what is remembered has changed over time. However this book is able to demonstrate that the elders' interpretation has not changed over time. Whether elders "were interviewed in the nineteenth century, the 1920s, the 1930s, the 1960s, or the 1990s" (p. 323) their interpretations remain

consistent. All of the elders remembered the treaty as being a peace treaty and did not remember any mention of a land surrender. They remembered that they had agreed to share the land with the newcomers in exchange for certain privileges. When this evidence is combined with the work of academics such as John Tobias, John Taylor, Richard Price, Noel Dyck, Hugh Dempsey, Sarah Carter, Jean Friesen and Doug Sprague it becomes clear that what was negotiated at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877 was not what finally appeared in the actual text of the treaty. This book demonstrates in a convincing manner that Treaty 7 was not honoured by the Canadian government.

The third part of the book includes short biographies of the elders, researchers, interviewers, and translators. The biographies of the elders are especially useful as they give the reader some sense of the people who are speaking, who they are related to and how they have gained some of their knowledge. The biographies eliminate the aspect of the unknown from the book, the elders who speak are not simply names in the text, the biographies give some context to what they have to say.

This book is a welcome addition to the growing literature that examines the interaction between Indian people in Canada and Euro-Canadians. It could be argued that this book has set a new standard by having the Indian voice included as a key part of the research. It demonstrates that oral history can be a valid form of evidence, especially when combined with other forms of evidence such as archival records. Hopefully others can also include the use of elders in their work as the interaction between Indian people and Euro-Canadians is further explored. This book clearly demonstrates that the oral history of Indian people has an important role to play in the interpretation of Indian history on the Canadian Prairies. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in treaties, the people of the Treaty 7 region, or the interaction of Indian people and Euro-Canadians.

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*The Geography of Manitoba: Its Land and Its People*, edited by John Welsted, John Everitt and Christoph Stadl. Brandon: University of Manitoba Press, 1996. Pp. 328.

*The Geography of Manitoba: Its Land and Its People* is a book that was conceived and developed by members of Manitoba's geographical community. It was created partly to commemorate the province's 125th anniversary in 1995, and also to provide a comprehensive account of the geography of Manitoba — something that the editors claim was previously unavailable in a single volume. The book is aimed at the second-year university level but