

this can in turn improve communication or the identities of both groups is less demonstrable. It was also not clear which segments of each society would be a party to this improved communication. As written, it appears, although it is not stated, that the focus is on communication between academics rather than educating the general population. Clarifying this question would allow a better consideration of the intent of the seminar.

In detailing the history of communication, the book goes a long way toward accomplishing the goal of cross-cultural understanding between Afro-Americans and Liberians with some mention of other African societies. This brings up one of the noticeable shortcomings mentioned in one paper, the limited information on the vast majority of African societies. While focusing on one country can reflect the complexities within that society, it does not reflect the diversity or complexity of African societies as a whole.

— Judith O'Dell

**Julie Cruikshank, in collaboration with Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned. *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990) xvi, 404 pp., \$50.00 cloth.**

*Life Lived Like a Story*, a volume in the American Indian Lives Series, contains the transcribed autobiographies of three women of the Yukon: Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned. In her introduction, Cruikshank states that the book is “based on the premise that life-history investigation provides a model for research.” To meet this goal, Cruikshank’s methodology depended upon ongoing collaborations between interviewer and interviewees. The three remarkable women who share their life stories in this volume were all raised on the inland side of the high country frontier separating coastal Tlingit and interior Athapaskans; all can claim both Athapaskan and Tlingit ancestry; and all were born within a few years of the Klondike gold rush (1896-98), a period at the close of an intensive period of Tlingit-Athapaskan trade and a period of unprecedented change. Cruikshank, with her careful attention to methodology, language, and the wishes of her subjects, has produced a volume of autobiographies that uses an oral tradition grounded in local speech and a shared body of mythological and traditional knowledge. The genre successfully captures the essence of each of these three women’s lives—the hardships as well as the humor—and the genre also underscores the recurring theme of connection to both nature and other people.

The first part on Angela Sidney contains seventeen sections that combine traditional stories and songs juxtaposed with fragments of Sidney’s life, such as reflections on her marriage and her children. Sidney begins her family’s history, her *Shagoon*, with first her mother’s clan history, then her father’s, then her husband’s, since this is the correct way to tell a Shagoon in a matrilineal society.

Section four is a compilation of “Stories from My Parents’ Time,” which includes “Skookum Jim’s Frog Helper” and “Good Luck Lady.” In section nine, Sidney remembers the last big *Dak’aweidi* potlatches held in 1912 and 1914. Section eleven recounts Sidney’s puberty seclusion and her feeling of being cheated by the minimizing of the ritual, which was not as strict, formal, or long in duration as tradition dictated. Sidney’s concern with finding a balance between the old and new ways preoccupies her narrative; traditional stories used in her narrative help to resolve these contradictions. According to Sidney, “My stories are my wealth,” and she realizes the significance of traditional stories to future descendants.

Part two of *Life Lived Like a Story* uses the same genre to tell the story of Kitty Smith, but again, the organizational strategy and final format are left up to the oral skills and goals of the interviewee. Smith defines herself as “old-fashioned,” yet she has led a remarkable and independent life. She left her first husband (and returned to her mother’s people around Marsh Lake) and barely focusses on him in her narrative; instead, her narrative develops her skill as a trapper, her economic independence, her travels, and her friendships with other women. Section ten contains three short sketches that explore various complex perspectives on a woman alone and a woman’s social and cultural roles. Smith uses dialogue skillfully in her narrative, firmly believing in the power of stories to teach; a recurring theme is the bond between a grandmother and a grandchild.

Part three—Annie Ned’s narrative—is the least likely to come close to Western notions of a life history or an autobiography. Ned’s account has as its central idea that “spoken words are infused with power that increases in value with repetition” (which led to this being the most edited account in the book). Unlike the accounts of Sidney and Smith, Ned centers her genealogy on her father’s people at Hutshi (her mother died when she was very young), and she identifies exclusively with her interior Athapaskan origins. She also uses more formal speeches and songs rather than traditional stories to explain events, which distances her more from the narrative. Sections one, three, five, and seven contain family history and secular personal accounts, while sections two, four, six, and eight contain the stories, songs, and oratory constituting her “explanations” for these events.

Cruikshank has carefully and faithfully transcribed narratives of women whom she obviously respects and with a methodology that is consistent and thorough. She includes genealogy charts for each of the women and linguistic notes for the Tlingit and Tagish and Southern Tutchone alphabets. In addition, her annotated notes are both illuminating to the text and cite other important works. Cruikshank also includes a glossary of Native terms and a fairly extensive bibliography. Her introductions before the life stories of each of the women are thorough and interpretive; however, they leave little to the imagination in their commentary. A reader would probably be more delighted in the narratives if he/she read Cruikshank’s commentary after the words of the women themselves. Overall, the stories of these three women are as remarkable in form as they are in content. As Cruikshank points out in a discussion of cultural constructions,

the distinction made by social sciences between “expressive forms” and “adaptive strategies” may be inappropriate to cultures where storytelling is central. According to Cruikshank, researchers can draw on Native oral traditions to reconstruct a more balanced and accurate picture of the past in general and women’s roles in particular.

— Laurie Lisa  
Arizona State University

**Raymond J. DeMallie and Douglas R. Parks, eds. *Sioux Indian Religion: Tradition and Innovation*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988) viii, 243 pp., \$9.95 paper.**

Most of the papers included in this anthology were presented in Bismarck in 1982 at a conference entitled “American Indian Religion in the Dakotas: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.” The conference was funded by the North Dakota Humanities Council and brought together a wide array of academicians and lay people representing different and sometimes conflicting experiential and philosophical points of view.

The subject matter of this collection has been dealt with extensively. Readily available publications present both insiders’ and outsiders’ views of this cultural aspect of the Lakota and Dakota Indians. Among the more notable are *Black Elk Speaks* by John Neihardt, *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk’s Teaching Given to John G. Neihardt* edited by Raymond DeMallie, *Land of the Spotted Eagle* by Luther Standing Bear, *Lame Deer; Seeker of Visions* by John Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes, *Oglala Religion and Yuwipi: Vision and Experience in Oglala Ritual* by William K. Powers, and James R. Walker’s *Lakota Belief and Ritual* edited by Raymond DeMallie and Elaine Jahner. With this sort of coverage, one might ask, “Why another book on Sioux Indian religion?”

The answer to this question is quite apparent when one reads through the papers edited by DeMallie and Parks. This compilation offers not only an interesting review of information on Sioux religion, but also a number of thought-provoking insights into the interface of traditional rituals with contemporary practices, including those of Christianity. The interdisciplinary framework incorporates perspectives from anthropology, history, medicine, religious studies, literature, and art. The canons and analyses of scholars (both American Indian and Euro-American) are juxtaposed against the personal convictions and experiences of non-academic specialists. The strange bedfellows include a traditional medicine man, the keeper of a sacred pipe bundle, a bishop of the Native American Church, an Episcopal priest, a Catholic missionary priest, and a Protestant minister. The extraordinary eclecticism of the book is intellectually exciting in itself.

Following the editors’ introductory chapter, the book is divided into three substantive sections. The first part is comprised of chapters dealing with the