Why Sacagawea Deserves the Day Off and Other Lessons from the Lewis and Clark Trail

Roger L. Nichols
University of Arizona
Work Roles, and Contending Redefinitions of the Great Lakes Métis, 1820–42,” Rebecca Kugel shows how the roles of people changed in the native Midwest. External influences of missionaries, trade relations, and working for white men altered the Indian world. Kugel concludes that the métis adjusted to these changes. In the twentieth century, native people, especially the youth, learned to live like non-Indians, as demonstrated in Brenda J. Child’s essay, “A New Seasonal Round: Government Boarding Schools, Federal Work Programs, and Ojibwe Family Life during the Great Depression.” Child reminds us that for those who stayed in the Midwest, the change proved greater than for those native people who removed to the West.

Following World War II, James LeGrand writes in his essay, “Indian Work and Indian Neighborhoods: Adjusting to Life in Chicago during the 1950s,” the pace of change increased as native people became a part of life in Chicago. That put native identities at risk. LeGrand proves that the new urban Indian became a part of the native Midwest. Brian Hosmer adds to this point in his essay, “Blackjack and Lumberjack: Economic Development and Cultural Identity in Menominee Country.” Hosmer also demonstrates that the Menominees became successful in the white man’s business world in the lumber and gaming industries. In “White Earth Women and Social Welfare,” Melissa Meyer concludes that the Anishinaabe women contributed to the economic and political life of the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. On the reservation, Meyer demonstrates, the women adjusted their ways to survive and succeed.

Overall, this is a major contribution to the literature on the history of native peoples of the Midwest. The essays are very readable and accessible to students at all levels. The final message of *Enduring Nations* is that native people adjusted to their cultures, altered their roles, participated in the new mainstream society in many ways, operated businesses, and helped to reshape the history of the Midwest.


This short book is a collection of odd, mal-fitting chapters loosely held together by a vague connection to the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The author is quick to say that she “did not write these essays with the
intention of publishing them as a collection” (xi–xii). As a coauthor of the well-received *Lewis and Clark Companion* (2003) and a board member for several Lewis and Clark–related foundations, Tubbs has plenty of knowledge about the expedition and its bicentennial celebrations throughout the West.

Her chapters range from a personal account of a canoe trip on the Missouri River and talks with people living and working along parts of the Lewis and Clark Trail to judgments of the two captains’ qualities as leaders. The essay on Sacagawea examines the young mother’s roles in the expedition, basically saying that there is not much more to say on the topic. When discussing the controversial death of Meriwether Lewis (whether by murder or suicide) while on his way to Washington, D.C., the author raises the interesting possibility that he suffered from Asperger’s Syndrome. If true, that would help to explain much of the captain’s often strange behavior, and probably is the only new thing about Lewis and Clark that the book offers. In general, Iowa readers, unless they are fans of Ms. Tubbs, will be disappointed.


The history of steamboating has been approached in a variety of ways. By emphasizing colorful characters and dramatic events, William J. Petersen, in his *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi* (1937), contributed significantly to the romance of steamboating. Louis C. Hunter, in his *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (1949), considered the business and mechanical aspects of steamboating. With more emphasis on quantification than Hunter, Erik F. Haites, James Mak, and Gary M. Walton, in their *Western River Transportation: The Era of Early Internal Development, 1810–1860* (1975), presented detailed information about steamboating’s impact on the overall economy. In *Troubled Waters: Steamboat Disasters, River Improvements, and American Public Policy, 1821–1860,* Paul Paskoff’s emphasis is on the interrelationships of steamboating as a perilous trade and river improvement as an important aspect of public policy.

Within a decade after the first steamboat navigated the western rivers (the Mississippi and its tributaries) in 1811, it was evident that