The New Warriors: Native American Leaders Since 1900

Michael L. Tate
and other aspects of their POW life. The letters in part two comprise postwar correspondence of some of these same POWs and date from late 1945 through 1998. The letters written in the late 1940s by former POWs to Iowans and Minnesotans for or with whom they had worked describe the poor living and economic conditions in postwar Germany and often include requests for or hint at the need for assistance.

Apart from a brief introduction in each of the books and identification of photos and illustrations, the editor’s presence is rarely evident. The narratives and letters are left to tell their own stories with basically no explanatory framework provided. In one way this is good, but it also creates problems. For example, the two main narratives in Enemies Within, on their own, tell a great story, but the reader’s ability to understand those experiences is limited by the absence of historical context, explanations of key terms, places, and events mentioned in the text, useful maps, or concluding observations. Signs of Life contains similar shortcomings, although the editor does occasionally provide brief explanatory comments. Both books include important photographs, drawings, and other illustrations, but the reproductions are of poor quality.

Nonetheless, the publication of these POW documents is an important contribution to the historical record, makes them more accessible to the public, and invites comparison. Persons interested in the German POW experience, especially in Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas where prisoners from Camp Algona were assigned, and those interested in the POW experiences of Iowans and other Americans in Germany should find these two collections of documents valuable reading.


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When David Edmunds published American Indian Leaders in 1980, he wisely subtitled the book “Studies in Diversity” to indicate that American Indian leadership patterns have been manifested in many different forms over the past three centuries. To be sure, some notable Indians achieved their fame on the battlefield, but others were equally important as peacemakers, artists, educators, and preservers of cultural traditions. In this newly edited work, Edmunds has assembled an equally impressive array of twentieth-century Indian leaders, whom
he has aptly termed "the New Warriors." With the exception of Charles Curtis, who substantially rejected his heritage, all 13 of the remaining individuals committed themselves to the enhancement of Indian life. Edmunds also points out that all 13 are mixed-bloods who were educated in white schools, yet their "hearts" and their "ways" remained Indian. The book’s introduction affirms the frequently voiced adage that being Indian is not determined by blood quantum or place of residence, but rather by lifestyle choices. Likewise, it stresses that modern battles have been fought more often in courts, legislatures, and the media, often with positive results.

Of the 14 biographies offered in this collection, only Charles Curtis (Kaw), Gertrude Bonnin (Dakota), D’Arcy McNickle (métis-Flathead), and Russell Means (Lakota) have received considerable coverage in printed sources. Other important national figures who have garnered somewhat less attention are also included as representatives of social and political activism: LaDonna Harris (Comanche), Wilma Mankiller (Cherokee), Ada Deer (Menominee), Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Northern Cheyenne), and Walter Echo-Hawk (Pawnee). A final category includes figures who are known in Indian Country, but who are less recognizable among the general public. This group includes Robert Yellowtail (Crow), Vine Deloria Sr. (Dakota), Howard Tommie (Seminole), Phillip Martin (Mississippi Choctaw), and Janine Pease Pretty-on-Top (Crow). For half of the people profiled, no better source of information exists elsewhere about them.

The authors who have written the 14 biographical profiles are mostly prominent historians and anthropologists. Using manuscript materials and interviews, as well as standard printed sources, they have crafted fairly comprehensive essays about their subjects’ most important contributions. Although most of the profiles are laudatory, each of the authors also casts a critical eye at the evidence to show human foibles.

Students of Iowa and midwestern history will discover that five of the essays pertaining to Indians of this region are among the strongest in the book. William Unruh’s discussion of Charles Curtis indicates how this mixed-blood Kaw rejected his tribal background, sometimes profited at the expense of fellow tribal members, and rose through the ranks of the Republican Party to become President Herbert Hoover’s vice president. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Ada Deer fought alongside other Menominee activists in Wisconsin to gain full restoration of tribal status that had been abrogated under termination policies of the 1950s. Likewise, Walter Echo-Hawk used his attorney skills to restore Pawnee skeletal materials and funerary objects housed in Ne-
braska institutions to the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma. His efforts led in 1991 to passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which opened the door to return of sacred objects to tribes throughout the United States. Two other essays also have a midwestern context, both focusing on Eastern Sioux, or Dakota, peoples. Deborah Welch provides a useful examination of Gertrude Bonnin (Zitkala-Sa), who became a prominent but controversial writer and critic of federal policies. More endearing is the essay on Rev. Vine Deloria Sr., who merged traditional Dakota spiritual traditions with Episcopal teachings. Written by his grandson and based on a series of extended taped interviews, this essay conveys the greatest depth of human feeling among all the contributions within the book.

The New Warriors represents an important addition to the expanding literature about modern American Indians. General readers will enjoy it as much as academicians.

"This Is America?" The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas, by Rusty L. Monhollon. New York: Palgrave, 2002. xvi, 284 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $39.95 cloth.


Rusty L. Monhollon, a native Kansan with a Ph.D. in history from the University of Kansas, has written a solid contribution to the burgeoning literature on the 1960s. Local studies are the wave of the future, challenging the grand narratives of the sixties by addressing the particular effects the events of that turbulent decade had on local communities around the country. This Is America? illustrates clearly how the conflicts of the 1960s over civil rights, welfare, the war in Vietnam, the counterculture, and so on played out in a midwestern context.

As in most books about the 1960s in the United States, the author begins by locating himself in relationship to his subject. Monhollon was too young to have participated in demonstrations, but he still considers himself a product of the sixties. "This book," he explains, "is my effort to make sense of the sixties. It culminates a long journey, as much personal as it was scholarly" (xiv). It is Monhollon's passion for his subject that makes this book work; it is thoughtful, well researched, and balanced. It may not tell us "how all Americans ... were politicized during those turbulent years" (4). Indeed, the author does not claim that Lawrence's experience was typical of other communities.