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Review of *Arapaho Journeys: Photographs and Stories from the Wind River Reservation* By Sara Wiles.

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forced to leave Colorado (Denver, Boulder, Fort Collins, and Rocky Mountain National Park), the Northern Arapahos were “temporarily” placed on the Shoshone reservation in Wyoming. Accustomed to living nomadically and following food sources, they found reservation existence difficult. The transformation away from traditional life was forced upon them almost overnight. The “temporarily” placed Northern Arapahos were required to take on Anglo-American first names and surnames and continued to remain in Wyoming.

The dark history of the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre in southeastern Colorado, where more than 150 Cheyennes and Arapahos were killed, proclaims itself in several of the photographs and stories memorializing the tragedy. Once I wrote a story in a writing class told to me by an elder about the Sand Creek Massacre. When I got my paper back, graded D, and approached my teacher to ask her why, she replied, “Because the story isn’t true; it has to be documented in a book to be true.” Sara Wiles provides an opportunity for readers to understand the ways in which Northern Arapaho heritage, passed from generation to generation in traditional ways, remains alive, promoting spiritual healing and keeping the vital past from being erased.

Northern Arapaho people are taught to be respectful, honest, humble, and thankful, qualities you see captured behind the eyes of each photographic subject. There is also wisdom, happiness, pride, and pain. Although many of these elders are now gone, Sara Wiles has been able to preserve something significant of their personhood in her photographs, unerasable moments that are now a part of Northern Arapaho history.


Sara Wiles’s photographs offer a glimpse of life on the Wind River Indian Reservation. Her portrayal of Northern Arapaho life, showing delicacy and the utmost respect, captures a segment of time not that long ago but rich in history, culture, and tradition.

By reading the collection’s stories you begin to understand the Northern Arapahos and their struggle to survive against all odds. After being