



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Stockwell of Minneapolis: A Pioneer of Social and Political Conscience* by William P. Everts

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Source: *Minnesota History*, Vol. 55, No. 6 (Summer, 1997), pp. 281-282

Published by: Minnesota Historical Society Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20188039>

Accessed: 31-05-2024 16:01 +00:00

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began in 1879 with the Indians released from imprisonment at Fort Marion and brought to Hampton when no other eastern school was willing to educate them.

From an American Indian perspective, the most serious weakness of Lindsey's study is his coverage of historical and cultural experience. The author's approach is largely a synopsis of Indian policy directives with a focus on education. One should not confuse the historical and cultural realities of Indian life with American Indian policy.

The Indian students who came to Hampton did not leave their cultural backgrounds and experiences with American society at home on the reservation. Their outlook and prior experiences greatly influenced their interactions with blacks and whites at Hampton. While it is unrealistic to expect to see historical and cultural detail for all of the tribes at Hampton, the author could have provided more than he did. One of the consequences is that Lindsey then analyses the complex relations among Indians, blacks, and whites without bringing to the table the factors that made Indians act the way they did.

Students of Minnesota history will find this book to be a good source on the Minnesota connections to Hampton. Lindsey covers Bishop Henry Whipple's strong support of the school and his role in recruiting Indian students. Those who participated were largely from White Earth and Leech Lake Indian Reservations. Among their ranks were Albert Bender, who distinguished himself in major league baseball, and his sister, Elizabeth Bender Red Cloud, who gained notoriety for her work with women's groups active in Indian affairs and education. Descendants of Hampton's students will be pleased to learn that the school's detailed records contain reliable genealogical data and, often, photographs and follow-up information on their life after Hampton, such as marriages and work experiences, based on responses to surveys conducted by the staff, newspaper clippings, and letters from the students to the staff.

On the whole, Lindsey's book is a solid contribution to the literature. His coverage of the Indian education program is richly detailed and well written. The book contains a wealth of information on the thought of Samuel C. Armstrong and his supporters and critics, provides data on the Indian participants often found nowhere else, and covers the controversies surrounding the school with clarity and a keen understanding of the dynamics of racism in American history. While not the final word on Hampton's Indian education program, the book offers a perspective that counterbalances previous works that have soft-pedaled the role of racist thought and politics in shaping the education programs and tri-racial interactions at Hampton. It provides an excellent foundation for further study and reflection on Hampton's "hand, head and heart" educational philosophy and its impact on the history of black and Indian education in America.

Reviewed by W. Roger Buffalohead, a member of the Ponca tribe and a consultant in American Indian history and culture. He has served as acting chair of the department of Indian studies at the University of Minnesota and dean of the Center for the Arts and Cultural Studies at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe.

STOCKWELL OF MINNEAPOLIS: A PIONEER OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSCIENCE

By William P. Everts Jr.

(St. Cloud: North Star Press, 1996. 423 p. Paper, \$14.95.)

Sylvanus A. Stockwell was one of the most enduring figures in Minnesota's galaxy of progressive political leaders. Not nearly as well known as Ignatius Donnelly and Floyd Olson, his career connected their life and work. Stockwell was present as an advocate, organizer, and elected official from the populist movement of the 1890s through the progressive era in the early decades of this century up to the triumph of Farmer-Laborism in the 1930s. In this book, his grandson presents an admiring portrait of both the man and the great social movements of which he was a part.

To list the organizations and causes to which Stockwell gave his life is to construct a family tree of Minnesota progressivism: Henry George's movement for a single tax, the anti-imperialist opposition to U.S. intervention in the Philippines, the battle against trusts and monopolies, the fight for women's suffrage, the Nonpartisan League, and the birth of Minnesota's conservation movement. Four decades before the civil rights movement, Stockwell was an ally of the Twin Cities' small but emerging black community, and in the mid-1920s, he led a fight to abolish compulsory military training at the University of Minnesota—a campaign that prefigured the great campus struggles of the 1960s.

As a politician, Stockwell was tireless. First elected to the legislature as a Democrat with Populist support in 1890, he served additional terms in 1896 and 1898. Following a string of defeats for state and local office through the next two decades, he enjoyed renewed success, winning all but one legislative election from 1922 through 1938. It was in his later years, as a man in his 70s and early 80s, that Stockwell enjoyed his greatest influence as a legislator. His wife, Maud, was a major figure in Minnesota's women's movement, and together the Stockwells became, in a sense, the first family of Minnesota progressivism.

Clearly Stockwell covered a lot of ground in his life, and so does the author of this biography. In energetic and straightforward prose, Everts paints a picture of both the man and his political context. Those familiar with the broad strokes of Minnesota progressive history will find little original in the author's treatment of major developments. What I found especially interesting, however, were his descriptions of the networks and social organizations that nurtured and sustained the radical spirit through times of movement and quiescence. One of the keys to understanding Minnesota's relatively progressive political culture is to analyze how social-movement traditions are passed down over time. Evert's vivid accounts of groups like the Saturday Lunch Club, the Stockwells' annual corn fest, and the First Unitarian Society demonstrate how gatherings of conversation, celebration, and community sustain political action over time.

