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Review of Hasinai: A Traditional History of the Caddo Confederacy

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these sources is woven into a framework of twelve chapters, each of which is introduced by a description of a dance. All but one of the dances make up a night's cycle of ceremonial song and dance that reenact the tribal history.

The dance sequence and chapter one begin with the drum dance that recounts the origin of the Hasinai people. It tells of how they emerged from a land of darkness into a new world of light guided by an unknown man who was the first among the Hasinai and who possessed special powers. Chapters two through five—the bear, corn, duck, and alligator dances—concern subsistence practices and material culture. They recall how the major food stuff was obtained and prepared, describe architectural forms (including structures found at several prehistoric Caddoan mound sites), and detail traditional clothing. Social and political relationships are the subjects of the next three chapters. They are entitled “Women’s Dance—Family Relationships” (chapter six), “Stirrup Dance—Tribal Relationships” (chapter seven), and “Quapaw Dance—Foreign Relationships” (chapter eight).

Chapter nine, “Cherokee Dance—Health,” briefly relates the Hasinai views of health and death. A small selection of folk remedies for the treatment of certain ailments is given and the preparation of the body of the deceased is described. Chapter ten introduces the bell dance and details certain aspects of language that today survive mainly in ceremonial contexts. The night of dancing concludes with the morning dance. It, along with contemporary affairs, is the subject of chapter eleven.

The final chapter is devoted to the very special turkey dance. Unlike the others, it is danced alone, only in the afternoon, and only by women. It relates, through dances and a series of songs, events that have defined—and continue to define—Hasinai history. Combined, the drum and the turkey dance best convey the Hasinai cognition of their cultural past and the importance of this past to maintaining their sense of social identity.

This is an extraordinary volume in that it

Hasinai: A Traditional History of the Caddo Confederacy. By Vynola Beaver Newkumet and Howard L. Meredith. Forward by Arrell Morgan Gibson. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1988. Photographs, glossary, notes, index. xvi + 144 pp. \$16.95.

This slender but far ranging volume presents the modern Hasinai Caddo view of their origin and traditional lifeways. It is based primarily on oral traditions and secondarily on published and archival material. The information culled from

succeeds in presenting two very different, and potentially conflicting, concepts of history. On the one hand, it is a subjective history that, to paraphrase one of the authors (p. xiii), underlies the historical landscape. From this perspective the authors have synthesized traditions that provide insights into the Hasinai people and their struggle to hold onto what is uniquely Hasinai. Presented in surprising harmony with this traditional history is much information the professional researcher will find useful. There are, for example, an account of the modern political history of the tribe, a generous number of photographs, end notes with numerous citations, and a glossary. The last-named, which is a Hasinai to English dictionary of several hundred words spelled using English phonetics, is an invaluable source for the modern Hasinai language.

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