

ture at the center, but misses the fact the plains has had other functions besides row crops. There is no mention of bison, the Poppers' "buffalo commons," Ted Turner's ranches, or the Land Institute. Prairie preserves and restoration are not connected back to climate, nomadism, grazing, or bison but compared to the "visible historical footprint" of more recent government shelterbelts (115).

Hurt contributed to the making of Ken Burns's documentary *The Dust Bowl*, which debuted shortly after the book was published. The plains have come to be known only by the "dirty thirties," and Burns replicated that narrow view by failing to engage all of the academic work that places the plains in a wider economic and ecological context. Hurt's *Big Empty* is a much better representation of the Great Plains. I only wish that Hurt would have engaged the historiographical debates and considered whether the region forces a redefinition of the American narrative.

Overall, this is a fine addition to the literature on the plains. Hurt justifies identifying the Great Plains as a region while also showing it to be "amorphous" (xi). I especially like the land-as-base perspective and the attention to social diversity.

Gudrun's Kitchen: Recipes from a Norwegian Family, by Ingeborg Hydle Baugh, Irene O. Sandvold, Edward O. Sandvold, and Quinn E. Sandvold. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2011. vii, 260 pp. Illustrations, recipes, sources for Norwegian cooking implements and foods, glossary, index. \$22.95 paper.

Reviewer Jill Nussel is a lecturer in history at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. Her research and writing have focused on using ethnic cookbooks to gain a fuller understanding of ethnic communities.

Occasionally, historians are so busy looking at the big picture with big concepts that we forget that history is made of individuals. Our American story is made up of women and men who came from disparate backgrounds and forged a nation doing everyday things. *Gudrun's Kitchen: Recipes from a Norwegian Family* is a heartwarming recollection, written by members of her family, of Gudrun Thue Sandvold's childhood in Norway and her forging of a fulfilling life in the United States.

Sandvold's story unfolds as an adventure story set in the global historical context of the first half of the twentieth century. We first meet little Gudrun in part one, "The Gudrun Chronicles," as the youngest of 11 children born in 1902. Gudrun spent an idyllic childhood on the family farm in Aheim, Norway, a coastal area of glaciers,

inlets, and narrow valleys. The family eventually moved to Molde for better economic opportunities. Gudrun spent her days exploring, studying, and learning from her mother, and was apparently noted for a wonderful singing voice.

At the time, Norway, like most of Europe, was undergoing significant social and political change. As a result, nearly 800,000 Norwegians found their way to the United States and Canada. At age 21, Gudrun and two of her sisters finally convinced their parents to allow them to go to America to meet their older siblings and cousins, whom they knew only from letters. The plan was for the sisters to work for a couple of years and return to Norway. But over the next decade, the sisters lived in Brooklyn and later in Chicago's Little Norway, where the older sisters married and lived until their deaths. At the height of the Great Depression, Gudrun married Irving Sandvold; the next year they started their family. So much for returning to Norway.

With the onset of World War II, the family moved to Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. After their children were grown, Gudrun and Irving moved to Boulder, Colorado, but part of her heart always remained in Wisconsin.

Gudrun lived through two wars, the Great Depression in between, a Cold War, and the turbulent 1960s, while raising a close-knit family spread across two continents. The tie that bound them all, and the tie that binds so many similar families, was the kitchen. From her earliest days, Gudrun had been known as an extraordinary cook. In part 2, "Recipes and Traditions," readers are treated to the histories of Norwegian wedding and Christmas celebrations and to Gudrun's favorite recipes for *frokost* (big breakfast) and *smorgasbord* (big meal). Readers will not be surprised to see recipes for smoked salmon or countless ways to prepare herring, *klubb* (Norwegian potato dumplings), and pickled everything. My only small criticism is that I would have liked to see more exploration of Gudrun's interaction with her non-Norwegian friends and neighbors who likely shared their recipes for more "American" fare like baked beans, Jell-O salad, and chop suey, which are also included in this book. The appendixes, with a section on where to purchase Norwegian cooking implements and a glossary of Norwegian culinary terms, are a must for anyone trying to replicate Norwegian culinary skills. For anyone from cold climates, the appendix on how to can and preserve foods through long winters of Norway or Wisconsin is also a must.

Following Gudrun's son's death in 2005, daughter Irene and her children and nephew were urged to put Gudrun's recipes into a book for all to enjoy. The result, *Gudrun's Kitchen*—part memoir, part his-

tory, part cookbook—is a testament to a woman who became part of the American fabric not through protest or activism but through her amazing talents in the kitchen. Perhaps that should be a lesson to us all. Let’s solve all of our problems with Gudrun’s chocolate chip cookies.

Minnesota Railroads: A Photographic History, 1940–2012, by Steve Glischinski. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. xv, 298 pp. Illustrations (many in color), notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Kevin Byrne is professor emeritus of history at Gustavus Adolphus College. His research and writing have focused on military history and the history of railroads and technology.

Minnesota Railroads is one of a number of outstanding books relevant to railroad history in the upper Midwest that the University of Minnesota Press has published over many years. With photographs and text, Steve Glischinski helps readers comprehend and visualize the past 72 years of railroading in Minnesota. The book’s first 100 pages cover 1940 to 1960, an era of technological transition from steam to diesel and growing challenges from other modes of transportation. A second 100-page chapter surveys the following 20 years, when railroads struggled to survive, many succumbing to bankruptcy. Chapter 3 (44 pages) focuses on the last two decades of the twentieth century, years of revival as several railroads gradually returned to profitability. The concluding 35 pages consider twenty-first-century developments, emphasizing successful consolidations and newly created short lines. Glischinski presents this narrative through pithy four- to eight-page introductions that open each chapter. These are essential, but superb photographs of locomotives, trains, terminals, rail yards, and more—plus extensive, informative captions—provide the meat of the book. These visual documents brilliantly illuminate the railroad experience.

This impressive volume offers insights from many significant perspectives. One example: Glischinski’s choice of images sheds light on the labor force. Photographs of employees loading ice for refrigeration, servicing locomotives in maintenance sheds, sorting mail on fast-moving trains (while carrying firearms), learning telegraphy, and battling blizzards evoke a deeper appreciation for life in railroading, and for the times themselves. Overall, this book is a “must-have” for railroad enthusiasts in Minnesota and the upper Midwest. It is a rich resource about a colorful, turbulent era.