an excellent indicator of this because, as she argues, the children who grew up in fascist youth groups and schools were often the most dedicated followers. McLean shows that all of the tensions and anxieties that drove fascism in Europe came into clearer focus in Italy in the 1930s. To quell regional differences, fears about race, and fears of geopolitical irrelevancy, Italy turned to the schools, standardizing them and making them better run, more uniform, and perhaps more politically reactionary places (the contrast is not wholly clear). Italian officials used the schools to convince a population scarred by loss in World War I to close the gap between citizen and soldier and to go to war once again. *Mussolini's Children* does not set out to be a cautionary tale, but it does compel us to think about the distinctions and shared practices between fascist and democratic schools. As a result, its story can help us to think about others, even as it offers its own compelling tale.

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Christina Snyder. *Great Crossings: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in the Age of Jackson.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. 416 pp.

With this book, Christina Snyder makes an intimate and multifaceted historical inquiry into the complex and shifting cultural landscape surrounding an early to mid-nineteenth-century American Indian boarding school, the Choctaw Academy, the first American Indian school to be directly controlled by the US federal government.

The book's title, *Great Crossings*, literally refers to the location of the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky, near a shallow spot where bison crossed Elkhorn Creek. Kentucky, however, was at the crossroads of the continent, serving as both "a gateway to the West and a borderland between North and South" (p. 14). Hence, for Snyder the name *Great Crossings* also serves as a metaphor describing the place and space where people from different races, cultures, positionalities, geographical origins, and histories crossed paths and intersected immediately before, during, and after the Jacksonian era of American politics. With this in mind, Snyder argues that the school, its location, and its multiracial community of Indians, settlers, and slaves, served as a

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"microcosm" of the imperial westward expansion of the United States during a period of rapid cultural change. The academy brought these distinct populations together at a place where they would attempt to "forge paths ahead" (p. 16). Through personal writings, family histories, and governmental reports and correspondences, Snyder constructs a thoroughly contextualized series of chapters that smoothly weave together biographical vignettes of the individuals occupying both the school and plantation at Great Crossings. The result is a well-rounded historical narrative that illuminates the larger social, economic, and political atmosphere that existed.

Two of the central figures of this history are Richard Mentor Johnson and Julia Chinn. Johnson, who established and oversaw Choctaw Academy, was a prominent political figure who served as US vice president from 1837 to 1841 under Martin Van Buren. He was also a plantation and slave owner who had taken Chinn, an enslaved African American woman, as his concubine. Together, they had two daughters born into slavery, Adaline and Imogene, whom Johnson publicly acknowledged as his own, educated, and groomed for eventual freedom and US citizenship. As Johnson was frequently away on business for at least half the year, Chinn assumed the role of supervising Johnson's estate and financial affairs, a responsibility atypical for a slave. These responsibilities included maintaining Choctaw Academy, which gave her a considerable amount of influence over her family's education.

The academy was established and operated on Johnson's plantation after he successfully lobbied the Choctaw Nation and procured a federal contract in a scheme to generate income and alleviate his personal debt. Over its twenty-three-year existence (1825-1848), the Choctaw Academy educated a few white students, some of Chinn's enslaved relatives, and, most notably, over six hundred American Indian students from seventeen distinct tribal nations. The majority of pupils came from the school's namesake tribe (the Choctaws), but the student body also included attendees from the southeast (Cherokees, Creeks, Seminoles, Chickasaws), the Great Plains (Dakotas, Osages, Omahas, Quapaws, Iowas), and the Great Lakes (Menominees, Ojibwes, Ottawas, Potawatomis, Miamis, Sauk and Mesquakies, and Shawnees).

