

**The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War, 1790 to 1870.** JOHN S. MILLOY. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, Manitoba Studies in Native History IV, 1988. 159 p. ISBN 0-88755-141-6.

Fourth in the Manitoba Studies in Native History series, John Milloy's *The Plains Cree* fits comfortably within a range of topics that now includes pre-1840 trade relations around Cumberland House and The Pas; fur trader George Nelson's 1823 Lac la Ronge writings on Cree and Northern Ojibway world views; and, the Dakota's economic adaptation to the Canadian Prairies after 1862. While the initial publication — a collection of papers arising out of a ground-breaking conference on the Métis — is longer, the rest of the series is comprised of slim volumes averaging about two hundred pages each. All abound with notes and references and are very well indexed and illustrated.

John Milloy draws mainly on primary sources such as Hudson's Bay Company records, fur trade journals, and numerous published memoirs and narratives. Not a full tribal history, *The Plains Cree* takes "a macro-historical approach to the Plains Cree in pre-reserve days in terms of their external relations." It is a detailed chronology of military and trade patterns built on the four themes of migration, nascent nationhood, the "horse wars" of the first half of the nineteenth century, and the "buffalo wars" of the 1850s and 1860s.

An editorial board representative of Manitoba's academic and native communities directs this series. Its solid scholarship is explicitly intended to address the historiographical problem of nonexistent or deficient accounts of aboriginal peoples' experience and their role in Canadian history. There have been previous works on the Plains Cree, but John Milloy's economic, military, and diplomatic history is bound to serve as a basis for future studies, some of which should be broader.

**Lisa Patterson**

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**The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival.** PETER DOUGLAS ELIAS. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, Manitoba Studies in Native History V, 1988. xvii, 262 p. ISBN 0-88755-142-4.

This volume is part of a series which deals with aboriginal history in western Canada. A significant feature of this particular publication is its focus on a specific group of native peoples where relatively little research had previously been done. It outlines the history of the Dakota in Canada, a distinct group of native peoples commonly associated with the United States.

The book provides an excellent overview of the economic strategies used by the Dakota in their struggle for survival. It also looks at the geographic and political aspects which shaped the lives of the Dakota in Canada. Elias chronicles the presence of the Dakota in Canada prior to the eighteenth century. The emphasis of this volume, however, is the period after 1862 or the recent history of the Dakota. By examining the writings of various government officials, Elias creates an historical account of the Dakota. In addition to the primary sources material, he also includes documentary evidence found in archaeological records and oral commentary to further support the indigenous claims of the Dakota.

This publication is a good introduction to the historical and contemporary background of the Dakota in Canada. It is a fine addition to the Manitoba Studies in History series which examines native history from a western Canadian perspective.

**Mary Jane Commanda**  
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**The Journals of George M. Dawson: British Columbia, 1875-1878.** DOUGLAS COLE and BRADLEY LOCKNER, eds. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989. 611 p. ISBN 0-7748-0276-6 (v. 1) ISBN 0-7748-0286-3 (v. 2).

*The Journals of George M. Dawson, 1875-1878* is a truly impressive piece of scholarship. Superbly edited by Douglas Cole and Bradley Lockner, this two-volume set examines the remarkable field activities of George Mercer Dawson, a former director of the Geological Survey of Canada (1895-1901) and one of Canada's foremost scientists in the nineteenth century. Appointed to the GSC on 1 July 1875 after serving as a member of the British North America Boundary Commission, the twenty-six-year-old Dawson was given specific responsibility for British Columbia and spent the remainder of the decade exploring the wilds of the province. From 1875 to 1877 he worked with Chief Engineer Sandford Fleming's CPR survey crews and covered an incredible amount of territory bordering the Fraser and Thompson rivers in the central and southern regions of the interior. In 1878 he went further afield to the north end of Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlottes.

The *Journals* cover these four seasons in British Columbia and feature not only Dawson's daily field entries, but also his notes on particular phenomena, his letters to family members, and even his poetry. The original records are held by the McGill University Archives, the Rare Book and Special Collections Department of the McLennan Library, McGill University, and the National Archives of Canada, and have been reproduced here with limited editorial revision. Dawson's punctuation and spelling idiosyncracies, for example, have been retained. Each particular field season is introduced with a map of Dawson's area of study and a handy day-to-day field chronology. The journal material itself is a testimony to Dawson's wide-ranging (some might say eclectic) interests, and clearly demonstrates his ability to extrapolate on the basis of limited observation to view the bigger picture.

The value of the *Journals* is greatly enhanced by extremely detailed footnotes (sometimes occupying more than half a page), which provide essential background information or elaborate on notebook entries. The work is further complimented by a concise introduction that nicely sketches Dawson's life and career and his varied contributions to Canadian science. There are also a number of appendices; perhaps the most valuable is the biographical dictionary of the many people mentioned in the *Journals*. Finally, there is a small collection of Dawson photographs which provide the reader with an appreciation of his skills in this area. Indeed, not only do the *Journals* represent a wonderful reference guide to the state and nature of Canadian science in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but they also confirm the need for a good biography of Dawson.

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