

**Welcome to the Oglala Nation: A Documentary Reader in Oglala Lakota Political History.** Edited by Akim D. Reinhardt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015. 306 pages. \$60.00 cloth and electronic.

This book serves as an introduction to Oglala Lakota political history for students, scholars, and interested lay readers. The introduction presents the underlying thematic structure for the book and briefly touches on the interpretation and representation of American Indians in historical narratives, American Indians as actors with agency in their own histories, and colonialism as an interpretive model or framing device for understanding the structural forces at work in American Indian political history. An overview of Oglala Lakota political history follows, based mostly on secondary sources. It focuses on polity, leadership, and the US-Oglala colonial struggle, including armed conflict, treaties, reservations, the Indian Reorganization Act, and more recent “episodes” such as tribal politics in the volatile 1970s, land claims, and tribal issues from 1999 to 2014.

Due to the brevity of the overview essay, the reader is given only a very limited and generalized grounding in Lakota-Dakota political history, structure, and especially the complex social and cultural worldview, including religion and kinship, which is essential to the “more accurate and honest historical assessment” the author calls for. A second key omission is a nuanced discussion of the internal politics of Pine Ridge Reservation from the 1970s to the present, utilizing the framing concepts of colonialism and individual agency.

The author selected sixty primary documents or excerpts of documents, organized chronologically, representing episodes in Oglala Lakota political history that reflect colonialism and individual agency. Four brief selections relate to: the creation of the Oceti Sakowin, or Seven Council Fires of the Sioux peoples; Oglala winter counts; French trader Jean-Baptiste Truteau’s “insights” into Lakota political dominance in the late eighteenth century; and an “ethnocentric” 1846 observation from Francis Parkman. The 1825 treaty with the northern Lakota groups and how the Oglala addressed early American efforts to assert colonial control concludes this section. A second group of documents focuses on the loss of Lakota land following the Powder River War, including an excerpt from previously published treaty proceedings, selected articles from the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, and selected parts of the 1889 congressional act to divide up and allot the Great Sioux Reservation.

The next twenty-one documents represent the period of official tribal organization, from the preamble to the 1921 Oglala constitution, to the Indian Reorganization Act to 1946. There are minutes of tribal council meetings and meetings with government officials as well as correspondence, representing both political issues and political process. The subsequent nine documents deal with issues in the late 1950s and 1960s, including interviews with Oglalas discussing tribal politics from the South Dakota Oral History Project at the University of South Dakota. These are some of the most interesting documents, as they present Oglala points of view.

The following twelve documents relate to internal political tensions on the Pine Ridge Reservation concerning elections, tribal governance, patronage, and factionalism

that gave rise to open conflict. Without previous knowledge of the political situation and events on Pine Ridge at this time, readers would likely have insufficient context to understand the significance of these documents. The last nine documents, including several newspaper accounts, highlight significant events from 1980 to 2014, such as the Black Hills Supreme Court case; alcohol sales and unsolved murders at Whiteclay, Nebraska; protests by the Grass Roots Oyate; the impeachment of Cecilia Fire Thunder; the introduction of casino gaming; the tribal council oath of office; and the consideration of legalizing alcohol on Pine Ridge.

The conclusion of the book is a bibliographic essay intended to enlighten readers who are interested in broadening their knowledge and seeking more context than the book provides. The essay extends well beyond Oglala political history to encompass the Lakota and Sioux-speaking peoples. This reader would have preferred an alphabetical bibliography with annotations rather than the essay format. The sources included are adequate, but certainly not exhaustive, especially for a broader Lakota social, cultural, and religious grounding.

The context provided for each document is very limited. A reader whose knowledge is limited to that provided in the book would have difficulty understanding the larger historical context and making sense of the relevance of the individual document, or could jump to conclusions. The editor provides little or no insight into his choice of documents. While the documents reveal the agency of individual actors, these actors are not identified or contextualized.

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