

ity or solidarity beyond their leisure and work circles. This would seem to be the next research step.

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### **Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies**

Katherine Pettipas

Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1994. xiv + 304 pp. \$39.95 (cloth)

Reviewer: Cath Oberholtzer

Trent University

As the powerful Thunder Beings roared and rent the sky, *kisikaw-awasis*, "Flash-in-the-Sky Boy," was born. The year was 1816 and this newborn infant (later renamed Piapot) grew to be a strong political and spiritual leader for his peoples in their resistance to governmental and missionary forces designed to quell Native spirituality on the Canadian Prairies.

This dramatic opening immediately draws the reader into the Native viewpoint, not only aligning our sympathies with the Native voice of tribal history, but also opening windows onto the social and spiritual setting of individual groups, and into the environmental setting of the prairies in the early nineteenth century. By examining the experiences of the Plains Cree from the 1870s to 1951, Pettipas exposes the persistence of religious practices despite missionary pressures to change, and the enactment of judiciary laws forbidding them. As Pettipas so poignantly declares, "It is time the story was told" (p. 16).

In relating the story, Pettipas gives life and meaning to what at times might otherwise be very dry reading. Using clear and precise language, she has incorporated a large corpus of archival documents into succinct statements. By deftly establishing the embedding and subsuming of Native religious expression within a form acceptable to Canadian administrators, both government policies and missionary endeavours are given a context, a context which in this case explains Euro-Canadian concerns and viewpoints vis-à-vis the Native situation at each stage.

Each chapter moves chronologically from the initial efforts of the Canadian government to sever the ties that bound every Native to each other, to the ultimate reversal when the notion, "severing the ties that bind," refers to the Native efforts to cut loose from the White suppression of Native spirituality, and to restore, through spiritual teachings and ceremonies, the traditional ideological bonds (p. 231).

During the period of colonial expansion from 1870 to the turn of the century, the Natives, viewed as impediments to progress, became dependent victims of the *Canadian Indian Act of 1876*. In their haste to transform "Indians" into "Canadians" through this hegemonic device, administrators were endowed with inordinate amounts of authority and power. Foremost was the repression of Native religious practices, for it was perceived—most astutely—by non-Natives that these practices were fundamental to Cree identity and critical for maintaining "the ties that bind."

As the push for settlement intensified, the two cultures clashed; Cree independence changed to wardship under the control of the federal government. Religious repression, particularly in the regulation of Sun Dances and Giveaways, and laws preventing movement between reserves incited the Natives into non-violent forms of resistance.

For the most part, resistance was expressed in truncated or modified versions of group rituals, or in extreme cases in secret performances. To demonstrate government power, a number of Cree leaders, including Piapot, were arrested and incarcerated for their persistence in following their own religion. Only recently have the once-forbidden rituals come full-circle, effecting the restoration of the traditional ideology.

Pettipas is to be applauded for a very fine publication. This is an important book for scholars of Native American culture, religion, and history. As such, it addresses innumerable issues, comprehensively and sensitively presenting meaningful information that is otherwise accessible only by means of extensive and intensive archival research. Pettipas has attained her goal, because the story has been told.

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### **Applied Anthropology in Canada: Understanding Aboriginal Issues**

Edward J. Hedicán

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995. xiii + 260 pp. \$55.00 (cloth), \$18.95 (paper)

*Reviewer:* Wayne Warry  
McMaster University

This publication stands as an important marker for applied anthropology in Canada. Hedicán has not written a general reader—there is nothing here about the many faces of applied anthropology that are divorced from Native interests. Rather, Hedicán documents the intimate association between Canadian anthropology and Aboriginal research. The book will be an invaluable resource to undergraduate students who to date have had to rely on American texts as an introduction to applied work. Within the nexus anthropology/Aboriginal people, it is difficult to imagine a major topic which Hedicán fails to consider. In deciding on this breadth of treatment, of course, Hedicán sacrifices analytic space, so that students who are familiar with Aboriginal affairs or with debates within applied anthropology may be dissatisfied with the lack of analytic detail. For this reason the book is better suited to undergraduate, rather than graduate-level, courses.

The book's structure reflects Hedicán's dual foci; some chapters are more clearly centred on the discipline—the nature of advocacy or mediator roles—while others analyze Aboriginal issues, including those associated with economic development, self-government and the “ethno-politics” of Aboriginal identity. Throughout, Hedicán works hard to maintain the linkages. He is particularly attentive in tracing the history of anthropological studies that have contributed to our understanding of Native peoples. Hedicán's discussion of self-government is skewed somewhat by his experience with non-reserve settlements, that is, by a perspective which emphasizes non-status perspectives rather than the opportunities available to First Nations. But elsewhere this experience enhances his discussion of the politics of Aboriginal identity by reminding the reader that the “Aboriginal” agenda is often dominated by issues that are of primary concern to status Indians. Given Hedicán's interest in “recasting” (p. 232) anthropology to better deal with contemporary issues, one curious omission exists. Hedicán fails to include any discussion of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, active since 1992, which has drawn on the work of many anthropologists.