

The Mistaken History of the Korean War: What We Got Wrong Then and Now

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The photos are high in quality, and the documentation for the individual barns is impressive. In many cases the author was able to determine not only the ownership history but also how the barns were used and how their uses changed over time. For example, she notes specifically how the Ink barn interior (Linn County) was organized and even which doors horses and cattle used. She includes colorful details that enliven the work: a local newspaper notice that helpers at an 1892 barn raising were afterward treated to cigars and lemonade; a story of how a German immigrant came to Iowa because he had heard of topsoil 15 feet deep.

Although the author takes care to relate each barn to agricultural activities on its individual farm, there is only the most general sense of how these barns collectively might represent any larger patterns in Iowa's agricultural past, whether regional or temporal. The approach is more that of a collector than an analyst. We don't learn, for instance, how the different barns might relate to the changes Alan Bogue described long ago in his classic *From Prairie to Corn Belt*, or indeed to work by Deborah Fink (*Open Country Iowa*) or Sonya Salamon (*Prairie Patrimony*). *Iowa Barns* can complement but not replace works such as Allen Noble and Hubert Wilhelm's *Barns of the Midwest* that do provide that broader interpretive context.

Iowa Barns is a worthy addition to a genre that will help to document and promote evidence of a rapidly disappearing agricultural past.

The Mistaken History of the Korean War: What We Got Wrong Then and Now, by Paul M. Edwards. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishing, 2018. xi, 186 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 paperback.

Reviewer Allison McNeese is assistant professor of history at Mount Mercy University. Her academic interests include colonial American history, twentieth-century American history, Latin American history, and the history of Iowa, with special emphasis on race and gender issues.

Some 70,000 Iowans, or close to 3 percent of the state's population in 1950, served in the Korean War. Of those, 528 died in the conflict, and nearly half of those who served were still living as of 2012, according to the Iowa National Guard. A monument honoring Iowa's veterans of the Korean conflict was dedicated in 1989, and recently survivors have been recognized by the opening of new museum exhibits (such as in Waterloo) and the awarding of long-postponed medals.

Although the Korean conflict is often referred to as the "Forgotten War" in American culture, a sizable number of memoirs, histories, and

reference works on Korea have been published in the past several decades. Paul Edwards, a noted historian of the Korean War and a veteran of it, is a prominent contributor to that literature. His most recent work is critical of the lack of knowledge about Korea in the United States. He calls attention to military and political disingenuousness, apathy among the American populace, media distortions over the decades (including those in newspapers, periodicals, literature, radio, television, and films), as well as the poor quality of public education.

The book challenges what the author sees as myths about Korea. Edwards purports to rely on veterans' memoirs and newly released material from archives (such as Russia's) to correct the record. He includes valuable material about the phenomenon of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among those who fought in Korea, and he offers a significant reinterpretation of assumptions about what caused the war and what happened during it. Although the autobiographical material included in the work is refreshing, the new "evidence" the author touts is either not cited directly or is referred to in the most general terms.

The book has a number of flaws. It seems carelessly edited; there are a significant number of grammatical and spelling mistakes, as well as rather glaring factual errors. Among the latter: the dating of the creation of the CIA in 1946 (it was 1947); the victory of the Communist Party in China in 1948 (it was 1949); and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1999 (it was 1991). The organization of material is also sometimes confusing. One example is the author's reference to a "Dr. Cummings" early in the work; no full name or context is given, and no such person is included in the bibliography or index. Later a "Bruce Cumings" is mentioned in the narrative (and in the appendixes). There is also discussion of President Truman's redeployment of U.S. air troops in Asia in 1948, apparently due to the Berlin blockade, "although the war [was] being fought in Korea" (33). (Of course, the Korean War did not begin until 1950.) Other oddities in the text: the inclusion of "Russia" with three other communist countries under the sway of "Moscow, the mother" of ideology (23); a short chapter titled "The Shock of No Gun Ri" that has barely one brief mention of that military event in its first paragraph—with nothing at all about it in the chapter afterward; and mention of various statements about Korea by prominent Americans (Lyndon Johnson, Barack Obama, and writer James Fallows among them) with no context or citations. One final note about textual inaccuracies: In his discussion of the Korean conflict's place in the overarching "Cold War," Edwards informs his readers that *The Chicago Manual of Style* has recently ruled that the term should no longer be capitalized, as it is "not an event of significant identity or consequence."

(He notes that it was a decision made “by English majors rather than historians” [154].) That seemed exceedingly odd, so I checked the most recent edition of the manual, and the assertion appears to be entirely untrue. It seems fair to argue that the sheer number of a variety of errors in the work unfortunately affects the author’s credibility overall.

Still, Edwards focuses on a number of issues regarding the Korean peninsula currently in the spotlight in 2018. Although he writes that “the harshness of positions on both sides of the DMZ shows little signs of letting up” (141), there seems to be more realistic hope now that hostilities in the region are declining and that peace may finally be within reach. Edwards cites the Department of Veterans Affairs’ assertion that approximately one thousand Korean veterans are now dying every day, and he is certainly correct in saying, “For the sake of our nation’s soul, we need to remember and acknowledge the memory of those who fought in it” (164).

The Story of Act 31: How Native History Came to Wisconsin Classrooms, by J P Leary. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2018. xiii, 337 pp. Notes, index. \$28.95 paperback.

Reviewer Patricia Stovey is assistant professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Her research and teaching focus on the relationship of education to culture, race, and power.

In *The Story of Act 31*, J P Leary challenges what he calls the “simplistic” view that the 1989 law was a reaction to Wisconsin’s spearfishing controversy. Instead, what Leary’s work aims to demonstrate is that the law, which requires teacher training and classroom instruction in the “history, culture and tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized American Indian tribes,” was a result of national and state policy changes and ongoing efforts by Native American leaders and educators throughout the twentieth century (252). To make his argument, Leary blends historical and policy analysis at the state and national level with reviews of Wisconsin public school texts and curriculum.

The book is divided into five parts. The first reviews American Indian sovereignty as defined in the U.S. Constitution and demonstrated through negotiations and treaties. In 1837, 1842, and 1854 treaties, the American government took control of Ojibwe land but never their hunting and gathering rights. After statehood, Wisconsin’s government abrogated Ojibwe rights, in part because they competed with the state’s rising tourist economy. In the early 1970s Lac Courte Oreilles hunters Mike and Fred Tribble contested state law and set off a legal