

Mikaëla M. Adams. *Who Belongs?: Race, Resources, and Tribal Citizenship in the Native South.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 352 pp. \$39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-061946-6.

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Published on H-AmIndian (July, 2017)

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Mikaela Adams has produced a very original, well-researched, and badly needed study of citizenship and sovereignty in the modern Native American South. In five chapters, which are essentially case studies, Adams charts the struggles of different Native peoples as they were left behind during the Removal Era and forced to safeguard their identity, their land, and their resources in the Jim Crow South, vis-à-vis both state and federal governments. These include the Pamunkey Indian Tribe of Virginia, the Catawba Indian Nation of South Carolina, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida.

Not only does each of these chapters cover a different Native group, each approaches the struggle for citizenship and sovereignty in complementary ways. Adams first considers the Pamunkey Tribe. The state of Virginia officially recognized the Pamunkey Tribe and its existence within the state as legitimate based on treaties that dated back to the earliest colonial records. During the nineteenth century, however, Pamunkeys stood to run afoul of Jim Crow segregation and of Virginia legislators' desire to classify the state's population as either "white," or "colored." Pamunkeys, finding they fit neither of those definitions, responded by fighting

state authorities and the bifurcated system of segregation.

The Pamunkey struggle was, in short, all about race, and the tribe attempted to secure its own sovereignty by distancing its people as far from the state's African American population as possible. Pamunkeys segregated themselves in church services or created their own, rather than attend "colored" services; they fought state attempts to have their kids sent to colored schools, ride in segregated rail cars, or fight in segregated units. They heavily discountenanced and even illegalized intermarriage to African Americans, and promoted intermarriage with whites or even other Native American groups instead. Pamunkeys obviously preferred a third category, and advocated for a clear and separate Indian identity in Virginia society and law. But when they failed to achieve that, they also fought the state to make sure Pamunkeys fell at least on the "white" side of an oversimplified black-white dichotomy as the best means to maintain their own rights.

The struggle of the Catawba Tribe was also one against state government. Like Pamunkeys in Virginia, the South Carolina state government recognized Catawbas as a tribe previous to the Removal Era. State authorities still attempted to remove the tribe in the 1840s to make room for settlers in a fertile farming country, and largely succeeded with

the 1840 Treaty of Nations Ford. Eventually, however, the state abandoned further removal plans when legislators could not find a suitable replacement tract. Eventually, South Carolina agreed to pay the Catawba people annual per capita payments based on Nations Ford, and purchased a nearby—albeit worse—tract of land for the purpose of a reservation. These payments formed the basis of the subsequent Catawba struggle to define citizenship because state officials required strict definitions of Catawba citizenship in order to distribute the payments.

Catawbas found such rolls problematic to populate because for generations Catawba culture valued much more fluid notions of belonging and citizenship—definitions which had, in the past, included both whites and African Americans. Furthermore, markers of Catawba heritage were vague at times, and the clearest markers, like the Catawba language, were gone. And what about Catawbas who had removed west? Neither the state nor many South Carolinian Catawbas were interested in paying members of the tribe who had left willingly during removal. Payments to absentee Catawbas stood to diminish what was left for the South Carolinian Catawbas, after all, and those payments comprised the sole income of many who had little else. For those reasons Catawbas began to define the parameters of belonging in specific terms, and began the construction of citizenship rolls. Like Pamunkeys they struggled to discourage and delegitimize intermarriage with African Americans in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century-South, seeking to limit the most visible societal markers that threatened to place them on the wrong side of a segregated South Carolina. They also struggled to refute the state's prohibition on intermarriage with whites, however, which did not stand to harm them socially. The Catawba struggle was not necessarily one of racial identity, as was the case with the Pamunkey Tribe, but rather one to determine who was and was not—which they

did with increasing exclusivity—entitled to financial support.

The struggle of the Mississippi Band of Choctaws, on the other hand, revolved around land in the Choctaw Nation in modern-day Oklahoma, as well as the triangular relationship between the two autonomous Choctaw groups and the federal government. Even though thousands of Choctaws were removed west in the 1830s, thousands were allowed to stay if they agreed to become Mississippi state citizens. It was clearly stated in the removal treaty, however, that those Choctaws who stayed in Mississippi would not lose citizenship in the Choctaw Nation. This became an issue later in the nineteenth century when the government, having passed the General Allotment Act of 1887 and then the Curtis Act of 1898, began allotting individual tracts of land to Choctaw citizens in the Indian Territory—lands that Mississippi Choctaws were, at least by treaty, also guaranteed.

This produced several dilemmas for both Mississippi Choctaws and the larger Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma. Several attempts were made over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to produce citizenship rolls that would define who, in Mississippi, had a legitimate claim to Choctaw land in the Indian Territory—to become Oklahoma in 1907—as well as federal resources. Each effort to produce or legitimize a citizenship roll became more demanding and more contested, however, and was disputed by both Mississippian Choctaws for being too exclusive, and also by members of the Choctaw Nation for being too inclusive. The efforts opened up profitable western lands to potentially frivolous claims as well as widespread speculation and fraud, all of which made accurate lists all the more important to federal legislators as well.

The test eventually became one of blood. As a reflection of Jim Crow Mississippi, anyone suspected of having African American blood was excluded almost categorically, for instance, as even those were seen as being too white. Prospective Missis-

Mississippi Choctaws were tested on genealogy, language, etc., for the right to be listed as “full-blood” and even “half-blood,” and therefore worthy of citizenship rights. The Choctaw struggle is Adams’s first clear example of a well-defined blood quantum as the critical factor in determining citizenship and the enjoyment of land and resources—an issue which Mississippi Choctaws, as they continue grow and become more financially successful, continue to grapple with.

The Eastern Band of Cherokees, in North Carolina, faced a slightly different struggle. As was the case in Mississippi, while the majority of the Cherokee people were forcibly removed west a small group remained in North Carolina and carved out an autonomous political existence. Much of the subsequent struggle hinged on protecting a seemingly always contested Cherokee territory from trespasses, squatting, illegal hunting and logging, and so on.

The Eastern Band of Cherokees was recognized by the federal government, which was more than could be said for Pamunkeys or Catawbias, but its territorial sovereignty was still poorly protected. Many of the trespasses were the product of vague definitions of Cherokee identity, which outsiders—either legitimately or illegitimately—benefited from. Cherokees began fighting these perceived abuses by better defining who was Cherokee, and therefore entitled both to reside on Cherokee lands and to benefit from its resources. The Cherokee leadership looked to those Cherokees who resided in North Carolina and helped rebuild the Eastern Band. They looked to exclude children of Cherokees who had moved away and married outsiders. They even looked to knowledge of Cherokee traditions and language as a means to disqualify potential citizens. More importantly, perhaps, and like the Choctaws, Eastern Band Cherokees turned to defining Cherokee blood in an attempt to distinguish “real Indians” from illegitimate “White Indians” and mixed bloods. When contracts for lumber or land usage stood to benefit

members of the Band financially, citizenship regulations continued to tighten, including the first sustained attempts to create citizenship rolls in the early twentieth century.

These developments, however, constituted a particularly harsh challenge to a Cherokee society that was notable for its inclusivity. Even more profoundly than Catawbias, Cherokee traditions stressed identity through kinship relations and clan membership, all of which passed matrilineally, which is to say from mother to child. Any child of a Cherokee woman was forever considered Cherokee, in other words, regardless of who his or her father was. That changed late in the nineteenth century, when Cherokees began to recognize unacknowledged and “mixed blood” offspring as illegitimate, and therefore disqualified from tribal membership. One-sixteenth Cherokee blood soon was the adopted blood quantum, a rule which is maintained currently. Cherokee blood was soon highly racialized as well, with the Eastern Band leadership stripping citizenship from practically anyone with African American blood while privileging intermarriage with whites. These regulations continued to harden into the nineteenth and even the twentieth century, codifying further in 1924 and beyond as the Eastern Band began to profit from gambling.

As recounted in the last chapter, the Seminoles and Miccosukee of Florida were by far the most complicated group. Like the Mississippi Choctaws and Eastern Band Cherokees, these two groups were the remnants of the Removal Era—in this case of two wars of removal. In the wake of the Second and Third Seminole Wars, remaining Seminoles and Miccosukees disappeared into the Everglades, living in small, isolated communities and eschewing interaction with whites for decades, at almost all cost. Making it difficult for these groups to define the terms of the citizenship, however, was the reality there had never been a well-defined idea of what it meant to be Seminole—the name Seminole itself only meant runaway, and was most

commonly used by outsiders. Seminoles were themselves remnants of other southern peoples, mostly Creeks from Alabama and Georgia, meaning many of the different groups in nineteenth- and twentieth-century south Florida could not trace a common heritage or even speak the same language.

Flexible cultural traditions among Seminoles were not unlike those among the Cherokees or Choctaws, all of whom placed paramount importance on kinship and clan membership. Matrilineal kinship left open the possibility for intermarriage within both groups, which left the children of Seminole mothers with a complete Seminole identity. As was the case elsewhere, much of that changed in the post-Seminole War years. Wary of outsiders, Seminoles forbade and even executed those who intermarried and raised children with whites, and increasingly viewed associations with African Americans negatively as well—particularly when the union was between a Seminole woman and an African American man. Both of these post-Seminole War developments stood in stark contrast to the traditions that dominated the previous century.

Seeing these remnant Seminoles as particularly destitute, outside Floridians and even federal legislators began advocating for reservation lands. Over the turn of the twentieth century several reservations, including Dania, Big Cypress, and Brighton, became a reality. Outside groups also pushed to Christianize Seminoles, advocate for education, etc., and their attempts slowly opened Seminole culture to the rest of south Florida, which, in turn, altered Seminole traditions. While still taboo, for instance, by the mid-twentieth century mixed-ancestry children were no longer condemned.

This development came to a head when state and federal authorities encouraged Seminoles to organize politically. These attempts, in conjunction with the creation of cattle herds on the reservations and other economic incentives and in-

creased complaints over land, eventually generated a political split among Seminole and many Miccosukees. While groups of more progressive Seminoles achieved federal recognition as the Seminole Tribe of Florida in 1957, more conservative and wary groups of Miccosukees dissented. Recognizing its benefits, however, they soon won recognition of their own, albeit after petitions to the Hague and even a trip to Cuba. A people who once had almost no concept of citizenship, by the late twentieth century both Seminoles and Miccosukees had citizenship rolls that, in some instances, required a surprisingly high blood percentage. As both groups continue to succeed in high-stakes gaming, which benefits citizens with handsome per capita payments, these citizenship requirements will continue to play an important role in both groups' traditions of belonging.

There is quite a bit to admire in this brief and well-written study. First and foremost, such a study is long overdue. Nationalism is a powerful force currently acting in Native America, and it is influencing a new generation of scholarship on the Native North America as well, as can be seen in Sami Lakomaki's 2014 *Gathering Together*, for instance. Adams's study is not only one of the first to grapple with these issues in the modern American South, but it does so by focusing on groups of marginalized Natives—and I am thinking of the Seminoles in particular here—to whom access can be notoriously difficult to access at times.

The structure of this book is very straightforward and the writing excellent. It is also the way Adams, a historian, weaves an impressive, multidisciplinary approach to the narrative, though, that makes the book read so well. At its heart this is a study about sovereignty and self-determination, and the introduction is heavy in the case studies that set up a legal foundation for that argument, beginning in the Removal Era. The rest of the narrative is not particularly heavy on legalese, however, which I think might have bogged it down. Instead, Adams relies on an impressive cross-section

and depth of research, beginning with plenty of the more traditional government sources. She is also keen, however, to integrate important ethnographic and anthropologic insight from the likes of James Mooney, Albert S. Gatschet, Frank Speck, and Clay MacCauley, as well. Perhaps my favorite, she also has done incredible work in the oral histories of these tribes, and by doing so is able to bring forward in the narrative the lives of several particularly vivid claimants as a means to demonstrate the complexities of the citizenship processes she examines. They include Catawba Leola Watts, the Raper-Lamberts and Taylor-Hardin families among the Eastern Band of Cherokees, and Seminole Charlie Dixie. Adams's effective use of oral histories to bring these families to life goes a tremendous distance to illustrate the extraordinary struggles many Native peoples faced, and make her study more engaging and all the more effective.

