

# H-Net Reviews

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Kendal H. Gladish, Hester Anne Hale. *Historians for the Future: A History of the Indiana Junior Historical Society, 1938-1998*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 1999. xii + 128 pp. \$22.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-87195-133-5.

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According to Richard S. Simons in his foreword to *Historians for the Future: A History of the Indiana Junior Historical Society, 1938-1998*, the fundamental theme of the Indiana Junior Historical Society from the beginning has been "studying history is fun." That theme captures the essence of both the juniors program and this newly published work by Kendal H. Gladish and Hester Anne Hale. *Historians for the Future*, published jointly by the Indiana Historical Bureau (IHB) and the Indiana Historical Society (IHS), chronicles the sixty-year history of the Indiana Junior Historical Society, a program that has an extensive network of chapters across the state for young people interested in history. Both the IHB, an agency of state government, and the IHS, a private organization, helped develop the juniors program, but today the program is sponsored solely by the Indiana Historical Society. The book is especially effective in portraying the many hands-on experiences provided by the juniors program that make history interesting for young people and that strengthen their educational and historical backgrounds. These include restoration of historic buildings and cemeteries, archeological digs, tours of historic sites, architectural surveys, local historical activities and exhibits, publications, statewide conventions, and summer camps devoted to exploring the nineteenth state's past. The authors make real the dedication and commitment to Indiana history by adults, particularly chapter sponsors, and students who have been a part of the juniors program. Gladish and Hale detail how learning the skills of history in the program can be rewarding for both the participants and the Hoosier communities in which they reside.

The authors cover fully the development of the Indiana Junior Historical Society over the last six decades, marking the high and low points of the organization as it evolved into the remarkably successful group it is today. The organizational development of the juniors program was complex, to say the least. The IHB and the IHS shared oversight of the program from its inception in 1938 un-

til 1991. Thomas K. Krasean, a longtime officer of the IHS interested in the juniors program, outlined a three-stage process of development for the program which is cited in the book. The first stage (1938-62) was marked by sporadic growth, inadequate administration and funding, and merely kept the flame of interest alive. The second stage (1962-89) was a sort of golden age for the program when full-time directors were appointed for the first time. Robert Montgomery, Robert Kirby, and Kevin Stonerock led the juniors in succession and produced extraordinary programs, making the group one of the finest such organizations in the country. The third phase began in 1989 with Stonerock's resignation and a period of turmoil ensued. The resolution to this turmoil was the full assumption of administrative responsibility by the Indiana Historical Society for the juniors program in 1991. Krasean's outline seems very much on the mark. In 1986 the IHS had commissioned a study of the juniors program which concluded that it was quite possibly the best of the twenty or so such programs in the United States but that its administrative structure was "complicated and confusing." Specifically, the study cited confusion because there were four sources of funding for the juniors (IHS, IHB, State of Indiana, and a small Indiana Junior Historical Society fund).

Interesting was the fact that the Indiana Historical Bureau and the Indiana Historical Society, the two sponsoring organizations with their separate structures and priorities, shared directors during the first four decades of the junior program's existence (Christopher Coleman, Howard Peckham, and Hubert Hawkins). The lines of authority for decision-making, and to a great extent funding, were spread across the two groups and had the effect of depriving the juniors program of the staff, energy, and focus that it needed. Since 1991, the program has thrived under the sole administration of the Society. Because of this complicated organizational development and the book's chronological structure, the reader must labor to see the big picture of the program's structural evolution.

This book is thoroughly researched, well documented, and contains numerous black and white photographs that illustrate the story. The reader comes away with a clear understanding that history is not the exclusive domain of adults and the professional historians. Properly presented, children up and down the chronological ladder can engage in meaningful historical activity. In a time when major historical organizations promote the revival of history in schools and society at large,

the Indiana Junior Historical Society points the way. All in all, *Historians for the Future* is a quick read and succeeds admirably in telling the story of how the Indiana Junior Historical Society encourages young Hoosiers to develop a strong sense of place and an appreciation for their state's rich history.

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