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reasons for the decline in American Indian sports participation in mainstream society since 1930. The blame is put squarely on society at large—for limiting opportunities to Indian athletes—and to a great extent on the Native American community's sense of isolation, alienation, and ambivalence towards the prospect of life off the reservation. "There are internal pressures to keep Indians on the reservation and to limit serious sports participation to the high school level and even lower. They also feel pressure from friends to remain and become a part of the traditional Indian community" (p. 269).

Though Oxendine concludes on a more upbeat note, pointing to several Lumbee Indians who made successful transitions to professional sports in the seventies and early eighties (Oxendine himself is a Lumbee who played professional baseball for three years before becoming chancellor of Pembroke State University), there is little doubt that the conflict between tradition and integration continues to be a concern for Native American athletes in the 1990s.

In his afterword from this recently published Bison Books paperback edition, Oxendine decries the continued lack of American Indian participation in non-Indian sports and cites the racism of sports iconography—the Atlanta Braves tomahawk chop, for instance—as a sign that the battle to achieve an even playing field for Native Americans is far from over.

*American Indian Sports Heritage* is an important book for scholars in search of data on Native American traditions and relatedness to sports and cultural integration. Other works of note include the aforementioned book by Wheeler (*Jim Thorpe: World's Greatest Athlete*) and Peter Nabokov's *Indian Running* (1981).

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**Corbett Mack: *The Life of a Northern Paiute*.** By Michael Hittman. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. 390 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$18.00 paper.

Native American autobiography and biography has been around for well over 150 years, describing as much the people and circumstances under which they were recorded as the person whose life was examined. The genre has evolved as a useful tool of historians, anthropologists, and Native Americans

for understanding an inside perspective of the American Indian experience, a view that can be gained in no other way. *Corbett Mack* follows in the dual roles of providing, in this case, a view of Northern Paiute culture while at the same time responding to an anthropologist's interest in showing the external influences that tore at its traditional fabric.

To understand the success and problems of this autobiography, the triad of context, text, and texture serves as jumping-off points. Let's take context first, looking at two other works that concern the Northern Paiute. In 1883 Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins published *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (Boston: Chalfant Press) which attempted to set straight the problems that had plagued the tribe since white contact. The "Princess," in the best tradition of nineteenth-century prose, outlined some of the major events involving her people and exposed the wrongs perpetrated in the name of civilization. Paiute manners and customs are sandwiched between events, but the more "earthy" side of life is never mentioned.

This is not as true in Lalla Scott's *Karnee, A Paiute Narrative* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1966) in which the subject, Annie Lowry, evokes more personal memories concerning her struggle as a mixed-blood, Paiute and white. Although passing references are made to problems with alcohol, sex, and conflict, the book takes a generally positive approach to the ideas and ideals of Paiute culture, dwelling on its value and minimizing its disruption by white society.

*Corbett Mack* moves in the other direction, emphasizing the dysfunctional life of a mixed-blood who lived from 1892 to 1974 in the Smith and Mason valleys of Nevada. The story had its genesis in the anthropological fieldwork (1965 to 1973) of a young graduate student, Michael Hittman. The project focused on ethnography to preserve traditional Paiute culture; Mack was among the oldest informants and became not only a vital source but a close friend of his interviewer. Emerging from this work were approximately two hundred hours of interview notes and audio tapes that describe eighty years of life in the Yerington Indian Colony of Mason Valley and surrounding area. The author emphasizes that what follows is not a carefully engineered narrative by a white man, such as is found in Winnemucca's *Life* or Lowry's *Karnee*, but a free-flowing, uncensored explanation of Corbett Mack's experience.

The text is organized into eight large chapters with 159 subtitles and an accompanying 125 pages of notes and appendices.

Indeed, reading this book, in a sense, is like reading two books—the main body being Mack's unvarnished narrative told as an oral report, often in broken English with Paiute words interspersed. The other part is Hittman's scholarly voice providing background and explanatory comments on what Mack has said. Each part of the text depends on the other.

In summarizing the recurrent patterns, one finds three major elements continuously surfacing. The most prominent one is that of substance abuse—alcohol and opiates. According to Mack, this was his and other Paiutes' consuming desire. His response to grinding poverty and a disrupted culture took the form of working for Italian farmers for homemade wine or trading with the Chinese for opiates. Page after page recounts how labor and money (if the latter ever changed hands) went to support these habits of addiction.

Another problem that accompanied alcoholism and drug addiction was the unbridled sex among members of the Paiute tribe as well as prostitution in the white community. Fidelity in marriage, as portrayed in *Karnee*, has been replaced with a permissiveness that may shock readers. Sexual conquests are treated lightly, as a matter of course.

