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Review of People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians

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Fox, Gregory L., "Review of People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians" (1993). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 780.

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People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians. By Stanley A. Ahler, Thomas D. Thiessen, and Michael K. Trimble. Grand Forks: University of North Dakota Press, 1991. Illustrations, photographs, suggested readings. 123 pp. \$19.95.

Research concerning the Plains Village tradition in the Middle Missouri subarea has been a primary focus of Northern Plains archaeology for the past hundred years. *Peoples of the Willows* incorporates results of those investigations along with more recent work stemming from the National Park Service-sponsored research program at the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site into a definitive and readable volume on the Hidatsa people of North Dakota.

This well-illustrated treatise deals with the prehistory, history, lifeways, and natural environment of the village dwelling, maize horticultural Native Americans at the confluence of the Knife and Missouri Rivers. Focusing on the Hidatsas, with numerous references to their neighbors the Mandans, the volume details the economic, social, and religious activities of these Native American groups. Employing the results of nearly a century of archaeological, ethnohistorical, and ethnographic research, the volume is directed more to a public audience than a scholarly audience, but scholars interested in the Hidatsa and regional archaeology will find this text an invaluable addition to their reference library.

The monograph is divided into an introduction and four chapters: Background Information, Hidatsa Archaeology, The Sites, and Research at Knife River. The introduction states that *People of the Willows* tells three stories: the history, prehistory, and lifeways of the Hidatsa peoples, a description of the major earthlodge villages located at the historic site, and the story of archaeological and historical research at Knife River. In essence, each of the major sections tells one of those stories. Hidatsa Archeology, for example, details aboriginal occupations at the mouth of the Knife from Paleoindian times to the present. The chapter combines a diverse

array of information into a detailed and interesting history of Plains Village tradition peoples at the Knife, including their interaction with Euroamericans and their participation in prehistoric and historical-period trade networks.

Even though the authors have provided a list of suggested readings, if this volume has any failings, it is their minimal use of citation in the text and the lack of any comprehensive bibliography to accompany the work. Although some scholars may find these omissions detrimental, the volume is so well written the public will not notice. Given the authors' recognized archaeological expertise and their command of primary and secondary source materials, the lack of citations does not detract from the value of the volume.

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