

and to others, driven by wanderlust, who saw in the roaring trains the golden key to places never seen and things never done.

Charles P. Brown was one of those road nomads, hitting the freights first as a hobo and then as a railroad itinerant, a boomer. In the road life, Brown and his fellow drifters found drama and excitement, exhilaration and suffering. They later recalled the hops to every corner of the country, where they could swap yarns, share mulligan stew, take on partners, and feel a sense of community. They recalled the hardships, the loneliness and violence; men being whipped on chain gangs and jailed for vagrancy; the mutilations and death from the razor wheels; the hunger. But the lure of moving was always powerful and they clung to the life, proud that they had met its demands.

Some wrote reminiscences. We remember the great literary effusions of Jack London and Jim Tully. But others, in their own crude vernacular, with their own raw sense of drama and pathos, also told their stories. Charlie Brown's account, first published in 1930, is one of the best we have, a tale that takes us from his early days as a hobo surrounded by men such as Denver Red and Chicago Blackie to his time on railroad crews from Iron Mountain, Missouri, to Needles, California. Superbly edited by railroad historian H. Roger Grant, this new edition of *Brownie the Boomer* is a rousing testament to the lives of the railroad itinerants, a work of interest to social historians, railroad experts and buffs, students of labor, and all other armchair knights of the open road.

Taliesin 1911-1914, edited by Narciso G. Menocal. Wright Studies, vol. 1. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992. ix, 141 pp. Illustrations, notes. \$39.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY WESLEY IVAN SHANK, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Two buildings of major importance designed by Frank Lloyd Wright are in Iowa. The City National Bank and Park Inn Hotel built in 1909-1910 in Mason City, viewed as one building, follows his Prairie style, inspired by the horizontality of the prairie and with a simplicity appropriate to an age of machine production. Not here the outworn symbolism of historic architecture. Cedar Rock, built in 1948-1950 near Quasqueton, where Wright's architecture is transformed, is the second major building. Inspired by nature, the building and the surrounding landscape interweave to create a sym-

phony of design. Why and when did this drastic change in Wright's architecture occur?

The authors of the five scholarly essays in *Taliesin 1911-1914* suggest some answers. They identify as the turning point in Wright's work the house Taliesin that he built for himself and Mamah Borthwick Cheney on a rural site near Spring Green, Wisconsin, in 1911. Like Cedar Rock, the house nestles near a hill crest, overlooks a river bend, and gives its occupants picturesque views of the landscape. Taliesin was the first of Wright's Natural houses; Cedar Rock is its descendant. The last essay's discussion of the drawings and photographs of Taliesin recreates it clearly for the reader. The other essays, about literature and culture, discern ideas that influenced Wright at this transitional time in his life. These include the myth of the ancient Welsh bard Taliesin and its eighteenth-century elaborations, Thomas Carlyle's great-man theory of history, Richard Hovey's poetry and drama, Swedish radical thinker Ellen Key's social ideas, and Tennyson's poem "The Flower in the Crannied Wall." An architect of international acclaim, influenced by a wide range of thinkers, Wright focused his design genius on buildings for clients in Iowa that earn him a place in the history of the state.

Measure of Emptiness: Grain Elevators in the American Landscape, by Frank Gohlke, with a concluding essay by John C. Hudson. Creating the North American Landscape Series. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. xi. 107 pp. Illustrations. \$29.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD FRANCAVIGLIA, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

Grain elevators are a distinctive feature of the American landscape, especially in the Great Plains and prairies, where they can be seen for miles. It is fitting that this book consists of three main parts—a personal and insightful essay on the visual and symbolic significance of grain elevators; forty-four evocative black-and-white photos of a variety of grain elevators in plains/prairie locales from Texas to Minnesota; and an informative concluding essay, "The Grain Elevator: An American Invention," by geographer John Hudson, which places the grain elevator in historical and geographical context. Although Iowa is only mentioned or featured occasionally, this book will be of interest to Iowa historians because grain elevators are such an important feature of Iowa's past and present

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