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the Modoc War relevant and readable should be applauded. If the conflict still awaits a definitive scholarly study, James's book shows that there is more than enough drama and significance in it to make the effort worthwhile.

Andrew H. Fisher

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O, My Ancestor: Recognition and Renewal for the Gabrielino-Tongva People of the Los Angeles Area. By Claudia Jurmain and William McCawley. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2009. 316 pages. \$21.95 paper.

Providing a contemporary voice to Gabrielino peoples throughout the Los Angeles basin and beyond, *O, My Ancestor* serves as a vehicle of agency for the Gabrielino community to interpret their own history as well as discuss their present situation and future goals. Although structured around a group of contemporary oral histories, the work becomes more than a simple snapshot of a people, as topics addressed and information provided by tribal members draw out historical narratives covering the entire twentieth century, filling a gap in Gabrielino and arguably broader southern California First Nations peoples' history. Bridging the chasm between early-twentieth-century anthropologists and more contemporary works like William McCawley's previous book, *The First Angelinos: The Gabrielino Indians of Los Angeles* (1996), the publication of *O, My Ancestor* becomes an invaluable research tool for those not only studying Gabrielino history but also for anyone doing Western history in general. The Gabrielino story shares many commonalities with other southern California tribes and Native peoples throughout the West. Issues concerning interaction with the federal government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, gaming, land rights, the preservation of one's culture, and the struggle to orient one's self and tribe to the historical realities of the mission system and later assimilationist policies all prove to be interconnected. The impressive list of assembled Gabrielino interviewees, who provided honest and forthright answers to some of the most-pressing questions that face the Gabrielino community, is a testament to the work's importance. It is also worth noting the unique structure of the book. Accessible to a lay or an academic audience, the publication relies heavily on contemporary oral histories prefaced by well-written historical vignettes that provide context and lucidity to the subsequent conversations on a whole host of themes.

Obviously, in discussing an unrecognized tribe such as the Gabrielino, the issue of obtaining federal recognition is at the forefront of any dialogue about the tribe and naturally becomes one of the most obvious reoccurring themes

in the book. Throughout the chapters, the reader witnesses the Gabrielinos' struggle to navigate the circuitous and convoluted path to federal recognition successfully while not allowing the process to dominate who they are or curtail what the Gabrielino community is able to accomplish. The duality of federal recognition, an ever-present priority that can easily become all-consuming, yet is something that the interviewees at times almost professed an indifference to because they do not let it define them as an Indian, was obviously not lost on the authors or the tribal members. Instead a sense of fatalism emerges in which the Gabrielino believe that they will eventually obtain federal recognition but all in good time. The topic of what would happen if the tribe was told it never could achieve federal recognition is not explored; therefore the conversations naturally focus on impediments to the inevitable recognition. According to the Gabrielino interviewees, the two main problems are money and unity, or a lack thereof. Interestingly enough, the expressed assumption that monetary concerns would eventually work themselves out did not manifest in discussions about the unification of Gabrielino tribal representative entities. Currently, there is not a single organization recognized by the federal government or the Gabrielino as representative of the entire Gabrielino Nation. Although interviews of Gabrielinos from differing tribal councils all voiced feelings of inclusiveness and openness to welcoming other members, a clear sense never emerges that the unification of the Gabrielino in terms of a representative organization is at hand. Some Gabrielinos comment that they historically never had a single chief or organization that controlled the entire Gabrielino community, while others also mention gaming.

Probably one of the most controversial and often-polarizing topics that cuts across all American Indian peoples, federally recognized or not, is that of gaming. However, the topic of casinos was conspicuously sedate throughout the entire book, with most Gabrielino interviewees treating the topic with understandable caution. Nevertheless, some insightful comments provide a window into the discussion of casinos within the Gabrielino community. For example, although most Gabrielinos are either supporters or opponents of casinos—for in discussions of gaming there are few fence-sitters—the fact that some saw the promotion of a casino as a cause for other Native Americans to question the motives of the Gabrielino becomes interesting, given that other gaming tribes support the idea of a Gabrielino casino. Yet where some see divisiveness, not just among the Gabrielino but the Native community as a whole, other Gabrielino tribal council members view casinos as a positive. A positive that draws attention to the Gabrielino cause of federal recognition in addition to tribal unity, which may be glossing over the unfortunate discord seemingly inherent in a tribal gaming operation, one that combined with other issues has already fractured the Gabrielino community with allegations and

lawsuits. However, there is something that unifies the Gabrielinos no matter their position on gaming and that is a respect for and a desire to preserve their ancestral lands.

