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REVIEWS

The Allegany Senecas and Kinzua Dam: Forced Relocation Through Two Generations. By Joy A. Bilharz. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. 194 pages. \$40.00 cloth.

All Indian nations have etched forever in their collective memories the traumatic events of a forced removal, a supreme injustice, or a destruction of life. The Cherokee have the "The Trail Where They Cried," the Sioux the Black Hills, the Blackfeet the Marias River Massacre, and the Seneca the Kinzua Dam. During the 1957 congressional hearing on the dam, Representative John Taber of New York asked a member of the US Army Corps of Engineers, "Is this the project where you are going to flood out the Indians and take their land away from them so that they will have nothing left but a swimming pool?" When the dam became operational in 1966, it created the Allegheny Reservoir. The Seneca called it the Lake of Perfidy, as the dam's construction abrogated the Pickering Treaty of 1794, the nation's oldest treaty "still in force," an action that symbolized the terminationist spirit of federal-Indian relations of the 1950s. The project submerged ancestral homes, farms, community centers, burial plots, and hunting and fishing grounds. Ultimately 550 Seneca were removed from the "take area" and another ninety-eight citizens lost most of their land. The Seneca did receive just over \$15 million for their troubles, but money could not repair the damage done to their sense of place and justice.

The story of this psychic and physical damage and its effect on the Seneca's political, cultural, and social life is the subject of Joy Bilharz's *The Allegany Senecas and Kinzua Dam*. Bilharz brings together excellent scholarship on the "Kinzua era" and adds to it extensive field research conducted during the 1980s for her doctoral dissertation in anthropology (Bryn Mawr College, 1988). She first provides a crisp summary of Seneca history before removal, describing the formation of the two principal regions of the Seneca Nation: the Allegany and the Cattaraugus reservations. Bilharz neglects some relevant analyses in her review of the pre-construction phase, but does an adequate job of synthesizing a body of historical work on the battles the Seneca waged in the courts, Congress, and media to prevent the dam's construction. In placing the Seneca removal in the larger "context of forced removals of minority,

often indigenous, populations” of this century, citing slum removal projects in Boston and Cuba, Bilharz fails to mention that denizens of two large Pittsburgh neighborhoods—including 1,239 black families—were removed to make room for elements of the urban renewal program called the Pittsburgh Renaissance, for which the Kinzua Dam served as an expensive (and unnecessary) flood insurance policy as well as a pollution control device (p. 25). In general, her efforts to create a comparative framework are too wide-ranging to achieve much substantive effect, though her brief analysis of the devastation wrought by the Pick-Sloan Plan is certainly instructive. She does, however, provide a foundation for more detailed comparative analysis. Her focus, however, is not the battle over dam construction. The value of Bilharz’s study is in its tracing to the 1980s, and briefly the 1990s, the impact of removal and the loss of the dam fight, especially on intergenerational relations and Seneca political culture.

Removal did improve Seneca housing, which created some ambivalence toward those forced to leave the old places; all the new houses built for the removed had electricity and indoor plumbing. But the sociocultural stress that occurred during and after removal took many forms, including an increased mortality rate for Seneca elders, as well as a difficult period of adjustment for elders forced to pay for utilities, insurance, and food. The Seneca lost not only land, but also the activities and knowledge the land made possible. Most of the families that were removed hunted, fished, and gathered firewood, flowers, fruit, and medicine. Younger Seneca, Bilharz writes, “regret the loss of botanical knowledge, remember their grandmothers’ descriptions of medicines and their growth cycles, and wish they had paid more attention.” Most of the “free natural resources” were submerged by the Lake of Perfidy, as were many of the children’s traditional play areas (p. 59). Because of the reconstitution of Seneca community life, there was also the loss of intergenerational contact between grandparents and grandchildren, which contributed to an attenuation of interest in the Seneca language. While this change was not just related to Kinzua, given social trends among the young, physical separation did not help with the maintenance of tradition. Bilharz also captures the social tension that developed between residents of Jimersontown and Steamburg, the two Allegany Seneca communities formed from removal, as well as between these residents and Cattaraugus Seneca who benefited from the federal settlement without suffering any direct effects of the removal.

Bilharz emphasizes two important and related legacies of the Kinzua experience: the formation of community groups and the growth of an “institutionalized bureaucracy” (p. 61). Many of the community groups formed in the 1960s to ameliorate the stress of removal—the “Seniors” and the “21 Plus,” among others—disbanded in the 1970s or became part of the new governmental bureaucracy. Members of the “21 Plus” club in particular moved on to work within the Seneca government, carrying with them the memory of losing the Kinzua fight. The Seneca Nation’s decision to commit federal rehabilitation funds to expanding educational opportunities for its citizens paid dividends in the 1970s as college graduates were “brought into government service,” helping to increase “government efficiency and accountability”

under the direction of the new People's Party (pp. 104-106). In addition, the increased political activity precipitated by the need to negotiate the terms of removal facilitated improved access to federal aid programs like Head Start. The Seneca may have tried to secure such aid if Kinzua had not occurred, but it is likely that they would not have been as successful.

