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Review of *American Indians in U.S. History* By Roger L. Nichols

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American Indians in U.S. History. By Roger L. Nichols. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xxii + 242 pp. Photographs, maps, illustrations, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

Writing a survey of United States history is a difficult task. Writing a survey of American Indian history—which dates to either 40,000 BCE or when Earth Initiate descended a rope of feathers, depending on your preference—poses an even more daunting task (more formidable than reviewing it). Roger Nichols undertakes this imposing venture, nonetheless, and in *American Indians in U.S. History* successfully offers a concise, readable, and affordable text.

Nichols divides his book into three sections: the frontier period, reservation life, and integration. Throughout, he addresses the gamut of issues facing American Indians, from the contentious debate about their origins in North America to the current controversy surrounding the mishandling of trust funds by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In the frontier phase, encompassing the period from before contact to the late eighteenth century, American Indians encountered other indigenous groups and Europeans, accommodated to the presence of Europeans, and finally resisted westward expansion. During the reservation era, the federal government forcibly concentrated Indians on reservations. Once there, Indians faced an intrusive assimilation campaign through boarding schools and Euro-American methods of farming. Some Indians cooperated with this mission, others resisted, and many, like Quanah Parker (Comanche), accommodated to the new circumstances. Finally, during the twentieth century American Indians integrated into the broader culture. Federal policies—such as relocation—and world events—both World Wars—broke down barriers between American Indians and mainstream society. Nichols leaves the reader with American Indians facing the question of tribal sovereignty or complete assimilation: “Many [American Indians] appear to want increasing ties with their tribal groups, and this is par-

ticularly true for those living away from the reservations. . . . At the same time, some actions by tribal people have moved them directly into the American mainstream.”

American Indians in U.S. History is a political rather than a social history of American Indians. Leaders such as Tecumseh, Sitting Bull, and Dennis Banks loom large in the narrative, at the expense, perhaps, of Indian women or wage laborers. The book’s organization, too, is uneven. Five of its eight chapters discuss Nichols’s frontier phase, while the remaining two sections—reservations and integration—are condensed into three chapters. Still, the volume is a welcome addition to any general reader’s library.

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