

Ho-Chunk Chiefs: Winnebago Leadership in An Era of Crisis

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Errors such as these make this a disappointing book. Although it has several interesting passages and contributions, I cannot recommend it for serious students of Wisconsin Indian history. Those seeking a solidly researched survey will be well advised instead to read Robert E. Bieder's *Native American Communities in Wisconsin, 1600–1960* (1995).

Ho-Chunk Chiefs: Winnebago Leadership in an Era of Crisis, by Mark Diedrich. Rochester, MN: Coyote Books, 2001. 200 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper.

Reviewer Edward J. Pluth is a retired professor of history at St. Cloud State University. His research interests include the Ho-Chunk, German prisoners of war, and rural history.

This is Mark Diedrich's tenth book on Native American history, his second on the Ho-Chunk, or Winnebago. In this latest book he examines the leadership of 26 nineteenth-century Ho-Chunk chiefs. A too brief introductory chapter relates the history of Ho-Chunk chieftainship. In each of the 18 chapters that follow, the author weaves together a biographical sketch of one or several of these notable leaders and a narrative of their efforts on behalf of the Winnebago within the historical context that this occurred, supported by selected quotations from their speeches or other statements. The structure of the work, with each chapter standing alone, results in annoying repetition of the historical events involved; for example, six chapters include a discussion of Tecumseh. The challenge in writing Native American biography is reflected in the uneven content and varied length of chapters. Unfortunately, there is no concluding chapter that assesses, individually or collectively, the decisions, actions, and leadership of this group of chiefs.

The Ho-Chunk have an important connection with Iowa history and that of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. For example, in the 1830s they were removed from Wisconsin to a reserve called The Neutral Ground in northeastern Iowa and southeastern Minnesota. Several Iowa locations, such as Winneshiek County and Decorah, reflect that history. Diedrich's work is of value in identifying and bringing together information on significant Ho-Chunk leaders. Readers will gain some insight into why the nineteenth century was an era of crisis for the Winnebago.

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