

settlement of the oft-neglected northern plains into the wider epic of the founding and growth of the American Midwest, especially the Dakotas' links to the commerce fostered by the Great Lakes and the later melding of the plains' agrarian economy into the railroad networks of the Midwest. Iowa was an important link in this chain development given that many Dakota settlers originated in Iowa and that Sioux City, which connects northwest Iowa to southeast South Dakota, was a frequent point of embarkation for Dakota settlers.

Risjord's *Dakota* is a welcome addition to the short list of survey treatments of the Dakotas, which includes George Kingsbury's *History of Dakota Territory* (1915), Herbert Schell's *History of South Dakota* (1961), and Elwyn Robinson's *History of North Dakota* (1966). Risjord's *Dakota* should be seen as both a serious survey of the neglected story of the American midlands and a justification for a greater number of more detailed treatments of the American Midwest and its development within the broader story of American history.

Norwegian-American Studies, volume 36, edited by Todd W. Nichol. Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2011. x, 195 pp. Illustrations, notes. \$34.95 hardcover.

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The Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA) in Northfield, Minnesota, has published the thirty-sixth volume of its *Norwegian-American Studies*, a venerable series, begun in 1926, by a venerable historical association established the previous year. Over the years NAHA and its publications have played a significant role in the study of Norwegian and Scandinavian immigration to North America. Editor Todd W. Nichol and NAHA are to be congratulated for continuing the series with the current volume, the first after a hiatus of a decade.

Volume 36 includes seven essays on a variety of topics; contributors include scholars from both the United States and Norway. The lead article by Norwegian historian Jens Eldal is a closely argued study of church architecture in Norwegian America. Eldal examines the roots of the design of Norwegian American churches: To what degree were they influenced by architecture in the homeland and to what degree did they adjust to prevailing American norms? A careful examination of Holden Lutheran Church in Goodhue County in southern Minnesota, which was supposed to have retained many of its Norwe-

gian traits, shows that it was also significantly influenced by American building traditions associated with other established Protestant traditions. The church thus represents an interesting fusion of European and American patterns.

This theme of how Norwegian ethnic traits and cultural patterns interacted with those of American society at large, creating something new, and in this case, particularly Norwegian American, can also be found in other essays in the volume. Two contributions deal with historians of Norwegian background who devoted some or all of their academic careers to examining, and at times exalting, Norwegian America. O. M. Norlie (1876–1962), an early historian of Norwegian America, focused on documenting various aspects of the complicated history of Norwegian American Lutheranism. Paul Knaplund (1885–1962) represented a less filiopietistic and more critical school of historians. Both articles emphasize the role the writing and writers of history played in the growth of Norwegian American identities during the early twentieth century. Similarly, Carol Colburn and Laurann Gilbertson's illuminating and precise examination of clothing styles, in particular work clothing, among Norwegian immigrants in the Midwest, successfully uses photographs to show a tendency to continuity of tradition for work or "functional" clothes.

Gary Olson's micro study of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, a city with a long history of a major Norwegian presence, uses the 1880 census to show that Norwegians were the city's largest foreign-born group and were active in all the social strata of Sioux Falls society, from laborers and maids to merchants and local politicians. Norwegian in-migration began during the so-called Dakota Boom in the 1880s, which brought Norwegians from Norway and from other areas of the Midwest to the Dakotas. The analysis complements earlier work by Odd Lovoll and David Mauk on Norwegian urban life in large and medium-sized cities.

Two literary contributions round out the volume. Marv Slind introduces us to Elias Molee (1845–1928), a son of Norwegian immigrants born in Muskego, Wisconsin, who lived and worked in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota before moving to the state of Washington in 1900. Molee had literary and cultural interests and aspirations and is best remembered for his (failed) attempt to promote the universal language *Alteutonic*. The final piece is a short story by O. E. Rølvaag, "Grandma and Her Story," first published in 1905 in the *St. Olaf College student newspaper*. According to the introduction by Todd Nichol, Rølvaag had written it for an English class during his sophomore year, nine years after arriving in the United States. The story

anticipates some of the themes in Rølvaag's later writings, such as *Giants in the Earth*, and shows that his style and command of the English language were already well developed at this early stage of his life in America.

Volume 36 of *Norwegian-American Studies* is a welcome addition to the literature on Norwegian American history. We can hope that we do not have to wait for a decade for the next installment in the series.

Railroads and the American People, by H. Roger Grant. Railroads Past & Present. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012. xiv, 307 pp. Illustrations, notes, suggested readings, index. \$40.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Scott E. Randolph is assistant professor of business history and ethics at the University of Redlands. His Ph.D. dissertation (Purdue University, 2009) was "Playing by the Rules: Markets, Manipulation, and the Meaning of Exchange in the American Railway Industry, 1900-1918."

This well-illustrated volume from the prolific H. Roger Grant takes readers on a journey through the intimate relationship that Americans shared with the railway industry during its Golden Era from 1830 through World War II. Concentrating on the Midwest, the Great Plains, and the South, Grant discusses how railroads sat at the center of the American experience by exploring four themes—trains, stations, communities, and legacy—in vivid detail.

Grant's first organizing theme is trains. He ranges widely, always providing memorable stories to illustrate his points. Riding trains is central to this theme. Grant includes debates over Sabbath operations, the history and sociology of hoboing and booming, and an extensive discussion of troop trains and their equipment. He does not neglect the running trades or the reasons why, for many employees, "workin' on the railroad" was a way of life pursued from childhood. Riding trains was utterly normal, but at the same time fraught with the unexpected, as Grant notes in discussing accidents, robberies, fashion shows, and memorials at line side graves.

In the section on stations, Grant takes us inside the social life of the railroad depot. The buildings themselves were sources of civic pride—or effort if residents believed that they deserved better. The station was often the center of community interaction, and station employees often served as the unofficial town aides-de-camp tasked with knowing everything worth knowing. While citizens treated the station as civic space, depots, especially in rural communities, also served as homes for railroad employees, as Grant discusses in some detail.