

Title: The Blue Guide to Indiana
Author(s): Michael Martone
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Did you know that Indiana suffered from two civil wars based on daylight savings time? Ever hear about the License Plate Insurrection of 1979? Information about these events and many more can be found in Michael Martone's *The Blue Guide to Indiana*. A fabricated travel guide of the Hoosier state, Martone drags the reader across the landscape at breakneck speed, speaking of stories long-forgotten (so forgotten they never existed) and teaching them about Indiana history one landmark at a time. That the cover makes sure to tell the reader that this book is in no way associated with the series of travel books entitled *Blue Guide* tells you all you need to know. Take a trip to South Bend, where the movie *A Philadelphia Story* plays every night at midnight (because James Stewart's character hails from the city). Travel to Jeffersonville, where the lesser-known-but-better-made competitor to the Louisville Slugger, the "Jeffersonville Slapper," is made. And don't forget to visit Auburn, where the barbershop trimmings for the entire state are discarded into the State Hair Dump. Don't miss the world's tallest incinerator smokestack, equipped with an observation deck for the public, in Richmond. The state's attractions culminate in Eli Lilly Land, an amusement park where pharmaceutical drugs are tested on the visitors. The world famous, just-like-grandma-used-to-make recipe for Pork Cake is finally put into print as well. This is a historic occasion.

Michael Martone's mere 120-page book is a testament to the Hoosier spirit. Martone sets out to mythologize the state and succeeds with flying colors. Wielding a humorous and entertaining mixture of fact, fiction, irony, and satire, Martone takes Indiana and finally gives it an identity. Indiana has struggled to distinguish itself from other areas of the country, and this fictitious travel guide remedies that. Martone revels in the ordinary, stretches the truth, and ultimately exaggerates the elements of Indiana that we know all too well. Indiana is given a new history, one with celebrated figures, art, culture, cuisine, and landmarks. This book is a breath of fresh air. Sometimes we need to be able to laugh at ourselves. These fictitious elements are not an insult to the Hoosier state (what even is a Hoosier anyway?) but rather a glorious love letter to Indiana. Martone, who hails from Fort Wayne by the way, paints an interestingly beautiful, if satirical, picture of Indiana.

Reviewed by Jerret Barker.