

way of life for all the birds and animals. Opler remarks that "The story attests to the detailed knowledge of the Jicarilla concerning the habits and appearance of the wild life of the region..." (p.349).

In an introduction Rushforth points out that the close correlation Opler finds between myth and behavior is based mostly on Apache reports of earlier behavior. While noting that the Jicarilla with whom Opler talked had had to deal with great changes in their lives, Rushforth sets forth the limits of the intellectual context within which Opler worked quite fairly. He ends by using one of Opler's own accounts to indicate how change has brought both anthropologists and Native Americans to new kinds of relationships.

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Reference

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Oxendine, Joseph B.: *American Indian Sports Heritage*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995. (Reprint of 1988 Edition.) ISBN 0-8032-8609-0 Paper USA \$16.95

Deerfoot, John Levi, Tom Longboat, Oren Lyons, Billy Mills, Louis Sockalexis, Louis Tewanima, Jim Thorpe, Gus Welch.

Recognize any of these names? If you don't know these Native athletes now, you will certainly become acquainted with them and their various accomplishments in sport while reading *American Indian Sports Heritage*. Joseph Oxendine, a Lumbee who has both played professional baseball and published in the sport-related areas of motor learning and sport psychology, set out to write this book because of his concern for Native youth:

...I became convinced that providing visibility to Indian sports heroes, past and present, as role models might serve to promote pride and ambition among young people on that

reservation. Developing a greater awareness of the strong Indian sports tradition might also contribute to a sense of community pride (p.ix).

The structure of his book reflects this intent. Oxendine develops an awareness of the Indian sports tradition by taking the reader first through sports and games in traditional Indian life (Chapters 1 to 6), then examining the emergence of Indians in modern sport (Chapters 7 to 11), and finishing with recent developments (Chapters 12 to 14 and the Afterword). Clear throughout this historical treatise is the integral place of sports and games in the lives of Native peoples. Oxendine also provides visibility for select Native sports heroes through the inclusion of fifty-one short biographies, as well as an entire chapter on Jim Thorpe, who was named the greatest male athlete of the first half century in 1950 by the Associated Press (p.231). This book will certainly dispel the myth that Native athletes have not been successful at national and international levels in sport.

Oxendine makes many contributions to our understanding of Native sports, and sports more generally, through this book. While there are a number of classic texts on traditional Native games and sports, and other books on particular Native athletes (or sports involving Native athletes), this is the only comprehensive text on American Native sports. It is easily read, and the historical and contemporary photos are themselves worthy of further analysis. Oxendine builds his case for why Native athletes, prominent at the turn of the century, waned in numbers after the 1930s: opportunities for sport skill development decreased, opportunities for participation were restricted, and Native interest in competing with non-Natives decreased (p.261). This is an interesting explanation, worthy of more extensive examination. In addition, his Afterword (included in the paperback version) on Indian mascots is an important contribution missing from the 1988 publication.

There are, however, several caveats which must be attached to this book. It is narrow in focus—the athletes you will read about are largely “American” rather than North American, with Alaskan Indians and Inuit ignored altogether. The athletes who are discussed have, at minimum, achieved national or international success in mainstream sport; they have thus, according to Oxendine, attained “widespread recognition within the non-Indian population” (p.241). This limitation leaves out other important “non-mainstream” Native role models including athletes active in all-Native settings (such as National Indian Activities Association competitions) and in contemporary traditional competitions (such as snow snake or hand games).

Additionally, women athletes are virtually invisible. They warrant a five-page section in the first chapter, and only an occasional reference elsewhere. For example, in the chapter on sport programs at the Carlisle and Haskell schools, no mention is made concerning girls' involvement in sports, despite the earlier inclusion (without comment) of three photos of women doing physical activity at Indian schools (pp.179, 180). Oxendine notes early on that "The majority of reports clearly indicate that women participated in sports as seriously and with as much integrity as did the men" (p.24); surely, then, the absence of women athletes in his accounts of modern sport deserved at least rudimentary analysis. Native women will be disappointed when they search to find female role models between the pages of this book!

There is also no mention made of traditional Native dance ceremonies, pow wows, or rodeos, reinforcing the artificial distinctions made among different forms of Native physical cultural practice. From Oxendine's account, the reader cannot glean the ways that non-Natives reinforced select cultural practices (such as sport) while suppressing other cultural practices (such as the potlatch), even though this relationship is central to any understanding of non-Native efforts to shape Native cultural practices.

Finally, there are occasional mistakes or contradictions in the book. For example, Oxendine notes that Billy Mills was inducted into the American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame in 1978 (p.277), then in 1973 (p.291) (the correct date is 1978). As well, he incorrectly claims that lacrosse was made Canada's national game in the mid 1800s (pp.38;165), an error which has been made by many other sport historians as well. Mistakes such as these, while small, should make the reader cautious about the accuracy of the facts presented in this text. This book is a place to begin an understanding of Native peoples' involvement in sport, but should not be seen as the definitive word on this subject.

Nevertheless, Bison Books has performed a service for readers interested in a little-known aspect of Native life. *American Indian Sports Heritage* was first released in hardback in 1988 at a price which largely prohibited widespread readership.

This 1995 paperback release, with the addition of an Afterword discussing the issue of Indian mascots, should ensure that the text—and thus this topic generally—receives more exposure. The lack of articles concerned with Native sport in scholarly journals is symptomatic of the general neglect this area has received to date. Much more needs to be done on this topic;

you can be sure, however, that Oxendine's work will remain a well-used, well-referenced text within that process.

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Parins, James and Daniel Littlefield, Jr. (Editors): *Ke-ma-ha: The Omaha Stories of Francis La Flesche*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995, ISBN 0-8032-2910-0 Cloth USA \$27.50.

Francis La Flesche is best known as a Native American ethnographer. His renditions of Omaha and Osage sacred texts are still among the finest accounts of First Nations ceremonial language available to us. For a time he also wrote fiction and autobiography, but gave it up in favor of ethnography after 1901. His account of his boyhood experience in a Presbyterian mission school, *The Middle Five*, is well known. His short stories, however, remained largely unpublished or out of print until many of them were brought together by James W. Parins and Daniel F. Littlefield Jr. They represent, the editors tell us, "only an interlude in the development of a remarkable Omaha intellect" (p.xxxiv).

Parins and Littlefield suggest that La Flesche "lacked the intensity of literary skill" necessary for a successful literary career (p.xx). His work, they say, "is full of brilliant beginnings, bright flashes of language, and narrative fits and starts that rarely move to climax or conclusion" (p.xxi). Despite this warning, I found myself reading the stories as successfully interconnected Native American narratives rather than as failed works of Western fiction lacking the expected genre conventions of climax and conclusion. What La Flesche may not have accomplished in any particular story, the editors make possible by presenting a group of them under a single cover. Together, these stories bring the reader close to the "brilliant beginnings [and] bright flashes of language" that characterize Native American oral tradition. They are a circle of interconnected narratives, not a single narrative line leading to denouement.

The collection begins with adaptations of traditional Omaha stories, some of which La Flesche himself translated for James Owen Dorsey between 1870 and 1881. Comparing the Dorsey versions with those of La Flesche is instructive. Dorsey's free translation of "The Bird Chief" begins: