

Yet there are frustrating elements to Zimm's collection. The intended audience is unclear: the editor explains words and situations that scholars understand, but leaves underexplained other matters that popular audiences may misunderstand. His editorial remarks are enlightening when provided, but too often he leaves the contexts surrounding the letters vague, perhaps because those contexts are virtually unknowable. Some newspapers redacted letters more thoroughly than others, removing individual names, place names, unit designations, and the like for reasons that are unclear now. Some discussion of these newspaper variations and their origins would have been useful. Almost always, readers are left wanting more information. I also wished that the editor would have followed more closely one of his stated selection criteria: the emergence of a distinct Wisconsin identity in the selected letters. Indeed, although many letters refer to particular places in the state, and the Iron Brigade makes many appearances, the bulk of the letters lack a noticeable midwestern flavor, and most could have originated from almost any Northern state. Letters that include ideas and attitudes showing stronger local perspectives about national affairs, or about surrounding states and their denizens, or about Wisconsin state partisan political dynamics, would have added much.

Despite these frustrations, *This Wicked Rebellion* provides a model that scholars in all states, including Iowa, should pursue: the construction of a large set of Civil War letters drawn from one state arranged by well-chosen themes that would reveal the nature and evolution of local ideals, priorities, prejudices, and attitudes about major issues between 1860 and 1865.

Dakota: The Story of the Northern Plains, by Norman K. Risjord. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. xi, 269 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$25.00 paperback.

Reviewer Jon K. Lauck is the author of *Prairie Republic: The Political Culture of Dakota Territory* (2010) and the forthcoming *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History*.

Historians, to a much greater extent than other scholars, tend to get better with age. Decades in the archives and accumulated learning and research often yield insightful and broadly gauged works from historians working late in their careers. Such is the case with Norman K. Risjord, who specialized in early American history for decades at the University of Wisconsin. In later years Risjord turned with special vigor to the American midlands. He has now made a major impress-

sion on midwestern history. First with *Wisconsin: The Story of the Badger State* (1995) and then *A Popular History of Minnesota* (2005) and later with *Shining Big Sea Water* (2008), a study of Lake Superior, Risjord probed the core of the American Midwest. Now he has taken the next logical step; in *Dakota: The Story of the Northern Plains*, he looks to the land just west of Minnesota. This roughly sequential collection of works represents an impressive succession of scholarly endeavor. Risjord has tapped the vein of scholarly energy that once helped Frederick Jackson Turner, from his post at the University of Wisconsin, give life to the story of the American Midwest.

In keeping with his earlier works on Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the exploration and trading history of Lake Superior, Risjord's *Dakota* is heavily tilted toward the early history of what would become the states of North and South Dakota. Risjord's front-loading of the story results in an intense focus on the early plains Indians and the French explorers of Dakota. The Verendryes, for example, receive extensive attention, as one would expect from a historian who is keenly interested in the early development of the Great Lakes trading enterprises that defined early Wisconsin and Minnesota. Risjord effectively explains the tripartite development and expansion of Dakota from the Red River of the northeast, the confluence of the Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers in the southeast, and the Black Hills in the west. For those interested in the foundational moments of the Dakotas, then, Risjord's history is first rate.

Dakota is a general survey. As a result, Risjord does not delve deeply into his topics, which befits the broad treatment he intended. The book does not reach much beyond the 1920s and essentially ends with a highly readable review of the construction of Mount Rushmore. It is not heavily documented and tends to rely on older interpretations of certain events. The treatment of the Dakota Boom and the movement for statehood in the Dakotas, for example, largely follows Howard Lamar's *Dakota Territory* (1956) and fails to incorporate more recent research highlighting the heavily midwestern, democratic, religious, and agrarian tendencies of Dakota's settlers. Risjord also neglects the tensions between the settlers committed to forming new communities in Dakota and the fleeting machinations of federal appointees. These observations should be read, however, in the context of recognizing Risjord's larger goal, which is to offer new readers a general treatment of Dakota history and an entry point into a world foreign to many Americans.

Risjord is to be commended for his greatest accomplishment in *Dakota*, which is to fully integrate the story of the exploration and

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.

Reviewer Dag Blanck is a historian and university lecturer at the Swedish Institute for North American Studies in the English Department at Uppsala University in Sweden and director of the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.

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-