

Morgan, Lewis Henry: *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997, (Reprint of 1871 edition.) ISBN: 0-8032-8230-3 Paper USA \$38.00

This is a reissue of a pioneering book written by an influential social theorist of the 19th century who made significant contributions to the study of Indigenous peoples in North America and elsewhere in the world.

Lewis Henry Morgan was born November 21, 1818 on a farm in central New York State. He trained in the law, setting up practice in Rochester, New York in 1844. However, he soon became fascinated with the Iroquoian speaking peoples of New York State. Fieldwork, particularly among the Tonowanda Seneca, resulted in his *League of the Ho-de no-sau-nee, or Iroquois* in 1851. By the late 1850s his interests had focused on kinship, a subject which was to engage him up to his death in 1881. The revelation that Seneca kinship was different from his own led him to seek comparative data on kinship from the Ojibwa, other Native American peoples during four trips west of the Mississippi, and from individuals in New York State familiar with the kinship of peoples elsewhere in the world. He developed a questionnaire which he sent to missionaries, Indian agents and others from whom he requested information about kinship practices throughout the world. He was able to obtain the information he wished from Central America, South America and Africa and, to a lesser extent, North America, Oceania and Asia. This work culminated in 1871 in his *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*.

*Systems* spans more than 600 pages, much of which is raw data. This is fortunate, for much of his theory is outdated. Morgan considered that two fundamental forms of kinship existed. Descriptive systems of kinship, on the one hand, distinguish different kin one from another by assigning different kin terms to them. Classificatory systems of kinship, on the other hand, equate genetically distinct kin by assigning a single kin term to them. Morgan hypothesized an evolutionary development of marriage and family from one form of kinship to another. *Systems* makes thorough use of the comparative method in which societies are compared one with another in regard to the subject matter under study.

Elizabeth Tooker, herself an eminent scholar of Iroquoian peoples, has written an informative 13 page introduction to this 1997 reissue of Morgan's text. Tooker locates Morgan's work in the context of 19th-century theorists of cultural evolution such as Lubbock, McLennan and Tyler. Although Morgan did not invent kinship as a subject of study, *Systems* gave kinship such an empirical and conceptual focus that the subject matter has been considered central ever since. Subsequent writers developed the study of

kinship in new ways. Kroeber considered kinship to be the result of underlying principles such as "same versus different generation," "lineal versus collateral relations," and so on. W.H.B. Rivers saw the form of kinship in a particular society as shaped by social conditions in the society external to kinship. At mid-century George Peter Murdock, Claude Lévi-Strauss and subsequently componential analysts such as Ward Goodenough and Floyd Lonsbury made contributions. Today, kinship remains a subject which, even though it is imperfectly understood, is recognized to be front and center as a foundation of society. It is a subject which unites such seemingly unrelated matters as, for example, economy, politics, zoology, and religion.

It is Lewis Henry Morgan's *Systems* which gelled kinship into the deservedly important subject it is recognized to be. Morgan's conception of kinship systems and his hypotheses of evolution from one form into another are no longer considered valid. Yet, his statement of kinship as a subject matter is unreservedly correct. The data he amassed and which are reproduced in this book are still interpretable as useable data. This is, in many different ways, a remarkable book written by a remarkable pioneer who had the wisdom and intellect to carve out a new subject area.

This reissue of *Systems*, with its informative introduction by Elizabeth Tooker, will be a welcome addition to the holdings of many libraries and individuals.

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Opler, Morris Edward: *An Apache Life-Way: The Economic, Social, and Religious Institutions of the Chiricahua Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996 (Reprint of 1941 edition), ISBN 0-8032-8610-4 Paper USA \$22.50.

Long considered a classic of Native American ethnography, Opler's book is still an important resource for those interested in the Apache and the southwestern United States. Divided into chapters representing different phases in the Chiricahua Apache "life-way", the book attempts to depict, as Opler puts it, "how a person becomes a Chiricahua". Significant not only for the encyclopedic breadth of material it contains, it is also an important