

Paternalism to Partnership: The Administration of Indian Affairs, 1786–2021. By David H. DeJong. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. 486 pages. \$70 cloth.

David DeJong, the director of the Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Project in Sacaton, Arizona, is the author or editor of eight previous books on the history of federal Indian policies. They range from ones on education and health services to treaties and water rights. He is best known for his past writings on the Indigenous communities of southern Arizona, especially his books *Stealing the Gila: The Pima Agricultural Economy and Water Deprivation, 1848–1921* (2009) and, most recently, *Diverting the Gila: The Pima Indians and the Florence-Casa Grande Project, 1916–1928* (2022). DeJong right away explains that his earlier book, *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs: The United States Indian Service and the Making of Federal Policy, 1824 to 2017*, published by the University of Utah Press in 2020, does not overlap with the present book under review since the previous publication focused on policy implementation and did not include descriptions of each head of Indian affairs.

The author provides biographical sketches of each head of Indian affairs and updates and replaces *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1824–1977* (1979), edited by Robert M. Kvasnicka of the National Archives and Herman J. Viola of the Smithsonian Institution, as a standard reference on these administrators. DeJong provides portraits of five superintendents of Indian Affairs (1786–96); eight superintendents of the Indian trade and chief clerks (1796–1824); forty-two commissioners of Indian affairs (1824–1981); and thirteen assistant secretaries of the Interior for Indian affairs (1977–2021). Only six of the commissioners of Indian affairs were Native Americans and none were appointed between Ely S. Parker's resignation in 1871 and the appointment of Robert L. Bennett by President Johnson in 1966. Since 1977, every assistant secretary of the interior for Indian affairs has been of American Indian or of Alaskan Native ancestry. Until President Donald Trump's selection of Tara McLean Sweeney, an Iñupiat businesswoman from Alaska, all the previous appointments were men. DeJong includes helpful charts, indicating when the administrators took office and ended their tenure. In nearly every thumbnail sketch on these administrators, the author also includes a selection from their policy statements. However, these excerpts, many from their annual reports of the Office of Indian Affairs, are all too identical in format, substance, and tone, and most scholars who are knowledgeable about the history of American Indian policies will largely deem them as agency propaganda.

By updating Kvasnicka's and Viola's earlier work, DeJong provides the reader with new information, especially in the last section of his book when he treats the assistant secretaries of the Interior for Indian affairs, starting with Forest Gerard in 1977. In this part of his book, his most effective chapter is on Larry Echo Hawk. He

has high praise for Echo Hawk's administration, one that fits DeJong's designation of "partnership" in his book's title. Echo Hawk, a Pawnee, successfully listened to tribal leaders; helped push for a revision of the excessively restrictive guidelines for federal recognition; helped settle four outstanding water rights suits at a cost of \$1 billion dollars; defended from congressional criticism Indian gaming operations, ones that provided hundreds of thousands of jobs in Indian country; and settled the perplexing *Cobell* case by working out a trust management settlement that dispersed \$1.46 billion to Indian communities and created a \$2 billion fund to assist in consolidating small parcels into more economically productive larger ones.

DeJong is also effective in providing new information about the lesser-known administrators, especially the superintendents of the Indian trade and chief clerks, from John Harris to John Mason. From the first appointment, they attempted to regulate the abuses of the fur trade in order to lessen tensions between Indians and frontiersmen and prevent war, which would destroy commercial profits. Early on, the author readily admits this fact, namely that the "relationship between the United States and the Indian Tribes was initially commercial with the War Department occupying a central role in implementing and overseeing policy and the secretary of war directly overseeing the management of Indian affairs" (8). Mason for one was hardly "paternalistic," clearly not concerned about the welfare of Indigenous communities, stressing the potential great resources that lay west of Missouri and that were there for the taking by enterprising pioneers.

Indeed, right from his introduction, DeJong contradicts himself in his use of the word "paternalism" set out in the title of his book. After all, was Commissioner Carey Harris—a Democrat from Tennessee, a member of Andrew Jackson's inner circle, and a speculator in Creek Indian lands in Alabama—"paternalistic" in pushing Indian removal? Did he want to "save" the Haudenosaunee by removing them to Kansas under the fraudulent federal treaty of Buffalo Creek of January 15, 1838? When referring to the second half of the nineteenth century, the author states that "every commissioner of Indian affairs of the era worked to divest tribes of their land via severalty and sought the complete abolition of tribal life" (8). He further states that, between 1880 and 1920, "every commissioner of Indian affairs of the era worked to divest tribes of their land via severalty and sought the complete abolition of tribal life, including reservations and tribal governments" (17). Finally, in his conclusion, DeJong readily admits that, historically, the policies of the Office of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) had been designed to extinguish aboriginal title through policies of "civilization, Christianization, assimilation, and termination" or by "gaining access to tribal lands and resources" (422).

I realize that the BIA has been the poor stepchild of the president, congressional committees, and the secretary of the Interior, and administrators within the BIA are often used as convenient scapegoats for others' failures. Yet DeJong's treatments of commissioners Brophy (with Zimmerman), Nichols, Myers, and Emmons could have been better. In just one sentence he mentions the BIA's Zimmerman plan released in 1947 that set in motion termination policies, but does not describe *what in these commissioners' backgrounds* led them to support this destructive policy for so

long. Moreover, in these same biographical sketches, he fails to properly explain why *all* of these postwar commissioners, including Commissioner Philleo Nash, acquiesced with little or no objections to *all* of the plans by Congress, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Army Corps of Engineers to flood hundreds of thousands of acres in Indigenous communities in a twenty-year period from 1947 to 1966. In addition, in his biographical sketch of my late friend, Commissioner Louis R. Bruce Jr., DeJong never mentions that he was an old New Dealer, mentored by Eleanor Roosevelt who brought him into government service as director of the National Youth Administration Indian programs in New York State in the 1930s; and that, to his credit, he supported Nixon's July 8, 1970, speech ending termination policies and backed the return of the sacred Blue Lake to the Taos Pueblos in 1970.

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