

Review of Karl Jacoby's *Shadows at Dawn*

Jacoby utilized a single event, the Camp Grant Massacre, to explore the world of the 'borderlands' in American history. Jacoby does this by examining four different perspectives of the peoples living there. By examining these groups Jacoby sets the stage for the cumulative event and the aftermath of the Camp Grant Massacre. Jacoby also examines how misconceptions played a significant role in the divisiveness that plagued the borderlands area. Finally, Jacoby's use of sources expands the field of ethnohistory by giving a voice to the O'odham and the Nnee (Apache) using calendar sticks and oral histories.

In some ways limiting the borderlands experience to a single event, the Camp Grant Massacre, is problematic. The experiences of peoples involved in this unique location cannot be used to explain similar events in places like New Mexico, Texas, and California. While similar groups had related experiences, the Camp Grant Massacre is a singular event in borderlands history. However, Jacoby does a wonderful job in researching and reconstructing the events that led up to what occurred at Camp Grant. Jacoby reassured those reading his reconstruction that there are gaps and that there is allusive aspect to the world of history.¹ Jacoby alludes to this with his choice of title.

Jacoby's use of perspectives is informative and unlike previous scholarship of American history in Arizona isn't limited to just the Anglo-American perspective. Jacoby's professional focus is easy to distinguish as a historian of borderlands and Native American history. He uses

¹ Jacoby, Karl. *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History*. New York: Penguin, 2009. ISBN: 978-0143116219. Page 6.

his background to lay out methodical account starting with the earliest groups and leading up to the latecomers. Jacoby focuses on four groups, the O'odham, the Nnee, Anglo-Americans, and the Los Vecinos in order to explain the cumulative event at Camp Grant. Jacoby doesn't rely solely on European-American accounts when recreating the past of the Native Americans. Instead of creating a singular timetable of the event from the European-American perspective Jacoby builds an historical analysis of the O'odham and the Nnee using archeological evidence and calendar sticks.²

By using the archeological evidence provided, Jacoby begins to uncover the layers between the O'odham and the Nnee. While sharing similar creation myths, the two groups had some major differences; plus, whatever event inspired them to furiously hate each other. This is an area of speculation that Jacoby doesn't dig to deep into; it could have been a precontact event that inspired the violence between the two groups or the arrival of livestock and sickness through trade lines after the Spanish arrived on the coastal areas.³ Regardless, Jacoby used an interesting word when explaining the tense relations between the two groups, "contained."⁴ The O'odham and Nnee practiced war on each other in a "tightly contained sphere," prior to European arrival. The differences between the O'odham's patriarchal and the Nnee's matriarchal societies might also explain some of the disparities. The Nnee were more likely to take prisoners of war into their camp in a way similar to what the Cherokee War Women would; there are no records of the O'odham doing this. However, the O'odham prisoners of the Nnee would attempt to escape and if the women became pregnant would not keep the baby due to the bad power.⁵ Then the O'odham, whether to similarities with Spanish settlers or not being the Nnee, stuck an accord

² Jacoby, pg. 16.

³ Jacoby, pg. 17.

⁴ Jacoby, pg. 21.

⁵ Jacoby, pg. 44.

with the new settlers that gave them a leg up on the Nnee. Another aspect that Jacoby explores is the shift from missionaries to military control; military control or dismissal would play a major part in the settlement and the eventual massacre at Camp Grant.

Jacoby also focused a section of the book on the “Los Vencinos” or the Spanish transition to Mexican government and the inclusion of Native *mexicanos*.⁶ In approaching the borderlands, it is important to include this aspect of American history. Most of our established history, prior to the 1960s focuses predominately on English settlement of the United States. By expanding, the historical narrative to include Spanish and Mexican history in the American frontier gives additional insights and depth. One complaint of the section on the Los Vecinos is that it would have allowed a more critical analysis to have separate chapters dealing with Spanish and Mexican rule. However, due to the emphasis on borderlands the idea of a Spanish or Mexican rule as two separate categories is somewhat silted due to the timeline and transition of lands I can understand why the two were combined.