To the Gabrielinos, respect for their traditional lands is of utmost importance. The theme of preserving what little has not been paved over or developed in the greater Los Angeles area runs throughout the book. For the Gabrielino view the land not only as a connection to their ancestors, but many also believe that the acquisition of a tribal land base would stimulate unity and solidarity amongst the Gabrielinos as well as serve as a vehicle for them to reconnect to their culture. Despite the unwieldy tangle of concrete and asphalt that pervades seemingly every inch of Los Angeles, the Gabrielino interviewees still feel a connection to their ancestral home and often believe to be able to see past the urban sprawl to what it once was. As a testament to their vision, they describe successfully defending the sacred springs presently on the University High School campus in West Los Angeles and the village site of Povuu'ngna on the California State University, Long Beach, campus. Nevertheless, although the Gabrielino express a notable sense of pride in these preservation achievements as an outgrowth of their respect for their traditional lands, the issue of where exactly or even vaguely would a Gabrielino reservation be located was never really discussed. As a result, the reader is left with a solid belief that the Gabrielino value the land and will fight to preserve it, but the desired location(s) of a Gabrielino land base remains unclear. Although the issue of gaining federal recognition, a casino, or a reservation may ultimately prove elusive, something that the Gabrielino repeatedly attest to is the regaining of their culture.

The reclamation and, in some cases, rediscovery of Gabrielino cultural identity and history prove to be central themes in every oral history included in *O, My Ancestor*, and as a result becomes one of the most pronounced and important themes in the book. Although every tribe strives to maintain its unique history, the Gabrielino tribe also has the added burden of simply persuading people—Native and non-Native—that they even exist. Every interviewee referred to examples of teachers, tour guides, or regular people claiming the Gabrielino were all gone, or perhaps the even more insulting notion that they were “culturally extinct.” It is easy to recognize the pain and anguish that the story of your people being told is incorrect, yet not always having a definitive answer to correct the historical record because of the fragmentation and external factors that forced much of the culture underground or into dormancy because of racism, percussion, or violence. Efforts to inform the public of their presence and educate their own children about what it means to be Gabrielino have led many of the interviewees to renew their own understanding of their history. Gabrielino interviewees describe a process of

introspection and researching their own history and culture. For many of the interviewees, this path of historical recognition leads to Mission San Gabriel and Sherman Indian School. In an interesting generational divide that is not fully explored, the older generation of Gabrielinos, who possessed a more direct and personal connection to these institutions, had almost universally a more positive opinion of them than did younger Gabrielino generations. Nevertheless, generational paradoxes aside, when taken in their totality the Gabrielino oral histories about cultural and historical discovery and renewal presented in *O, My Ancestor* serve as the basis of the work and its most salient contribution to a greater understanding of the Gabrielino community in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It is a compelling story and one, the book points out, that is best told by the Gabrielinos. Most readers of *O, My Ancestor* will agree.

Jeffrey Allen Smith

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Our Knowledge Is Not Primitive: Decolonizing Botanical Anishinaabe Teachings. By Wendy Makoons Geniusz. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009. 214 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

Colonization of knowledge is, at its very core, a way of assimilating another culture and minimizing the occupied population's experiences and historical context. In many ways we are reminded that the occupying culture often treats the knowledge of the colonized as inferior or of lesser importance in light of the perceived new and improved information at hand. This is a story told again and again in a variety of forms when discussing the outcome of the colonization of the Americas by Europeans; however, Wendy Geniusz presents not only the historical context but also a viable and unique alternative to the current overarching worldview methodology.

The premise that Geniusz eloquently builds upon is that she has the scientific background and cultural heritage as jumping points from which to address the botanical, medicinal, and spiritual context of the Anishinaabe—her own people—proposing that this information is useful to reclaiming a cultural and linguistic revitalization. The Anishinaabe knowledge, or *anishinaabegikendaasowin*, is explored in depth with sensitivity and sincere investigation in this book, implementing new systems to decolonize the culture by using a distinctly Anishinaabe approach, or Biskaabiiyang. Geniusz is careful to introduce words and concepts to the reader in a clear, understandable way. In using these terms throughout the book, the reader can begin to understand the