

## Good Seeds: A Menominee Indian Food Memoir

Christopher Cumo

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Cohen mentions that dwindling Jewish communities in small-town America are far from the only challenges midwestern Jews have faced in recent decades. Assimilation, secularization, and intermarriage have changed American Jewish identity in general. Her narrative still emphasizes the “bonds of a common ancestry that dates back to ancient history” (86) as the main marker of Jewish identity, yet a 2013 PEW Research study suggests that Jewish identity in America has evolved into what some scholars refer to as an “emancipated diaspora” mentality that maintains identity less by looking back than by being outer directed and engaging the other. (See Roberta Rosenberg, “Jewish ‘Disporic Humor’ and Contemporary Jewish-American Identity,” *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 [2015], 110–38.)

*Good Seeds: A Menominee Indian Food Memoir*, by Thomas Pecore Weso. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2016. xi, 122 pp. Illustrations, recipe, bibliography, index. \$19.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Christopher Cumo is an independent scholar in Canton, Ohio. He is the author of *Plants and People* (2015).

Author and Menominee Amerindian Thomas Pecore Weso offers a personal account based on childhood and adulthood experiences of the folk- and foodways of the Menominee of Wisconsin during much of the twentieth century. The book is a contribution to the burgeoning field of food history, a dynamic discipline that draws on the work of many scholars. As such, this account deserves a wide readership. The method flows from Weso’s commitment to fact and discrete detail as the backbone of historical reminiscence. The book does not borrow the theoretical architecture of related historical studies, but such constructs would be out of place in a memoir.

Weso organizes *Good Seeds* into a preface and 17 chapters. The emphasis is on short, evocative passages and a fidelity to the past. As is proper for a book concerned with food history, Weso relates the importance of several foods to the Menominee of Wisconsin. We need not belabor them all, but in the first chapter the author remarks about the importance of potatoes and cornbread as staples in his diet and that of the people he knew. Taking Weso’s cue, one can scarcely underrate the value of potatoes and corn. Corn, of course, is a primary crop in Iowa and other midwestern states, whereas potatoes, originating in the Andes Mountains, have emerged as a world crop, at least in the temperate zones. Weso begins the second chapter with a third American crop, supplying a myth for the origin of tobacco, a plant some might call a noxious weed likely native to Virginia. One grasps at once that *Good Seeds*, rooted in the

Midwest, at the same time transcends the region with its strong transnational focus. The book is local, state, regional, and international history.

In evaluating *Good Seeds*, one begins with the title, which suggests seed-based agriculture. This perspective is certainly accurate for corn, but one might recall that potatoes, although they produce seeds, are usually propagated by “eyes.” The emphasis on seeds likewise accords with the wild rice that was important to the diets of the Menominee into the twentieth century. Of course, the emphasis on wild rice extends treatment beyond the cultivated species of Africa and Asia.

*Good Seeds* provides an important study of foodways in the upper Midwest, treatment that others might well extend to Iowa and other parts of the Midwest. Indeed, remarking about his residence in Kansas, Weso trains his eye on foodways of the lower Midwest so that a balanced treatment emerges. Given the centrality of the potato and corn to the diets of the Menominee, one wonders whether similar patterns emerge in Iowa and other parts of the Midwest. In these ways, *Good Seeds* should command the attention of many scholars.

*The Vanishing Messiah: The Life and Resurrections of Francis Schlatter*, by David N. Wetzel. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016. xii, 279 pp. Map, illustrations, appendix, timeline, survey of prior works, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer Holly Folk is associate professor of liberal studies at Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington. She is the author of *The Religion of Chiropractic: Populist Healing in the American Heartland* (2017).

The social marginality of lay healers has often cast twin shadows—of charlatanry and altruistic spirituality—on their social presentations. *The Vanishing Messiah* challenges readers by blending these categories. David N. Wetzel’s biography of Frances Schlatter, a Progressive Era faith healer, charts the author’s travel to archives and historic sites that reveal Schlatter’s story. Wetzel’s narrative journey beautifully depicts the experience of historic research. His proposed alternative ending for Schlatter’s story chronicles what Wetzel believes was Schlatter’s later life, offering interesting speculations about the healer’s character, and thereby the nature of religious healing.

An Alsatian immigrant, Francis Schlatter arrived in Colorado in 1892. In the fall of 1895 he held nationally publicized healing crusades in Albuquerque and Denver that delivered healing blessings to tens of thousands of people. Because of his physical appearance, refusal to accept payment for healing blessings, and claim that healing came “from the Father,” Schlatter came to be seen as a Christ-like figure.