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Essie's Story: The Life and Legacy of a Shoshone Teacher. By Esther Burnett Horne and Sally McBeth.

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eration. In the pages of *Daughters of the Buffalo Women*, the author explores cultural traits that were retained and those that were lost or discarded as the people adapted to their new situation on reservations.

An additional and intriguing element in the book is the author's ability to mix her own memories with those she interviewed. While this provides a cross-generational view, the women who tell their stories also compare the cultural traits of long ago to those of the transitional period and the present. In this way, the reader is exposed to the contrast among these three periods in Blackfoot cultural history. This contrast is best exposed during an interview with Molly Kicking Bird in which she speaks of the cultural introduction of cars and telephones. Her conclusion is full of traditional wisdom: "It's my thinking that the young people who live with all these modern things have a very easy life. But they are also poor because of it (pp. 131–132)." She is speaking of cultural complexity, which may be the book's major theme: although life in the past was full of hardships and difficulties, it was in many ways a more simple and rewarding way of living than the modern day.

The chapter titled "Going to Sit" is particularly fascinating because it provides a female view of the boarding school experience. It is interesting to note that the author's commentary on boarding schools is more critical than that of her mother who lived through the experience.

There is only one part of the book that seems out of place. The chapter concerning the boarding school nurse, Jane Megarry, does not reflect the thoughts, feelings, or perspectives of Indian women. However, her comments are interesting and do contribute to an overall understanding of the Indian school experience.

*Daughters of the Buffalo Women*, alongside Hungry Wolf's *The Ways of My Grandmothers*, should be incorporated into classes on Indian history, serving to inform the younger generation of Native people about the changes that occurred in the lives of Indian women throughout the twentieth century. It is unfortunate that this book could not have been larger, with more stories of this fascinating era of Indian history.

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**Essie's Story: The Life and Legacy of a Shoshone Teacher.** By Esther Burnett Horne and Sally McBeth. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. 225 pages. \$35.00 cloth; \$13.95 paper.

In *Essie's Story*, anthropologist Sally McBeth, author of *Ethnic Identity and the Boarding School Experience*, and Shoshone educator Esther Burnett Horne present an important example of collaborative autobiography as they tell the story of Horne's life. From the title page to the end, the book displays the importance its authors place on collaboration, mutual recognition, and academic openness and honesty. Sharing equal responsibility for the book's authorship is only the first of many strategies that Horne and McBeth use to

redefine the relationship between the Indian subject and white amanuensis that makes up the bicultural composition established by Arnold Krupat as the marker of the collaborative Indian autobiography. By combining an informed yet flexible use of the methods of collaborative autobiography with an engaging and important narrative, Horne and McBeth create an important addition to the library of American Indian autobiography, the boarding school narratives, and Indian women's life stories.

McBeth's critical introduction provides a detailed description of the methods that she and Horne used to create the memoir. From collecting and recording multiple versions of life events to a collaborative editing process that produced several drafts over a ten-year period, McBeth and Horne devoted themselves to dismantling the distinction between informant and ethnographer. McBeth notes, "The process had become much more important than the product, the dialogue more significant than the text" (p. xvii). This emphasis on process over product allowed both Horne and McBeth to shape the text according to their goals for an audience they mutually defined—both academic and non-academic readers interested in "oral traditions, in women's issues, in twentieth-century American Indian life, and in collaborative methodologies" (p. xxii).

By disclosing explicit information about their recording, transcribing, and editing methods, including an appendix that compares the transcript of Horne's taped telling of an event to the final version included in the book, McBeth highlights the plusses and minuses of the collaborative process. This reflection on and presentation of the process provides a model for future collaborations. McBeth's contextual information enables readers to understand the division of labor involved in the creation of the book and allows them to place Horne's story within the tradition of American Indian autobiographical studies. Clearly, the adjustment in the power discrepancy usually present in the production of an Indian autobiography allows Horne to play a much more active and equal role in telling and shaping her story. She is able to emphasize what she finds important or interesting about her experiences. In fact, her "Retrospective," which brings her narrative to a close, gives her an important opportunity to theorize the significance of her own story.

Unfortunately—as McBeth recognizes—"much of [Essie's] warmth and humor and her thoughtful reflections have been lost in the writing process" (p. xvi). The transcript in the appendix, as well as several humorous out-takes McBeth includes in her introduction, possess a far more playful and artistic use of language than the final product reflects. In their rigorous concern for accuracy and clarity, Horne and McBeth produced a narrative with more historical and anthropological value than literary merit. The prosaic tone of McBeth's introduction is present throughout the text. The loss of the playfulness of Horne's storytelling is, perhaps, the downside of the collaborative method. McBeth's and Horne's dialogic composing process resists the type of seamless cover-up often revealed in these type of texts. While this process has considerable benefits, the beauty of the language suffers.