From a critical standpoint, the inclusion of Native American treatment by the Los Vecinos, especially their idea that the Apache as “irreconcilable opponents to settled society,” is a valuable part of the history leading up to the Camp Grant Massacre.⁷ In contrast, from the O’odham the Nnee, or Apache, became the villain that connected three groups of people. From the early periods between the O’odham and Nnee, to the Spanish slave trade and moving problem Apaches to Cuba, and finally the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and American occupation there has always been an emphasis on the Apache as the “problem.”⁸ By including the animosity shared between the O’odham and the Los Vecinos of the Apaches, Jacoby builds

⁶ Jacoby, pg. 51.

⁷ Jacoby, pg. 60.

⁸ Jacoby, pg. 56 (Apaches moved to Cuba), Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo pg. 63.

on the historical narrative and sets up the events that would happen at Camp Grant. It is important to note that the Apache fought against Spanish colonization while the O'odham utilized it to better supply themselves.⁹ There is also an element here, where the Apache did not see the livestock as anything more than a type of wildlife and further Spanish Colonialization and exposure did not remedy their inclination.¹⁰ In fact, Jacoby outlines that it was the Los Venicos that led the attack on the Apache. Many white Americans, who helped organize the attack, dropped out because they did not want to go against the U.S. Army.

Finally, the section on the Anglo-Americans that settled in amongst the Native Americans and Los Venicos adds another layer into the historical account Jacoby puts forth. After the international boundary line moves several times it is easy to understand why places like Tucson remained more Mexican once it became an American territory.¹¹ Similar to other works on Native American's and African American history, such as *Ties that Bind*; Anglo American men moving into the area intermarried with the Los Venicos women, creating a "higher class," and Native American women as well.¹² It also created another level in racial tension similar to the movement west of white Americans during the gold rush; Mexican men saw these marriages as another conquest of a natural resource.¹³ Jacoby does an excellent job of revealing some of the interworking issues that white Americans bring to the table during this period. However, this section is short in comparison to the other sections. Due to the emphasis on the U.S. Military and the shift in Indian Policy, many of the Anglo-Americans were conflicted about the course of action to take. Many saw the military coddling the Apache and did not like the idea of that;

⁹ Jacoby, pg. 50.

¹⁰ Jacoby, pg. 149.

¹¹ Jacoby, pg. 70-71.

¹² Jacoby, pg. 75.

¹³ Jacoby, pg. 76.

hence, the rise in propaganda against Apaches and the elevation of the Wooster raid into an attack on “white womanhood.”

Looking at Jacoby’s sources, the best way to describe them is ‘well-rounded.’ Not only does Jacoby look at traditional historical accounts from newspapers to military journals, he looks at non-traditional sources including oral histories. The O’odham calendar sticks are an interesting source that Jacoby utilized in the writing of this book. While not a detailed written history, the calendar sticks marked an occurrence and the keeper of the stick used the mark to recall the event for oral recitation.¹⁴ There are two unfortunate aspect of calendar sticks, anthropologists dismissed them as gossip and once a keeper of the calendar stick died the sticks were broken.¹⁵ In the case of the Nnee, their oral histories are limited due to an avoidance of talking of the dead.¹⁶ Jacoby includes newspapers but is critical of the material and used it to show the power of misconceptions in the case of Wooster and his “white wife.”¹⁷ Jacoby also shows the implicit bias used to alienate the Americans and Mexicans from U.S. Army in the affidavits published for public consumption.¹⁸ It is interesting that this is one time the U.S. Military was on a positive path with a group of Native American’s.

Aside from the perspective of the Nnee, the other three groups have a shared common interest and similar settlement patterns. For the Los Venicos, it was their tie to a sense of place that would endear through the transitional period of borderlands. The Americans would intermarry with Natives and Los Venicos to establish ties to the area. By looking at how these four groups interacting together, we received a new historical analysis of the southwest

¹⁴ Jacoby, pg. 31.

¹⁵ Jacoby, pg. 33.

¹⁶ Jacoby, pg. 144.

¹⁷ Jacoby, pg. 137-139.

¹⁸ Jacoby, pg. 134.

borderlands. Jacoby notes his approach as “the most honest way” to point out the interconnecting aspects of the Camp Grant Massacre.¹⁹ He is quite correct in his assessment of this being the most honest and fair way to shed light on a volatile period in time. One other thing Jacoby accomplishes in the realm of Native American history is the idea of the O’odham and the Nnee as “people.” Not only does he humanize the two groups he also established how they viewed themselves as “the People.”

¹⁹ Jacoby, pg. 295.