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argues that the assumption of *terra nullius* usually went hand in hand with a perception of Indigenous people as being primitive and uncivilized. The different ways that the policy was implemented had to do with whether there was any acknowledgment of Indigenous property rights by prior nations, as in the case of Russia in Alaska and Mexico in California, or whether white settlers had already inhabited lands; the size of settlement; and Indigenous resistance and the kind of economic development that was taking place.

One important aspect of this book is the way in which it shows how property law developed in the Pacific by serving political and economic interests of white colonizing nations. What the book testifies to is how the archives provide more detail about Indigenous land tenure in which agriculture existed but little about the system of Indigenous land tenure amongst nonagriculturalist tribes, which confirms Banner's thesis about *terra nullius*. White possessors would only recognize systems that accorded with their own ideas about what constituted possession, and even then they utilized law and policy to reduce Indigenous land ownership. White possession continues to function discursively within the law circumscribing the sovereignty claims of Indigenous people in the twenty-first century. *Possessing the Pacific* speaks to the possessive nature of the colonial enterprise and makes an important contribution to the colonial history of property law in the Pacific where it should be compulsory reading in property-law subjects.

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The Seminole Freedmen: A History. By Kevin Mulroy. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. 446 pages. \$36.95 cloth.

In 2002 Americans saw how history, race, and a multimillion-dollar settlement split the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma between Seminoles and the African American freedmen who had long been a part of the nation. Popularly known as "Black Seminoles," these descendants of slaves, who had escaped to the protection of the Seminoles, claimed that they should receive some of the \$56 million that the federal government was paying for Florida lands that the Seminoles lost before most of the nation was removed to Indian Territory (later Oklahoma). Freedmen and their supporters contended that they had fought alongside Seminoles in wars against the United States, intermarried with Seminoles, and at the very least had been included as members of the nation in the nation's 1866 treaty with the United States. Seminoles countered that their rights as a sovereign nation entitled them to limit their membership to individuals who could trace descent from Seminole Indians. Citing legal considerations, the US Supreme Court sided with the Seminoles when it upheld the nation's right to define its membership as it saw fit.

Regarding the historical evidence, Kevin Mulroy offers a somewhat different verdict that is meticulous, unequivocal, and, in light of the recent legal disputes, bound to be controversial. Contrary to the assertions of most

Seminole freedmen and their supporters, Mulroy contends that the freedmen are not Seminoles or “Black Indians” but are instead the descendants of maroon communities that formed in close alliance with but were still separate from the Seminoles of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This book joins and pushes forward a recent spate of pathbreaking histories that remind all Americans of the long-standing and frequently overlooked ties between Native American and African American communities, especially among the Five Civilized Tribes (Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles) of eastern Oklahoma. Considering the Seminoles’ renown as a people who associated closely with African Americans, Mulroy’s careful treatment is all the more important as the first full-length study on the subject since Daniel Littlefield’s *Africans and Seminoles: From Removal to Emancipation* (1977), and it is the first book to address the lives of freedmen after the Civil War. Mulroy’s careful work with the records, especially from the federal policy makers who sought to understand and ultimately destroy the Seminole Nation, allows him to provide needed information on people who have inspired much speculation but received little scrutiny.

Mulroy begins in the 1700s with the Indians and African slaves who fled south to Florida. Where Africans sought freedom from slavery, Creek migrants (later called Seminoles) sought the relatively open lands and large feral cattle herds of the Tallahassee hills and central peninsula. Some Africans managed to form independent communities, but most joined communities that were “enslaved” to the chiefs of certain Seminole towns, a status that essentially required little more than the payment of a modest annual tribute. Mulroy insists that these new African American communities were “maroon” communities rather than “Indian” ones. The choice of term is significant: these runaways constructed a culture of their own, one that was distinct from Seminole culture and that retained certain African cultural practices, including those influencing naming and leadership. Equally important, he notes their similarities with other maroon communities in the Americas.

During the US-Seminole wars of the 1810s through 1840s, maroons fought alongside their Seminole neighbors and even served as translators for some Seminole leaders. Despite such cooperation, maroons and Seminoles generally fought and negotiated separately. This separation continued after the United States removed most Seminoles and maroons to Indian Territory after 1838. One reason for the difference was that only maroons were tributaries to Seminole chiefs, and only they faced the threat of slave raiders attempting to capture and sell them to the white slave owners in Texas and Arkansas, or to other Indians in Indian Territory. Such threats convinced some maroons to migrate to safer homes in Coahuila, Mexico, where slavery was illegal. Although the Civil War divided Seminoles and other nations of Indian Territory, maroons enthusiastically joined this fight against slavery, forming the earliest regiment of African Americans to be sanctioned by the US government.

