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"I Do Not Apologize for the Length of this Letter": The Mari Sandoz Letters on Native American Rights, 1940-1965. Edited by Kimberli A. Lee.

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throughout most of the text and becomes an advocate against such aquaculture practices. Though he does attempt to balance that criticism in the epilogue, it is nice to see Arnold set aside neutrality for advocacy.

Arnold states that his book “is not a jeremiad on the fate of salmon in Alaska, neither is it an uncritical celebration of the progress of an industry under scientific resource management” (4). A jeremiad is not needed, as southeast Alaska’s salmon fishery, though undoubtedly threatened, is currently faring well (considering its nadir in the 1960s), especially in comparison to the salmon fisheries in Washington, Oregon, and northern California. Nor is a celebration of progress needed at this particular time, because without critical interrogation, such celebrations often promote destructive practices. What is needed is a text such as *The Fishermen’s Frontier*, which provides a historically informed, balanced, and unflinching examination of southeast Alaska’s salmon fishery: its successes and failures, its myriad cultural and economic interests, and how Native and non-Native interests continue to transform that fishery.

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“I Do Not Apologize for the Length of this Letter”: *The Mari Sandoz Letters on Native American Rights, 1940–1965*. Edited by Kimberli A. Lee. Foreword by John R. Wunder. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2009. 197 pages. \$45.00 cloth.

Several Northern Plains American Indian servicemen paid a surprise visit in 1943 to the New York City home of well-known author Mari Sandoz, Kimberli Lee notes in her introduction, in order to express their gratitude for her writings about Native peoples and perform a small honoring ceremony on her behalf. Deeply moved by the gesture, Sandoz passionately continued to devote her life to righting wrongs and correcting perceived injustice to First Peoples. In the process, she drew praise and admiration from many Native Americans and non-Natives and won several awards. Fortunately, Lee organized, catalogued, and edited Sandoz’s numerous letters (dating from the 1940s to the mid-1960s) relating to Indian concerns. The letters are part of the Sandoz Collection housed at the University of Nebraska Archives in Lincoln (UNL). John R. Wunder, author or coauthor of numerous books and series editor of the Plains Histories Series, of which this is part, wrote the foreword.

Born and raised in the Sand Hills of northwest Nebraska near the beginning of the twentieth century, the physical and cultural nature of the region provided Sandoz with countless invaluable experiences to write about. As

the eldest child of Swiss immigrants, she largely raised her five siblings and endured endless harsh work and moody and difficult parents. Despite her often-stressful childhood, she later wrote with great fondness about the lifestyle on the plains where she grew up during her formative years. She first encountered Native Americans during these early years because the Pine Ridge Reservation was a relatively short distance from her parents' homestead. Each summer, Oglala Lakota frequently visited the Sandoz ranch, and her families' close friendship with them forever shaped her writings and later activism.

Blessed with a thirst for reading, storytelling abilities, and a deep passion and gift for writing, Sandoz wrote more than twenty books and a dozen short stories. Most of her work portrays American Indians in a sympathetic light and drew attention to their frequent mistreatment and injustice. In particular, her books *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas* (1942) and *Cheyenne Autumn* (1953) brought her national recognition and highlighted the persecution of and challenges faced by Native peoples. Probably her most well-known book, however, is *Old Jules: Portrait of a Pioneer* (1935), a biography of her father.

Sandoz's academic training took shape when she enrolled and worked at UNL during the 1920s. During this time, she spent countless hours researching at the Nebraska State Historical Society and mining the materials for insights into federal policy regarding the Northern Plains Native communities. Trips to the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations and other Native communities during the 1930s reestablished old friendships and contacts with Lakota and Northern Cheyenne confidants. Her close friendship with these and other tribal communities fueled her fervent interest in writing a fairer and more balanced history of federal-Indian relations. It also marked her as a pioneer in the field of ethnohistory at a time when the sympathetic treatment of Native Americans was not the norm. She realized early in her life that the history of Native peoples was a rich and important part of the fabric that shaped American history in general, and without it a fuller understanding of the history of the United States was impossible. Although not formally trained as an academic historian, she took classes from and worked with professional historians who shared with her the tools of the discipline and taught her historical methodology and interpretation.

Thus, following her time at UNL, she became not only one of Nebraska's greatest historians but also a nationally respected one because she used this time to write some of her most well-known works. Not content to right the wrongs of federal-Indian relations through her writings, she also devoted the rest of her life to lecturing about and advocating a wide range of Indian causes from legal and sovereign rights to eliminating stereotypes. She died of bone cancer in 1966 and is buried on the family ranch overlooking her beloved Sand Hills.