The return of post-Kinzua college graduates who were exposed to pan-Indian organizations, Bilharz found, led to a "new attitude of self-confidence" and a "concern with ethnic heritage," as well as cultural stress when their tactics were viewed by some elders as leftist or radical. Interestingly, in an effort to evaluate the impact of removals on children, the author notes that young activists of the 1980s "tended to report the most grief, fear, and disruption at the time of removal" (p. 5). The frequency and tenor of Seneca activism during the Red Power era and beyond would have likely occurred without Kinzua, but the Lake of Perfidy provided a visible symbol of lost Seneca land and government dishonor that undergirded and energized any political campaign. The sense of a "land shortage" attributable to the construction of the dam, combined with the judgment that older Seneca had not fought it hard enough, politicized a younger generation at the same time that New York State began pushing to take Seneca land to begin a four-lane highway project. In this context, Bilharz pays special attention to the expanding political role of Seneca women. When the nation finally granted them the right to vote in 1964, and the right to hold office in 1966, Seneca women rapidly became involved in its political sphere. In the early 1980s, a cohort of college graduates organized the Seneca Women's Awareness Group (SWAG) to deal with issues important to women, in particular this growing problem of land tenure. The group expanded its appeal by organizing the first Remember the Removal Day in 1984, securing money from the Tribal Council to fund it. The most passionate members of the group soon turned their attention to stopping the construction of the state highway project that threatened to further reduce the Seneca land base. Their encampment in a small longhouse and their hostage-taking of construction equipment did not sit well with some elders as well as with some SWAG members. But these activists were determined to prevent another Kinzua, to preserve "traditional land," and thus to protect Seneca sovereignty. Their actions, Bilharz writes, "demonstrated the extent to which Kinzua Dam had become the measure of political activism for the Senecas" (p. 125).

Some readers may find tenuous the connections Bilharz makes between recent political activity and the building of the dam while pursuing her primary goal of evaluating the impact of Kinzua on the Seneca over the last thirty years; Bilharz acknowledges that it is difficult to make direct connections in some cases. But for two generations of Seneca Nation citizens, represented in SWAG's organization of Remember the Removal Day, Kinzua loomed large, literally and figuratively, in the background.

Bilharz's subsidiary goal was to use this case study to "test the utility" of the Scudder-Colson model of forced relocation. At times, her efforts seem grafted on, at others they illuminate common problems of politically vulnerable displaced peoples. In the end, her efforts highlight the fact that the

Seneca people survived their forced relocation better than most, partly because of the Seneca's strength, partly because of the support provided by unaffected Seneca communities and other Iroquois nations, and partly because of the material assistance offered to the removed. As Bilharz states at the end, the Seneca "made the best of a bad situation," in large measure because throughout the crisis and beyond they viewed "themselves as actors rather than victims" (pp. 156, 152).

Bilharz knows her subject well. While living on or near the reservation, she interviewed elected officials and relocatees, and was granted access to Seneca Nation documents and other data, including personal letters and the newsletter *Oh-He-Yoh-Noh*. She worked as an insider to the extent that an outsider is able. Bilharz obviously integrated the results of this field research into her narrative, yet I was somewhat disappointed, given this extensive research, that there were not more Seneca voices in the book.

The Kinzua era in Seneca history is an important story, and *The Allegany Senecas and Kinzua Dam* holds something for scholars interested in Seneca and Iroquois history, issues of forced relocation in general and the Scudder-Colson model in particular, post-war federal Indian policy, and issues of gender in Native American politics.

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American Indian Literature and the Southwest: Contexts and Dispositions. By Eric Gary Anderson. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999. 225 pages. \$35.00 cloth; \$17.05 paper.

Eric Gary Anderson covers a broad spectrum of literature with a geographical emphasis in his critical work *American Indian Literature and the Southwest*. An assistant professor of English and instructor of American and Native American literatures at Oklahoma State University, Anderson is ambitious in his critical reading of both popular and high cultural arts. Unfortunately the American Indian literatures under discussion are subordinate to Anderson's critical apparatus and his discussion of works by non-Indian writers. Of the approximately two hundred pages in the book, the majority do not directly address writings by American Indians. The preponderance of the argument and illustrations encompass works about, sometimes tenuously, rather than by American Indians.

Anderson argues intensely to establish his theoretical premises. He contends that the American Southwest is preeminent in artistic influence and therefore transcends regional literature and art. The establishment of cultural context affects both serious and popular representations. Indeed, he ranges from an illuminating discussion of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* to the cartoon representations of Crazy Kat.

The geographic definition of the Southwest seems fluid for Anderson. He avers: "The Southwest and its peoples, like other American regions and theirs,