Equally helpful were his accounts of some less known but fascinating and important political battles, many of them in Stockwell's hometown. A leading Minneapolis

reformer, he sought to rid the city of the machine politics practiced by the legendary boss, Alonzo Ames. He helped start the Minneapolis Voters League in 1904 to bring greater integrity and competence to city government. In 1905 he founded the Municipal Ownership League to break the corrupt relationship between the gas, electric, and streetcar utilities and city politicians. Public ownership of utilities was a passion for Stockwell, one he pursued with vigor as a legislator, private citizen, and repeatedly unsuccessful candidate for city council.

Stockwell was also passionate about the environment, long before conservationism became a national concern. He started local campaigns to clean up the pollution in Lake Calhoun caused by ice-making machines, advocated for public improvement around Minnehaha Falls and Lake Nokomis, and fought for an efficient and clean water supply for the city. His greatest legacy was on a grander scale. As chair of the Public Domain Committee of the Minnesota House in 1933, he shepherded legislation that preserved the wilderness area on the Canadian border and established 13 new state forests. Today's battle over the Boundary Waters was first joined, though in a different context, in the 1920s and 30s, and Stockwell, characteristically, was right in the middle.

Everts, then, has written a biography about a man and the causes he cherished. But what about this man? Everts presents him as many contemporaries saw him: steadfast, courageous, and principled. Of his virtue, there can be no argument. Yet, ironically, this very rectitude makes for unsatisfying biography. As a reader, I looked for the tension, the moral struggle, the human imperfections that make us vital and interesting as human beings. Donnelly, Olson, Franklin Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln were not uniformly consistent or always virtuous. What makes them interesting as leaders is the tension between principle and expediency, ambition and selflessness, that marked their careers.

Did Sylvanus Stockwell ever doubt the righteousness of his positions? Was he ever tempted to put aside principle for political advantage? Did he agonize over whether the proverbial half a loaf is better than none? Everts does present his grandfather as a man who evolved—who embraced a reformer's pragmatism in his later years as a Farmer-Labor legislator. In fact, the old single-tax radical of the 1890s was critical of his party's 1934 platform calling for a "cooperative commonwealth" in Minnesota and the nation. Clearly he was capable of change. Yet we don't get inside the man—perhaps because he rarely revealed what was inside to a wider public.

I don't want to end on a critical note, however. Everts is not a professional biographer. What he has given us is a warm portrait of a man who deserves the gratitude of those who, like me, respect the progressive political traditions of this state. More importantly, he has given us the story of a man we can look up to. And in these times, that is no small gift at all.

Reviewed by Thomas O'Connell, an associate professor of political science at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul. He is a student of Minnesota social movements and the development of the state's political culture.

MEXICANS IN THE MIDWEST, 1900–1932

By Juan R. García

(Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996. 292 p. \$39.95.)

Juan R. García has written a strong introductory text regarding the lives of Mexican nationals in the Midwest during the early twentieth century. For readers unfamiliar with the diversity of Mexican experience in various midwestern communities, García's overview provides a good general background to the subject, as compared with the earlier, more labor-centered texts of historians such as Paul S. Taylor, Dennis Valdés, and Zaragosa Vargas. García focuses on what he calls "representative" states and Mexican communities within the Midwest to demonstrate this diversity because sources on these people and their experiences are sparse.

Some source materials utilized in the book are especially rich. In Chapter 8 on the social and cultural lives of midwestern Mexicans, García's analysis makes particularly good use of popular culture, such as film and theater, and leaves the reader wanting more. He proves historians can successfully utilize popular cultural artifacts and constructions to access the stories of previously underdocumented and understudied groups. García also enriches his narrative through the frequent inclusion of personal anecdotes from letters and interviews located in numerous archival collections in both the United States and Mexico.

One of the strongest areas of the text is García's continued demonstration of how midwesterners' views of Mexican nationals significantly affected their interaction with not only other ethnic Americans, but also with each other, particularly along class, gender, and generational lines. For example, he reveals the complexity of racial interactions when he discusses Anglo-midwesterners who took "Hispanic" dance classes taught by Mexicans and adopted exotic "Hispanic" stage names but were unwilling to sit next to these same residents in local movie theaters. He also demonstrates the Mexicans' ability to capitalize on and subvert these prejudices through tactics such as "renting" Ford-plant identification badges to compatriots because Anglo supervisors usually could not tell Mexicans apart.

Although García admits to focusing on representative communities, the approach is one of the major weaknesses of the book. The problem is occasionally compounded by the uncritical reading of sources found in midwestern historical societies that frequently collected only the papers of large, stable organizations and the oral histories of recognized community leaders. The result is unsubstantiated, uncritical, or contradictory statements about Mexican nationals, especially those of the working classes. For example, without citation, García discusses Mexicans as "the 'breeders' of a labor supply" and as people who drank alcohol during Prohibition, thus augmenting hostilities and pent-up emotions that resulted in violent "shootings, knifings and fistfights." These were unfortunately the same stereotypical notions that many midwesterners held of the Mexican nationals in their midst. Additional oral histories, information from the nonrepresented Mexican communities in the Midwest, or more