Although the Treaty of 1866, which restored Seminole relations with the United States, included the stipulation that Seminole freedmen were part of the nation, both groups retained distinct identities and communities. This

interpretation of freedmen history directly challenges what he calls “the myth of massive Seminole-maroon intermarriage” (236). Mulroy contends that the myth is built mostly on the uninformed generalizations of nineteenth-century white observers, and he attacks it with his characteristic attention to evidence. In the 1890s, the federal government decided to break up all of the reservations in Indian Territory, creating the Dawes Commission to allot each Indian and freedman a particular plot so that the remaining lands could be sold off to non-Indian settlers. In the process of allotting the Seminole Reservation, the commissioners had to compile detailed censuses of Seminoles and freedmen, including notations about the parentage of each allottee. According to these cards, only 2 percent of the Seminole and freedmen populations were of mixed ancestry. Acknowledging that Seminoles and freedmen would both have an interest in concealing African ancestry from representatives of a nation that despised (and often lynched) African Americans, Mulroy concludes that perhaps 7 percent of the total population was of mixed race. How he reaches this second number is not explained either in his text or copious footnotes.

The number might be of questionable accuracy, but the larger point is not. Mulroy notes how freedmen and Seminoles maintained distinct patterns of naming, family construction, and settlement, patterns that should have converged had intermarriage been prevalent. However, if Seminole and freedmen were separate, they, unlike the Jim Crow world around them, remained equal: they voted in Seminole elections, could be elected to the national council, advised Seminole chiefs, and served in the nation’s police force. Freedmen and Seminoles “coexisted peacefully” during this “golden age” of the late nineteenth century (xxix). When the United States forcibly allotted the lands of Seminoles and other residents of Indian Territory, the Seminoles were unique in their willingness to allow freedmen to receive equal shares of land. According to Mulroy, separation and equality went hand in hand because it “reduced the potential for racial friction” (264). This potential would become painfully apparent in 1908, when the new state of Oklahoma instituted Jim Crow laws among its first legal actions, leading Seminoles to reconsider their association with freedmen who jeopardized their prospects of joining the state’s white ruling class.

In this story of accommodation gained and lost, it seems that there is another story that Mulroy has not covered. His history might look much different if he took the time to explain the sources of possible “racial friction.” The potential seems all the more significant when he notes in passing that Seminole freedmen, like most African Americans, “typically attach status to Indian heritage” (298). What did these perceived and actual differences in power mean for the disagreements between Seminoles and people who were their tributaries before the Civil War and a minority in their population after it? Even if he were only to acknowledge that the government records that he has examined offer few avenues for addressing this question, it deserves more of Mulroy’s attention.

Mulroy attended to a great deal in this book, and for that we should be grateful. Without question, this is a masterful survey of a poorly understood

part of American history. It is sure to guide subsequent research on this topic, and it introduces Americans to a community whose presence has been ignored for far too long.

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Sharing Our Stories of Survival: Native Women Surviving Violence. Edited by Sarah Deer, Bonnie Clairmont, Carrie Martell, and Maureen White Eagle. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008. 362 pages. \$85.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

Sharing Our Stories of Survival is a project of the Tribal Law and Policy Institute, a leading organization in the United States that addresses violence against Native women. Sarah Deer, Bonnie Clairmont, and others from the institute were also key contributors to Amnesty International's recent report on sexual assault in Indian country, *The Maze of Injustice*. This book in particular is designed to be an introductory textbook on tribal policy regarding violence against Native women and also speaks effectively to individuals working in tribal governments and to advocates interested in developing tribal-centered approaches to ending gender violence.

Although the book generally focuses on tribal policy, it also centers the voices of Native women who are survivors of violence. In doing so, *Sharing Our Stories* ensures that the realities of violence in Indian country do not become mere abstractions in a discussion of policy reform. Through poetry and narrative, Native survivors of violence address many of the challenges faced by Native peoples in the system, including unresponsive administrators in tribal colleges, abuses in Native boarding schools, violence in the prison system, homophobia faced by Native lesbians, dual arrests, and lack of support from families and communities. For instance, Stormy Ogden's essay describes how a lifetime of abuse set her toward a path that led to her incarceration. In prison, she was further subjected to abuse and dehumanization. Her essay is a helpful reminder to antiviolence advocates who uncritically support criminalization strategies for addressing violence without looking at how this work gets co-opted to support the prison industrial complex. As her story demonstrates, in our attempts to solve the problem of violence through criminalization, we further victimize many Native women who also become entrapped in the criminal justice system because of their histories of violence.

This book's contemporary focus is grounded in historical analysis. This analysis foregrounds the fact that violence in Native communities is a direct result of colonialism, and this requires anticolonial strategies in order to address it. Jacqueline Agtuca looks at the detrimental impact of federal policy on the ability of tribes to keep women safe. Although federal laws such as the Major Crimes Act and Public Law (PL) 280 were ostensibly passed to address "lawlessness" in Indian country, Agtuca contends that these laws actually served to create lawlessness for Native women by undermining effective