FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Culture

Ojibwe Wassa Inaabidaa: Waasa Inaabidaa (We Look in All Directions)
Marlene Wisuri
Thomas D. Peacock
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"Back in those days, we didn't have the dime-store variety playthings. Sticks and boards would be carved into machine guns and used in war games. As usual, no one wanted to play the Indians." In this book, a companion piece to a recent public television series by the same name, the author, an Ojibwe Indian, sardonically recalls playtime while growing up on a northern Minnesota Indian reservation in the 1950s.

In first-person narrative, Peacock traces the history of the Anishinaabe/Ojibwe people from roughly five hundred years ago, through their migration from the northeast United States, to their eventual settlement in the regions surrounding Lake Superior, where a majority of their descendants reside today.

The book is a primer of the Ojibwe culture and history. For instance, as young boys neared adolescence, Peacock writes that they needed to seek a vision. He notes that girls could also go on a vision quest if they desired, but "it was felt that females, because they have the ability to create life itself, were born fulfilled." The history also showed that contact with the advancing Europeans, and their ongoing search for furs and land, proved to be an ultimately unhealthy relationship for the Ojibwe.

Peacock, who opens each chapter with a personal story, tells of breaking down in tears while reading papers and letters when researching the archives of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, of being overcome by emotions, including "anger and disgust for a government that believed it had the right to supervise the personal lives of the people whose nations it had possessed." Other chapters cover the Ojibwe's strong kinship to the natural world (animals are referred to as "elder brothers"), the effects of American expansionism and various treaties, the Ojibwe belief system and teachings (the "Path of Life"), the healing arts, the recovery of their spoken and written language, and the eventual reversal of what Peacock sees as centuries-long infringements by the

U.S. government.

More than 200 photographs accompany the text. They sometimes tell their own story, such as the photo of young Elizabeth Pine, a resident of Sugar Island, who died in a flu epidemic during the first World War. Peacock opens the window into a world and way of life not familiar to most Americans.

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