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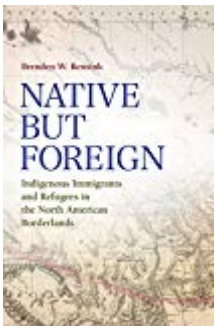

Brenden W. Rensink. *Native but Foreign: Indigenous Immigrants and Refugees in the North American Borderlands.* Connecting the Greater West Series. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2018. Illustrations. xv + 300 pp. $40.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-62349-655-5.

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Native but Foreign offers new perspectives in the intertwined histories of transnational movements and borderlands while focusing on often-neglected peoples. The newest book in the Connecting the Greater West series, Brenden W. Rensink's *Native but Foreign* connects the disparate histories of peoples in North America by focusing on the diverse but shared experiences of Chippewa, Cree, and Yaqui cultures from the eighteenth through the twentieth century. It retraces these experiences across regions and along the Canadian-US and Mexican-US international boundaries. *Native but Foreign* helps us better understand how various indigenous communities across North America—while usually not examined as a group nor in the same time period—had much in common as they negotiated their respective livelihoods and attempted to prove that they, too, belonged in US society. It also revisits such concepts and labels as "refugee," "immigrant," "foreign," and "Native American" and explains their changing meaning throughout time as well as their use in various regional contexts. Comparing these three indigenous groups and their uneven integration into US society is at the heart of Rensink's book and argument, which outlines how despite the myriad challenges created by the treatment of indigenous peoples as immigrants, they nonetheless negotiated their political and cultural identities as best they could for their own communities' survival.

In the 1880s, as some of the most resistant indigenous peoples, such as "Geronimo," a major Bedonkohe leader among the larger group of Apaches, and others were suppressed, the US government began to view indigenous groups, including the Crees, as a threat given the potential for military collaboration with the Sioux and others in the wake of a declining fur trade during the mid-nineteenth century. Crees, similar to the Chippewa, moved in search of new economic opportunities from Canada to the United States. As they carved out new communities in US-claimed territory, they became "foreigners" (p. 82). Farther south toward the United States border with Mexico, Yaquis, who had experienced decades of exploitation and outright attacks by the Mexican government, sought

safer ground as well as new economic opportunities in the United States.

While all three groups Rensink examines crossed into the United States during the latter part of the nineteenth century and as some became refugees and immigrants, their experiences concerning efforts to integrate into American society differed greatly. The elimination of bison herds and settler colonial efforts presented difficulties for these groups. While the region south of their Canadian homelands in present-day Montana was "familiar land" for Crees, they were, as Rensink explains, "forced to live in unfamiliar ways" (p. 95). By contrast, Yaquis who crossed into Arizona more easily incorporated themselves into that region's society. Yaquis who gained experience as miners and railroad workers quickly became commodities, as employers demanded a skilled labor force. These skills thus were crucial to overall Yaqui survival. Yaquis also negotiated identity politics when it was advantageous (that is, labor) and blended in with the "Mexican" population yet always embraced and claimed their identity as Yaqui.

Other groups also negotiated their survival as best they could. Crees, for example, turned to livestock rustling. However, this created larger problems for the different generations of Crees. While perhaps older Crees were able to engage in such activity, younger generations of Crees now contended with state agents and new federal laws that worked against these older practices. Some groups of Crees gained political refugee status, while others blended in with the larger community as a whole, further complicating the issue of qualification for refugee status. Worse yet, white settlers in the region shifted the perception of Crees from "public pity to public outcry" through biased portrayals in newspapers and complaints submitted to officials (p. 99). Tragically, this resulted in a deportation campaign in the late nineteenth century.

Like their neighbors the Crees, Chippewas turned to negotiating their status and created alliances with white residents with their own racialized understandings of indigenous peoples. Rocky Boy's Chippewas, for example, created strategic alliances with well-known members of the community as in the case of Charles Russell "the cowboy artist" of Great Falls. Rensink carefully examines these early twentieth-century alliances while also providing ample evidence of the total opposite. Deeply rooted racial ideas about indigenous people—native *or* foreign—abounded. In one letter to their congressman, Montana residents described Chippewas as "the lowest type ... lazy ... diseased ... wholly unfit to mingle with white people" (p. 184).

Eventually, Crees, Chippewas, and Yaquis were able to gain federal recognition and land to call home. This was only possible through years of struggle, identity claiming, alliances, and community-based organizing. For Montana Crees and Chippewas, federal recognition and land came in 1916. Yaquis, who had for a long time distanced themselves from a Mexican identity, were recognized as Yaqui Americans in 1978, although mostly in name (for both the federal government and Yaquis themselves). Continuing to assert their Yaqui culture, they received land and their corresponding titles/deeds in Arizona after the passage of a congressional act in 1964.

Rensink invites us to rethink the categories of refugees and/or immigrant (as well as immigration policies or lack thereof concerning "foreign" indigenous peoples) and the category of Native American. These case studies of various indigenous groups offer a counter-narrative to the too-often contemporary-driven image of immigrants and refugees and their experiences as well as overall immigration policy. The author's rich portrayal of the long history of struggle for belonging and inclusion serves as the foundation for this counter-narrative. Ironically, those groups that had by far greater claim to North American land, regardless of international borders, were among those who had the greatest difficulty gaining land and/or federal tribal recognition. Rensink's work also

broadens our perspectives about the experiences of indigenous peoples that form part of American society today; that is, many of these groups faced incredible challenges to simultaneously defend their community and identity group culture while positioning themselves as US residents and workers. All three groups were subjected to years of anxiety and uncertainty because federal immigration policy failed to adequately address the status of indigenous peoples.

Other contributions of the book include the incorporation of a wide variety of primary source material, including memoirs, newspaper articles, and government and military records. Rensink recreates the intimate day-to-day lives of indigenous peoples by carefully analyzing their first-hand accounts. Larger historical processes are equally valued and serve as the backdrop for these lived experiences across time and region. While at times, the term "transnational" is often overused and runs the risk of losing meaning, the sections in which Rensink shows us how these groups *were* transnational helps to address the overuse of the term.

Although a broad comparative work of this nature can run the risk of presenting disconnected narratives given the difference in periodization and specific Chippewa, Cree, and Yaqui histories, Rensink delivers a nicely woven single narrative. In short, those interested in the historical struggles of indigenous incorporation, resistance, and negotiation in the expansive North America will find a compelling and important narrative based on rich primary sources in *Native but Foreign*.