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**James Wilson. *The Earth Shall Weep: A History of Native America*.
New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999. 496 pp.**

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Despite worldwide interest in Native Americans and their histories, there exist few general textbooks covering these peoples and their past. Most scholars have, instead, devoted their investigations to regional, tribal, or topical studies. While informative, these works fail to synthesize the histories of diverse groups and different eras. They also lack comprehensive explanations of the factors and events that weave disparate indigenous peoples together. Though publications such as Colin Calloway's *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History* (1999) indicate that this trend may be changing, overall there remains a scarcity of general surveys that evaluate the major trends and catalysts in Native American history from pre-European centuries to the present.

James Wilson's *The Earth Shall Weep: A History of Native America* serves as an exceptional model of both synthesis and informative overview that should help alleviate this situation. Pursuing an interdisciplinary approach to his subject, the author capably delivers a detailed synopsis of Native Americans and their existence in North America from the ancient period to the late twentieth century. Organizing his study through first a regional, and then a chronological perspective, Wilson succeeds in encapsulating the multiple pasts of millions of people in less than 500 pages. In the process he integrates previous conclusions on different groups and periods with new theories on events and policies developed as late as the 1990s. At the book's conclusion, the reader has been exposed to the primary issues with which Native Americans have dealt in both the distant and recent past.

Wilson's research is exhaustive and it is apparent throughout the book that he has extensively utilized his journalistic skills to obtain vast amounts of previously unrevealed evidence. In addition to consulting prominent historical and anthropological studies, the author relies on numerous personal interviews amassed through years of interaction with native peoples. By revealing contemporary Indians' perceptions of their past, he adds a perspective commonly lacking in earlier general histories. Also valuable are the many insights into previous occurrences that the author extracts from modern Native American literature. Wilson convincingly uses passages found in the writings of people such as N. Scott Momaday, Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko and Joy Harjo to better explain native perceptions of history and obtain "the feel of contemporary Native American life" (449).

The author's greatest contribution is his willingness and ability to integrate both academic scholarship and Native American oral traditions to achieve an understanding of the past. Though modern ethnohistorians routinely adopt this approach in their studies, past authors of general surveys, especially those writing prior to the 1960s, refused to accept oral accounts as methodologically valid. Not only does Wilson incorporate them into his evaluations, he often uses them as the core of his arguments.

Emphasizing the limitations of the written word, the author unveils new perspectives and origination points for evaluating the past that should reshape paradigms for general Native American histories in the future.

On occasion, however, Wilson's use of sources is questionable. He relies excessively on the conclusions and evidence of a few select historians, including Vine Deloria, Jr. and Mel Thom, to substantiate his assertions. Many readers, particularly academics, may question the prudence of relying on these authors, especially in light of their highly provocative styles and controversial reputations. Regardless, excessive dependence on any one source undermines the scholarly integrity and intellectual legitimacy of any historical investigation.

The book also suffers from structural problems. Wilson's regional approach during the second section of the book obviates problems associated with the length of time being covered, but also obscures much vital information. Chapters focus on specific regions from the time of European contact until the twentieth century. Unfortunately, some readers may fail to make significant connections between certain events due to this regional breakdown. Pan-Indian movements such as the Northwest Indian Confederacy (1786-1794) and trans-regional events such as Removal encompassed various Indians from multiple locales. The author's focus distorts the impact of such occurrences and fails to convey how certain ideas and policies transcended geographical boundaries. In addition, Wilson's treatment of the twentieth century, though valuable in places, is unbalanced as a whole. He provides little information on Native Americans from the turn of the century to the Great Depression, implying that very little of historical note affected North American Indians between the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 and Collier's New Deal of the 1930s.

These criticisms, however, should not detract from the overall value of this work. Wilson has produced a book that should challenge future authors hoping to create concise yet pedagogically sound general surveys of Native American history. His investigative approach and multidisciplinary perspective allow readers to gain a more balanced, yet complex view of indigenous peoples and their past. This work should be read by anyone hoping to gain a clear, informative introduction to North America's first peoples.

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