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bling key, thought-provoking chapters. These chapters should serve a wide audience and become part of the necessary building blocks that will allow the development of broader, and perhaps more realistic, theories of chiefdom development.

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The Dispossession of the American Indian, 1887–1934. By Janet A. McDonnell. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991. 163 pages. \$20.00 cloth.

Thoughtful critics of Indian policy such as Janet McDonnell correctly characterize the treaties of land cession and the allotment of Indian lands as *dispossession*. In the nineteenth century, when Indians were separated from millions of acres of territory and forced to live on marginal reservations, dispossession, however perceived as legal, could be interpreted as the “spoils” of conquest and colonization. Subsequently, the nation made promises to the tribes, who complied with governmental wishes to relocate and assist them in redirecting their lives. But just as soon as the government abrogated the policy of treaty-making, it moved boldly (arrogantly?) toward a new goal—in effect, the transformation of Indians into whites who would now embrace the culture of the dominant society and forsake tribal lifeways.

The traditional view holds that policymakers and friends of the Indians mistakenly but honorably believed the route to this bold new world was the conversion of tribal lands into homesteads (allotments). Policymakers embraced the notion that private property possessed some magical force that would lead to the acculturation of indigenous people to the ways of Western culture. Begun in earnest with the Dawes (Severalty) Act of 1887, the process lasted legally until 1934, when it was replaced by the Indian Reorganization Act. However, the impact of allotment remains with us today. Not only did it lead to the alienation of tribal patrimony—from about 138,000,000 acres to 52,000,000 acres—but it frustrated and/or disrupted the modicum of successful Indian land use by fragmenting landholdings through inheritance, by necessitating dependence on the leasing of land, and by causing landlessness of individual Indians through sale of allotments, as well as out-migration from reservations. The results

were poverty and severe economic dislocation, as well as the near collapse of many tribal communities.

Surely these later consequences of land allotment created the cruelest dispossession of all—for, “in utmost good faith,” the nation assumed the role of trustee in order to protect the Indians’ landed estate and provide them a homeland and an economic base in which they could flourish and sustain their lifeways. But, as McDonnell demonstrates, the United States seemingly pursued a more heinous objective in the guise of a well-intentioned policy, one that nearly destroyed Indian peoples.

It takes a certain self-assurance to enter a crowded field of published research on a much-debated policy. To date, the literature of allotment virtually divides into opposing arguments. Supporters of allotment, including scholars, religious thinkers, Indian champions, lawmakers, and other public officials, often have been too willing to overlook its faults even in the face of the facts, and dissenters have been too quick to criticize without always identifying the true bases for culpability. Where does this place Janet McDonnell’s book? To the author’s credit, this critical reexamination of the allotment policy is much justified. In turning to the “official record” and focusing on the government’s role, she has uncovered much of the real evidence—the maladministration, corruption, and ineptitude rather than misguided altruism—that ultimately led to the widespread diminishment of tribal lands under the allotment policy. McDonnell states that scholars must look behind rhetoric and motives not only to explain the dismal failure of this land policy, but to understand the compelling reasons why the government persisted despite the human tragedy that was then unfolding. She argues that the goal to convert tribal lands into private property masked other objectives and contends that “it was no longer enough for Indians to accept allotments and surrender the surplus to whites; they were expected to use their own allotted land profitably or surrender it” (p. 4).

For students of political science interested in the role of appointed officials and their contribution to the formulation and execution of policies, McDonnell’s analysis argues that the government, while perpetrating the belief that it was morally sound to pursue allotment, land leasing, and the rapid transfer of land title to Indians, actually gave in to or supported the demands of influential landed interests in the West who wanted to see Indian lands transferred to the private sector. McDonnell offers us a fair appraisal of the varying positions of Indian commissioners and

secretaries of the interior. She evaluates the ambivalence in the thinking of the policymakers and administrators but sums up by noting how consistent each administration was until the 1920s, when, within and without the government (e. g., John Collier, the Meriam report), criticism of the allotment policy could no longer be side-stepped. She also notes how ironic it is that the introduction of a policy toward Indian self-sufficiency created a burdensome bureaucracy that made the Indian even more dependent on the Indian bureau. Policymakers had relied too heavily on what we today might call "conventional wisdom"—the beneficial effects of individualized land ownership—and did not take into consideration the culture shock of the program nor the fundamental cultural differences among the tribes.

This study relies heavily and ably on archival data such as in-house communications involving the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Executive Office of the President, congressional hearings and laws, as well as manuscripts and published materials by champions of the Indian (who also embraced allotment) such as the Lake Mohonk Conferences (New York) and the Indian Rights Association (Philadelphia). The book proceeds chronologically, taking up separate topics: allotment—dividing the land, implementation, and Indian farming; leasing—policy, problems, and uses; irrigation (a much-welcomed discussion); fee patents and competency commissions; and declaration of policy (two of the more provocative chapters); and, finally, making amends (the coming of the Indian Reorganization Act).

If I were to find fault, it would not be with the historic treatment or the rather dry prose but with the omission of instructive case studies (e. g., from the Pacific Northwest and the northern Great Plains), which would have enhanced her findings through more detailed analysis and a better use of representative tables, graphs, and maps. Without developed case studies, findings become generalizations that have no locus, the real places where the failure as well as "sins" of policy occurred. Neither the topical chapters nor the maps in this book (one that shows reservations in 1885 and another that depicts allocated areas in 1935) do justice to the focus on dispossession. Thus the reader cannot perceive the fullest implications of the misallocation of allotments that all too often left the best lands as "surplus" to be acquired by whites. Map scale precludes the printing of the exact details of land fragmentation; however, some representation of the breakup of tribal lands, especially the impact of land sales to whites, would have rein-

forced other findings and significantly revealed the basis for much of today's conflict over jurisdiction in Indian Country. It is, after all, the legacy of a failed land policy that needs to be underscored. To McDonnell's credit, she does discuss selective tenure problems on various reservations, but this often reads as a recitation of data.

As a new contribution to the history of Indian land tenure, this slim volume offers readers a strong indictment of the allotment process and tries to set the record straight. Thus, perhaps, it will enable scholars to move on to assess more recent policies and events in Indian affairs.

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The Cherokees: A Population History. By Russell Thornton, with the assistance of C. Matthew Snipp and Nancy Breen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990. 237 pages. \$35.00 cloth.

Throughout the United States, men and women identify themselves as having "some degree of Cherokee lineage," largely because somewhere in their past they have a "Cherokee grandmother." This phenomenon and many others associated with the population history of the Cherokee people is discussed in detail in this fascinating book by Russell Thornton. Drawing on statistics collected by the United States, Cherokee tribes, and scholars, the author has assembled a study focusing on a wide range of topics, including creation, land occupation, disease, war, removal, and relocation. The question of population decline, stability, and increase from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries is the continual theme of the book, with heavy emphasis on the last two centuries when data was preserved by the government. Like Thornton's other scholarly works, *The Cherokees: A Population History* offers much more than statistics. It provides a way of thinking about American Indian history that is often missed in traditional historical accounts of the Cherokee.

Thornton concentrates on population, offering new perspectives on the Cherokee while dealing with well-known topics of the Cherokee past. For example, he offers an enlightening chapter on Cherokee removal, providing eyewitness accounts by Indians and non-Indians, as well as statistical data such as the Cherokee census of 1808 collected by Colonel Return J. Meigs. Thornton weaves