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*The Murder of Joe White: Ojibwe Leadership and Colonialism  
in Wisconsin* by Erik M. Redix (review)

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ter described as the “politics of interdependence,” built upon traditions of gender mutuality and negotiation.

Devine’s careful research and engaging writing brings to life women’s stories and voices and is an important contribution to our understanding of farm organizations, rural activism, and the varied nature and locales of feminism. She rightfully concludes that the Iowa farmwomen’s agrarian feminism is representative of midwestern farmwomen generally. The assertion by Iowa farmwomen in the 1970s that “We always were liberated” was echoed by farmwomen across the Midwest. Devine has brought us much closer to understanding the experience and sense of identity that prompted that response and produced agrarian feminism.

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Erik M. Redix, *The Murder of Joe White: Ojibwe Leadership and Colonialism in Wisconsin*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014. 282 pp. \$34.95.

At the intersection of violence, American colonialism, and Ojibwe sovereignty rests Erik M. Redix’s book *The Murder of Joe White: Ojibwe Leadership and Colonialism in Wisconsin*. Redix begins, “scholars have the power to not only influence future policy makers, but also shape how Native people themselves understand their sovereignty” (xxii). Redix sets out to demonstrate how Ojibwe sovereignty was, and is, a shape shifting concept, constantly challenged and constantly reasserted. Through a detailed examination of Joe White’s murder, Redix demonstrates that colonization of Ojibwe land in Wisconsin was a three-pronged attack. The Ojibwe had to reckon not only with the United States federal government, but also, after 1848, with the Wisconsin state government and corporate interests, especially logging companies. While the Ojibwe at times were able to play these competing interests off one another, more often than not this strategy failed. The shooting of Joe White and the subsequent murder trial resulted directly from U.S. colonization of Ojibwe lands in Wisconsin. These developments demonstrated that white Americans accepted violence committed against American Indians (xiii).

The book’s title is strategically provocative. The white men who killed

Joe White were never found guilty. Instead, Redix argues that the white jury condoned violence against Wisconsin Natives (149). Joe White was accused of hunting deer out of season in violation of Wisconsin state law, despite the fact that Wisconsin Ojibwe, through treaty agreements with the federal government, were guaranteed hunting and fishing rights regardless of the season. When White exercised these hunting rights he challenged the state authority of Wisconsin and made himself a target of violence, particularly because of his previous opposition to the removal of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band to the newly created reservation in Wisconsin. Redix reexamines evidence from Joe White's trial transcripts to reach a different conclusion than the all white jury. Redix argues that Horace Martin and Josiah Hicks committed premeditated murder (161). Joe White's slaying showed that "the failure of the law to effectively protect Native people" served to erode Ojibwe sovereignty, in much the same way that violent campaigns against American Indians did further west (178).

Before delving into the details of the trial Redix first traces American colonization of Wisconsin. The monograph is broken into seven chapters with an introduction and conclusion. The first three chapters chronicle Ojibwe Lac Courte Oreilles Band leadership throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. Redix begins with a discussion of the Ojibwe leadership at the Prairie du Chien Treaty Council of 1825. The council brought together several Native nations as well as the United States to discuss the creation of borders in the Wisconsin region. While federal officials sought to construct boundaries in order to ensure peace, Redix contends that the U.S. government later used these boundaries for its own benefit in negotiations to gain land cessions.

Present at the treaty was Nena'aangabi, an Ojibwe ogimaa (leader) and relation of Joe White. By 1855, Nen'aangabi was the most influential ogimaa in Wisconsin (31). He had refused to sign the 1837 treaty that had ceded many northern Wisconsin lands and continued to push against American colonial aggression. In addition to resisting American movement into Ojibwe territory, Nena'aangabi resisted Dakota expansion. Chapter two ends with Nena'aangabi's death in battle against the Dakota in 1855. Leadership at present day Lac Courte Oreilles was passed from Nena'aangabi to his son Waabizheshi. Waabizheshi's served twenty-two years as an ogimaa for the Ojibwe at Rice Lake. During this time he strove to strengthen ties with the growing white settler community in order to create an inter-

cultural community through which to challenge U.S. government goals of Ojibwe removal.

Redix shifts focus in chapter four to Waabizheshi's sister, Aazhaweyaa. Aazhaweya was unique in that she was a warrior who had participated in raids against the Dakota. Through examining Aazhaweyaa's unique status Redix is able to explore how Ojibwe women's roles shifted throughout the nineteenth century. Redix argues that the Ojibwe at Rice Lake forged relationships with lumbermen through marriages. However, in the case of Aazhaweyaa's marriages, lumbermen broke off their marriages to Ojibwe women and instead married white women who moved into the region, further breaking ties between the white and Ojibwe communities at Rice Lake.

Waabizheshi's death in 1877 resulted in his brother, Giishkitaway (Joe White), assuming the role of ogimaa. Giishkitaway contested removal efforts by federal officials and the Wisconsin state government. By the 1870s the Ojibwe were declining as a majority population and could no longer enforce their laws upon incoming white settlers. At this point American rule of law reigned supreme, and crimes against Ojibwe were investigated by white lawmen.

Redix's narrative and argument make for a compelling read. Equally compelling is his use of Ojibwe language sources, which separates his work from other scholarship on the Ojibwe. Redix uses such materials in order to compare English and Ojibwe language in treaties. Scholars interested in Ojibwe studies will find his endnotes to be a goldmine filled with extra information regarding the physical location of sources, spelling variations of Ojibwe names, and useful notes to further future research projects.

*The Murder of Joe White* is a powerful examination of the effects of American colonial power on American Indian communities. Scholars and students of Native studies, U.S. colonialism, and nineteenth century United States will benefit a great deal from immersing themselves with Redix's monograph. Joe White's murder is but a single link in a much more complicated chain of events resulting from the colonization of Ojibwe lands. Through the book's thoroughly researched, clearly written, and thoughtful narrative, Redix succeeds in reconstituting how scholars, policymakers, and Native people understand American Indian sovereignty.

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