While evident in the nature of its name but often lost amongst other strands of its identity, Indiana was and still is, thanks in part to Elizabeth Glenn and Stewart Rafert’s *The Native Americans*, “The Land of the Indians.” In the first centuries of white colonization, the land existed beyond the conscious thought of most Europeans, although trading routes passed along many of its rivers. The Delaware, the Miami, and the Potawatomi, to name only a few tribes, lived in relative isolation and, for the most part, in relative peace.

The War of 1812 and the needs of a burgeoning nation changed everything. Keenly aware of the vast resources that resided on the other side of the mountains, white settlers began to pour into this land of the Indians. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the land had become another tragic locale for the removal of many of its original occupants. While most historians may be tempted to stop at this point of removal, Glenn (professor emerita of anthropology at Ball State University) and Rafert (adjunct professor of history at the University of Delaware and author of *The Miami Indians of Indiana*) press on to the present day.

Glenn and Rafert lead us through a chronological discussion of the history of the peoples who once and, in some cases, still do occupy this land. Beginning with “Original Ethnic Groups” reaching as far back as 11,500 years, the authors detail the lifestyles, cultural values, and societal structures of the inhabitants of what became Indiana. The authors proceed to show the various legal and cultural struggles that tribal peoples in Indiana, particularly the Miami and the Potawatomi, had to navigate. Each chapter focuses on a period of time lasting two to four decades, in effect telling the stories of the tribes in generational eras. This structure allows the authors to highlight key individuals and events that give a local quality to this history.

As an historical treatise, Glenn and Rafert’s work comes with both strengths and weaknesses. One of the strengths is the gripping, informative writing style that allows the authors
to offer a concise introduction to the story of tribal peoples in Indiana. The book is accessible to lay readers, whether they are college students, high school students, or interested individuals thoroughly removed from any connection to Indiana or its tribal peoples.

However, some critical concerns do emerge. The concluding section of the book leads away from a discussion of tribal peoples in Indiana, describing instead a more general view of tribal peoples in America. Another weakness is the brief nature of some of the information offered—concise writing makes for engaging reading but it can also sacrifice depth, for example, in descriptions of important historical figures including Chief Pokagon and Chief Little Turtle.

Together, we initially read this book as part of a college class focused not only on the history of tribal peoples but also on the relationships we now share with them as fellow members of the social fabric currently defining Indiana. We wanted to know more about the past, present, and future of tribal peoples here in Indiana. A number of good books exist concerning particular tribal groups. However, no singular text deals directly with the lives of these peoples within the particular geographical boundaries that now define Indiana. We found this book to be capable of filling that void.

In general, our responses to this book as teacher and students were quite comparable. We met each week over the course of a six-week period to discuss the material found in each chapter along with matters such source utilization and historiographical commitments. As previously mentioned, we determined that the book possessed certain weaknesses. However, we also found that high school or college classes with comparable interests would be well served by this text. Individuals with interests in Indiana or midwestern history would also be well served.

Overall, Glenn and Rafert present a strong assessment of the significance of tribal peoples in the story of Indiana. The chronological structure of the book ensures easy access for a wide range of readers, and the authors provide a lengthy list of primary and secondary sources. The story told by Glenn and Rafert reminds us in a convincing manner that before Indiana, before the idea of a land of borders and fences, free peoples called this land home and that those peoples underwent a transformation that almost destroyed their story.

Todd C. Ream is the Associate Director of the John Wesley Honors College at Indiana Wesleyan University. Luke Nielsen and Aaron Morrison are students in the John Wesley Honors College.