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Buried Indians: Digging Up the Past in a Midwestern Town. By Laurie Hovell McMillin.

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to explain and resolve the tension between moments of fluidity and eventual rigid boundaries. Historians such as White, Hinderaker, Aron and Adelman, Merrell, and Shoemaker have begun to resolve the tension by providing arguments for the transition from fluidity to rigidity in social boundaries in the early West. This essay collection might have done more to address this dynamic of change-over-time.

This critique is not meant to question the continuing importance of the idea of a fluid frontier. In the best essay of the collection, Bruce Smith shows how the framework of the “middle ground” can still yield important new insights and approaches. Smith looks at legal institutions in frontier Illinois and particularly focuses on the legal handling of interracial violence. As he concludes, far from being a tool of domination, the law in the Northwest was a flexible zone of negotiation, in which whites and Indians could pursue their own versions of justice. Like Steele’s essay on captivity, Smith’s essay deserves a wide readership, opening up an original and previously ignored avenue of inquiry.

Of course, as Barr writes, the authors of this collection do not pretend to give the final word. An added virtue of the volume is the way in which the authors point the way for future studies in the field. Detailed endnotes, together with an excellent bibliography, provide a directory of the rich source materials related to the Old Northwest. As many know, the Old Northwest happens to have some of the most extensively published and readily available primary sources of any field in American history, thanks to numerous nineteenth-century collectors, state historical societies, and early twentieth-century historians and editors, such as Thwaites, Alvord, Carter, Kellogg, and Draper. The helpful contribution of this bibliography corroborates Barr’s hope that the collection will encourage new entries into this vital field.

All in all, the collection adds some interesting case studies to our growing understanding of the history of this region, especially opening up new insights into agency and contingency. Some of the essays suffer from stylistic and organizational problems, as well as distracting faults such as long quotations. Still, these are well-researched and useful essays with important points to make.

*Bob Morrissey*

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**Buried Indians: Digging Up the Past in a Midwestern Town.** By Laurie Hovell McMillin. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006. 283 pages. \$60.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Laurie Hovell McMillin’s book is an interesting approach to community research and writing, as she documents attitudes and local decision-making processes in her hometown of Trempealeau, Wisconsin. Her attempt to account for the positions community members take on whether platform mounds on Trempealeau Mountain are authentic and deserve archaeological preservation takes her into a wide-ranging study of the identities and world-views of the local population.

McMillin quickly abandons any pretense of objective analysis, opting instead for an emic viewpoint based upon her own family history in the Trempealeau area and her own experiences and research. She comments on this approach several times, once responding to her own brother's comments about her unscientific approach by saying, "It seemed to me that Bob was asking for an objectivity that didn't exist, while I held fast to the belief in a multiplicity of views, a multiplicity I hoped to represent but that would inevitably be filtered through my own partial view" (150).

It is an effective approach, but in employing that viewpoint, she opens a kind of Pandora's box of themes that sometimes seem to lead her away from her main goal. Themes such as patriarchy in the recording of history and a number of self-conscious descriptions of interactions among her family members sometimes leave the reader with the task of connecting McMillin's personal viewpoint with the community attitudes she wishes to assess. Yet that approach yields some powerful moments, as readers are forced to see the very human levels of community identity in the process of group decision making in Trempealeau.

Community members are exposed in a very personal way as a result of McMillin's approach, as she lays bare the ways many non-Indian communities in the United States seem to select very self-serving aspects of the Native American heritage of a place. She is fascinated by the way community members "wanted to believe and remember only certain things about their town," ignoring the violence of settlement, removal of the area's Indian peoples, and the restriction of those peoples on reservations elsewhere (31). She documents some revealing evidence of this nostalgic selectivity, including the portrayal of Indians in such events as that held on the centennial of the creation of nearby Perrot State Park, the use of "Indian" mascots by high schools in the area, the supposed commemoration of Indian people in place names, and the resultant dismissal of any special claims of Indian people to lands and sites on private and public property. McMillin makes effective use of the area's newspaper accounts and personal interviews and her own experiences to uncover the attitudes and motives of community members.

She also documents the history and archaeological studies of the area, establishing the tribal roots. In this endeavor, McMillin finds strong evidence of the authenticity of the platform mounds, which is in stark contrast to what many community members want to believe. Early historical documentation from explorers and surveys by archaeologists become important sources for her conclusion that the mounds, though damaged by looters and local development through the years, are authentic. She even documents the fact that one community member of the 1880s, George Hull Squier, studied at Harvard, then returned to the community to document the presence of the platform mounds on his father's property and helped establish a connection between the Trempealeau Mountain sites and the Cahokia culture to the south. She comments of Squier that "we might say that what he could not see before, he learned to see at Harvard" (81).

