

REVIEW NOTICES

Letters from the Greatest Generation: Writing Home in WWII

Edited by Howard H. Peckham and Shirley A. Snyder. Foreword by James H. Madison

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. xi, 354. Index. Paper, \$25.00.)

In 1948, the Indiana War History Commission published its first book, *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers*. Editors Howard Peckham and Shirley Snyder collected 131 letters written by Hoosier soldiers, from December 1941 in Hawaii to August 1945 in occupied Japan and Europe. As James Madison notes in his new foreword to the re-titled volume, however, only 140 copies of the book sold in its first 12 months of publication. Of all the books republished in the bicentennial year of Indiana's statehood, this is one of the most valuable. That most Hoosiers, and most Americans interested in the history of World War II, have been unaware of these remarkable letters for almost 70 years is astonish-

ing. As the original reviewer for the *Indiana Magazine of History* observed: "There is nothing specifically Hoosier about this book. It is a book about Americans, who might have come from any state in the Union. They faced death, and some of them met death, with a courage which knows no boundary. Every American should read them at least once a year."



The Kimberlins Go to War: A Union Family in Copperhead Country

By Michael B. Murphy

(Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 2016. Pp. xi, 153. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, appendices, index. \$19.95.)

Of the thirty-three men from the extended Kimberlin family who enlisted to fight for the Union from Scott County, Indiana, only twenty-three returned home at the end of the war. Using forty extant family letters, Michael Murphy tells the story of one particular group of Hoosiers during a

period of national conflict. The book's first three chapters set the stage, delving into family history, as well as the economic and political history of Scott County. Chapter Four follows the soldiers' lives and fortunes during the war; Chapter Five looks at their lives and those of the other members of the extended family after the conflict. This is a brief volume, and many readers might wish that the author had spent more time discussing the details of the war years, but anyone interested in the history of Hoosiers during the Civil War will nonetheless enjoy and profit from reading this book.



Undeniably Indiana: Hoosiers Tell the Story of Their Wacky and Wonderful State

Introduction by Nelson Price

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. xiv, 274. Illustrations. Paper, \$22.00.)

Pick up this small volume and start reading any section. If the first stories in "Just Plain Peculiar" don't catch your attention (although how could the Thorntown Gorilla and the Tipton Mummy fail?) move over to "Eatin' Out" and read about the Spanish hot dogs at Gene's Root Beer and the sugar cream pie from the Dutch Mill. The editors of the IU Press sent out open invitations on social media to past and present Hoosiers: write something about why Indiana is meaningful to you and send it to us. The pieces they

chose for *Undeniably Indiana* speak to growing up and living in towns and cities across the state. Some people wrote a few sentences; some wrote several pages. Browse through the book, read a few stories, and then come back tomorrow. Make sure that at some point you reach the last section, "The Extraordinary Ordinary," and in particular the final two stories of "Uncle Snuffy" and "Sunshine." And in the middle, just enjoy reading small stories written by Hoosiers about Indiana.



Indianapolis: The Circle City

Photographs by Lee Mandrell

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. x, 131. \$35.00.)

Lee Mandrell's gallery of photographs of Indiana's capital city will quickly capture readers' attention. The cover depicts the Soldiers and Sailors Monument lit up for the Christmas season; a lovely early evening scene along the Central Canal introduces Matthew Tully's foreword to the book; and the first photograph in the gallery offers a stunning view upward to the ceiling of the Shrine Room at the Indiana War Memorial. Many of Mandrell's photographs focus on downtown sites, although he also features views of many of the city's most historic and photogenic parks and neighborhoods. Mandrell focuses on capturing the details of each building and place, often without including people. An empty street and sidewalk in front of

Bankers' Life Fieldhouse as well as a fan-less and player-less Victory Field might seem static and cold. But then consider the fountains of Garfield Park's Sunken Garden captured at night and a beautiful sunrise shot at the west entrance to the same park. Look down one long empty corridor of the Indiana Government Center that, as photographed by Mandrell, evokes a medieval cloister. This book should appeal to anyone who cares about the Circle City and wants to see it anew through the eyes of a talented photographer.

One Day in May: 24 Hours in the Life of Indiana

By the Editors of Indiana University Press

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. ix, 143. Illustrations. Paper, \$19.00.)

The editors of IU Press invited Hoosiers to take a picture on Friday, May 20, 2016. The photos were meant to convey an ordinary day in the life of a person, a family, a business, or a town in the Hoosier state. From the hundreds of submissions, the editors chose 140 photos. The day begins at 2:44 a.m. in Bloomington at the Crescent Donut Shop; the sun rises at the North Lookout Tower in Brown County State Park. An evening baseball game with the Indianapolis Indians, a late-night meal at the Hi-mark Restaurant in Kokomo, and live

music at the Rusty Bucket Saloon in Charlestown round out the day.

Hoosiers: The Fabulous Basketball Life of Indiana

By Philip M. Hoose

Third ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. xii, 293. Illustrations, map, index. Paper, \$27.00.)

The publication of a third edition of most books would not prompt celebration, but IU Press has published a new, updated edition of Philip Hoose's delightful and definitive book on Indiana basketball just in the time for the state bicentennial. Hoose separates the real Hoosiers from wannabes and newbies even before his first chapter, with the "Hoosierland Map." Yes, the main cities are there, but if you know anything about Hoosier basketball, you'll know why Heltonville, Milan, Walton, and Fairmount are included; if you're behind the curve, then buy this book and read it. Hoose opens with a marvelous chapter on how basketball became Hoosier Hysteria; subsequent chapters discuss famous basketball towns, teams, coaches, and players. This edition features a new chapter titled "Four Class Basketball: Death or Salvation of Hoosier Hysteria?" and an update on many of the people featured in the book.