Perhaps no one is more familiar with the materials in the Sandoz Collection housed at the Don L. Love Memorial Library on the UNL campus than Lee. While completing her doctorate at UNL, she served as graduate research assistant charged with organizing, indexing, and microfilming the Sandoz manuscripts, research notes, letters, correspondence, and other primary sources. The National Endowment for the Humanities provided funding for the project. Lee points out in her book that Sandoz meticulously and painstakingly kept and preserved a treasure trove of documents and historical information from her research, writing, and years of advocacy. These should be of tremendous use to scholars from a variety of disciplines who discover or rediscover Sandoz and the rich material in the collection now that Lee has made it accessible and brought it attention.

Lee appropriately presents the letters in a readable thematic and largely chronological format. She divided the letters into four broad themes that include her requests for historical information, political activism, a crusade against negative American Indian stereotypes, and the promotion of Native American artists and writers. Lee wrote short introductions before each section and placed the letters in a historical context. Particularly interesting are the letters dealing with Sandoz's efforts to slow or stop the termination movement of the late 1940s to the mid-1960s and the complementary relocation program that threatened to force Indians into assimilation once and for all and destroy tribal communities and Native culture. Equally fascinating are Sandoz's efforts to end adverse images of American Indians in all forms and her promotion and advocacy for Native artists and authors during a period of time when few others were taking such a stand. It certainly establishes her as a crusader of Indian rights with few equals. It is no wonder many Native groups honor her today. Clearly, when one reads the letters, her passion and devotion to her life's calling jumps off the pages. Certainly, she was more than willing to try to wield her influence with leaders of stature ranging from tribal representatives, Indian advocacy groups, cinema makers, publishers, elected officials, and judges to US presidents.

Although Lee has done a nice job of assembling the letters, I would, however, take exception to her statement in the book that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) "would not reach prominence until the mid-to-late 1950s" (15). Founded in 1944, NCAI campaigned vigorously from its inception to promote Native American legal, land, cultural, sovereignty, political, and other rights. Within just a few years of its founding, NCAI had battled to protect the rights of Alaska Natives, end voting and Social Security discrimination in Arizona and New Mexico, promote unrestricted legal counsel to Natives, and create an Indian Claims Commission in order to help adjudicate Indian land issues. Although the NCAI did not win all

the early battles it waged, it certainly had scored some success by 1950 and brought national attention to Indian concerns. Most important, it was the NCAI, and not the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA), as she implies, that took the lead in slowing or stopping termination and relocation (17). From the late 1940s until the official end of the termination movement, NCAI stood steadfast in stopping the devastating policy. In 1954, NCAI held an emergency conference in Washington, D.C., that aggressively and successfully led to an end to the termination policy. The AAIA participated in the conference but took its direction from NCAI leaders. Ironically, it was then NCAI Executive Director Helen Peterson, a Northern Cheyenne, but enrolled Oglala Lakota, who directed the campaign from the basement of her home. Given Sandoz's close affinity with the Northern Cheyenne and Lakota, it is quite surprising that there would not be correspondence between Sandoz and Peterson. Certainly, both were strong-willed individuals who would have been powerful allies. If those letters are not part of the Sandoz Collection, I strongly suspect that there is correspondence between the two contained in the Helen Peterson Papers at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Moreover, much of NCAI's leadership during the 1940s and 1950s hailed from the northern plains, and surely Sandoz corresponded with some of them.

Regardless, this is a minor quibble and only intended to make a fine book an even better one. The book offers a nice introduction to the valuable letters and correspondence that Sandoz generously left behind for scholars to probe. Lee's edited work and Sandoz's writings stand at the crossroads of the history of the plains and American West, American Indian and women's history, and literature.

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The Indian Commissioners: Agents of the State and Indian Policy in Canada's Prairie West, 1873–1932. By Brian Titley. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2009. 288 pages. \$39.95 paper.

Few books on Canadian Indian policy deal with or focus primarily on the individual actors involved either in the formulation of the policy or in its implementation. Ian Getty and Antoine Lussier's *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows* (1983) is an edited collection of readings containing several articles that focus, to some extent, on the individual personalities and backgrounds of some key public servants who shaped Canada's early Indian administration. Brian Titley authored an earlier work (*A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell*