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Affairs, exercise of its trust role in the form of generous block grants, and the assumption by tribal governments of the full responsibility and risk of self-governance.

*James Lopach*  
University of Montana

**American Indian Population Recovery in the Twentieth Century.** Nancy Shoemaker. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000. 176 pages. \$16.95 paper.

The twentieth-century population history of American Indians is a relatively underdeveloped field of study. Before the welcome appearance of Shoemaker's study, the most extensive general treatment of the topic has been some chapters in Russell Thornton's excellent *American Indian Holocaust and Survival*. Most of the action in American Indian historical demography has been in the estimation of pre-Columbian population and analysis of the cause, timing, and magnitude of decline to the Indian population nadir at the end of the nineteenth century.

Recent understandings of twentieth-century Indian population growth have been dominated by the fact of the large increases in American Indian population attributable to increasing classification of mixed-ancestry Indians as Indians in Census enumeration after 1960. But, as Shoemaker observes, there is much more to understand about the twentieth-century recovery than that. By the beginning of the twentieth century, many Indian tribal populations had stabilized and begun at least a slow increase. Changing rates of fertility and mortality both contribute to Indian population growth. There is an important and largely untold story about these conventional components of population change.

One reason that the modern population history of indigenous Americans is not studied more often is the exasperatingly poor quality of available data. Analysis of American Indian population dynamics must confront serious data limitations—poor or nonexistent vital registration data, worse administrative data from the Indian Office/Bureau of Indian Affairs, variable Census undercounts, and inconsistent classification of race. The analysis of tribe and reservation-specific population histories raises additional difficulties: geographic mobility and inconsistent Census reporting practices with respect to reservation and tribal populations.

Shoemaker addresses these questions by careful mining of available Census data—for example, inferring life expectancy by Brass's method, inferring fertility from child-women ratios, and analyzing age at marriage and at starting and stopping fertility, birth intervals, and rates of childlessness. These methods are not perfect remedies for the data problems. When it comes to the manufacture of population-history silk purses, American Indian data are irremediable sow's ears. Thus the analysis is necessarily fragmentary and appropriately cautious rather than comprehensive and definitive.

Nonetheless, Shoemaker takes the data as far as they can go. Because of her efforts, we know much more than we did before about Native population changes.

One of the useful features of this book is its comparative framework. "Indian population" is, of course, a nebulous abstraction encompassing many diverse regional and tribal populations. Shoemaker compares population growth for five tribes: Navajo, Cherokee, Red Lake Ojibwas, Seneca, and Yakima. She asks whether different tribes experience different timings and patterns of vital rates and other components of population change. Having demonstrated in chapter two that tribes have different twentieth-century growth rates, she turns in chapter three to examining underlying similarities and differences in vital rates and their proximate determinants. Chapter four examines elements of social context that might explain the observed variation.

Probably the most useful finding from the study is that we learn how complex the explanation of changes in Indian-population dynamics can be. Shoemaker shows convincingly that the data reject simple modernization explanations of the sequences of population change. She finds that different combinations of components of change account for the different population dynamics of different tribes. For example, the Yakima and Seneca had a young age at marriage and first birth, high rates of childlessness, long birth intervals, young age for cessation of fertility, and relatively low fertility rates. The Cherokee and Ojibway had a long span of childbearing and higher fertility rates. The Cherokee encouraged intermarriage, adopted Western behaviors more rapidly than other tribes, and grew rapidly. The Navajo intermarried little, remained unassimilated—and also grew rapidly. There isn't a single pathway to the population recovery of each tribe, but a complex combination of mediating causes.

Chapter five, "Postscript to Recovery," examines Census microdata about the socioeconomic characteristics of the Census-identified American Indian population over the period from 1940 to 1980. Specific tribal histories drop out of the story for this chapter. The chapter provides a useful compendium of historical Census data about Indians, with comparison to the White and Black populations. The chapter documents the transformation of American Indians from internally colonized peoples living in reservation enclaves, to populations that increasingly commingled with other Americans. In this transformation, American Indians increasingly take on the social traits and behaviors characteristic of disadvantaged minorities. This chapter might do more to provide practical information than it does to address the impact of compositional shifts in the Census Indian population on the socioeconomic characteristics of this population. These shifts are acknowledged, but their import is largely ignored in the discussion. Nonetheless, this chapter, like the remainder of the book, is an informative guide to the demography of twentieth-century American Indian demography.