

reasons for voting as they did.<sup>1</sup> Seen from the vantage point of centuries-long struggles to retain territory amid multiple colonial pressures across Mexico and the United States, tribal participation in a U.S. election appears not as an expression of a linear story of progress but as an extension of past efforts to protect their own rights as sovereign nations. This book fiercely reminds us that the contingency of Native civil rights, and how they are exercised and denied across the continent, is ongoing.

## Temperance in Indian Country: Native American Women and the WCTU

Lappas, Thomas John. *In League Against King Alcohol: Native American Women and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1874–1933*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020. xvi + 321 pp. \$36.95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-8061-6463-2.

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Thomas Lappas's new work on Native American women and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) is a detailed history that explores how Native American and white women worked together to keep alcohol out of Native American communities. Lappas untangles the complicated relationships of race, activism, and religion in a work that spans the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Lappas argues that Native American women's deep involvement in the WCTU changes both what we know about Native American women and what we know about American reform. Not only does Lappas's research reveal a greater diversity within reform movements, it also highlights a unique form of Native activism that involved Native American women rallying behind causes such as U.S. citizenship, Euro-American-style education, Christianity, and other causes to serve their temperance goals. From the 1870s through to Prohibition, Native American women partnered with white women to promote abstinence from alcohol and legally mandated prohibition in Indian country.

The WCTU has a complex history. Although sometimes treated as a footnote in works about prohibition and women's history, it was the largest women's organization of the nineteenth century. Lappas not only highlights the organization, he also focuses on a specific area of its work to expose the organization's cultural values and preconceptions and reveal the WCTU as both a shaper and reflection of American culture.

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<sup>1</sup>Anna V. Smith, "How Indigenous Voters Swung the 2020 Election," *High Country News*, Nov. 6, 2020, <https://www.hcn.org/articles/indigenous-affairs-how-indigenous-voters-swung-the-2020-election> (accessed Dec. 29, 2020).

*In League Against King Alcohol* describes the relationship between the WCTU and Native American women as a partnership. Many Native American women became WCTU members and welcomed the organization into their communities. White women working in the organization invited themselves into Native American communities as part of their extensive outreach networks. Lappas argues that Native American women's involvement in the WCTU was not only part of an acculturation and assimilation project, but also reflected their desire to protect their communities and assert women's role in politics. Lappas's book carefully discusses the internalization of outside stereotypes as well as "self-colonization," and examines Native American Christianity. While teaming up with the WCTU involved relinquishing certain traditional lifestyles, many Native American women created opportunities to maintain community traditions as part of their temperance work.

The book's first chapter focuses on Native American women's reasons for joining the WCTU and starting local chapters. It investigates the reasons why Native women felt that the WCTU framework was the most useful for protecting their communities. The second chapter also focuses on Native women, the specific ways they were engaged in fighting alcohol consumption, and the ways they used the existing WCTU infrastructure to have a tangible effect on their communities' legal system and law enforcement. Lappas argues that many Native American women saw involvement in the WCTU as a chance to facilitate their own education and improve their standard of living.

The book's later chapters focus on white women's experiences in the WCTU's Department of Work Among Indians. Lappas analyzes their mixed motives and perspectives with care, unpacking a genuine concern and willingness to help coupled with pernicious stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings. One of Lappas's most skillful interpretations is his exploration of the ways in which the published accounts of Native American women's own words were filtered through white perspectives and presented to mostly white audiences.

The real strength of Lappas's work is his extensive use of archival source material. While one might hope that a volume featuring Native American women would highlight their perspectives most prominently, Lappas digs into the records, works with what is available, and reads between the lines to piece together a narrative that includes multiple perspectives. While this work of women's history may seem focused narrowly on temperance, it also reveals how white women played a role in shaping Indian policy and legislation and how Native American women helped to shape the twentieth-century United States.

## The Business of Politics in Gilded Age New York

**Broxmeyer, Jeffrey D. *Electoral Capitalism: The Party System in New York's Gilded Age*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. 220 pp. \$55.00 (cloth), ISBN: 978-0-8122-5236-1.**

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