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Sondra Jones. *Being and Becoming Ute: The Story of an American Indian People.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2019. xiii + 559 pp. $29.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-60781-657-7.

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Commissioned by F. Evan Nooe (University of North Carolina, Charlotte)

Writing a comprehensive tribal history that spans pre-Columbian times to the present seems like a daunting task, but Sondra Jones has accomplished this with admirable success through decades of archival and field research. Compared to their Apache, Comanche, and Navajo neighbors, the Utes have received scant attention from historians, but this book helps to fill that historiographic void. Notably, the detailed chronological narrative maintains a consistent analytical focus on the complexities of Indian identity and ethnogenesis. “The political, cultural, and economic history of the Ute Indians is the story of but one native group,” Jones writes, “but it illustrates the kinds of forces that have shaped the history of native America” (p. 3). In essence, she sees the Utes as an exemplar of the methods whereby Indians of all tribes have strategically resisted and adapted to the forces of colonialism and modernity in order to perpetuate a distinctive indigenous identity within the American nation-state.

Divided into nineteen chapters, the narrative is organized both geographically between Utah and Colorado and topically around the Northern and Southern Utes. The first two chapters—one examining Ute origins and ethnography, the other emphasizing equestrianism and slaving during the Spanish colonial era—cover well-trodden ground that will sound familiar to many readers. The remainder of the book focuses on American interaction with Utes and their homelands, from the early nineteenth century to the present. With the arrival of fur trappers and traders in the 1820s, Jones notes, “shrewd and ambitious Utes incorporated free-enterprise capitalism into their traditional economy” by expanding hunter-gatherer skills into a more diversified lifeway that increasingly embraced raiding and trading (p. 55). The mass arrival of Mormon “pioneers” in the Great Basin beginning in 1847 dramatically intensified Ute interaction with outsiders and marked one of the most transformative events in the tribe’s nineteenth-century ethnogenesis. Some of the results varied from one Ute subtribe to the next, but in all cases resource depletion, land dispossession, interethnic violence, and demographic decline attended the colonial processes of “ecological and microbial conquest” (p. 151). Beginning with the Provo War in 1850 and continuing with the Walker War three years later, Mormon-Ute hostilities claimed many lives and during that decade alone the Western Ute population sunk from an estimated eight thousand to just eight hundred (p. 91). In neighboring Colorado Territory, the gold rush to the Rocky Mountain Front Range that started in 1858 exacted a similar toll on Eastern Utes.

My only quibble with this book comes in the short section where the author discusses events in New Mexico during the mid-nineteenth century, because here a handful of factual errors creep into the narrative. General Stephen W. Kearny was long gone from New Mexico by the time the Taos Revolt occurred in January 1847, so he could not have "quelled it" himself (pp. 109, 131). The author seems to use "Army of the West" as a catchall term to name the US soldiers in New Mexico Territory during the late 1840s and early 1850s, but in fact the term applied only to Kearny's soldiers—mostly volunteers—during the US invasion of 1846-48 (pp. 112, 121). "General Edwin Sumner" should read "Colonel Edwin Sumner" because he did not attain the rank of general until the Civil War (p. 114); "Brigadier General Calhoun" should say "Brigadier General Carleton" (p. 124); and New Mexico's territorial governor, William Carr Lane, is incorrectly referenced as just "William Lane" (p. 114). The author discusses the pivotal Battle of Cieneguilla in 1854 but never actually names it, leaving the reader to infer this on their own (p. 116). Finally, the comment that professional troops left New Mexico at the beginning of the Civil War (p. 124) is inaccurate, because Colonel Edward R. S. Canby ignored the order to send the territory's federal troops back east in 1861, and the Confederacy had no troops there to recall at that time.

The book regains accuracy when it shifts back to Colorado and Utah after the Civil War. Jones details the rise of Ouray as the most influential tribal chief of his time, although she notes that he also served as "a tool the U.S. government used" to manage the Utes (p. 133). It was during Ouray's tenure in the late 1860s that federal agents began to assign their own band names to Ute subtribes like the Uncompahgre, Capote, Mouache, and Weeminuche, a process that applied tribal identities externally. Ouray also drew the ire of his followers for supporting the 1873 Brunot Agreement that drastically reduced the size of the tribe's Colorado reservation. Throughout this era, Utes still found themselves in widespread conflict with the region's prospectors and farmers, fighting the Black Hawk War with Utah's Mormons from 1865 to 1872 and then carrying out an infamous attack on Colorado's White River Agency in 1879. During this bloodletting they killed their meddlesome agent, Nathan Meeker, and symbolically drove a stake through the dead proselytizer's mouth. Outraged American settlers proclaimed "The Utes Must Go!" and their political representatives lobbied successfully for the expulsion of Colorado's Eastern Utes onto the Uintah and Ouray Reservations in Utah (p. 195).

Three disparate groups of Northern Utes, their official band identities concocted by outsiders, failed to coalesce in pan-Indian amity on their shared reservations and the War Department built Fort Duchesne there in 1886. These events marked a major tribal transition into the reservation era. Here the author emphasizes the impact of imposed tribal identities that categorized Utes into administratively manageable units for policy purposes, contributed to the removal of Indian children to boarding schools, and allowed for the application of land allotment following the 1887 Dawes Act. At this same moment, many Utes began practicing new religious movements like the Ghost Dance, Sun Dance, and Peyotism as a form of resistance to assimilation.

The twentieth century saw Ute participation in the Indian New Deal, as all three Ute tribes accepted—albeit through nefariously skewed votes—the Indian Reorganization Act's self-determination mandate and formed their own governments in what Jones calls "a rebirth of tribal sovereignty" (p. 296). Having gained "a new sense of pan-Indian awareness" as a result of shared military experiences during WWII, the Confederated Ute Tribe became the first group to secure a payout from the postwar Indian Claims Commission (ICC), receiving $32 million—the largest single sum ever doled out under the ICC—in the so-called "Big Ute Case" (p. 297). But in an adverse

twist this ushered in the new era of termination, effectively severing the tribe's wardship to the government, eliminating access to government benefits, and creating deep divisions in the three Ute subtribes as they fought over disbursement of their eight-figure windfall. The issue of Indian identity reared its head anew, as full-blood Utes embraced the concept of blood quantum to expel mixed-bloods and thereby block access to tribal funds. Noting that very few Utes participated in the Red Power Movement of the 1960s-70s, the final three chapters look at political, economic, and cultural change among the three Ute tribes from 1960 to the present.

A few factual errors aside, Sondra Jones's magnum opus is a monumental achievement in American Indian ethnohistory, ranking among the best tribal histories I have ever read. In addition to being the most complete and well-written study of the Utes, the author's consistent focus on mutable ethnic and cultural identity as a conceptual framework adds a layer of analytical sophistication, making this book much more than just another narrative study of one tribe.