McMillin also tries to document some of the tribal attitudes toward the platform mounds. In doing so, she also reveals the uncomfortable fit that

results from community views of Indians as people of the past, now long gone, with little appreciation of living Indian people in such nearby communities as that of the Ho-Chunk people at Black River Falls. She cites Vine Deloria Jr. and other Indian scholars as she points out that Americans in general are far more comfortable with a romantic view of Indians of the past than with actual Indian people of the present. She is unable to get much direct comment about the authenticity of the mounds in question from Indian people, revealing a weakness in her research, but does make some interesting observations about the Indian people of today in the area, including her own reactions to being an outsider at a powwow in Black River Falls. Of that experience, she comments that non-Indians from Trempealeau could learn something from being uncomfortable at a powwow. She concludes that Native viewpoints about preserving the mounds is that “they were not concerned with preserving the site for future exploration; instead, the site connected them to the past, manifested the past in the present, giving them a way to claim, We are here and we *were* here” (249).

One of the great strengths of McMillin’s approach is her ability to give voice to the people she portrays. She occasionally puts words in the mouths of her sources to express her analysis of the very personal nature of identity. She also does this when articulating the arguments for private property for Euro-Americans and for community members concerned about the machinations of outsiders, such as archaeologists. In those cases, she finds a way, perhaps a controversial one, around the narrower community studies that emerge from the disciplines of academia, such as anthropology. Though she mentions her own adolescent alienation with the narrowness of understanding among community members, she seems to have worked diligently to express their views accurately.

McMillin clearly states in several places in the narrative that she seeks an avenue of knowing, of understanding the very human processes of community identity and decision making that lead to such controversies as those surrounding the preservation of prehistoric Indian mounds. Preservation today means achieving a careful balance between access for the public and protection of attributes. Because Trempealeau residents were being asked to approve a proposal that included partial town funding to preserve the platform mound site, they often felt ambivalent toward the idea. Their own sense of community identity, McMillin shows, could not easily adjust to the reality of former peoples there, some of whose descendants still live nearby. She notes that the subtle racism that helps people “remember” and “forget” selectively when it comes to Indian peoples became a huge hurdle to what might seem a minor issue in Trempealeau.

This book provides an opportunity for both Indian and non-Indian people to reconsider today’s crisis in intercultural understanding. Although limited in scope, McMillin’s study shows us that group identities, cultural views of place, and the land are important variables in intercultural communication. Her implication seems to be that unless we strive to understand these human identity questions with a sense of empathy, we will continue to encourage the “misremembering” of America’s Indian heritage, thus continuing subtle racist

policies and social conditions (184). Though her book often tends toward the personal memoir, it appeals to the human emotions and creative sensitivities of readers at a time when so many Americans have lost the sense of place provided by small communities like Trempealeau.

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**The Conquest of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land, 1820–1875.** By Gary Clayton Anderson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005. 476 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

In this boldly argued book, Gary Clayton Anderson joins a growing number of scholars in challenging long-standing romanticized myths of Anglo-Texan exceptionalism and uncovering the state's much darker hidden history. Anderson argues that the fifty years of ethnic violence up to 1875 were predicated on "an Anglo-Texas strategy and a policy" that, after fits and starts, "gradually led to the deliberate ethnic cleansing of a host of people, especially people of color" (7). Focusing primarily on Indians and secondarily on Tejanos, Anderson explains that political elites in Texas formulated the policy. However, Texas Rangers and later the US Army implemented it and functioned as its agents. Although this work suffers from some theoretical shortcomings, it is significant because it uses solid archival research to place Indians and Tejanos at the forefront of Texas history in an era when many historians have mischaracterized or ignored them.

Building on his previous reconception of Comanche culture to 1830 in *The Indian Southwest* (2001), Anderson provides further insight into Comanche society to 1875. Offering a healthy corrective to T. R. Fehrenbach's uncritical assertion in *Lone Star* (1968) that Southern Plains Indians routinely raped Anglo women during their raids across the Texas frontier, Anderson explains that it is a mistake to assume that Comanche men raped every Anglo-American woman they left naked after a raid. For example, even John Wesley Wilbarger's ethnocentric and biased *Indian Depredations in Texas* doesn't mention Granny Parker being raped by Comanches and their allies in their well-known raid at Parker's Fort in 1835. Anderson insightfully argues that Native men probably took Anglo-American women's clothing for its comfort and material value because Indian women preferred woven dresses to deer hide skirts. Anderson at times draws important parallels between Comanche and Texas Ranger thinking regarding some of their most brutal and violent raids. For example, he explains that rangers and Comanches inflicted revenge on one another because they believed their enemies "had killed innocent settlers and violated the honor of their womenfolk" (139). Perhaps most importantly, Anderson, relying on Sam and A. J. Houston's correspondence, shows that southern Comanches, despite being a seminomadic society, did come to understand the European concept of property boundaries and the notion of ownership as of 1838.