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American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk. Edited by Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8q14q17r>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 23(2)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

1999-03-01

DOI

10.17953

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REVIEWS

American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk. Edited by Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997. 297 pages. \$36.95 cloth; \$19.95 paper.

An increasing number of books, written from a variety of perspectives, have been published in recent years about Indian activism in the 1960s and 1970s. Many were written by participants in the events under discussion—by Indians and non-Indians, members of the government, and protestors. These volumes add immeasurably to our knowledge of this important period. *American Indian Activism* clearly ranks in the top tier, both as a scholarly resource and as a sheer good read.

The contributors to this volume come from disparate backgrounds, approach the subject from a wide variety of perspectives, and reach differing conclusions about the consequences stemming from the eighteen-month occupation of Alcatraz Island by the “Indians of all Tribes” in 1969 to 1971. These differences do not, however, lead to the all too familiar disjointedness so often associated with edited works, as the organization of the book lends a coherence to the material, which is presented in an easily digestible form without overmuch editorial intrusion. The authors are also united by their knowledge of the events leading up to, during, and following the occupation, and by their belief that the occupation itself was of immense importance.

The volume is organized around roughly chronological lines, beginning with the occupation, continuing with the government’s response to it, and ending with essays on its consequences. The chapters include personal accounts as well as analytic treatments of the occupation.

The first section of the book provides a theoretical framework and historical context for the occupation, which is useful both to those who are aware of the protests of the period as well as to those who are less familiar with them. In the first chapter, the editors trace the history of Red Power protest from 1969 to the Longest Walk in 1978, placing that period of protest in the context of Indian activism since the late 1700s, and situating Indian protest amidst the other protests of the 1960s and 1970s. They also provide a brief overview of the occupation itself, which illuminates the later chapters. Finally, they make the case that although other activities may have received more attention from scholars in the field, “it was the occupation of Alcatraz Island that launched the greatest wave of Indian activism” (p. 10).

While not disagreeing with this point, Vine Deloria, Jr. also argues that we must not romanticize either the activists or their activities, but should examine them dispassionately, in order "to learn from them the hard lessons that will serve us well in leaner times" (p. 45). Deloria provides that examination, analyzing Indian protest in terms of its commonalities and differences with the larger civil rights movement. He combines this analysis with his personal recollections of his involvement with the occupation, providing both immediacy and analytic distance, and concluding that for Indian activists to be effective, they must have specific goals and strategies designed to attain them. In the absence of such goals and strategies, the decision-making power defaults to the federal government: "When Indians do not clearly articulate what they want, the government feels free to improvise, even if it means creating new policies that have no roots in anything except the fantasies of the creator" (p. 50).

These two introductory chapters provide the reader with much to think about while perusing the later essays, which contain evidence of extraordinary dedication and commitment to the causes associated with Indian rights as well as a certain amount of confusion and conflict concerning how those causes should best be articulated and pursued.

The chapters on the occupation itself include an excerpt from Adam (Nordwall) Fortunate Eagle's book on Alcatraz, which details the events leading up to the occupation, the processes of coalition building among and between the various Indian organizations in the Bay Area, and the issues that underlie the occupation. Other chapters in this section include the personal recollections of journalist Tim Findley and a fascinating look at the key participants in the occupation by LaNada Boyer. These chapters indicate the importance of the issues to those involved, the significance of personality among them, and the pivotal role played by the media. Since this era marked the real beginning of mediated politics, these chapters provide an absorbing glimpse into activists' early attempts at influencing the media and being influenced by them.

These selections are followed by several chapters, each of which provides a different perspective on the antecedents of the occupation and how they affected the occupation itself. The various authors trace the occupation back to the establishment of Native American Studies Programs at the University of California at Berkeley and Davis. Steve Talbot, Luis S. Kemnitzer, Edward D. Castillo, and Jack D. Forbes were all involved in the early days of those programs, and they are well equipped to provide valuable insights into the relationships between the academy and political action, and the costs of each for the individuals involved.

The two following chapters, by Lenny Foster and George P. Horse Capture, eloquently argue for the significance of Alcatraz in the lives of Indians everywhere, whether they were directly involved in the occupation or not. The personal transformations and consequences for group identity they detail speak loudly of the differences Alcatraz made and is making in the self-understanding of many Indian people.

The questions of change on a policy level are addressed in the final chapters. John Garvey and Troy Johnson provide an account of events from the government's perspective, and shed some light on how Alcatraz was to influ-

ence governmental responses to the protests that followed the occupation. Robert A. Rundstrom examines the symbolic nature of Alcatraz in an interesting essay on the graffiti and other elements of the physical environment. Woody Kipp provides a powerful and moving narrative of the occupation's influence on the protestors, tying Alcatraz to his experiences at Wounded Knee two years later. Karren Baird-Olson's account of the costs and consequences of activism for women is one of the best in the volume, made particularly poignant by Ward Churchill's concluding description of the governmental efforts to repress those activists.

Altogether, these essays provide an insightful and enthralling examination of an important series of events and their place in the broader history of the period. They work together well rather than competing with one another, and unite to form a well-rounded and multi-layered portrayal of the occupation and its aftermath.

I have two small quibbles with the book. The first is the title, which, while evocative, is not really descriptive of either the volume's content or its aims. The book is centered on Alcatraz, and the title would better serve its purpose if it reflected that focus. Secondly, a closing chapter by the editors would have been a nice addition to the book, which currently seems to just stop rather than to conclude. Such a chapter would have been especially useful as so many of the people involved in Alcatraz and featured in this volume continue to be active, in one capacity or another, in Indian issues. The commitment that was evident at Alcatraz remains evident. As LaNada Boyer put it: "We want to live as a free people in our own country. We want the government to pass laws to respect our Mother Earth, with real enforcement to protect the land, the water, the environment, and the people. We want freedom of religion—the right to be human. We want our ancestors' remains to be returned to our homelands. We want the federal government to stop contributing to the destruction around the world and to set a good example so we can all be proud to be Americans" (p. 99). They not only want these things; they and many others remain willing to fight for them. This important fact could have been reinforced in a conclusion.

These are, however, extremely minor quibbles. This book will be useful in the classroom, valuable for scholars, and interesting to general readers. It belongs in the library of everyone interested in the politics of the 1960s and 1970s, American Indian politics, social movements, and/or American history.

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As We Are Now: Mixblood Essays on Race and Identity. Edited by William S. Penn. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. 254 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

This is an unexpected book. William S. Penn, of Nez Perce and Osage heritage, has written previous books of essays and literary criticism—*The Telling of*