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## Review of *Ohiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux* By Raymond Wilson

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*Ohiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux.* By Raymond Wilson. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1983. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. xiii + 219 pp. \$16.95.

Charles Eastman, Ohiyesa, was a Santee Sioux whose life invites curiosity in a different way than for great Native American leaders like Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph, or Crazy Horse. Eastman was one of a very few Native Americans of his time who lived competently in two worlds. Raymond Wilson offers a picture of the whole lifetime in one concise, readable volume, showing Eastman's life as fraught with difficulties and controversies. The work is based primarily on government documents, correspondence, others' accounts, and Eastman's own books and articles.

Eastman's maternal grandfather, Seth Eastman, was a U.S. Army captain who left his native wife and daughter. Because his mother died while Eastman was an infant, his paternal grandmother reared him in the traditional Sioux ways until he was nearly fifteen, when his father, who had adopted Christianity, took him to live in Flandreau. Ohiyesa became Charles

Eastman and began the formal education that led through an M.D. at Boston University School of Medicine in 1890.

Soon after Eastman began his service as the government physician at the Pine Ridge Reservation, disagreements with the agent marred his dreams of helping his people and he soon left. In 1891 Eastman married Elaine Goodale, a teacher from New England. They moved to St. Paul in 1893 where Eastman began working for the YMCA. Though Eastman appears to have reconciled the differences between his traditional past and Christianity, Wilson contends that his approach was an oversimplification. At this time Eastman also became involved in what would become a complex battle to resolve Santee claims against the federal government. Wilson suggests that Eastman's motives were financial as well as altruistic.

In 1900 Eastman served another short, unpleasant term as a government physician, this time at the Crow Creek Reservation, then moved to the project of renaming the Sioux. According to Wilson, this task satisfied Eastman's superiors but caused him some personal discomfort since the objective was clearly assimilation. Between 1910 and 1921 Eastman wrote and lectured on his own life experiences, on Native American culture, and on Native American relationships with Euroamericans. Although he was an early supporter of the Dawes Act of 1887 he later repudiated it, and generally promoted the idea that Native Americans must accept the ways of the mainstream without the total sacrifice of native beliefs and practices. Eastman once more rejoined government service in 1923, not as a physician but as an Indian inspector, but was again enmeshed in internal conflict. Eastman devoted his final years to research and lecturing, including a speaking tour in England. Because he was estranged from his wife, he often retreated to a lodge that he had built in southern Ontario or lived with his son in Detroit. Charles Eastman/Ohiyesa died at the age of eighty in 1939.

Unhappily, the documentation Wilson offers the reader gives an incomplete characterization of Eastman's life. Wilson repeatedly refers to

the esteem and respect accorded Eastman by many people, but he details his failures. Wilson fails to make clear that Eastman's problems as a physician result not from any incompetence on his part but from strained relationships with people in the bureaucracy. Wilson praises Eastman's writing and lecturing, but the praise is diminished by his reference to Elaine's claim that she edited and revised her husband's work extensively. However, Elaine is portrayed as having unrealistically expected Eastman to assimilate into the dominant culture, an aspiration that Eastman did not share.

Perhaps Wilson also expected too much of Eastman. The author admits that Eastman's loyalties to and identification with two different cultures must have been overwhelmingly difficult, but Wilson principally views and describes Eastman from only one of these cultures. Although Wilson acknowledges Eastman's acculturation, he never really addresses the phenomenon of bi-culturalism. People in both cultures tend to expect too much of bi-cultural individuals, as if they could lead two full lives simultaneously. Charles Eastman's life could be a composite description of many native people who have had an extensive education in the American mainstream culture. The dilemmas stemming from reservation factionalism, from mainstream politics, from mixed loyalties to their government positions continue to plague numerous Native Americans. Eastman's troubles would, unfortunately, seem commonplace to many bicultural native people. Aside from these few shortcomings, Wilson's book is well documented and is worth reading. The book contains valuable photographs and a thorough bibliography.

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