Accompanying this was witchcraft used as a supernatural means to punish unwanted interlopers or people who gained power over others. Mistrust, fear, and death took their toll on the social fabric of the community. Lengthy sections of the text report how certain men attacked entire families using witchcraft for revenge and control. Retaliation and countermeasures fueled the conflicts, adding to the death and controversy taking place within the band. All of this fails to create a comforting picture.

Mack's life history is set against the backdrop of intense labor exploitation for the lowest wages possible under the crudest conditions. Whether it is the white ranchers, the Italian potato farmers, the Chinese drug runners, or the Paiutes themselves, everyone appears to be out to gouge his or her neighbor. As one travels with Corbett through this difficult existence, it is just as difficult to keep in mind that it covered not only the early 1900s but continued right up until he died in 1974. Hittman suggests that he avoided writing about Corbett's life for some time because it was so painful, but finally he decided it was a story that needed to be told.

Is the whole story just too stark, or are there positive elements that emerge from the Paiute's life? Throughout the narrative are scattered interesting aspects about kinship, naming

procedures, ceremonies, mythology, and historic figures like Jack Wilson (Wovoka—prominent in the Ghost Dance religion of the 1880s to 1890s). For a person specializing in some of these topics in Paiute culture, there are wonderful nuggets of understanding to be mined, but this is not the major thrust of the work. Most of Mack's time is spent recounting his life of dissipation and hard toil.

The book's texture is derived from the interviews themselves. At times it is difficult sledding as one struggles to decipher Mack's thoughts recorded in fragmentary sentences and poor grammar—exactly what one encounters in dialogue as opposed to the written word. A short sample provides a feeling for what it is like:

Says he's chief, been on that Churchill [1860 Pyramid Lake] War. And Winnemucca natsee say no bullet can hurt my grandfather [i.e., bulletproof], neither. No sir! Got his horse at Desert Creek—'cause there's plenty salt and pasture there.... Get [captures] 'em by that old way too: puttin out ongabee [salt]. But they're not real mustang he catch. No sir! Some kind wild horse. ... Different kind poogoo from what we got.... And same way my grandfather, he teach Big Mack to ride, how to throw that rope underhand style.... (p. 35)

For those used to reading oral interviews, this texture may not be a problem, but for the average reader, it becomes laborious.

What, then, is the book's contribution to understanding? Hittman and Mack provide a well-documented account of exploitation and drug abuse. Particularly interesting is the information about the Chinese and Paiute relationship, since both were marginal to the white community. All three groups took advantage of the others' dependent plight, something that few scholars have examined in this light.

Another important aspect is Hittman's recording of past events, personalities, and beliefs, since Mack's life spanned a number of generations during which rapid technological and social change became the norm. (Imagine living from 1892 through two World Wars and a national depression to the landing on the moon.) What is interesting is that his life never seemed to waiver or feel the effects of what were considered

national milestones by many people. Life on the reservation just marched to a different beat.

A final contribution comes from an insider's view of what it meant to be a Paiute during very trying circumstances. It was a difficult life and one that, some would argue, was wasted. To a public that strives for "political correctness" and "cultural sensitivity," this work is unsettling. For romantics who fantasize about Native American culture, it is a bitter pill to swallow. And for those who want to escape the demands of today's life for a more perfect world in the past, this is not the book to read. It is, in a phrase, stark reality.

*Corbett Mack* is an honest accounting of a man's life. Although it may not be the type that one would seek, it is still a part of the human experience and should be recognized for its value. On the other hand, Mack's struggle, to Hittman, represented that of an "Everyman" in the Paiute tribe (p. 8). Based on my experience in working with a Southern Ute/Paiute faction, I can only partly agree. True, there may be many who live a life similar to Mack's, but there are also many who rise above the fray and lead a happier life. This is not to suggest that writers should fabricate life history, but only that there are better examples upon which to place the title of Everyman. There has to be a more even ground—somewhere between Sarah Winnemucca and Corbett Mack—that spawns hope for the future from pride in the past.

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**Cree Legends and Narratives from the West Coast of James Bay.**

By C. Douglas Ellis. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1995. 554 pages. \$75.00 cloth; set of six cassette tapes \$65.00.

The last decade has seen serious efforts on the part of linguists involved with Algonquian languages to provide published versions of oral literature. In particular, the University of Manitoba has provided high-quality bilingual versions of Plains Cree and Ojibwe texts, for instance those edited by Freda Ahenakew and H.C. Wolfart. In addition, the journal *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* has introduced a new series of publications dedicated to literature in an aboriginal language without translation. As part of the Manitoba series, Douglas Ellis