There are parts of the book, however, that did leave me wanting more. Where is the Poarch Band of Creeks? Given that they also come from southeastern Native traditions of inclusivity and kinship, were left in the heart of the Jim Crow South (Alabama) after removal, were intimately tied to the existence of Seminoles and Miccosukees in Florida, define citizenship with blood requirements, and also struggle with the success of high-stakes gaming, I wonder why the Poarch Band of Creeks did not make for a sixth chapter. Perhaps it is because each of Adams's chapters is unique in its own way, and one of the best aspects of the book is how her argument does not become redundant, or monotonous. Perhaps the Poarch Band of Creeks was not a necessary addition. Whatever her reasoning, I think it might have been worth mentioning.

More importantly, though, this was a relatively short book, at just over two hundred pages without notes. While that makes the narrative clear and the book very readable, I think there was room for a bit more context and reflection in many of the chapters. This was particularly so with the

Choctaw, Cherokee, and Seminole peoples—all of whom had complex and inclusive traditions that defined belonging, which were in turn essentially reversed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Those three groups also had previous relationships with the federal government and respective state governments at times, which might also have been useful to include.

The Cherokee story, for instance, has important roots in the pre-Removal Jefferson and Madison administrations, which Adams only eludes to. Facing dispossession even in the eighteen-teens, Cherokees (and to a lesser extent Creeks) were already constructing state-like structures and defining citizenship in an attempt to prevent removal. In an almost complete reversal of what Adams narrates, federal legislators in this earlier period advocated that Cherokees in the East would lose land for each emigrant that left for the West, prompting the Cherokee National Council to define, and then threaten the stripping of, citizenship from those who took up the government's invitations to move west. Decades before the first citizenship rolls, then, Cherokees were already grappling with who was, and who might no longer be, Cherokee. I think a discussion of these early events would have been interesting.

Likewise, much of this book focuses on Native-African relations, and I could have used more detail on the before picture here as well. The subject of Indian-African relations in the Native Southeast has been an important field of scholarly inquiry for generations, and has proved a notoriously tricky one to tackle. Many Cherokees and Choctaws adopted a very southern persuasion by the nineteenth century, but others did not. Meanwhile, the Seminole story remains contentious—one that studies including Christina Snyder's 2010 *Slavery in Indian Country* have attempted to tackle in the recent past. Although Adams's focus is clearly in the post-Removal South, I think a deeper discussion of pre-Removal race relations in the Native Southeast could have better explained just

how tremendous a change the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Seminole reversals in race relations were in that period.

Lastly, while each chapter involves a healthy discussion of culture and tradition, which is meant to demonstrate the many ways Native identity *did not diminish* in these important years, I was left wondering if in some cases this presented a bit too rosy (or ethnohistorically questionable) of a perspective. Much of the struggle, for example, was over land. Many of the peoples of the Native Southeast—in particular, again, the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Seminole tribes Adams investigates—conceived of land ownership communally. Likewise, kinship relations and matrilineal traditions were not just important; they were foundational to Native identity. They were the defining aspects of coalescent societies like those in the Native Southeast, and they reflected the complementary nature of Native cosmology itself. Those traditions dictated who controlled land, diplomacy, and even life. In a few parts of this book, in sum, I was left wondering what it really meant when citizenship rolls appeared that were designed to allot parcels of property or per capita cash payments to individuals; or that moved the idea of belonging away from kinship and clan membership to an arbitrary “blood quantum”; or that excluded intermarriage with other races; or that became patrilineal in nature. Adams reflects on a few of these issues in the conclusion, but I think being more reflective about the depth and meaning of these developments would mean bringing into the narrative some much darker suggestions.

In this handful of instances I thought a few more pages might have further developed Adams’s argument by providing a bit more context, and perhaps a bit more reflection. None of these issues materially detracts, however, from the excellent study that she has produced. Her narrative is carefully crafted and the stories lively. Her usage of the available sources is comprehensive. Most important, the issues of nationhood, citizenship, and

sovereignty that she grapples with swirl today in Native communities, and as more scholars begin to reevaluate Native American history of all eras, this book will prove incredibly insightful.

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Citation: Kevin Kokomoor. Review of Adams, Mikaëla M. *Who Belongs?: Race, Resources, and Tribal Citizenship in the Native South*. H-AmIndian, H-Net Reviews. July, 2017.

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