Days of Knight: How the General Changed My Life

By Kirk Haston

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. 223. Illustrations. Paper, \$22.00.)

During his four years playing basketball for Indiana University (1997-2001), Kirk Haston never lost admiration for Bobby Knight, his coaching ability, and his influence on players. *Days of Knight* tells the story of one talented high school basketball player and how he was recruited by Knight, how he learned to play for the coach, what his life was like as an athlete and a student, and how he felt about Knight's firing, which took place before Haston's final year with the team. Members of Hoosier Nation who still dream of seeing Coach Knight return to Assembly Hall will be the natural audience for this book; it will also appeal to readers interested in one man's perspective on playing for one of the most successful and well-known college basketball coaches of the twentieth century. And because Haston kept a written record of his experiences throughout his four years, he is able to include "Knight Lines" set apart in special boxes throughout the book. From Haston's junior year: "Running into a screen is like a guy taking a nap under a tree and having a cow come by and p . . . ing on his head and not waking up" (p. 32).



Indiana: An Interpretation

By John Bartlow Martin. Foreword by James H. Madison. Afterword by Ray E. Boomhower

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. xviii, 325. Notes, map, bibliography, index. Paper, \$32.00.)

In 1992, IU Press reprinted John Bartlow Martin's neglected 1947 classic book on the state of Indiana. Hoosier historian James H. Madison provided an introduction which gave a new generation of readers an appreciation for the significance of Martin's work. Now the press has re-issued that 1992 book with an added afterword by Ray Boomhower, Martin's biographer.



Keep on Fighting: The Life and Civil Rights Legacy of Marian A. Spencer

By Dorothy H. Christenson

(Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015. Pp. xv, 110. Illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95.)

In the early 1930s, thirteen-year-old Marian Alexander joined the NAACP from her hometown of Gallipolis, Ohio. In 2012, Dorothy Christenson recorded an extended oral history given by ninety-five-year-old Marian Alexander Spencer. The interview documented her remarkable life and career of public service, particularly her decades of work on behalf of civil rights in the state of Ohio. In 1952, Spencer led a successful protest

movement against the segregation of Cincinnati's Coney Island amusement park. Spencer was also instrumental in efforts to desegregate Cincinnati schools and neighborhoods. Christenson brackets Spencer's own narrative with historical context; she also provides appendices documenting Spencer's memberships and awards.



Portrait of Route 66: Images from the Curt Teich Postcard Archives

By T. Lindsay Baker

(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016. Pp. ix, 265. Illustrations, maps, index. \$34.95.)

Chicago's Curt Teich and Company was at one time the largest postcard manufacturer in the United States. This delightful book has been assembled from their archives. T. Lindsay Baker begins, as does Route 66, in Chicago, Illinois, then follows the road westward and southward into Missouri and eventually to Santa Monica, California. Each of the stops on Baker's tour receives two pages: the first page gives the history of the place and information about the postcard that portrays it; the second offers the original photo from which Teich and Company worked as well as the final postcard. Postcard collectors will value this book: Teich took black-and-white photographs and transformed them into glowing color. The cocktail lounge at the Hotel Louis Joliet in Illinois, for example, pops

with a dark red ceiling and carpet, and bright blue accents on the walls. For those interested in the history of travel in midcentury America and for fans of the historic and current Route 66, this book is a must-buy.



Lustron Stories

By Charles Mintz

(Columbus: University of Ohio Press, 2016. Pp. xi, 152. Illustrations. \$49.95.)

In 1948, the Lustron Corporation of Columbus, Ohio, began manufacturing distinctive all-metal, affordable homes for postwar Americans. Many Lustron homes still exist in towns and cities throughout the Midwest, and Charles Mintz has photographed sixty-eight of those houses. The book's two introductory essays set the stage. Jeffrey Head offers the history of the company and its houses in "Lustron's Legacy," while Shannon Thomas Perich's "Pulling Back the Curtains" offers commentary on Mintz's photos and some of his subjects. Many of the standard interior and exterior features of Lustron homes are still obvious in these houses; Mintz also portrays an intriguing group of owners. Unfortunately, Mintz chose not to include text with each photo, so that each full-page photograph is accompanied by another, nearly blank page stating only the location of the house and the first names of its owners. Given the lack of individual stories, perhaps the book should have been given another title.

*Interpreting American History:
Reconstruction*

Edited by John David Smith

(Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press,
2016. Pp. xi, 243. Notes, bibliography, index.
Paper, \$29.95.)

This volume is the third in a series, following books on *The Age of Andrew Jackson* and *The New Deal and the Depression*. Graduate students developing their own courses or studying for their final exams, advanced-level high school teachers and college professors looking for summaries of the latest scholarship—all these readers should appreciate the books in this series. Smith's volume opens with a brief introduction to the topic, followed by an overview of the historiography of Reconstruction. The bulk of the book contains seven topical essays. Every essay offers extensive notes; the concluding bibliography is comprehensive.



*My Gettysburg: Meditations on
History and Place*

By Mark A. Snell

(Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press,
2016. Pp. xiii, 222. Illustrations, maps,
notes, index. \$29.95.)

Mark Snell, retired career military officer and professor of American history at the U.S. Military Academy, enjoyed a second career teaching Civil War history at Shepherd University. In this volume, Snell, who lives in

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, offers a series of personal and historical essays on the place. One chapter focuses on West Virginian soldiers in the battle; another looks at music about Gettysburg from 1863 to 1913. One of the final essays examines the experiences of Civil War re-enactors, including the author. Readers looking for books about the Civil War that go beyond biographies of generals, detailed histories of regiments, and minute analyses of battles will enjoy *My Gettysburg*.

