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**Review of *Searching for Sacred Ground: The Journey of Chief Lawrence Hart, Mennonite* By Raylene Hinz-Penner**

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story, but also a reflection of the shifting contours of contemporary Native life and a story that tells us much about what it means to be Cheyenne in the modern world. Writing with a keen appreciation for the larger issues at play in Hart's life, Hinz-Penner deftly broadens her account into something resembling a history of the Southern Cheyenne people for over the past hundred and fifty years.

She begins by placing Hart's own life into the broader context of the Cheyenne world since about the middle of the nineteenth century. Brief but informative sections on life on the prereservation Plains, the heartbreak of the Washita massacre, the reservation, the appearance of the Mennonites who were to have such a formative influence on the Cheyenne people, boarding schools, and the transition to a new way of life frame the first third of the book. Like most biographers, Hinz-Penner is in search of the larger world that has shaped her subject's life, and on most counts she succeeds well enough in making important connections. It is clear, for example, that kinship and a sharply honed sense of community have functioned largely uninterrupted in the Cheyenne community for the past century, not least because they have become anchors of stability in a sea of change. When Hinz-Penner engages Hart in discussions about his ancestors, Hart's deep appreciation for their importance in the life of his people and his commitment to maintaining their place in the Cheyennes' collective memory are abundantly clear.

The years of his adult life (Hart was born in 1933) constitute the bulk of the remainder of the book. In fairly short order Hinz-Penner covers his decision to enter the military (his so-called "Dog Soldier Days"), his return to civilian life as a student at Bethel College, his subsequent decision to enter the Mennonite ministry, and his extraordinary service to the Cheyenne community as peace chief, activist, tribal administrator, and ceremonial leader. These sections, each informed by Hinz-Penner's numerous interviews and conversations with Hart and his wife Betty, offer readers an important window into contemporary Indian life. On the one hand, the Harts and their growing family look and sound a great deal like most other middle-class families on the Southern Plains in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. On the other,

*Searching for Sacred Ground: The Journey of Chief Lawrence Hart, Mennonite.* By Raylene Hinz-Penner. Foreword by Donald L. Fixico. Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2007. 205 pp. Photographs, references, index. \$19.95 paper.

In Oklahoma's Cheyenne community, Lawrence Hart has led a life framed by service and self-sacrifice. Widely regarded by his people as the embodiment of what a leader should be, Hart has spent decades tending to their cultural, spiritual, and political health. In Hinz-Penner's hands, Hart's biography is not simply his life

the importance and power of Cheyenne traditions come through time after time as Hinz-Penner engages Hart in conversations about the larger purpose and meaning of his life.

Hinz-Penner writes with a storyteller's sense of time and change, not with a scholar's, and so her observations and conclusions will strike some readers as underdeveloped. Her preference is to avoid controversial and problematic issues and to focus on the good that Hart has done for his people. This is understandable, but it also threatens to leave readers with an underdeveloped sense of the Cheyenne community's dynamics. On balance, however, she has written an informative and insightful biography of an important figure in contemporary Indian America. With some careful contextualizing, students will appreciate this book, for it has a great deal to tell them about what it means to be a Native person, a Cheyenne, and a person of faith in contemporary America.

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