during this war by centering hard power in both European and Indigenous contexts.

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The First Code Talkers: Native American Communicators in World War I. The Civilization of the American Indian Series. By William C. Meadows. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021. xv + 358 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. $36.95)

The First Code Talkers provides a thoroughly researched and comprehensive examination of Native Americans in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) who used their Native languages to send messages during World War. As the foremost expert on the subject, William C. Meadows traces the origins of Native American "code talking"—especially within the 142nd and 143rd Regiments of the 36th Division, their specific use by military officials during the closing weeks of the war, postwar efforts to recognize their contributions, and the complex legacies they bequeathed to future generations.

While an important contribution to Native American history, the book is very much a military history as well. The author provides specific details about U.S. military operations (strategies, tactics, troops movements) during the final year of the war in addition to detailed descriptions of armaments, mines, and related military technologies of the time. The decision to employ Native Americans as code talkers occurred very late in the war (October 1918) and may have involved Indian soldiers from half a dozen or more tribal Nations (Eastern Band of Cherokee, Oklahoma Choctaw, Oklahoma Cherokee, Comanche, Osage, Sioux, and Ho-Chunk). Meadows does a masterful job untangling the often-conflicting documentary evidence and oral histories of these groups to derive conclusions about the identities of code talkers. Much of his focus, consequently, centers on the verifiable contributions of Oklahoma Choctaws tasked with code talking at the Battle of Forest Ferme (October 26–27, 1918). Never able to crack the new U.S. "code," German intelligence officials struggled to anticipate the movement of AEF forces. While the use of Native American code talkers was significant and certainly saved American lives, Meadows argues, assertions that they single-handedly brought about the collapse of the German army are unsupported (and unsupportable) by evidence. He likewise provides a critical examination and reassessment of renowned Choctaw veteran Joseph Oklahombi, whom the popular press depicted as the Indian equivalent to Sergeant Alvin York. Meadows likewise focuses attention on the lesser-known contributions of Sergeant Otis W. Leader (Choctaw) who may (or may not) have been a code talker. Finally, Meadows challenges the misconception that little is known about WWI code talkers because military officials censored information about their use.

The First Code Talkers is an impressive book and will undoubtedly become the foundation for related studies. What I found most remarkable was the author's expert and dogged search for "the truth"—no matter where it might lead. Never content to accept a particular piece of evidence (government document, newspaper article, oral history) at face value, Meadows critically analyzes his sources to corroborate his findings—all the while sharing his methodology and research challenges with the reader. Consequently, I commend this work for its contributions to

Native American history, military history, and to students of the historian's craft.

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Charmian Kittredge London: Trailblazer, Author, Adventurer. By Iris Jamahl Dunkle. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020. xii + 299 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $26.95, paper.)

Charmian Kittredge London is best remembered today as the second wife of Jack London (1876–1916), described at best as his beloved "Mate-Woman," in Clarice Stasz's *American Dreamers* and *Jack London's Women*, and at worst as the devious other woman who led to his estrangement from his children, in Irving Stone's *Sailor on Horseback*. In this sympathetic new biography, the first to focus solely on Charmian, Iris Jamahl Dunkle draws extensively on archival sources, including letters and diaries, to present a woman who was not only London's editor, typist, and enthusiastic partner in adventure but also a writer, which caused the well-documented tensions between the couple during London's later years.

In addition to documenting Charmian's life with London, Dunkle provides fresh information about her life before and after those years. Born in Wilmington, California, in 1871, Charmian Kittredge was orphaned at a young age and brought up in literary circles in Berkeley and San Francisco. By age thirty-one, she had worked her way through Mills College, traveled to Europe, and was supporting herself as a stenographer. An advocate of socialism, vegetarianism, and free love, reportedly the first woman in California to ride astride rather than sidesaddle, the independent Charmian found in London an intellectual equal and comrade. After their 1905 marriage, the pair sailed to the South Seas on their ill-fated vessel the *Snark* and spent extended periods in Hawai'i and on their Glen Ellen, California, "Beauty Ranch." Dunkle provides evidence that Charmian wrote descriptive sections for *The Valley of the Moon* and *The Little Lady of the Big House* in addition to being the model for their heroines, but her principal literary achievement resides in her well-reviewed travel books *The Log of the Snark* (1915) and *Our Hawaii* (1917).

Charmian lived nearly another forty years after London's death, and Dunkle chronicles her travels, writing, romances (with, among others, the magician Harry Houdini), and efforts to preserve both London's ranch and his literary legacy. Unfortunately, critics found her affectionate two-volume biography *The Book of Jack London* (1921) less compelling and less truthful than her earlier travel writing, and her reputation suffered accordingly. In later years, Charmian's mild attempts to whitewash the truth of London's paternity and her ongoing affair with the still-married London before his divorce fell before the probing of less sympathetic biographers, among them Irving Stone, who stole personal letters and diaries for his sensationalized biography *Sailor on Horseback* and fabricated the myth that London had died by suicide. By the time of her death in 1955, Charmian had lived up to the "trailblazer" and "adventurer" descriptions in Dunkle's subtitle, even if the critical establishment and, for many years, London scholars would not credit her abilities as an author. Written in a clear, lively style, Dunkle's biography goes beyond seeing Charmian as the keeper of London's legacy in its portrait of a twentieth-century western woman who is fascinating in her own right.

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