It is in this climate that Snyder argues that the European American citizens, American Indian students, and African American slaves intermingled in a rapidly evolving sociopolitical setting. Here, all three groups would link "education to their people's destinies" (p. 316). Johnson, positioning himself politically, used the school as a revenue source, as did other European Americans who provided services to the school. Chinn, capitalizing on its proximity, used the

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school as a means of ensuring that her enslaved children and other relatives gained valuable educational opportunities that would prepare them for freedom and life beyond the narrow scope of the plantation. Meanwhile, the Choctaw and other American Indian tribes used the academy as a means of embracing change and modernity and educating their own for the protection of their tribal lands and sovereignty. The latter is exemplified by another key figure in *Great Crossings* named Hatchoctucknee, a biracial Choctaw more commonly known as Peter Pitchlynn. Pitchlynn attended Choctaw Academy becoming one of its most distinguished alum using the school to springboard himself into college. With his education Pitchlynn became a proponent of tribal sovereignty and treaty rights. During his lifetime he served the Choctaw as a district chief, a delegate to the United States government, a critic and superintendent of Choctaw Academy who sought to close it, and subsequently as superintendent of the Choctaw's own school system in Indian Territory.

A potential drawback to the book could be that, despite the book's subtitle and coverage of Choctaw removal, it is thin on details about the inner workings of Andrew Jackson's presidency and his administration's politics, although this could also be a strength of the book. Instead of a top-down historical narrative about policy, Snyder writes a history that focuses on the life experiences of those at the academy to illustrate how Jackson's policies impacted the racial fabric of the United States and altered the prospects of each racial group involved in this educational enterprise.

Snyder considers Jackson's aggressive and unethical approach to Indian removal to be "a pivotal event in US history because it established a precedent for invoking white supremacy to seize the lands of other peoples" (pp. 301-302) and empowered "white men by colonizing Indian country and redistributing its resources" (p. 132). Hence, she argues that Jackson's imperial project created a more rigid and hard-line racism that both turned sovereign Indians into marginalized subjects and further solidified African Americans as chattel. The impact of this social change is demonstrated through the biographical details of those living and working at Great Crossings. So although Great Crossings served as a point of intersection that brought together those who sought to use the school for their own benefit, the political realities of Jacksonian-era politics meant that this intersection also became a point of divergence, as the paths forward for each racial group differed greatly. Thus, what seemed like a moment of convergence became instead a racialized fork in the road.

Snyder's book makes a valuable contribution to the field of history by offering a more complex view of the lives, identities, and motives of American Indians, particularly the Choctaw, than what has typically

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been portrayed. For this reason, *Great Crossings* is recommended for anyone interested in the history of colonialism, race, and slavery during the nineteenth century, as this is Snyder's area of expertise. However, the book is also appropriate for those interested in Choctaw history, American Indian educational history, Indian removal, antebellum US history, or the life of Richard Mentor Johnson.

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Jan Surman. *Universities in Imperial Austria 1848-1918: A Social History of a Multilingual Space.* West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2018. 460 pp.

Jan Surman, who completed his doctoral work at the University of Vienna and is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Poletayev Institute for Theoretical and Historical Studies in the Humanities in Moscow, has produced a remarkable piece of scholarship, although it fails to deliver all that its title appears to promise. Common themes in the social history of universities—enrollment patterns, evolving social and gender demographics, student culture—occupy only a peripheral place in the book. The Hungarian (Transleithanian) portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire receives little attention, even for the years before the Compromise of 1867 that created the so-called Dual Monarchy.

What Surman does deliver, however, is a wide-ranging examination of the interactions between changing languages of instruction at some Austrian universities and the trajectories of professorial careers. At the heart of his concerns is what he calls the "schizophrenic tension between supposedly supranational science and national scholarship" (p. 3). German was not only the administrative language of the Austrian territories at midcentury, but was becoming the dominant international language of science. Surman records several discussions about whether Czech, Polish, or Ukrainian (known as Ruthenian at the time) even possessed the requisite vocabulary for scholarly publication. As he puts it, "From the viewpoint of cultural dominance, instruction in a national language could be allowed only if that language was

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