

Book Reviews

All communications regarding book reviews and review copies of books should be sent to Book Review Editor, *South Dakota History*, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217.

.....

Life of the Indigenous Mind: Vine Deloria Jr. and the Birth of the Red Power Movement

David Martínez. New Visions in Native American and Indigenous Studies Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press and the American Philosophical Society, 2019. 498pp. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$75.00.

Vine Deloria, Jr., was born in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation border town of Martin, South Dakota, in 1933 and raised on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Hailing from a prominent *iyeška* (mixed Sioux) family with Ihantuwan, French, and Anglo-American origins, he completed stints with a Lutheran seminary and the United States Marine Corps before settling on a life in Indian affairs. After serving as executive director of the National Congress of American Indians from 1964 to 1967, Deloria earned a law degree from the University of Colorado in 1970 and built a successful career as a professor and writer. His prodigious scholarly and polemical output encompassed the realms of philosophy, law, religion, history, and politics. Beginning with his seminal bestseller *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969), Deloria authored no less than twenty-six books by the time of his death in 2005, establishing himself as arguably the most important indigenous intellectual of the twentieth century. No wonder scholar David Martínez refers to the copious academic analysis of this man and his vast opus as “Deloria studies.”

Building upon earlier assessments by Robert Allen Warrior, Jace Weaver, Larry

Zimmerman, Thomas Biolsi, James Treat, Steve Pavlik, Daniel R. Wildcat, Michael Lawrence, and many others, Martínez offers a major contribution to Deloria studies specifically and to American Indian studies more generally. *Life of the Indigenous Mind* focuses on Deloria’s first four books: *We Talk, You Listen* (1970), *God Is Red* (1973), *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties* (1974), and *Custer Died for Your Sins*, all of which were published during the tumultuous later phase of the Red Power movement and which Martínez refers to as Deloria’s Red Power tetralogy. He mines these four books to outline Deloria’s advocacy for tribal rights as well as his critique of “colonial institutions that did the most to negatively affect American Indians as tribes, as people, and as nations” (p. 45). To that end, Martínez organizes his book thematically, going so far as to mirror the topical chapter order of *Custer Died for Your Sins*, allowing him to examine all four books simultaneously at each step. Martínez’s thematic chapters explore Deloria’s ideas on Indian-white relations, the law, the termination era, civil rights, exploitative social science research, religion, federal Indian policy, metaphysics, and tribal government.

In each chapter, Martínez offers a blend of synthesis and analysis. Deloria’s recurring and expanding themes and ideas from across the tetralogy are identified, parsed, critiqued, and contextualized. Martínez is fair in his assessment of Deloria, citing his many triumphs while also acknowledging some of his shortcomings, such as a proclivity to ignore contradictory evidence.

The book also profits from Martínez's wide reading of Deloria beyond the tetralogy and his other books to include countless forewords, introductions, magazine articles, and newspaper pieces. Martínez's immersion in Deloria's work gives his own monograph substantial depth and insight.

Martínez's overviews and syntheses make *Life of the Indigenous Mind* accessible to those less familiar with Deloria's work, while those already well versed in his relevant writings may find the book a bit heavy on summary. It is a fine line. Nonetheless, this volume is the most substantial and important consideration of Deloria's work to date and deserves a place on any comprehensive American Indian studies shelf.

AKIM REINHARDT
Towson University
Baltimore, Md.

The Dakota Sioux Experience at Flandreau and Pipestone Indian Schools

Cynthia Leanne Landrum. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019. 312pp. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$55.00.

Cynthia Leanne Landrum provides a comprehensive history of two of the many boarding schools the United States government opened to educate American Indians. Located less than twenty miles apart in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota, the Flandreau and Pipestone Indian schools opened in 1893. Flandreau was originally a Presbyterian mission school called the Riggs Institute, founded in 1871. Pipestone was located on a square mile of land containing an ancient quarry for material to make pipes prized by the local Yankton Sioux and other tribes; the site is now a national monument. The Pipestone school closed in 1953, and

Flandreau remains open today. Both were designed to assimilate American Indians into the general population, emphasizing English instruction and providing half days of vocational education that also supplied student labor to help maintain the campuses.

Today, Indian boarding schools are controversial, especially in Canada. In the United States, the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition emphasizes the social, emotional, spiritual, and cultural devastation these institutions inflicted on their students. American Indian Movement leader Dennis Banks supports that negative view in his 2004 autobiography in which he described his days at Pipestone. Adam Fortunate Eagle, a leader in the Indian takeover of Alcatraz Island who also attended Pipestone, however, gives a more favorable description in his 2010 autobiography. Landrum discusses both books and gives a balanced view of Pipestone and Flandreau, detailing how over the years they helped the Dakota Sioux and other American Indians survive and adapt to traumatic changes that colonization brought on and how they served as community centers for a variety of functions, including health services.

