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Sheheke, Mandan Indian Diplomat: The Story of White Coyote, Thomas Jefferson, and Lewis and Clark. By Tracy Potter. Helena, MT: Farcountry Press; Washburn, ND: Fort Mandan Press, 2003. 206 pp. Maps, illustrations, endnotes, references, index. \$21.95 cloth, \$15.95 paper.

Long before Lewis and Clark launched their journey of exploration up the Missouri, Native peoples used the river to penetrate and open the Northern Plains to settlement and trade. As a result, the American explorers came across people with sophisticated understandings of the social and geopolitical situation of the Northern Plains, people whose calculated agendas spoke to different and independent visions of the West than the vision advocated by Lewis and Clark. It was such calculation that led one man, Sheheke, or White Coyote, of the Mandan to embark on his own epic

voyage of exploration down the river and then on to Washington to meet with President Thomas Jefferson. Tracy Potter tells Sheheke's remarkable story in *Sheheke, Mandan Indian Diplomat*.

Potter pieces Sheheke's and the Mandan people's story together from historical and archaeological sources, informed by ethnographic information and family and tribal tradition. His early chapters deal with the archaeological and traditional histories of the Mandan, the introduction of the horse and its effects, the influence of white trade items, the impact of smallpox and the resulting codependence with the Hidatsa, and the interactions of the Mandan with European and Euro-American explorers predating Lewis and Clark. By chapter six, Sheheke occupies center stage as Potter draws on the explorers' journals to give an almost day-by-day account of the chief's activities. Chapter six also gives Sheheke's famous lines that underscore the centrality of the Mandan to the explorers' survival in the bitterly cold winter of the Northern Plains: "If we eat, you shall eat, if we starve, you must starve also."

Subsequent chapters follow Sheheke to Washington in 1806. As one of the first chiefs to visit from west of the Mississippi, he became an object of intense curiosity. Unfortunately, Potter's limited primary material forces him to speculate on Sheheke's reactions, so that "was likely" and "must have" appear with regularity. Conversely, he mines his extant sources so deeply that the minutiae of Sheheke's eastern experiences occupy too much text. As Sheheke returns to the Plains, however, Potter tells a fascinating story of unforeseen challenges and mishaps. For the rest of his life, undoubtedly as a result of his trip to the east, Sheheke remained an advocate for American trading interests, a predilection that may have contributed to his death at the hands of the British-leaning Hidatsa during the War of 1812.

Potter has justly recovered from obscurity a key figure in Mandan history and in the annals of Lewis and Clark. Incorporating more of the secondary literature—Peter Onuf and

Anthony F. C. Wallace on Jeffersonian western and Indian policy or Richard White and Colin Calloway on the intertribal dynamics of the Northern Plains—would have provided the reader with a richer context. A closer reading of the ethnographic literature also would have explained some of Sheheke's actions more fully. His resistance to Jefferson's self-designation as "father," for example, preferring to regard him as "brother," provides an insight into how Mandan ideas of kinship informed diplomacy. These quibbles aside, Potter has written an important book that bodes well for future offerings from the newly constituted Fort Mandan Press.

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