

**William E. Unrau and H. Craig Miner. *Tribal Dispossession and the Ottawa Indian University Fraud.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985) 212 pp., \$17.95.**

Described by historians William E. Unrau and H. Craig Miner as “a case study of manipulation and fraud,” this book tells the story of the loss of an entire reservation belonging to the Ottawa Indians by a series of events which led eventually to the dissolution of the tribe itself in the 1950s. Several bands of Ottawa Indians living in what is now Michigan and Ohio were deprived of their lands there by a series of treaties forcing land cessions and by allotment of their lands. Three bands of Ottawa Indians were relocated to a reservation in northeastern Kansas in the 1830s; eventually, all of this land was lost to them and they were forced to move to Oklahoma, where they purchased land. Several decades later, they were forcibly allotted, and by 1927 there were only two of the original Ottawa allottees still in possession of the lands they had acquired by allotment.

In short, the Ottawas lost their lands, and eventually their identity as a people, as a result of federal policies of removal, allotment, and efforts to assimilate Native Americans. This book gives the specific facts of this process for one tribe. What is especially striking about this case study, however, is that the process took place in the name of education and morality. Leaders of the dispossession effort were Baptist missionaries or lay people, and the beneficiaries included Ottawa University, today a Baptist school. By the treaty of 1862 with the Ottawas, reservation lands were to be sold to make possible creation of the school, which was to educate Ottawa children; the same promise was contained in an 1869 treaty which removed the Ottawas to Oklahoma. Today, the University has begun a program to provide tuition and boarding scholarships to Ottawa students, but the original aim has never been realized.

The leading individuals in bringing about these results were an amazing mix of piety, greed and brazenness. One of the key figures was John Tecumseh (Taay) Jones. Part-Chippewa Indian (but in no way Ottawa) he managed to get himself accepted as a member of the Ottawa tribe and one of its representatives negotiating key treaties for the tribe. These treaties awarded land and money to himself and other tribal representatives and placed him and his friends in charge of the institution which became Ottawa University. Eventually, the tribe expelled him, but not until long after the damage had been done. Another key figure (after whom the City of Hutchinson was named) did his work as federal agent to the Ottawa, a post he received *after* he had been discharged as an agent to the Sac and Fox tribe for fraud and incompetence. He carried on his fraudulent activities with an almost unbelievable effrontery, maintaining that he had no records of land sales

because he had been too busy to keep them! Eventually, the government stopped suing him for more than \$42,000 he had failed to account for as an Indian agent and accepted a payment of \$1,000, for the government's legal expenses. The third key person, Baptist minister Isaac Kalloch, dominated the new University from the beginning until he was finally driven from the board. Of course, honest accounts of how these individuals saw themselves are not available, but the evidence cited, much of which is contained in records of the National Archives, amply justifies the charge of fraud, as did the decisions of the Indian Claims Commission in the Ottawa case. The book is thoroughly documented, there are bibliography and index, and it contains a map locating the Kansas Ottawa reservation and photographs of key individuals and early University buildings.

The remarkable combination of religious zeal, boosterism, and chicanery is fascinating, but not very adequately explained. Indeed, the authors do not attempt much in the way of explanation at all. Nevertheless, this is an interesting and significant study, and perhaps it will, as they suggest, lessen the likelihood that similar frauds will take place in the future.

— Elmer R. Rusco  
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**Gina Webster, Producer. *The Black Aged: A Diverse Population*. 1985. Videotape, 11 minutes, color, \$30.00 for ½" or \$35.00 for ¾" copy. To order: Mr. Thomas D. Maher, Coordinator, Instructional Television-MRC, California State Polytechnic University, 3801 West Temple Avenue, Pomona, CA 91768.**

*The Black Aged: A Diverse Population* is an engaging eleven minute videotape documenting various lifestyles of the black elderly in Southern California. Gina Webster skillfully dispels the "all black aged are alike" myth as she highlights the current visions and lives of five octogenarians. From immigrant, laborer, writer, missionary, to social worker, each life is as varied as human experiences can be. Each individual carries a vivid past, an enriching present, and an optimistic future.

Webster, in a brief moment, has presented a picture of diversity. She integrates factual information concerning the black aged, the