

## Indian Agriculture in America: Prehistory to the Present

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the site's different occupations; environmental changes were not a causal factor in this area's cultural development. Mississippian subsistence represented at Labras Lake was a broad spectrum strategy combining farming, hunting, and gathering—not specialized harvesting of a limited resource base. He concludes that economic and technological changes represented at the site through time were expansions of earlier bases, not replacements.

This volume is not without problems, however. Its most significant shortcoming is a recurring lack of explicit statement of definitions or criteria used in the analysis. For instance, discussions are inadequate or missing for key issues such as how individual components and assemblages were separated and identified at the site, the selection of the artifact sample used in the microwear analysis, and feature and site classifications. These lapses would be less noticeable if Yerkes were not so critical of apparently similar subjectivity by others. Also, he at times seems to forget his own recognition of use-wear limitations.

Overall, Yerkes's book is a significant contribution. Both the approach used and its conclusions should be of interest to a broad audience. It is based on a specific site and locality in the middle Mississippi valley, but cultural developments here either had parallels or ultimately affected developments elsewhere. Some of the study's conclusions challenge traditional interpretations and are pertinent for a much larger portion of the Midwest. Perhaps more important, Yerkes illustrates how modern cultural resource management projects can contribute substantially to our understanding of the archeological record. Analysis and study of the data from these projects need not stop with submission of a report to the funding agency.

*Indian Agriculture in America: Prehistory to the Present*, by R. Douglas Hurt. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988. xiii, 290 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$29.95 cloth.

BY CYNTHIA R. KASEE, UNION INSTITUTE, GANTZ UNDERGRADUATE CENTER

*Indian Agriculture in America* is a chronological view of the development of agriculture in North America (with reference to its Mesoamerican origins). Hurt interweaves an account of the diffusion of the cultivation of staple aboriginal crops with discussions of the social and religious structures of countless tribes throughout all the major culture areas, culminating with a look at the decline of agriculture and the failure of federal policy and the reservation system either to maintain or to reintroduce farming in various native nations.

Nonspecialists should appreciate the confluence of chronology and attention to social patterns. Without resorting to technical explanations, Hurt offers insight into the advanced methods native Americans used and understood. His style is engaging, and his use of a clear chronological progression gives readers a sense of the profound impact of Euro-American contact on native agriculture. He has done an especially commendable job of showing the connections between aboriginal farming and the study of native Americans by historians, physical and cultural anthropologists, Indian law scholars, and feminists, as well as those in scientific disciplines such as geology and chemistry.

Hurt's timeline begins with the supposed innovation of agriculture's simplest form in the Tehuacan Valley. Noting the spread of agriculture and Mesoamerican religious motifs along similar routes into the present United States, he shows how farming provided a basis for the evolution of North American "high cultures" similar to the climax cultures of Central America.

As he shifts from the Mississippian complex cultures to the widespread adoption of agriculture in the East, Hurt introduces Euro-American influences on Indian America. He describes the influence of the Conquistadores in the Southwest and concurrent explorations in the Southeast. In reviewing Euro-American settlement on all fronts, he is careful to point out the differences between aboriginal views of land use and ownership and those prevailing in the feudal lands that launched the Age of Discovery.

Hurt begins his examination of the changing federal Indian policy with the creation of the United States. In the early republic that policy was based on a belief that farming would be the eventual fate of aboriginal Americans. Hurt manages to describe the impact of slavery on agriculture in some tribes without interjecting moral concerns. The Civil War, he points out, was a watershed in the history of native agriculture, the question of slavery notwithstanding.

Assimilation is an important theme in the last third of the book. Hurt views dispassionately the direction of federal Indian agricultural policy through the relatively enlightened Collier era at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the disastrous termination policy promulgated in the 1950s. With the rising tide of Indian pride and the resulting demands for self-determination, new problems emerged. Hurt's discussion of the legal history of native water rights should be of particular interest to readers in the Midwest.

Hurt discusses extensively the natives of the Great Lakes and the Great Plains, but he fails to give the reader much detail about the tribes indigenous to Iowa (the Iowa and, to a lesser extent, Sioux, Oto,

and Omaha) or those who became Iowans (Sauk and Mesquakie). He does refer to the plan of Indian agents at the Great Nemaha subagency to reintroduce extensive agriculture to the Iowa; the resulting crop in 1842, he notes, was produced almost totally by the white farmers who were supposed to provide only technical assistance. This account, coupled with references to periodic drought damage to crops, leaves the reader with the impression that the Iowa failed to master Euro-American farming techniques.

Hurt does note that the Sauk and Mesquakie of Kansas "had farmed for a long time . . . yet they were 'positively retrograding'" (148). And although he characterizes the Sioux as a hunting tribe, as opposed to a farming tribe, he also states that the "harsh environment of the Great Plains did not prevent at least some tribes from developing important agricultural economies" (62). He is unclear about his reference dates for either assessment, but his allusion to the period of initial white contact contradicts Carl Waldman's contention that "at the time of Contact, . . . the only noncultivators on the Great Plains were the Algonquian-speaking Blackfeet in the North and the Uto-Aztec Comanches in the South" (*Atlas of the North American Indian*, 1985). This point could be a catalyst for further research.

Agriculture in native North America deserves such a definitive study. Hurt's book is a readable synthesis of the diverse aspects of Indian agriculture. Its positive points far outweigh its few shortcomings. It is well worth perusal by all mavens of native American culture.

*The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri*, by Stephen C. LeSueur. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987. ix, 286 pp. Notes, illustrations, maps, bibliography, appendix, index. \$24.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD MAXWELL BROWN, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

One of the most dynamic and exciting fields of scholarship in American history today is Mormon history. Termed the New Mormon History by Thomas G. Alexander, it distinguishes itself by its objectivity and conceptual character as well as by copious publication of books and articles. Much of this scholarship revises traditional or long-held views. A sterling example of the New Mormon History is *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* by Stephen C. LeSueur. A revisionist account of the war, this book is the first on the conflict between Mormons and gentiles in northwest Missouri in the summer and fall of 1838. The conventional wisdom holds that the war represented a brutal case of the oppression of inoffensive Mormons by bigoted Missourians whose anti-Mormon outrages were highlighted by the Haun's Mill

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