

then and now, *Among the Sioux of Dakota* will be a provocative source of ongoing study.

—Julian Rice
Florida Atlantic University

Jo Ann Robinson. *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson.* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987) xv, 190 pp., \$12.95 paper.

Jo Ann Robinson, a major organizer of the Montgomery bus boycott, offers a new and convincing account of the origins of the protest that triggered the entire civil rights movement and launched the career of Martin Luther King, Jr. In an absorbing, first-hand narrative, the dignified and unassuming Robinson focuses on the role of the Women's Political Council (WPC) and details the WPC's plans to engineer a boycott months before the heralded arrest of Rosa Parks.

Although the Parks arrest has been universally understood as the spark that ignited the boycott, Robinson and other WPC leaders had negotiated with recalcitrant city officials over the issue of bus seating long before the boycott began. Disturbed by a series of racial incidents on city buses, the black community experienced new depths of frustration and alarm when police jailed a teenager named Claudette Colvin. Parks's arrest mattered because it constituted, in Robinson's words, "almost a repeat performance of the Claudette Colvin case." Immediately following the Parks arrest, and without consulting Parks, Robinson and the WPC mimeographed and distributed over fifty-two thousand leaflets that mentioned the name of Colvin but not Parks and urged a one-day abandonment of public transportation.

The success of this initial action led to the formation of a separate organization to supervise the boycott, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), which elected King as its president. During the year-long boycott, Robinson joined other MIA representatives in negotiating with city fathers. Her copious notes of meetings allow Robinson to provide an accurate first-hand chronicle of events reported by journalists from around the globe. She describes the initial solidarity of the black community, the growing frustration during prolonged negotiations, and the hope imparted by donations sent to the MIA from Americans and foreigners alike. She also discusses the MIA's remarkable efficiency in coordinating a car pool large enough to enable fifty thousand boycotters to stay off buses indefinitely.

The effect of Robinson's involvement—her arrest along with over a hundred other MIA leaders and boycotters, her resignation from Alabama State College, and her move from Montgomery soon after the issue was settled—clearly exemplify the heavy toll the struggle for civil rights exacted on many who participated in this and later campaigns.

In conjunction with Aldon Morris's *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, this book effectively refutes the common perception of the Montgomery bus boycott as a spontaneous event inaugurated by a single arrest and extended by the charisma of a single leader. Without slighting Rosa Parks or Martin Luther King, Jr., Robinson demonstrates the critical importance of her grassroots women's organization in instigating and sustaining the protest.

The value of this primary source will endure long after many best-selling, secondary accounts of national politics during this period have disappeared. And for that reason we should applaud Jo Ann Robinson, editor David J. Garrow, and the University of Tennessee Press for making this volume available.

—Keith D. Miller and Elizabeth Vander Lei
Arizona State University

Karl H. Schlesier. *The Wolves of Heaven: Cheyenne Shamanism, Ceremonies, and Prehistoric Origins.* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987) 214 pp., \$25.00.

Schlesier has a necessary footnote advisory to readers explaining the way in which he has structured *The Wolves of Heaven*. In the advisory Schelesier writes that the book is a slow read on purpose so as to develop the story of how it was that the Tsistsistas (Cheyenne), came out of the boreal forest to become hunters of the northern plains, evolving eventually into the 19th century Tsistsistas bison hunting horse nomads.

The book is focused on their transition from a group of taiga hunters to northern plains hunters some time between 500 and 300 B.C. The transition was ritualized in the performance of a ceremonial event called the Massaum, first held at the foot of Bear Butte (Nowah'wus) located in what is now the state of North Dakota, about 500 B.C. The Massaum is an enactment of the creation of the world and the ordering of the universe, and is a land giving ceremony intended to signify the taking of possession of a hunting ground by the Tsistsistas. The Massaum was performed for this purpose on an annual basis for some uncertain number of years thereafter, and then on an irregular basis until the last performance in 1927.