

Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians. Edited by Susan Sleeper-Smith, Juliana Barr, Jean M. O'Brien, Nancy Shoemaker, and Scott Manning Stevens (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015). Pp. 335. [Price]

This book is not an all-encompassing history of American Indians but rather a fresh infusion of an assortment of recent scholarship into the discussion of teaching United States history. As the editors of this book state, their mission is to “change how historians teach U.S. History” by creating a “resource that should help college teachers see the connections between American Indian history and the entirety of American history and enable them to recast their survey history classes from this vantage point”(1). Concluding that many U.S. history survey classes often lack a strong American Indian presence, the authors provide educators with important examples of how including American Indians within the narrative of American history adds a depth and complexity to our understanding of history.

Growing out of a 2013 symposium of the same name, this book provides a much needed reminder of how interconnected American Indian history is to the history of the United States. Divided into three parts, the book's nineteen chapters are organized chronologically with the first two sections mirroring the traditional U.S. History survey divisions of before and after 1877. A third section, “Reconceptualizing the Narrative,” is comprised of three chapters that address concerns on a more theoretical level. Of these latter chapters, Mikal Brotnov Eckstrom and Margaret D. Jacobs' “Teaching American History as Settler Colonialism” deserves considerable attention as a possible framework for course construction.

At first glance the book appears to be heavily weighted toward the past one hundred fifty years, but this is by design. Jacob Betz explains that “as the U.S. history survey is frequently taught... Native Americans are moved offstage historiographically” following the Civil War thus “mirroring their literal marginalization onto reservations as settlers homesteaded the West” (227). This book is designed to demonstrate the continued importance of American Indians to United States history long after they vanish in many textbooks.

The book's strength is in its practicality. Understanding the time constraints placed on survey classes, the authors suggest simple yet *impactful* ways to ensure that American Indians are part of the master narrative of American history and are not a tangential element pushed to the background of a larger story. For example, James D. Rice, Jean M. O'Brien, Paul T. Conrad, Scott Manning Stevens, and John J. Laukaitis demonstrate how traditional events and topics that are already a staple of history courses, such as Bacon's Rebellion, the California Gold Rush, slavery, the Civil War, and Civil Rights respectively, can be complicated by including the perspective of American Indians. These added nuances go beyond the simple tropes of Indian suffering and subjugation. As Jeffrey Ostler points out in his chapter on Indian warfare, too often the inclusion of American Indians “evokes a sympathetic response” but does not “necessarily challeng[e] students to think more broadly about the underlying causes of conflict” (153). Therefore, many of the chapters focus on the complexity of power relations and

American Indian agency. Juliana Barr and Adam Jortner's chapters in particular will make educators reconsider what maps they include in their PowerPoint presentations. Barr and Jortner's discussions on the ways in which maps contribute to notions of the invisible Indian will inspire new lessons that invite students to interrogate the power and ideology of maps and their creators.

The chapters in this volume cover a wide range of historical categories including urban, labor, military, gender, religious, legal, and economic history. Unfortunately, American Indian women and discussions of gender more broadly are almost exclusively isolated in the text to a single chapter by Sarah M. S. Pearsall on their experiences during the American Revolution. Each chapter differs slightly in approach. Some chapters, such as Laukaitis' "Positioning the American Indian Self-Determination Movement in the Era of Civil Rights," prescribe specific pedagogical strategies including suggested course readings and framing questions; meanwhile, other chapters are more narrative but still highlight lesser known events, individuals, and concepts. Although the breadth of this book restricts its depth, every chapter is accompanied by a suggested reading list for further exploration and inquiry.

Any instructor of United States history whether a high school teacher, a first time graduate student, or a tenured professor will find value in the suggestions of this book's numerous authors. In order to amplify the impact of this book, it should become required reading in the educational programs of K-12 social studies teachers. As K. Tsianina Lomawaima recognizes, the neglect of American Indians in United States history is a larger educational problem where college professors frequently need to "overturn what [students] have been taught all their lives" (276). This book may not revolutionize the composition of United States history courses, but it is a step in a positive direction.

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