

Unearthing Indian Land: Living with the Legacies of Allotment. By Kristin T. Ruppel. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008. v + 227 pages. Photos, notes, index, and bibliography. \$35 (paper).

In her recent book, *Unearthing Indian Land, Living with the Legacies of Allotment*, Kristin Ruppel brings an impressive range of scholarly approaches to her study of the problem of fractionation of American Indian allotment lands. Her primary focus is on two northwestern reservations, the Shoshone-Bannock at Fort Hall in Idaho and the Quinault in Washington state. As Ruppel notes, the policy era known as Allotment (1887–1934), which witnessed the forced sectionalization of collectively held tribal properties into individual Indian ownership, is regarded by American Indians as the most devastating policy experiment ever to have been implemented against Native Americans in the United States. Over one hundred years later, tribes and individuals are still struggling to recover from its devastating effects, and Ruppel's work vividly evidences some of the concrete impacts the policy continues to have on Native American landholders.

Legal doctrines, postcolonial theory, and poetics are interwoven throughout the work, which begins with two chapters dedicated to grounding the reader in the complexities of Native landholding. From the first colonial encounters, the conceptual framing of land that ultimately justified the policy of allotment is explored. Colonial doctrines of discovery and conquest are juxtaposed against Native doctrines of relationship building. Exemplified in the first treaties, the conflicting views held by colonial powers (of lands being transferred) versus Native views (of usufruct rights being granted) nevertheless indicate an implicit agreement by both parties of the preeminent occupation of and rights to their lands by Native peoples.

For the later American nation that asserted a strong identity as a just and moral government and people, the tension between the just recognition of the inherent existence of Native governments and peoples and the political and social autonomy that this entails on the one hand, and the immoral desire to take what does not belong to them on the other, requires interesting legal twists and turns. The irony is that Native peoples have repeatedly used these strange federal policies and decisions, intended to diminish their status as distinctive political entities, to do just the opposite and, instead, assert their sovereign authority, for in the end that sovereignty remains implied throughout. From the treaty era to contemporary regulatory schemes, Ruppel's strong background in federal Indian law and history is enhanced with postcolonial rhetorical interpretations that ultimately contribute eloquently to a convincing argument that the "colonial assumption of entitlement to Indian lands" by which the United States unilaterally authorized allotment was and is achieved not by right, but by power (p. 25).

In the body of the work, Ruppel shifts to an anthropological stance as she moves the experiences of the allottees at Quinault and particularly at Fort Hall to the forefront. The problems of fractionation and probate of allotment lands, as well as the exploit-

ative leasing practices of a Bureau of Indian Affairs that remain infuriatingly paternalistic in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, are the lived experiences of Helen Mitchell (Quinault), Ernestine “Ernee” Werelus (Shoshone-Bannock), and Walter Nevada (Shoshone-Bannock). Ruppel’s fieldwork experience and continuing involvement with and advocacy for these reservation activists informs the account, but in large part Mitchell and Werelus now drive the work. The need for their efforts is immediately apparent as hundreds of reservation residents attend a first informal meeting on the subject of allotments organized by Werelus. Addressed are aspects such as the 2 percent rule (under which a fractionated allottee who holds less than 2 percent of the overall allotment may find that land reverted to the tribal government, even though the actual amount may be several acres); the extraordinary difficulty for allottees to probate their shares; the tribal government’s role, which may be adversarial to the allottees; and the secretive and exploitive policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which seems to be working with agribusiness and ranchers more than with the tribal governments in leasing Indian allotments for well under fair market rates. As eloquent as Ruppel is in her academic analysis, Mitchell and Werelus demonstrate equally the eloquence and passion of those actually affected. The diverging views of land and property come to the forefront again. Allotments are not simply property, they are heritage and identity. As a result, for Native peoples the loss of land constitutes much larger losses as well.

The last chapter contains a final treat for the reader as Ruppel moves to yet another area of skill and ability, poetics. Returning to her earlier discussion of encounter, she eases the reader out of a largely legal and anthropological text by bringing it to the level of intuition and empathy, acknowledging the limitations of the Western academic dialogue around conservation, environment, and cultural diversity to bridge the gap between living-on-the-land and living-as-the-land. As another kind of encounter, the work thus moves not only full circle, but from a Western frame to a more indigenous frame, another step in building the bridge.

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Music of the First Nations: Tradition and Innovation in Native North America.

Edited by Tara Browner. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009. 184 pp.
Photos, tables, illustrations, index, and bibliography. \$35 (cloth).

Music of the First Nations: Tradition and Innovation in Native North America presents a collection of ethnomusicological case studies illuminating the complexity of First Nations, Inuit, and American Indian musical practices and expressions. Editor Tara Browner (Choctaw) contextualizes the book as being concerned with and reflecting balance in relation to a number of different relationships, including