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Review of *Rebirth of the Blackfeet Nation, 1912-1954* By Paul C. Rosier

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Blackfeet Indian Reservation

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Rebirth of the Blackfeet Nation, 1912-1954. By Paul C. Rosier. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. xiii + 346pp. \$65.00.

As a Blackfeet tribal member researching my tribe for over twenty-five years through the medium of its language, I read Paul Rosier's book with trepidation because accurate accounting is not a hallmark of most historical analysis done on the tribe. Too often I detect research flaws based on notions contrary to our oral tradition, and I marvel at the distorted interpretations. Rosier's book is excruciatingly revealing, honest, and important. Not just to me, despite my hardened edge, but for the uninformed reader as well. The chronicle is powerfully laced with pages of stark reality, and wanton subterfuge. One of the most treacherous pathways ever traversed by the Blackfeet is the one trekked in Rosier's account. Despite thousands of years of existence in a homeland of vast terrain and unfathomable conditions, nothing challenged them more than the pathway dictated by nation building. This book accurately depicts a subdued people subject to the whim and fancy of self-serving counselors involved in misconduct rivaling today's corporate scandals of greed and deception. Rosier's account is more about the mayhem of non-Blackfeet speculators and officials than it is about the tribe itself.

My only question is the term "Rebirth" in the title, insinuating that positive change occurred, but misrepresenting the fact that the tribe still labors for the self-sufficiency and direction echoed throughout the book by generations of tribal members. It still labors to experience full return for the sale of its resources for the benefit of tribal members. "Rebirth" is apropos only if meant to convey the tribe's survival through unbelievable quagmires to situate itself as a modern evolving entity. An older man speaking about the many ordeals the tribe survived stated, "We must be the richest tribe on earth, because even with all that was taken from us, we still survive in our homeland."

With the birthrate on a dramatic increase paralleled by an emerging revitalization in tribal language, history, and heritage concerns, the tribe remains intact. Each day Blackfeet people move further away from the factional groups labeled in yesteryear's derogatory terms towards a renaissance more in keeping with the term rebirth. Rosier's work is an eloquent account of a people who have been through the worst of times and still view every day as one of promise.

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