

## The People of the River's Mouth: In Search of the Missouria Indians

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*The People of the River's Mouth: In Search of the Missouri Indians*, by Michael Dickey. Missouri Heritage Readers Series. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011. xvi, 157 pp. Illustrations, maps, table, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Thomas J. Lappas is associate professor of history at Nazareth College of Rochester. He is the author of "'A Perfect Apollo': Keokuk and Sac Leadership during the Removal Era" in *The Boundaries between Us: Natives and Newcomers along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750–1850* (2006).

Michael Dickey has composed a history of the Nyut<sup>^</sup>achi, more commonly known as the Missouriia, from their origins in pre-Columbian times through the present. He incorporates archaeological evidence, colonial and national period records, and oral traditions of the modern Otoe-Missouria people and other Native Americans from the mid-western United States. The Missouriia present challenges for such an endeavor. Archaeological evidence is often inconclusive, and many differing interpretations exist.

Dickey concludes that the strongest evidence suggests that the ancestors of the Siouan-speaking Missouriia, Otoe, and Ioway people migrated from the Great Lakes to the Missouri River region, where they became intertwined with the Oneota cultural group. The exact timing and causes of the development of the Missouriia as a distinct nation or tribe are unclear. The written record about the Missouri is spotty and sometimes conflicted about the basic narrative of the Missouriia's locations and activities, but the tribe was centered around the Grand River, an important tributary of the Missouri River in the middle of the state to which the nation lent its name. Depopulation and diaspora in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries offered challenges to the keepers of the oral traditions that were even more pronounced than among other native nations. Nonetheless, Dickey pieces together a generally clear narrative of the Missouriia, emphasizing their power during the colonial era.

The Missouriia appear in the written record beginning in 1673 and make infrequent appearances when compared with tribes from the Eastern Woodlands, the Great Plains, or those around the Great Lakes or Gulf Coast, where interaction with European recordkeepers was more sustained. Dickey thus relies on information regarding kinship, material culture, and origin stories from speakers of the related Siouan dialect of Chiwere—the Otoe and Ioway—to create an impressionistic picture of Missouriia cultural life.

By the early national period, the Missouriia population had diminished to about 400 people, precipitating mergers with other nations, including the Osages (with whom they had become allied against the

Sauk and Meskwaki and other enemy tribes) and most notably the Otoes. During the removal era of the 1830s, the Otoe-Missouria were removed to Oklahoma, the location of the modern Otoe-Missouria community.

Dickey communicates the challenges of doing this kind of sweeping history of a group of people for whom the sources are problematic. Because this book was written for the Missouri Heritage Readers Series, which has an intended audience of general adult readers, it is a slim volume. Often one wishes to learn more about the evidence for a given assertion, but notes are omitted, although a useful bibliography is included. Despite these limitations, Dickey acquaints his readers with the discrepancies in the written, archaeological, and oral records within the text itself. He humbly acknowledges that new data may lead to modification of his conclusions. Ultimately, Dickey has produced a very useful volume for the general reader of Missouri and midwestern history, especially for those with an interest in the history of American Indians in the region.

*Dakota Women's Work: Creativity, Culture, and Exile*, by Colette A. Hyman. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012. 240 pp. Illustrations, maps, graphs, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Catherine J. Denial is assistant professor of history at Knox College. Her dissertation (University of Iowa, 2005) was "The Shifting Politics of Gender and Kinship among the Dakota, Ojibwe, and Non-Native Communities of the Upper Midwest, 1825-1845."

In this 150th anniversary year of the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War, Colette Hyman's *Dakota Women's Work* offers a fresh entry point into the history of the Dakota people of the upper Midwest, before and after the conflict. Hyman focuses on work as the means to recognize Dakota cultural continuity, resistance, and accommodation throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Paying attention to male work patterns as well as female ones, Hyman assesses the effects of a cash economy, relocation, and Christianity on Dakota culture and pays tribute to the contemporary Dakota women keeping their grandmothers' skills and traditions alive.

Much of the book, as the title suggests, focuses on the labor of women—on the acts of raising, gathering, preserving, and cooking food; making clothes, shoes, and storage items; providing shelter; nurturing children; and practicing bead and quillwork. These tasks were not simply the means by which the Dakota supplied their basic needs, Hyman argues, but were culturally and spiritually significant