

Without Reservation: Benjamin Reifel and American Indian Acculturation

Eric Steven Zimmer

Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies (CAIRNS) in the Pine Ridge Reservation

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mon characteristics of country schools. He also glosses over widespread conflict over the first round of consolidation by simply reporting that Cosgrove voters in 1920 created the county's first consolidated school.

Nostalgia flavors many of the oral-history quotations; former students reflected, "You knew everyone and their families, and you felt very safe and secure" (79) and "we created our own fun" (92). The book's overall tone, however, is more balanced. Acknowledging "female students who talked of male teachers who touched them in inappropriate ways" (90) and humor in recitations and skits that "came at the expense of negative stereotypes" (112), Yoder heeds his own caution that "we can easily romanticize rural schools and in the process, overlook their shortcomings" (154). *All in One Room* captures both strengths and shortcomings of country schools in Johnson County over more than a century.

Without Reseroation: Benjamin Reifel and American Indian Acculturation, by Sean J. Flynn. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2018. ix, 281 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Eric Steven Zimmer is a research fellow at the Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies (CAIRNS) in the Pine Ridge Reservation. He won the American Society for Environmental History's 2017 Rachel Carson Prize for Best Dissertation for his work "Red Earth Nation: Environment and Sovereignty in Modern Meskwaki History."

In *Without Reseroation*, Sean J. Flynn offers a robust biography of Benjamin Reifel, who was born in the Rosebud Indian Reservation. One of history's most distinguished South Dakotans, Reifel spent years at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and served briefly as its commissioner toward the end of his career. Along the way, Reifel completed a doctorate at Harvard and became the first Lakota to represent South Dakota in Congress. Flynn dives deeply into secondary literature and the holdings at several archives—including Reifel's papers and interviews he gave—to uncover Reifel's development as a person, a civil servant, a politician, and a policymaker.

As a BIA agent, Reifel helped many midwestern tribes—including the Meskwaki Nation in Iowa—draft their constitutions in the 1930s. A decade later, he represented the BIA in North Dakota while the U.S. government decided to dam the Missouri River. That proved to be one of the most controversial periods of Reifel's career. The Missouri River project flooded most of the best land in the Fort Berthold Reservation and nearly destroyed an indigenous agricultural economy that had thrived for at least a thousand years. Relying in part on Reifel's advice, as Flynn writes, the tribal council rejected a land swap proposed by the

federal government during the initial compensation negotiations. Instead, tribal leaders held out for a better cash offer that ended up being grossly inadequate. Other periods of Reifel's career were less destructive. In Congress, Reifel was a leading voice on Indian affairs, secured critical support for South Dakota's farm economy, and helped bring a federal data center to Sioux Falls, where it continues to provide a healthy number of federal jobs.

Flynn distills Reifel's core philosophy on Native issues: he was "committed to [the] integration" of Native Americans into the mainstream of American society. "Reifel," Flynn writes, "envisaged a world without reservations, or at least without the poverty-oppressed reservations that characterize Indian life on the northern plains" (6). Reifel's life experience shaped his thinking. He continued to speak Lakota throughout his life and endeavored to stay connected to the people and customs of his community. Yet Reifel struggled against suggestions that he had "betrayed his race" by supporting integration and building a life in the non-Native world (2).

From a writerly perspective, I appreciate *Without Reservation's* titular double entendre and understand why Flynn leans on that theme throughout the book. It succinctly captures Reifel's unrelenting sense of duty as well as his approach to the challenging policy environment of his time. And Flynn articulates a nuanced view of the relationship between Reifel's thoughts and actions. When it came to controversial policies like termination, Flynn writes, Reifel was "uncomfortable with [their] pace and scope" even as he "supported the gradual loosening of federal-tribal ties" (129). Reifel opposed outright termination but supported relocation programs that incentivized Native people to leave their reservations for American cities. Indeed, Reifel believed more strongly in encouraging "American Indians to exhibit greater initiative and self-reliance" than in any single policy — especially those he viewed as destructive (1).

Specialists and general readers will enjoy *Without Reservation*, and it is sure to inspire robust conversations about regional history and the possibilities for the future of Indian Country. Yet readers should approach Flynn's title and the theme it represents with caution. After all, the last time the United States pursued a world "without reservations," termination proved an unmitigated disaster. Dozens of terminated tribes suffered immensely, spending decades restoring their political status, land, and resources. Many never fully recovered their land and resources. Today, certain political forces are threatening the trust responsibility and longstanding pillars of Indian law. With history as our guide, Termination 2.0 would almost certainly be a disaster for Native

America. We should all be wary of romanticizing a world “without reservations,” lest we forget the terrible consequences of an era, not so long ago, when that dangerous rhetoric became reality.

Let Us Make Men: The Twentieth-Century Black Press and a Manly Vision for Racial Advancement, by D’Weston Haywood. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. x, 340 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 paperback.

Reviewer Brian Hallstoos is associate professor of history at the University of Dubuque. His research and writing have focused on African American music, drama, and sports in the Midwest.

On the cover of D’Weston Haywood’s *Let Us Make Men* appears a photograph of three carefully groomed, impeccably attired young black men absorbed in reading. The image hints at the connections the author makes among print media, masculinity, and race leadership but belies his rigorous attention to seven central figures—Robert Abbott, W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, John Sengstacke, Robert F. Williams, Elijah Muhammad, and Malcolm X—who address these connections through the black press (that is, newspapers produced by and for African Americans). Relying heavily on recently digitized (thus easily searched) newspapers and four archival collections, Haywood argues that these black publishers addressed moments of racial crisis and change “in masculine terms, a lens they applied in their papers and intended to appeal to readers’ own gendered subjectivities in hopes that readers would embrace a proper black manhood for the benefit of the race” (6).

The five chapters trace the rise and decline of the mainstream black press and its related shift from crusading for African American civil rights to adopting a more cautious role as chroniclers of others’ efforts toward such progressive ends. In chapter one the author addresses the role Robert Abbott and W. E. B. Du Bois played in shaping black leadership and masculinity through their highly influential newspapers during the mass migration of African Americans from the rural South to northern cities around World War I. Abbott’s *Chicago Defender* receives greater attention than Du Bois’s *The Crisis* in demonstrating that “newspapers could be effective tools in shaping black people’s social movements and gender ideologies, as well as effective tools in helping black men assert a public voice and manly racial leadership” (56). The second chapter focuses on Marcus Garvey and his radical newspaper, *Negro World*, which capitalized on a flourishing, postwar black consciousness that gave rise to the Harlem Renaissance. In particular, Haywood examines how the black press first elevated and later condemned Garvey