

*Seasons of Change: Labor, Treaty Rights, and Ojibwe Nationhood*, by Chantel Norrgard. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. xii, 201 pp. Illustrations, map, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paperback.

*My Grandfather's Knocking Sticks: Ojibwe Family Life and Labor on the Reservation*, by Brenda J. Child. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2014. 241 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paperback.

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Seldom are readers of American Indian history treated to the nearly simultaneous release of two books examining neighboring tribal communities over roughly the same period of time and through similar methodological lenses. Yet 2014 brought both Chantel Norrgard's *Seasons of Change* and Brenda J. Child's *My Grandfather's Knocking Sticks*, each of which explores how Ojibwe peoples relied on and adapted their labor systems to navigate the shifting economic and political landscapes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Both works are framed around the ways Ojibwes have used labor to endure the advance of American colonialism. Norrgard surveys the period between the 1870s and the 1930s to "trace the role that labor played as a historically shifting dynamic shaped by Ojibwe struggles with colonialism" (2). While focusing most closely on four reservations — the Bad River and Red Cliff reservations in Wisconsin and Fond du Lac and Grand Portage in Minnesota — Norrgard draws examples from myriad Ojibwe communities. Thus, the overarching history related in *Seasons of Change* is widely applicable across the Lake Superior region. Norrgard intervenes in the latest scholarship and successfully deploys her Ojibwe case studies to firmly implant Native work in the broader paradigm of American labor history. Child, on the other hand, looks at the first half of the twentieth century and emphasizes her home community, the Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota. She tells the story of her people from their own perspective but follows the historian Jeffrey Ostler by critiquing efforts to highlight Native agency when it obscures the fact that, despite their best efforts, Native peoples remained less powerful than their non-Native neighbors. She is careful not to downplay the harsh realities of Indian life, showing that, for all their effort, her ancestors and their peers still endured "the loss of essential freedoms on reservations during the first half of the twentieth century" (5).

Each scholar approaches the Ojibwe past on slightly different terms. Norrgard assembles her story from an impressive variety of holdings, including three branches of the National Archives; collections of the New

York, Wisconsin, and Minnesota historical societies; and online collections. She expertly integrates these documents with a bevy of published primary sources, more than a dozen regional newspapers, and various governmental reports and legislation passed by states and the federal government. Child similarly builds *Knocking Sticks* from materials held at federal and state archives, but she incorporates a handful of oral history interviews and relates stories passed down within her own family. The result is a delicately balanced and very personal account that paves new paths for understanding Ojibwe labor and family life but does not shy away from the less appealing aspects of her community's past.

Both books are divided into two parts. Norrgard's first section entails three chapters, each in turn exploring how berry picking, hunting and fishing, and commercial fishing made up the Ojibwe economy in the treaty era of the late nineteenth century. Her second part begins around the turn of the twentieth century, as tribal members turned to wage labor to compensate for the dispossession of lands and resources brought on by the depletion of timber, game, and other essential components of nineteenth-century Ojibwe life. Most compelling among these chapters is Norrgard's interpretation of the Ojibwe encounter with "tourist colonialism" (108). She applies that concept to illustrate how, following the nearly total depletion of land and water in the nineteenth century, state and federal efforts to redevelop the Wisconsin and Minnesota wilderness for recreational use "led to further restrictions on Ojibwe rights to hunt, fish, and gather" (108). Finally, a conclusion reveals how early twentieth-century Ojibwe activism laid the foundation upon which later generations would proctor the so-called Walleye Wars for hunting and fishing rights in the 1970s and 1980s.

In *Knocking Sticks*, Child emphasizes the importance of family life and casts a wider net that includes activities such as ceremonial healing and working available welfare programs alongside rice gathering and hunting as part of the labor Red Lakers had to perform to cope with their lack of regular employment. The book's opening chapters, examining the life and marriage of Child's grandparents, describe the changes under way in matters of family life. The final three chapters show how global events like World War I, the 1918 influenza epidemic, and the Great Depression engendered significant shifts in Ojibwe life and labor. Child's discoveries about particular labor practices that she and others long considered traditional stand out. Among them are the titular knocking sticks—long cedar canes her grandfather used to knock *manoomin*, or wild rice, into his canoe. Before the Great Depression, men would not have collected rice. But, as with work of all kinds, gendered systems of labor shifted dramatically in the twentieth century, leading

Ojibwe men to join women in rice collecting as all sought to survive the Depression economy.

Norrsgard's *Seasons of Change* is deeply researched, tightly written, highly analytical, and packed with fresh and useful information. But the work is best suited for academic specialists. It also bears a surprising number of typographical errors, which at times distract from the arguments at hand. This is, of course, a minor critique; the mere fact that some shaky copyediting is perhaps the work's greatest downfall stands as a testament to its quality as a piece of scholarship. Child's *Knocking Sticks* matches Norrsgard in analytical strength but is more accessibly written. Indeed, Child's fluid prose and moving narrative will entice and engage scholars and general readers alike. Of particular significance is Child's direct incorporation of entire primary sources, transcribed and typed onto her pages. In these instances, she lets the documents tell their own stories. Such passages are followed by in-depth discussions of how Child approached her sources, what questions they raised, and what research avenues they either opened or closed, thus making her work especially well suited to any college classroom.

Taken together, these two books reaffirm some important points about the history of the Native Midwest. While neither deals directly with Iowa, *Annals of Iowa* readers interested in the recent scholarly energy surrounding the study of the midwestern past will find in these works a compelling rebuttal to recent calls for a return to master narratives once prescribed—and now, in some circles, revived—by influential thinkers like Frederick Jackson Turner. Indeed, *Seasons of Change* and *Knocking Sticks* remind us that long after removal, the creation of the reservation system, and the closure of the frontier, progress for some continued to be built upon the dispossession of land and resources belonging to others. Ojibwes and other Native peoples were left with little to depend upon aside from each other and the intricate labor systems they built and adapted to in their struggle to survive. Well into the twentieth century, state and federal governments took aim at Ojibwe lands and livelihoods. That Native peoples persevered in such conditions should be noted and celebrated. But, as Child so poignantly reminds us, “survival” in the American heartland—as elsewhere—“rarely felt like freedom or sovereignty to Indigenous people” (3).

*Degrees of Allegiance: Harassment and Loyalty in Missouri's German-American Community during World War I*, by Petra DeWitt. Law, Society and Politics in the Midwest Series. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012. x, 257 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 hardcover.