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## Tribal Dispossession and the Ottawa Indian University Fraud.

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white missionaries, church officials, land speculators, town boosters, government officials, and Ottawa Indian leaders from opposing factions. Good intentions are mixed with deceit. And in the final chapter, there is neither a happy nor a tragic ending, only a belated settlement. William E. Unrah and H. Craig Miner, two highly capable historians at Wichita State University, have produced this case study of the chicanery associated with the creation of Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas. They expose how the desire of Baptist missionaries to create a college for Ottawa Indians became entangled with land speculation and town building enterprises and how even in the eyes of the churchmen the goal of establishing the college took precedence over the rights of the Indians.

The Ottawas were a people buffeted about by the growth of white America, and by the 1830s most of their remaining number lived on a reserve on the Marais de Cygnes River. By the end of that decade, the Ottawa Baptist Mission had been established in their midst, and in 1862 Ottawa leaders signed a treaty that provided for tribal funding for a college slated to be the first major institution of higher education for Indians west of the Mississippi River. In 1865 the school received the name Ottawa University, and four years later it boasted a \$50,000 building. However, in 1867 the Ottawas were removed from Kansas to Indian Territory, and with no Ottawas attending the institution, some tribesmen claimed that the college had really been created for whites. Equally disturbing was the speculation in Ottawa land sold to finance the school by those charged with overseeing the establishment of the college. Then, too, the charge arose that funds of the Ottawa tribe had been misused in pursuing the project.

In all, it became a convoluted affair. Both sides engaged legal counsels. The Indian Office investigated the matter. Congress became involved. But in the end, the Ottawas had little left. Most had become United States citizens by 1870, so the tribe had ceased to exist as a legal entity. Their land holdings of

*Tribal Dispossession and the Ottawa Indian University Fraud.* By William E. Unrah and H. Craig Miner. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985. Illustrations, maps, photographs, index, bibliography. xii + 212 pp. \$17.95.

The story is complex with many actors—

74,000 acres in Kansas were gone, and roughly \$42,000 remained unaccounted for as a result of the university-building scheme. In 1967, however, the Indian Claims Commission awarded the Ottawas \$406,166.19 as compensation for their losses.

In doing their research, the authors drew from several sources, especially Interior Department materials. And while some readers might desire more documentation at certain points, the only errors in this thorough, solid study are such as referring to Dennis N. Cooley as the Secretary of Interior in 1865—Cooley was the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Such minor criticisms aside, this book, often resembling a criminal investigation report filled with names, dates, and figures, is informative and leaves no doubt that the Ottawas were victimized in large part by “wilderness entrepreneurs” who “mixed piety with ambition” (p. 68).

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