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## Book Review: Tell Me, Grandmother: Traditions, Stories, and Cultures of Arapaho People

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*Tell Me, Grandmother: Traditions, Stories, and Cultures of Arapaho People.* By Virginia Sutter. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2004. x + 152 pp. Photographs, references. \$45.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

Organized as a series of “imagined conversations” between Virginia Sutter and her great-grandmother Goes In Lodge (1830-76), *Tell Me, Grandmother* presents in alternating chapters Goes In Lodge’s and Sutter’s recollections of their life experiences.

Goes In Lodge was one of the co-wives of the famous Northern Arapaho Chief Sharp Nose. Several chapters describe her life, based on published sources on the Arapahos. Childbirth, childhood activities, courtship, marriage, women’s work, and tribal ceremonies are described. Sometimes Sutter makes uncritical use of sources and does not use unpublished, archival sources on family history that would have fleshed out portraits of her family members. Nonetheless, this material is written in a style that engages the reader.

The most interesting and original part of the book is Sutter's story of her own life. She was born on the Wind River Reservation. Her parents, an Arapaho man and a white mother, separated and she was raised by her mother's family on a ranch in central Wyoming. There is a description of ranch life in the 1930s and the kinds of discrimination she faced as a "half-breed" living off the reservation. She attended public school, then went to Haskell Indian boarding school for a brief time. She had a series of jobs in Wyoming towns and, shortly after World War II, enlisted in the navy. Later, after marrying a man from Texas, they traveled throughout the country working at various jobs. One incident to which she gives great weight is a meeting with her brother, raised on the reservation by her father. Her attempt to help her sibling overcome his alcoholism seems to have sparked an interest in helping the Arapaho community.

Sutter and her family returned to Wyoming in 1969, where she worked in Lander, located near the reservation line. An enrolled member of the Northern Arapaho tribe, she became familiar with the reservation community with the help of her elderly father. She briefly owned a grocery store on the reservation, with funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Small Business Administration, and the tribe. Then she left to obtain a college education and received her PhD in Public Administration in 1995, working for various Indian agencies, including health programs, to pay for her education.

Subsequently, she returned to the Wind River Reservation where she worked for the tribes and then entered tribal politics. She served as chair of the Northern Arapaho tribe and was one of only two women to serve on the business council in recent years. Unfortunately, there is not much detail on reservation politics, women's contemporary roles, or Indian policy issues. It would have been interesting to have commentary from an elected tribal official on sovereignty issues at Wind River, the problems of implementing a sovereignty agenda, or health problems facing Indian communities today. Eventually, she left Wyoming and there-

after worked for Indian agencies on the West Coast.

Virginia Sutter's account of her life is important as a life history of an enrolled tribal member who returned to the reservation with an interest in helping the community. There are many Native individuals who have chosen to do this and very little published information on their experiences. This book is also a well-written account accessible to a broad audience.

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