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The White Earth Nation: Ratification of a Native Democratic Constitution

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ture in the Twin Cities. That community remained private, however, with event information traveling by word of mouth in order to circumvent morality codes and avoid arrests. Because of its underground existence, the gay community remained vulnerable to larger citywide changes, such as urban renewal projects that eliminated meeting places in the mid-twentieth century, all but burying the community's early history in piles of rubble, high rises, and cloverleaf highways.

The mid-twentieth century brought a new sense of political and civic action designed to make the community less vulnerable and to secure a voice in the cities' changes. In the second half of his book Van Cleve traces the rise of gay activism and activity that addressed housing, anti-homosexual city ordinances, marriage, and the health issues brought on by HIV/AIDS. The activist organizations and cultural touchstones—everything from Pride parades and bath houses like The Locker Room to the North Country Bears and the Christopher Street treatment center—that grew out of the late twentieth century demonstrate that queer life not only existed but thrived in the Midwest.

Van Cleve's book lacks the high level of analysis that queer history academics produce, but he does provide an excellent place for Minnesotans, as well as other midwesterners, to learn about the diverse and rich queer history that exists in their region. This is a heavily researched, well-written book, and a great addition to our ever-increasing understanding of queer history in the United States.

The White Earth Nation: Ratification of a Native Democratic Constitution, by Gerald Vizenor and Jill Doerfler. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. vii, 100 pp. Bibliography. \$16.00 paperback.

Reviewer Mark R. Scherer is associate professor of history and chair of the history department at the University of Nebraska–Omaha. He is the author of *Imperfect Victories: The Legal Tenacity of the Omaha Tribe, 1945–1995* (1999).

Hundreds of Native American nations operate under the terms of tribal constitutions enacted in the aftermath of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934; only a handful have reshaped those documents in recent years to better reflect their own cultural and political values. In 2009 the White Earth Nation of Anishinaabeg Natives (perhaps more familiar to outsiders as the White Earth band of Chippewa or Ojibwe) became one of the few Indian groups anywhere, and the first in the state of Minnesota, to take that important step in furtherance of its sovereign autonomy.

This slim but valuable volume presents the text of the White Earth Nation's new constitution, along with insights from two of the key par-

ticipants in the drafting, deliberation, and ratification of that historic instrument. Tribal member Gerald Vizenor, a historian at the University of New Mexico who became the principal author of the White Earth constitution, offers an extended essay that provides important context for the motivations and goals of the tribal convention that produced it. Historian Jill Doerfler of the University of Minnesota carefully chronicled the convention's progress and presents a series of articles she published contemporaneously in the tribal newspaper as the process unfolded. The net effect is to provide a compelling behind-the-scenes perspective on the creation of the White Earth constitution that will be instructive to anyone who is interested in the perplexing but always stimulating topic of indigenous self-government. Few issues are more significant to residents of the Great Plains and the American West.