Landrum writes that Dakota Sioux students attended the Pipestone and Flandreau schools "as a means to an end" and, ultimately, the institutions were "community schools" (p. xi). She also asserts that the Dakota Sioux generally accepted the education they received, realizing they needed to adapt to the onslaught of white settlers in order to survive. The boarding schools provided a refuge for children from the poverty that many Indians experienced, especially during the Great Depression. Landrum builds on our knowledge of Indian boarding schools by providing extensive details about their operation based on archival information. There are

multiple instances, however, where the author copies verbatim from sources she cites without indenting longer quotations or using quotation marks. She also uses a vague referencing system. For example, in chapter one, notes twenty-five through thirty-one all read "Fear-Segal, *White Man's Club*, 81-83." Additionally, some quotations are inaccurately transcribed.

Landrum's study joins a growing number of boarding school histories, including the better-documented history of Rapid City Indian School by Scott Riney (1999), that provide insight into their complex and controversial history.

JON A. REYHNER
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, Ariz.

Nebraska during the New Deal: The Federal Writers' Project in the Cornhusker State

Marilyn Irvin Holt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019. 208pp. Illus. Append. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Paper, \$19.95.

The Federal Writers' Project produced a prodigious amount of material. Although its series of state guidebooks and slave narratives are arguably the project's most important outcomes, state offices also produced pamphlets, radio scripts, city guides, and compendiums of historic newspapers. Among this massive literary and historical output, according to Marilyn Irvin Holt's engaging history of the Nebraska Federal Writers' Project, no state published more on a per capita basis than Nebraska.

Nebraska during the New Deal has thematic chapters that chronologically narrate the story of the Nebraska Federal Writers' Project from its founding in 1935 through its closure in 1942. The importance of Nebraska's project, Holt

argues, was threefold: (1) for the labor of the workers involved and their efforts to expand the possibilities of the state's historical record; (2) for the wide range of publications it produced; and (3) for its enduring historical legacy. To support her claims, Holt details the project's internal politics and undertakes a comparative analysis of Nebraska's group of workers with those in neighboring states, including Kansas, Iowa, Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota. Nebraska is also situated within the larger national political debates over the direction, funding, and value of the Federal Writers' Projects.

Future famed writers Weldon Kees and Loren Eiseley as well as consultants Mari Sandoz, Lowry Wimberly, and John G. Neihardt are among the Nebraska project's best-known participants, but the intentional anonymization of the workers obscured the contributions of other unemployed writers, poets, teachers, and students. Holt identifies all the known employees of the project, listed in the appendix, and highlights their efforts to collect folklore and oral histories and document the state's racial and ethnic minorities. Employees' efforts to document the history of "a changing, evolving America" (p. 55) were earnest but limited. For example, the project opted not to interview any American Indians and instead published a series of pamphlets documenting Indian legends and ghost stories.

The Nebraska Federal Writers' Project published twenty-two books and booklets, produced thirty-one pamphlets, edited issues of two magazines, and wrote hundreds of weekly press reports and approximately forty radio scripts during the opening months of World War II. Twenty-four publications were in progress when the project was canceled in 1942. Holt finds that these publications, as well as the project's accumulated interviews

and manuscripts, produced a durable legacy that both broadened the boundaries of what constituted Nebraska's past and continues to direct the documentation of the state's folklore and heritage.

Scholars of New Deal programs and the Federal Writers' Project specifically will find this work an insightful study into the regional implementation of the project. Moreover, it is useful for scholars of folklore and public and community history.

Holt's detailed accounts of the inner workings of the project and the limitations of its methodologies provide a case study for those interested in the development of those respective fields. Holt's study is a welcome addition to the history of the Great Depression in Nebraska and across the Great Plains.

NATHAN TYE
University of Nebraska at Kearney
Kearney, Nebr.

Announcements

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society, provides financial support for the work of the society in preserving and interpreting the state's rich past. The foundation offers a number of giving opportunities for donors who wish to leave a legacy of history for future generations. For information on making a contribution or bequest, please contact the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217; telephone, (605) 773-6003.

Steven J. Bucklin has earned the Herbert S. Schell Award for the best article in Volume 49 of *South Dakota History*. His article, "Working on the Railroad: A History of the South Dakota Core Rail System," appeared in the Spring 2019 issue of the journal. A panel of judges selected Bucklin's article from among those published in the 2019 volume of *South Dakota History*.

The West River History Conference will hold its annual conference 8–10 October 2020 at the Martin and Mason Hotel in Deadwood, South Dakota. This year's theme is "The Double Eagle Year: Faces, Places of the West," but papers on other topics relating to the history of the region are also welcome. Please submit paper titles with brief descriptions, technical requirements, and a biographical sketch to West River Conference, Inc., P.O. Box 9276, Rapid City, SD 57709, or online at <https://www.westriverhistoryconference.org/>.