

indication of the educational level of the anti-slavery forces in Bleeding Kansas. Within months of his arrival in the territory, he married a local girl and planned to make Kansas his permanent home.

Within a few years, however, the Civil War began, and the fighting that had been occurring in Kansas between proslavery and antislavery factions carried over into the war. In 1862 Williams helped recruit black soldiers to fight against the Confederacy, and he became the commanding officer of what was initially known as the First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry. Williams led the unit in a victorious battle against Confederate forces in Missouri near the Kansas border in October 1862. According to Robert W. Lull, this confrontation—the Battle of Island Mound—was one that helped prove to US Army commanders that black men would make good soldiers for the Union cause. Consequently, in January 1863 the First Kansas Colored became a regular infantry regiment and Williams was promoted and selected to continue commanding the unit.

Williams remained in command of the First Kansas Colored Infantry throughout the Civil War. The unit fought battles in Arkansas and Indian Territory as well as in Kansas and Missouri. In Indian Territory, Williams's charges fought and defeated Confederates at the Battle of Cabin Creek and the Battle of Honey Springs—both in 1863. Lull notes that these battles helped the Union keep the territory free of Confederate control and that, therefore, Williams and his black soldiers were a significant factor in Union success in the trans-Mississippi theater of the war.

After the Civil War, Williams stayed in the army at the rank of captain, commanding a unit of white cavalry troops fighting American Indians in the American West. He resigned from the army in 1873 in part due to frustrating relationships with some of his superior officers. He also was experiencing some health problems caused by wounds he received at the hands of both Confederate soldiers during the Civil War and Indians afterwards. During his postmilitary career, Williams at various times operated a ranch, a general store, and a lumber business. He eventually retired and moved his family to Washington, DC, and he is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

According to Robert W. Lull, this is the first book-length biography of Williams—and he is correct in stating that such a biography is warranted. But Lull paints such an admiring portrait of his subject that he fails to criticize Williams when criticism is justified. The biggest flaw in this volume, however, is that it was not edited adequately before going to press. Writing is obviously difficult for Lull, and his book contains many examples of poorly written sentences that easily could have been

improved. Moreover, several sentences on page thirteen are repeated verbatim on pages twenty-two and twenty-three. And the word “Missouri,” which is in the title to chapter four, is spelled with three s’s. In addition, factual errors are apparent. On page fifty-three, for example, the author, in discussing the Battle of Island Mound, states that the encounter occurred in 1863 instead of the correct date of 1862. Factual mistakes and typos aside, this is a worthwhile book that could have been better.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A HITHERTO TRUTHFUL MAN: PERSONAL / HISTORICAL ESSAYS. By Davis D. Joyce (Norman, OK: Mongrel Empire Press, 2013. Pp. x, 199. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$18.00 paper).

In today’s color-coded vernacular, Oklahoma is arguably the reddest state in the Union, not because of its famously red dirt or even its preponderance of American Indians, but rather, the electorate’s enthrallment to ultraconservative politicians. Witness the presidential election of 2008, when John McCain and Sarah Palin swept all seventy-seven counties. In no other state were Barack Obama and Joe Biden so soundly thrashed. What most Okies (once a badge of shame, and now proudly displayed on lapel pins) do not know is that Oklahoma’s reddish hue once signified the allure of socialism. On the eve of World War I, Oklahoma was the only state where socialism posed a credible threat to the two-party system. The question is, how did Oklahoma evolve from its progressive past to its conservative present?

Perspectives on such puzzles can be found—and enjoyed, no matter your political persuasion—in *Recollections of a Hitherto Truthful Man*, a collection of essays by historian and political activist Davis D. Joyce. The author borrowed his title from Harvard historian Edward Channing’s unfinished memoir under the same title, published privately after his death in 1931. Both amusing and insightful, the title suggests that historians who spend their careers in the pursuit of truth should be granted some leeway in their golden years. As Joyce asks rhetori-

cally, "Have you ever noticed that the memories of old folks, even those who experienced the same things, don't always match up?"

To provide a through-line for this disparate collection of "personal / historical essays," the author introduces us to Howard Zinn, whose brand of historiography launched Joyce on a lifelong commitment to liberal causes. Zinn's magnum opus, *A People's History of the United States*, has been a magnet for controversy since it was published in 1980. Insisting that objectivity in writing history is neither possible nor desirable, Zinn provokes the reader to consider history from the standpoint of women, minorities, radicals, and others who have suffered from unequal access to the levers of communication, and whose stories enable us to perceive history from the bottom up and from the outside in. Such was the allure of Zinn's social history and the political activism that goes with it that Joyce chose it as the basis for all his teaching and writing. He even wrote a book under the no-nonsense title, *Howard Zinn: A Radical American Vision*.

Joyce gives us glimpses into the issues and controversies that framed his academic work and fueled his political activism, from the antiwar movement of the 1960s to the culture of racism symbolized by the Confederate flag and evident every day in countless acts of senseless bigotry that belie America's promise as a land of opportunity for all. An Arkansan by birth and Oklahoman by choice, Joyce champions the pluck and optimism of his fellow Oklahomans, even as he agonizes over racist attitudes that simply will not die. In one of his many astute observations, Joyce admonishes his readers to get over the "predominant Western / frontier / cowboys and Indians image and realize the extent to which Oklahoma is part of the South."

Like Zinn, Joyce sees no distinction between his personal life and his place in history, and the emotional bonds he established with others afforded him a lifetime of opportunities to refine his approach to social history. From his Sebastian County, Arkansas, mother he learned to make the best out of difficult circumstances; from a college buddy at Eastern New Mexico University who happened to be black, he learned what it must be like to fear walking into a roadside restaurant under the withering glare of white folks; and from songwriter Woody Guthrie, he explored the radical message embedded in "This Land Is Your Land," a ballad that many recommend as America's national anthem. Also like Zinn, Joyce sees ongoing contact between people of different races and socioeconomic backgrounds as the only sure-fire guarantee that we will ever get along.

In his foreword to the book, history professor and 2015 inductee into the Oklahoma Historical Society's Historians Hall of Fame Jimmie Lewis Franklin praises Joyce for his progressive and reform outlook:

With characteristic frankness, he unveils notable tensions within our culture that call for reasoned debate, tolerance, and civility in our personal relationships and politics as our country struggles to fashion policies that serve the general welfare of all its people, not just the privileged few among us. If I read Joyce correctly or understand his distinguished scholarly career of nearly four decades, I hear a clarion call for us to rekindle a spirit of national unity that the founding fathers envisioned so that America does not falter in its continuing quest for the good life.

As someone with a bent toward social history, I, too, think Joyce deserves credit for giving voice to the voiceless and introducing generations of readers and students to alternative views of history.

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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. 352. Illustrations. Maps. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$29.95 paper).

Over the course of nineteen essays and three sections, *Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians* utilizes case studies to show how American Indians have played a role in events throughout the history of the United States. At the same time, the collection's editors note that even though basic college survey courses have improved over the last few decades, many courses still teach US history without Indians and "treat Indian history as a sidebar to Euro-American expansion" (p. 1). The book came about from a two-day symposium on the marginalization of Native studies hosted by the Newberry Library in 2013. The five editors write in the introduction that some symposium participants rightfully argued that the marginalization of Indian history goes well beyond the introductory college survey course, but undertaking a full revision of how historians