

BOOK REVIEW

The Last Trek of the Indians. By Grant Foreman. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1946. Pp. 382. Bibliography, maps. \$4.00.)

Once more Indian removal becomes the subject of Oklahoma's foremost writer on the subject of Indian affairs. The gap between 1850 and statehood is now closed with a volume filled with factual material concerning the removal of Indians into central, northern, western and the extreme northeastern portions of the state.

One-third of the volume is given to the development and execution of the Indian policy east of the Mississippi River. In the early years of the past century the Indians North of the Ohio River had been forced into contracting areas where they might well have been regarded as residents but always subject to the ever changing Indian policy. Among these Indians, who have been in Oklahoma for three quarters of a century, are Delawares, Shawnees, Wyandots, Potawatomi, Sacs, Foxes, Kickapoos, and others.

They were the subject of many treaties made by General William Henry Harrison who was quite efficient in Indian diplomacy. From Indiana, Illinois and other areas of the Old Northwest the Indians were gradually placed on reservations in Missouri, Iowa and Kansas. The Indians already living in this area were naturally resentful and added to the troubles incidental to removal. Loss of land, livestock, homes and money, separation of families, disturbance of cultural development, and hardships along muddy roads and in inclement weather caused a great loss of life. At best the Indian population of the emigrants was relatively small and by the time the trail-worn travelers reached Oklahoma, after decades of hardships, the tribes were but remnants of their original numbers.

Inefficient agents, whiskey peddlers and grafters were partially responsible for the sad lot of the Indians. Occasionally, of course, an agent worked long and effectively to prevent their becoming abject victims of the white man's cupidity. Some of the Kansas reservation Indians were allowed to go south into the Canadian River district where they began agricultural development.

The building of railroads west of the Mississippi brought disaster to the Indians. Constant removal made agricultural development next to impossible. Attempts at self-government were often futile. Establishment of schools and missions was a disheartening process to those interested in the activity. The disappearance of wild game brought more difficulties. The constant shifting from place to place was not conducive to prosperity. All this made life

for the Indian tribes something to be endured. The author makes these facts live in history.

The forcing of the plains Indian tribes—Cheyenne, Arapho, Kiowa, Apache, Pawnee and others became a series of treaties, battles and guarding reservations by soldiers. The Wichitas, Caddoes, and others who were easily removed found homes along the middle stretches of the Washita Valley. The establishment of agencies with permanence made for better conditions.

Mr. Foreman has made this volume valuable far beyond the interesting and authentic narrative. The maps represent careful selection. The documentation is extensive and affords abundant material for the student who may wish to consult original sources. The index is complete. The author should feel satisfied with a real contribution made to the Indian history of Oklahoma.

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