

The Story of Act 31: How Native History Came to Wisconsin Classrooms

Patricia Stovey

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

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(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

challenge that in 1983 reached the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, where the tribe's usufruct rights were affirmed.

Part two follows the aftermath of that decision, known as *Voigt*. Many white northern Wisconsinites took exception to the Ojibwe spearfishing off reservation through racist acts that demonstrated ignorance and misinformation about Native Americans and their sovereignty. A report from an ad hoc commission convened to address the problem "identified a lack of learning opportunities as both a cause and effect of racism" (91). Schools were both the problem and the potential solution.

Parts three and four follow twentieth-century policy and curricular trends in social studies education at the national and state levels. Nationally, increasing cultural awareness did not always result in greater understanding of Native peoples, especially concerning tribal differences and sovereignty. At the state and local levels, Eurocentric perspectives remained the norm. Using texts and student work, Leary reveals misinformation, bias, and racism in Wisconsin classrooms, demonstrates how American Indians were largely relegated to the state's past, and shows that the tribal/government relationship was never thoroughly developed.

In part five, Leary takes readers through the process involved in passing Act 31, which addresses both teacher training and school curriculum. Wisconsin's schools are, however, locally controlled entities — there is no state school board — thus leaving the law's implementation uneven and the state without any powers of enforcement.

Leary's work brings together an impressive array of sources and knowledge to tell the story of Act 31 in a writing style that is accessible to undergraduate students. Especially impressive is Leary's analysis of *Badger History*, a journal written (partially) by and for Wisconsin school students from 1947 to 1980. He effectively points out the language that inculcated an "us and them" dynamic that more than a generation of Wisconsin school children absorbed. He provides specific examples of the common — yet biased and frequently inaccurate — knowledge sanctioned by the state.

The book's organization was problematic for me, however. For instance, I would have appreciated knowing about Act 31 at the very beginning. Also, the author's early and detailed coverage of the spearfishing controversy seems to belie the overall argument about *Voigt's* relationship to the 1989 law. After reading *The Story of Act 31*, it is clear that the law represents an ongoing battle over Native American understanding and historical representation that, while set in Wisconsin, is not particular to Wisconsin.

The Latina/o Midwest Reader, edited by Omar Valerio-Jiménez, Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez, and Claire F. Fox. Latinos in Chicago and the Midwest. Urbana and Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2017. xii, 332 pp. Illustrations, chart, tables, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$28.00 paperback.

Reviewer Dionicio Valdés is professor emeritus of history at Michigan State University. He is the author of *Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century* (2000) and *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917–1970* (1991).

The Latina/o Midwest Reader is an interdisciplinary anthology of 17 essays, plus an introduction and afterword, that examines various aspects of the experience of an increasingly diverse and rapidly growing population in the region between the Rocky and Allegheny Mountains. It is based on papers initially presented at a symposium at the University of Iowa in 2013. The authors examine a range of topics, most of them specific midwestern case studies, five of which focus on Iowa. The essays are grouped into five sections, examining geography and place, history and workers, education, performance, and non-electoral political activism. The authors represent diverse disciplinary approaches and a range of viewpoints.

The editors emphasize that one aim of the volume is “to challenge the notion that Latinas/os are newcomers to the Midwest” (2). That challenge extends, at least implicitly, to intensifying negative stereotypes in the national political arena, including claims that Latinas/os have different values, pose a threat to older residents and to national unity, and therefore do not belong. Each essay challenges one or more of the stereotypes in distinct ways.

The essays in part one, “The Browning of the Midwest,” emphasize facets of the expansion and intensification of Latina/o cultural geography, as a population that first spread from Texas and Mexico to a handful of locations starting more than a century ago, primarily in search of short-term, temporary work, over time became an increasingly rooted population that has spread across the region, even living in small towns on the prairies. A case study based on a bicycling research trip challenges the myth that Latinas/os have different values or pose a threat, providing cases consistent with the current neoliberal trope that demonstrate successful entrepreneurs and elected political representatives. Two subsequent essays examine the longstanding link between Texas and the Midwest and a more recent one between Lorraine, Illinois, and Jiménez, Nuevo León, in which workers participate in a labor migration circuit linked to the broomcorn industry.