

Sitting Bull literally witnessed the demise of the buffalo herds that supported the nomadic way of life of the 19th-century Lakota people. Utley writes persuasively about the combination of forces that drove Sitting Bull south, indicating that hunger ultimately caused him to lead what remained of his group back to the United States.

For the context of his story, Utley sketches a picture of how Lakota groups lived and moved about on the High Plains. He provides some ethnographic details such as the organization of the seven traditional tribal divisions of the Lakota people. Utley's epilogue hints at, but does not fully explain, the linkage between the shooting and killing of Sitting Bull by Indian police of the Standing Rock Reservation at his home near Grand River, South Dakota, on December 15, 1890, and the massacre 14 days later by the United States Seventh Cavalry at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, of over 250 Lakota people under the leadership of Big Foot (*Si Tanka*).

Overall, the narrative that Utley presents of Sitting Bull's life reveals a certain detachment that in my opinion makes his description and analysis of events appear somewhat dry, given his exciting subject. He might have depicted in more lively human terms the efforts of Sitting Bull to protect his people from Euro-American encroachment, to preserve Lakota culture and, finally, to muster some semblance of continued leadership on the reservation by sanctioning the Ghost Dance. We are not genuinely brought to feel the ongoing anguish for his people that Sitting Bull must certainly have experienced. To Utley's credit, however, we are brought to understand and appreciate the untenable situations in which Sitting Bull found himself.

### **Approaching the Past: Historical Anthropology through Irish Case Studies**

Marilyn Silverman and P.H. Gulliver, eds.

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Few edited volumes in the social anthropology of Ireland can match the breadth and depth that this collection has achieved. It combines six historical case studies of local Irish society and culture with three theoretically informed overviews of the many overlapping interests and concerns of the anthropologists, geographers, sociologists and historians of Ireland. All chapters address the book's themes, which are laid out by the editors in an intelligent, comprehensive and provocative style in the volume's introduction. This introduction, written in a refreshingly personal and reflexive manner, uses the editors' experiences as ethnographers and historians in rural Ireland as an introduction to the difficulties of situating localities in Ireland within the wider contexts of regional and national history and historiography. An equally important goal of the editors, however, and perhaps a more interesting one to scholars beyond Ireland, is to use these Irish cases to explore the ways all localities have a past and a history, and the ways these histories both affect the present and are meaningful in local people's contemporary lives. In fact this volume's introduction is as clear a review of the development and present state of the art of anglophone historical anthropology as exists anywhere in the literature. It also stands as a baseline review of the value of history and ethnography in locality studies in Europe, and the benefits of historical anthropology

for comparative interdisciplinary approaches to local societies and cultures. In so doing, the editors do not shrink from either pointing out the difficulties and tensions inherent in doing research which crosses disciplinary boundaries nor do they avoid highlighting some of the weaknesses in their own, often difficult, approaches to historical ethnography (for example, when the chapters by Marilyn Silverman and Joan Vincent threatened to become overwhelming due to the insistence on adherence to chronology and holism, or when the editors reflexively wonder about the role of "power" in anthropological views of history and society).

Unlike so many other edited volumes, this meaningful introduction is followed by nine chapters which all address the themes of the volume. As editors and readers know, this is no mean feat. Although all the chapters are worthy of individual note, I choose here to single out the case studies. Joan Vincent examines the culture of death in a Northern Irish county during the famine year of 1847. Marilyn Silverman investigates the impact of the privatization of property on a number of levels of Irish society in the 19th century. Lawrence Taylor's overview of religious discourse in Donegal in the last century has clear relevance to contemporary religious beliefs in Ireland. P.H. Gulliver's account of the relations between shopkeepers and farmers over the last century is an important addition to our understanding of class in rural Ireland. Donna Birdwell-Pheasant also adds to debates on modern Irish society through her historical analysis of the stem family in Kerry. The geographer William Smyth examines the limits to documentary research in locality studies, as well as the need for interdisciplinary collaboration.

I do not wish to suggest that these cases, and the more general chapters by Joseph Ruane, Nicholas Rogers and Samuel Clark, have no omissions or weaknesses. One, for instance, is the rather arbitrary and unclear distinction between historical ethnography and the anthropology of history which the editors posit in their introduction. But the overall high quality of the volume may reduce such cautions to quibbling. At the least, this book provides a clever, provocative and important beginning in a more integrated approach to the study of locality, history, culture and power in Ireland. At the most, it may serve as a model for local historical and anthropological studies elsewhere in Europe, if not the world.