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No One Ever Asked Me: The World War II Memories of an Omaha Indian Soldier

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a “right to childhood,” although she recognizes that such modernity did not necessarily come to all.

On the whole, this is an enjoyable and useful book, and my criticisms are few. In her first paragraph, Lindenmeyer addresses my concerns about her title, making it unnecessary for me to expend argumentative energy on her use of the overused and probably inaccurate term, “the greatest generation.” I have a couple of quibbles with her analysis of children’s literature for girls in the 1930s, particularly the *Little House* books and *Caddie Woodlawn*. No matter their final conclusions, the books are not really about conformity and compliance but about heroic girls who defied gender stereotypes common for girls of their era (and, incidentally, *Caddie Woodlawn* is *not* a late nineteenth-century story, but a Civil War era story). This, however, was the only truly jarring note in the book.

I would have liked to see more attention to the concerns of rural children, particularly those who worked on their parents’ farms rather than as hired laborers. Their experiences had an impact on a number of issues in young farm children’s lives. In Iowa, for example, high school attendance did not become common until the decade after World War II, somewhat at odds with the author’s analysis of the impact of the Great Depression on education throughout the rest of the country.

Lindenmeyer has written a highly readable, entertaining, and very useful volume that will be appreciated by family and social historians and those interested in the larger history of the Great Depression. The book synthesizes a vast array of primary and secondary materials, providing a wealth of information useful for teachers at the secondary and collegiate levels. By treating seriously the impact of the Great Depression on the lives of the nation’s youngest citizens, she sheds new light and offers new perspectives on the critical importance of that decade to modern American life.

No One Ever Asked Me: The World War II Memories of an Omaha Indian Soldier, by Hollis D. Stabler, edited by Victoria Smith. American Indian Lives Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005. xvii, 183 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewer Thomas A. Britten is assistant professor of history at the University of Texas at Brownsville. He is the author of *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home* (1997) and coauthor of “The Sergeant Rice Incident and the Paradox of Indian Civil Rights” (*Annals of Iowa*, 2004).

For people interested in American combat operations in the European theater during World War II, Hollis D. Stabler’s edited memoirs tell an

exciting story of one soldier's battlefield experiences. After enlisting in 1939, Stabler received training for service in the army's 2nd Armored Division. After the United States entered the war, he participated in the Allied invasion of North Africa and the subsequent campaigns in Sicily, the western coast of Italy, and southern France. While in Italy, Stabler suffered dual tragedies: his younger brother Robert was killed in action near Cisterna, and he suffered fairly severe wounds himself from enemy shrapnel. Nonetheless, Stabler continued to serve in a variety of posts, such as radio operator, machine-gunner, and truck driver, among others. During his three years of wartime service, he participated in five major campaigns and countless battles. His vivid recollections of hardship, sacrifice, and camaraderie are poignant reminders of what the "greatest generation" went through to preserve American liberties at home.

Stabler's memoirs are also significant for what they reveal about Native American experiences and perceptions of the war. A member of the Omaha Nation of Nebraska, Stabler was one of 25,000 Indian soldiers who served during World War II. He recalls few instances of discrimination while he served in the military; his comrades were apparently so indifferent about his background that they never bothered to ask him what tribe he was from. After the war, Stabler returned stateside to an uncertain future and, like many veterans, struggled to adjust to life after war. The Omaha people welcomed their veterans home with traditional rituals and ceremonies, and Stabler received his own song in recognition of his status as a *Wano^she* (warrior). University of Nebraska historian Victoria Smith, who interviewed Stabler and edited the work, does a fine job of organizing the story and placing it in its proper historical context. I highly recommend it.

A Public Charity: Religion and Social Welfare in Indianapolis, 1929–2002, by Mary L. Mapes. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. xi, 173 pp. Notes, index. \$ 37.50 cloth.

Reviewer Joan Gittens is professor of history at Southwest Minnesota State University. She is the author of *Poor Relations: The Children of the State in Illinois, 1818–1990* (1994).

A Public Charity analyzes the history of social welfare in Indianapolis, while charting the boom and bust course of the nation's concern with poverty throughout the twentieth century. Author Mary Mapes looks at the role Indianapolis has played in addressing poverty, and describes the dynamics between the city's public officials and private, religious social welfare organizations. She finds Indianapolis a reveal-