

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

Summer 2001

Review of *The Rapid City Indian School, 1898-1933* By Scott Riney

Amy M. Goodburn

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, agoodburn1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Goodburn, Amy M., "Review of *The Rapid City Indian School, 1898-1933* By Scott Riney" (2001). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2242.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/2242>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

and years, employees, and BIA influence, the book describes the Rapid City Indian School's regional importance to schooling on the Northern Plains and its relationship to the larger history of US Indian education.

The most groundbreaking chapter, "Extending the Reach of the Bureau," examines how Rapid City Indian School administrators performed duties important to the overall BIA mission and to the lives of individual Indians. Riney provides numerous examples of school superintendents intervening—and interfering—in the lives of Indians in and around Rapid City in terms of financial affairs (arranging Sioux benefit packages, allotment, and grazing and mineral leasing), legal concerns (child custody, prison sentencing, and liquor prohibition), and emergency monetary requests (for travel or funeral arrangements, for instance). He argues that Rapid City School personnel went beyond their educational duties and stood in for BIA structures, providing resources to tribal members living off the reservations in and around Rapid City. Riney concludes by hypothesizing how the Rapid City Indian School might have better served its students had administrators' attitudes (and overall BIA policies) not been shaped by racial ideologies that bred distrust toward Indian parents.

The book's omission of Native voices speaking for themselves about their schooling experiences mutes the resonance found in other Indian boarding school histories, such as K. Tsianina Lomawaima's *They Called It Prairie Light* (1995) and Brenda Child's *Boarding School Seasons* (1998). While the work draws on transcripts of oral histories collected by the American Indian Research Project and the Warm Valley Historical Project, its primary data emphasize bureaucratic documents and letter exchanges between school administrators and students' parents, thereby limiting the extent to which the perspectives of Indian school students and their families can be represented. Nonetheless, *The Rapid City Indian School, 1898-1933* provides readers new to American Indian boarding school history a use-

The Rapid City Indian School, 1898-1933. By Scott Riney. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999. Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index. x + 278 pp. \$29.95.

This book contributes to the growing canon of historical accounts of American Indian government boarding schools that operated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Focusing specifically on the thirty-five year history of the Rapid City Indian School, Riney analyzes interactions between school administrators and Northern Plains Indian parents and their children. Organized around such themes as curriculum, discipline, cycles of days

ful introduction to the policies and practices that shaped American Indian schoolchildren's lives from the late 1800s to the early 1930s.

AMY M. GOODBURN
Department of English and
Women's Studies Program
University of Nebraska-Lincoln