
“Location, location, location.” McDonnell (Univ. of Sydney) explores how the Anishinaabeg utilized their extensive kinship networks and their strategic locle between Lakes Superior, Huron, and Michigan to become the “masters” in that region of three empires: the French, the British, and finally the infant US. The author delves deeply into how that tribe, particularly the Odawa at Michilimackinac, built trade networks and kinship connections with French fur traders that allowed them to manipulate colonial authorities and keep out rival western tribes while avoiding war with the Iroquois. McDonnell highlights how the Odawa spearheaded the Native alliance with the French against the British in the mid-1750s, which he calls the First Anglo-Indian War, and then how they used the second war (Pontiac’s Rebellion) to force the British into seeking alliances rather than domination west of the Ohio, increasing the tribe’s influence in the region. Less persuasive is his argument that those actions triggered the American Revolution by shaping British imperial reforms and colonial resistance. Regardless, this book is a strong addition to the growing body of early American scholarship that centers on Native peoples in the interior of the continent, revealing new aspects of community and imperial relationships. Summing Up: ★★★ Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above.—D. R. Mandell, Truman State University


McGirr (Harvard) travels down unfamiliar avenues in her examination of the US struggle to enforce the “noble experiment.” She makes the compelling case that Prohibition enforcement was notable for its selectivity and that working-class, urban immigrant, and poor communities were hardest hit, whereas the flouting of the Volstead Act by elite, well-connected, white Americans went comparatively unchecked. Furthermore, McGirr contends that the war on alcohol cemented a broader sense of shared identity among immigrant ethnic workers and forged the basis for new political loyalties. Opposition to Prohibition, among other issues, motivated large numbers of working-class, urban, ethnic voters to come out to vote for Democratic candidates by the late 1920s and early 1930s, switching much of the urban North permanently from Republican to Democratic. McGirr also finds a direct link between Prohibition and the war on drugs. She asserts that Prohibition forged the bureaucratic structure, assumptions, and logic that underpin the current drug war, and further contends that the selective enforcement that marked the dry years has been replicated more dramatically in the current war. Of interest to those who want to learn more about Prohibition and/or the rise of the modern surveillance state. Summing Up: ★★★ Recommended. All levels/libraries.—J. M. Richards, Gordon State College