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**Review of *Contrary Neighbors: Southern Plains and Removed Indians in Indian Territory* By David LaVere**

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*Contrary Neighbors: Southern Plains and Removed Indians in Indian Territory.* By David LaVere. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000. Maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. xii + 292 pp. \$29.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

Many are aware of Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal policy, which uprooted Native Americans from their homelands and drove them into Indian Territory. Few, however, are aware of the other side of removal, that is, the impact of the removed tribes on the Prairie and Plains peoples living in the region of the relocation. Removal crowded thousands of

Indian people of diverse cultures onto land that could not adequately support them, resulting in bitter conflicts between the Native peoples of the Southern Plains and the invading eastern strangers.

Those of us who are members of the tribes involved as well as scholars examining the people and the region have long been aware of this "other side of removal." Unfortunately, there has been little attention directed toward these conflicts since Grant Foreman's works of the 1930s. David LaVere has re-opened the broader topic in *Contrary Neighbors*.

After describing the cultures of the Southeastern and Plains tribes, LaVere traces the history of Indian Removal, providing a detailed description of the conflicts that occurred between the Southeastern Removed tribes and the Prairie and Plains people. While he includes all of the participants, he focuses specifically on the Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole and their relations with the Caddo, Osage, Wichita, Comanche, and Kiowa. In a chronological narrative, LaVere recounts the nineteenth-century conflicts between these peoples.

In his introduction, LaVere sums up the cultural context for the conflict as follows: "Herein lies the heart of my argument. The Southern Plains Indians and Southeastern Indians existed as two wholly different peoples. They had completely different cultures, had different ways of life, and looked at the world in very different ways. . . ." He is correct, but errs when he groups all the participants into two categories. He later adds a third group, the Prairie Indians, but is inconsistent as to membership in these groups; moreover, such broad categorizing ignores the real cultural complexity of the people and the conflicts. LaVere tries, unsuccessfully, to stretch his cultural framework into the twentieth century, where it simply does not work. A lack of cultural understanding did indeed exacerbate the conflicts and made peacemaking more difficult, but the nature and the causes of the violence went well beyond cultural misunderstanding.

Despite the forced cultural categories and some minor factual errors, *Contrary Neighbors* is an important book. It provides a fine narrative of events and draws attention to the post-removal Indian Territory. LaVere's extensive annotation and thorough bibliography offer scholars a wealth of information for future research on this significant topic.

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