Despite its occasional narrative flatness, the book provides important information about a remarkable woman's life. Esther Burnett Horne was born

in Idaho on 9 November 1909, the daughter of a Shoshone mother, Mildred Large, and a Scottish-Irish father, Finn Burnett, Jr. Horne begins her life story long before that date, however, with the history of her great-great-grandmother, Sacagawea. Horne is one of the firmest advocates of Shoshone oral tradition, which claims that long after she made her place in history by accompanying Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their expedition to the Pacific, Sacagawea returned to the Wind River Reservation where she lived among her Shoshone people until her death in 1884. Citing the stories and reminiscences passed down to her from her family, members of the tribe, and the larger community at Wind River, Horne defends her heritage against historians who claim that Sacagawea died in 1812. Appropriately, chapters about Sacagawea frame Horne's life story since, as she states, "the oral traditions of this woman have inspired me to hold on to my traditions" (p. 1).

Though she had a happy childhood, Horne's family life became troubled and impoverished after her father's death in 1922. Her home life had fallen apart by the time she and her siblings left for the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, then an off-reservation boarding school. Because of the problems she left behind, the BIA-run school was a source of stability for Horne. Her memories of her time at Haskell reflect a boarding school experience that was far less traumatic and negative than the experiences portrayed in most boarding school narratives. Horne thrived in the school environment, becoming a commissioned officer in the school's military-style student leadership. She reveled in the opportunity to meet Indian people from other tribes and she valued the sense of community the students shared, finding within it the "traditional values, such as sharing and cooperation [that] helped us to survive culturally at Haskell, even though the schools were designed to erase our Indian culture, values, and identities" (p. 33). She met her husband, Robert Horne, at school, and was especially affected by her two Native teachers—Ruth Muskrat Bronson and Ella Deloria. These women, who found ways to encourage the retention of tribal and Pan-Indian identities even within the school's rigid and oppressive system, became role models for Horne. She decided to make nurturing and supporting Indian students her life's work.

Horne had the uncommon experience of being part of the boarding school system as both a student and a teacher from 1924 until her retirement in 1965. *Essie's Story* makes its most important contribution by chronicling this dual experience during the turn of the century, a time period not often discussed in school histories. From her first teaching job at the Eufaula Creek Girls' Boarding School, where she used a cooperative, bilingual teaching technique, to her thirty-five-year sojourn at the Wahpeton Indian School in North Dakota, Horne was an innovative teacher who tirelessly strove to integrate Indian cultural materials and values into the boarding school curriculum. She was also a working mother and continued to teach even as she nursed her two infant daughters and cared for her family while her husband served in World War II. Her story gives insight into her teaching philosophy and her efforts to make boarding schools respectful of and responsive to Indian students. Often the only Indian faculty member in the school or at the many training sessions she led, Horne asserted her strength as a leader, working for change from within the system.

While turn-of-the-century boarding school students such as the Dakota author Zitkala-Sa asserted that the schools were “civilizing machine[s]” that caused their students “long-lasting death” by attempting to strip them of their cultures and tribal identities (*American Indian Stories*, 1985, pp. 66, 99), Horne argues that by 1982 boarding schools provided “cultural advantages” for their students, giving some of them “the first real contact that they had with their ethnic heritage” (p. 126). To Horne, the boarding school had become the protector, rather than the destroyer, of Indian identity. Acknowledging that her experience was different from the dominant evaluation of the schools, Horne emphasizes, “It has often been said that the boarding school created a generation of confused and lonely children. While this may be true for some, it does not ring true for many of us boarding school students. That is why I record this story” (p. 140).

Her life-long involvement in the system provides an unusual opportunity to examine the continuity and importance of the boarding school experience to Indian identity. Even a brief list of Horne’s prominent acquaintances who were associated with the schools—teacher, ethnographer, and author Ella Deloria; her colleagues at Wahpeton, Ralph and Rita Erdrich, parents of novelist and poet Louise Erdrich; and her students, American Indian Movement leaders Dennis Banks and Leonard Peltier—shows the centrality of the boarding schools to the Indian experience in the twentieth century. *Essie’s Story* is a consequential new resource that adds to our understanding of the legacy of the Indian boarding schools, the intricacies of one woman’s life, and the methods by which Indian autobiographies should be written.

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**First Person, First Peoples: Native American College Graduates Tell Their Life Stories.** Edited by Andrew Garrod and Colleen Larimore. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997. 250 pages. \$39.95 cloth; \$15.95 paper.

Recently the headmaster of a college preparatory school expressed to me his dismay that several Native Americans who had just gone on to college from his school had dropped out and returned to their communities. He was discouraged and was questioning whether recruiting Native students was worthwhile. In response, I bought *First Person, First Peoples* for him. With poignancy and forcefulness, this book communicates the struggles Native American youth experience in their transitions from home communities to predominantly Euramerican academic institutions. Although the book focuses on Native American students at Dartmouth College, the insights it offers are as relevant to secondary and postgraduate education. These first-person testimonies of indigenous peoples would be invaluable to a broad audience, including prospective Native students, administrators, and students and scholars in Native American studies who are interested in processes of cultural continuity and adaptation, resistance, and institutional oppression.