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## Review of The Potawatomi

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*The Potawatomi.* By James A. Clifton. Indians of North America, edited by Frank W. Porter III. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987. Maps, illustrations, photographs, bibliography, glossary, index. 98 pp. \$15.95.

Clifton's *The Potawatomi* is one of a series of books in American Indian history designed for "young adults." Not-so-young adults will find the book of little use and would be better served by referring to Clifton's article on the Potawatomi in the *Handbook of North American Indians*.

Despite its having been written for a different audience than *Great Plains Quarterly's* usual readership, or perhaps because of it, *The Potawatomi* raised interesting questions about the state of Indian history. In general, I sympathize with the problems Clifton must have faced in trying to simplify the Potawatomis' complex history into a narrative accessible to teenagers, but I was disturbed by his tendency to place the Potawatomis in the backseat of their own history. This is particularly the case in a chapter called "Coping With Americans," in which we read about the battle of Fallen Timbers from the perspective of "Mad Anthony" Wayne. Also in this chapter Clifton claims that Indian lead-

ers thought the United States treaty policy "surprisingly generous, for they fully appreciated that they had been decisively defeated" (p. 54). This and other generalizations about Potawatomi thoughts or motivations deserve to be supported with evidence and seem like ideal occasions for Clifton to let us hear some of the Potawatomis' views in their own words.

For similar reasons, I was also distracted by Clifton's emphasis on "mixed-bloods," whom he refers to as "marginals." He devotes more space to proving that the "genuine Potawatomi" (p. 76) were plagued by these marginals than to illuminating the lives of the so-called "genuine Potawatomi." Also, Clifton tells us that these marginals came to dominate political and business life in many of the Potawatomi communities, and thereby invents a conundrum: how can someone be dominant and marginal at the same time?

The book's strongest feature is the large collection of photographs showing products of Potawatomi manufacture, including a vivid center display of beadwork and woven bags.

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