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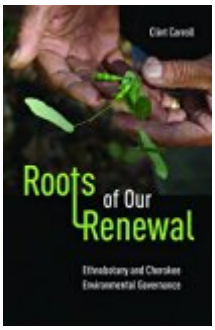
Clint Carroll. *Roots of Our Renewal: Ethnobotany and Cherokee Environmental Governance.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. 256 pp. $25.00, paper, ISBN 978-0-8166-9090-9.



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Caught between the outside pressures of a settler-colonial state and the internal politics of a sovereign nation, Native governments are forced to carefully balance the needs and values of their citizens, often drawn from traditional worldviews, with the realities of removal and imposed governance structures. Although this is true in many aspects of government, the centrality of land to indigeneity makes environmental management particularly contested. In ***Roots of Our Renewal,*** Clint Carroll draws from ethnographic research within his own tribe, the Oklahoma Cherokee, to develop a model that combines indigenous and Western governance in order to ethically and sustainably manage both natural resources and, more importantly, traditional environmental knowledge.

Carroll argues that American Indian nations need not completely abandon the Euro-American style governments that were often imposed on them by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), citing the pre-allotment Cherokee Nation of the mid-nineteenth century as an example of a government that successfully incorporated indigenous environmental values into a modern state. Through documenting his development of and involvement in an elders' advisory group on Cherokee ethnobotany, Carroll demonstrates how individuals are attempting to reproduce this hybrid government in contemporary Cherokee society.

The first three chapters of ***Roots of Our Renewal*** historically contextualize Carroll's case study. Chapter 1 addresses the early centralization and development of the Cherokee Nation as a state in response to settler-colonial pressures, especially the threat of removal and agrarian capitalism. Forced to meet the encroaching United States on Euro-American terms, the Cherokee began to reevaluate their relational management of the land, adopting a new model that maintained land sovereignty, but sacrificed more traditional forms of politics. Chapter 2 looks at the Cherokee's struggle to maintain a traditional relationship to the natural world throughout removal and allotment, two processes that required a radical shift in environmental knowledge and land manage-

ment. During this period, the government systems were by necessity outward focused, dealing with the colonial state and increased threats to sovereignty at the expense of developing strong internal management practices. Chapter 3 brings us to the present, showing the relationship between greater Cherokee self-governance and a resurgence of traditional indigenous values in politics. Specifically Carroll notes the attempts of the Cherokee Nation Natural Resources Department (NRD) to move away from BIA-imposed Euro-American resource management to a relational approach that incorporates traditional knowledge and re-centers nonhumans.

The final two chapters return to the original case study of the elders' advisory group. Chapter 4 examines the contentious history of ethnobotany within the Cherokee Nation. Unauthorized and unethical use of traditional plant knowledge, much of which is closely connected to spiritual practices, has bred a culture of distrust and secrecy around ethnobotanical knowledge that extends to the tribal government itself. While effective in preventing abuses, many fear that this knowledge, along with the traditional ways of understanding and managing the resources, will be lost when the elders who hold it are gone. The elders' advisory group is an attempt to rebuild a more open community and create a group of traditional leaders with environmental knowledge to which the government can be accountable. Chapter 5 digs further into the relationship between the advisory group and the tribal government, suggesting ways traditional knowledge can be translated into practices legible to the existing Euro-American-style government. This kind of alliance, Carroll argues, is the best method to create a more ethical and indigenous centered environmental policy.

Beyond its main argument around tribal environmental policy, I found this book useful for environmental historians in other ways. Carroll's highly involved "critical ethnography" reminds us of the importance of accountability to the communities we study and work with. Is our scholarship addressing community needs or is it exploitative? And is it possible to know the difference without the kind of sensitive involvement that Carroll demonstrates in his research? While there are certainly drawbacks to inserting oneself so heavily into the narrative, Carroll's research, especially considering the culturally sensitive nature of the subject, is an excellent example of participatory, social justice-oriented research done well.

Finally, by combining the fields of indigenous studies and political ecology, Carroll illustrates how integral they are to each other. While obviously indigeneity and Native sovereignty are a critical part of the political ecology within reservations, in a settler state like the United States, all political ecologists and environmental historians should be grappling with the role settler-colonialism has played and continues to play in environmental issues. Likewise, for scholars in indigenous studies, political ecology offers another lens to interpret the relationship between land and colonialism.

Both an environmental history of the Cherokee Nation and a commentary on tribal government, ***Roots of our Renewal*** is widely applicable in environmental history and indigenous studies. Hopefully the insights gained through Carroll's carefully considered ethics toward his research will inspire other scholars to pursue similar work within their own communities.

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