

## Cold War Kids: Politics and Childhood in Postwar America, 1945-1960

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in which she considers the involvement, the actions, the heroics, and the often considerable sacrifice of those who fought. Her numerous stories cover all sorts of men and women, all ranks, all services, all circumstances, amazingly constructed to provide some insight into the individuals. This first volume (June–October 1950) covers the opening of the war, the massive retreat to the Pusan Perimeter, the breakout of the Eighth Army, and the invasion of Inchon. It concludes there, leaving the discussion of the Chinese invasion and the hill and outpost war for subsequent volumes.

While the scope of her work is limited to those from the Prairie states, the book is very informative about the early days of the Korean War, thus giving it an appeal to a far larger audience. More a creative historian than a military scholar, Helm provides some interpretations of action and behavior that are still open to question, as, for example, her identification of the flaws in MacArthur's entrapment plan (355). But these do not detract from her primary purpose. In the main the material is clearly and responsibly presented. The one drawback is a problem common to this type of work; that is, even though each individual and action is special and worthy of remembrance and appreciation, when combined together in this format the efforts presented often appear redundant. It is perhaps best read over an extended period of time.

The book is well written, even exciting at times, highly informative, and especially valuable if you or one of yours is mentioned. The author obviously cares that these stories are well told, and she has accomplished that. All in all, it is an honest and well-prepared honor to those who so deserve this recognition.

*Cold War Kids: Politics and Childhood in Postwar America, 1945–1960*, by Marilyn Irvin Holt. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014. ix, 214 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Jennifer Robin Terry is a doctoral candidate in history at the University of California, Berkeley. Her work looks at social and political intersections in American children's lives in the mid-twentieth century.

What do school lunch programs, the Indian Adoption Project, and eleven 1955 deaths from contaminated polio vaccines have in common? They all resulted, Marilyn Irvin Holt tells us in *Cold War Kids*, from an unprecedented uptick in federal intervention in American children's lives from 1945 to 1960. Holt explains that increased federal attention to childhood issues marks the period as a turning point in Americans' expectations and acceptance of federal responsibility and leadership in their everyday affairs. Although studies of children's history during the

Cold War period are often overshadowed by those on Progressive/New Deal federalism and Lyndon Johnson's 1960s Great Society, Holt argues that the immediate postwar period is worthy of deeper investigation as the era's political wrangling over such issues as juvenile delinquency, children's literacy, and popular entertainment demonstrates well the shifting state-to-federal balance of power.

Holt uses the 1950 and 1960 White House Conferences on Children and Youth both as a framework for the study and to demonstrate changes in the federal agenda. Prior to the 1950 conference, federal and state policies regarding childhood were narrow in scope and purpose. The four preceding White House conferences had been primarily concerned with poor and marginalized children—the delinquent, the destitute, and the orphaned—and resulted in few federal policy changes. The 1950 and 1960 conferences, on the other hand, strove to build a better citizenry and cope with Atomic Age fears by addressing issues that affected children across the board, regardless of socioeconomic, regional, or racial differences. Issues considered too costly or widespread became opportunities for federal intervention. That is not to say that federal expansion was unfettered or unchallenged. Holt acknowledges the transitional ebb and flow and points to resistance on various issues such as water fluoridation and school desegregation.

This book covers a lot of ground in four detailed chapters. The first chapter contextualizes the study through an examination of the 1950 and 1960 White House Conferences on Children and Youth. It touches on topics such as Cold War foreign and domestic concerns; the expansion of federal agencies; the increasing reliance on "experts"; and the growing recognition of adolescence as a special category of note. Subsequent chapters focus on three distinct areas most affected by expanded federal intervention: education, dependency (delinquents, orphans, and the impoverished), and children's health. Holt recognizes that many of these issues are longstanding and not unique to the Cold War period. What is different, she explains, is the Atomic Age rhetoric and Red Scare atmosphere that motivated policy changes that greatly affected children's lives. Illiteracy, poor health and fitness, and corrupt morals became potential threats to national security. Hence, she claims, federal policy had less to do with concern for children and more with building a bulwark against "the threat of Soviet superiority" (80). A minor criticism of this work is that the 1950 and 1960 White House Conferences on Children and Youth are conspicuously missing from chapter four. While the chapter's connection to the study's framework is implicitly obvious, lack of explicit mention (as in other chapters) leaves readers to assume connections.

Nonetheless, *Cold War Kids* is an important work that redirects East Coast biases of child welfare reform studies and demonstrates the national significance of concerns that arose in other regions. Coverage of issues significant to the Midwest, such as educational funding, segregation, and consolidation of rural schools, centers largely on Kansas. That is likely because a significant amount of Holt's research material came from the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas. She drew largely on official government documents, such as presidential commission reports, conference proceedings, and congressional statements. Specific examples from literature, film, television, and music enhance the argument. Of particular note is Holt's use of archival collections that have received scant attention until now, such as the records of the 1950 and 1960 White House Conferences on Children and Youth, housed in Abilene, Kansas; and the Orphan Correspondence Files at the National Archives and Record Administration in College Park, Maryland—a collection that Holt requested through the Freedom of Information Act.

Throughout the book, Holt successfully highlights the things that Americans said they wanted for their children—health, education, and hope in a world of insecurities—while specifying how Cold War tensions influenced government programs in form and function. Holt convincingly argues that childhood “achieved a new importance both culturally and politically” on the frontline of democracy in postwar America (150). *Cold War Kids* demonstrates in substantial ways that federal policies and agendas shaped postwar American childhood, leaving a legacy that continues into the twenty-first century.

*The Rural Midwest since World War II*, edited by J. L. Anderson. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, 2014. xii, 323 pp. Illustrations, graphs, maps, tables, notes, index. \$28.95 paperback.

Reviewer Coreen Derifield is an instructor at East Central College in Union, Missouri. She is working on a book manuscript titled “Earning Her Daily Bread: Women and Industrial Manufacturing in the Rural Midwest, 1950–1980.”

*The Rural Midwest since World War II* provides an impressive array of essays on the state of the Midwest since 1945. Each contributor provides a descriptive answer to three questions that tend to arise when discussing the Midwest: What is the Midwest? What does it mean to be rural? And is the Midwest distinct? By tackling these difficult questions, the scholars provide a varied and complicated look at the social and economic diversity of the rural Midwest.

This collection also addresses two fundamental issues surrounding the history of the rural Midwest: the relative lack of scholarly interest in