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Review of *First Person, First Peoples: Native American College Graduates Tell Their Life Stories* Edited by Andrew Garrod and Colleen Larimore

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First Person, First Peoples: Native American College Graduates Tell Their Life Stories. Edited by Andrew Garrod and Colleen Larimore. Foreword by Louise Erdrich. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997. Photographs. xviii + 250 pp. \$39.95 cloth, \$15.95 paper.

When Dartmouth College recommitted itself to recruiting and enrolling Native American students in 1970, it had graduated only nineteen Native Americans in its two hundred year history, though it was founded in 1769 with the explicit mission of educating Indian youth, as stated in its British charter. All of the essays collected here are by Native American students or graduates of Dartmouth College from 1970 to the present. The book translates the grim statistics of Native American representation and involvement in postsecondary education into potent personal stories that delineate the obstacles to institutional success for Native Americans within the academy and show how these individual students have creatively forged their own successes by drawing on various sources of strength from family members to traditional beliefs to their Native American student communities. The editors state in their introduction that "the crucial journey, both literal and figurative, is the one between [the students'] home communities and the culture that this predominantly white college represents. It is learning to walk this path in balance without losing oneself in the process that is vital."

Of particular interest to readers of *Great Plains Quarterly* will be the four essays by Plains Indian students. Each comments at some length about Dartmouth's unofficial Indian mascot symbol which has permeated student behaviors in areas ranging from cheers for athletic teams to the breaking of a clay pipe at a ceremony for graduating seniors (a ceremony that has only recently been eliminated after years of tireless lobbying by student group Native Americans at Dartmouth). These students also discuss the exhausting task of constantly having to educate the general student body about Native American history and the lives of contemporary Native Americans. Arvo Quetone Mikkanen (Kiowa/Comanche) in his essay "Coming Home" describes a commonly held sentiment by Native American students: "I eventually became tired of functioning as the ambassador and expert for every tribe from the Bering Strait to Tierra Del Fuego—especially when I had my normal class schedule and other academic assignments to keep up with. Like many Native American students, I eventually became worn out by the effort of trying to educate my peers about Indians and why one group of people should not be forced to be the mascots of another."

Other topics authors address include the racial prejudice they encountered at college from both students and faculty. Robert Bennett (Sicangu Lakota) faced racist stereotypes circulated by his baseball coach who instructed Bennett's team members to keep him away from the fraternity basements because "his people have a big problem with alcoholism." Marianne Chamberlain (Ft. Peck Assiniboin and Sioux) encountered vicious treatment from peers who painted the words "Indian Bitch" on her dorm door and told her that "the only reason you got into Dartmouth is because you are Native American. . . . They lower the standards for you people."

But the essays do not focus only on the problems their authors faced. Many students comment on the value of an accessible Native American community on campus from which

they drew both comfort and strength. Another common theme is the hope that a college education would enable the authors to return to their Native communities with an increased ability to help their people. Overall the collection is a telling introduction to the experi-

ences of Native American students within the academy.

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