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Review of *The Nez Perces in the Indian Territory: Nimiipuu Survival.* By J. Diane Pearson

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The Nez Perces in the Indian Territory: Nimiipuu Survival. By J. Diane Pearson. Foreword by Patricia Penn Hilden. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. xxiii + 383 pp. Map, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. $34.95.

The Nimiipuu are most associated with the Columbia Basin rather than the Great Plains. Yet some Nimiipuu groups and their western allies lived for a year or more in the Northern Plains during the early to mid-1800s. There they followed a bison-hunting life and linked the region to the Columbia River trading network. Nimiipuu were so much a part of the region that they were signatories to the United States' 1855 Treaty with the Blackfeet negotiated by Isaac I. Stevens.

Nimiipuu knowledge of the northern Great Plains decided the "escape" route from their homelands that was the Nez Perce War of 1877, which is how readers will recognize them. Less well known are Chief Joseph's and other leaders' efforts to return to their homeland. Few people today know the story of the Nimiipuu's 1877-85 sojourn through Hell—*Eeikish Pah*—in the Indian Territory and their return to the Northwest. Their deeply traumatic experience

is little known even among today's generation of Nimiipuu.

Pearson's book fills that silence through exhaustive archival research and on-the-ground fact checking. She describes how the Nimiipuu survived this crushing experience, their transport to Indian Territory, the first abortive attempts to intern them there, their settlement near Oakland, I.T., and their ultimate return to the Northwest. Throughout this period, the Nimiipuu suffered further loss and discouragement from starvation, disease, rape and other physical violence, and community disorganization. She reveals the significance of leadership, Nimiipuu relations with other peoples in the Indian Territory, the effects of Federal schools and Christian proselytization, and the activities of the community to accomplish their partly successful return to the Northwest.

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in Great Plains history, Native American history, or Nimiipuu history for several reasons. First, Pearson's painstaking work is a model of historical research. She reveals the complexity of events and the individual actors in them. Indian policy and conditions in Indian Territory are clearly connected to the continued Nimiipuu resistance to United States policy towards them. In clear, vigorous prose and well-selected quotations, Pearson shows how the Nimiipuu community, despite long odds, actively adapted to terrible situations and survived.

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