the river's ecosystems. There are no images of the upper Mississippi River's locks and dams. Distant images of tow boats and barges sneak into a couple of images, but imposing levees and other flood control projects are absent. Although she features the Old River Control Structure and the Bonnet Carre and Morganza spillways in her narrative, there are no images of them. Many photographic essays on the Mississippi River conclude with the jetties funneling the Mississippi into the Gulf. Scott ends with a wetland image titled "Delta National Wildlife Refuge: Mud." Even the river's cities and towns make no appearance. Just looking at her photographs, someone who did not know the Mississippi would think it was still largely a natural river. Her captions, however, let readers know that even these seemingly unaltered landscapes have been changed dramatically.

Given the breadth of her narrative, there is little room for depth. Scott repeatedly fingers the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as the culprit behind destroying the natural river, but she never looks behind the curtain — she does not investigate who pushed the Corps to do what it has done. The oil companies, navigation industry, agricultural interests, and Congress receive some blame, but she spends little time on them. The most difficult task in reading this book is visualizing the places discussed in the narrative. To really grasp the subject, readers need a map or the internet handy.

There are many, many photographic essays on the Mississippi River, many with narratives introducing the river's history and culture. What distinguishes Scott's endeavor from the rest is the breadth of details about all the work that has altered the river and all the efforts to restore it.

A Watershed Year: Anatomy of the Iowa Floods of 2008, edited by Cornelia F. Mutel. A Bur Oak Book. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010. xix, 250 pp. Illustrations, maps, graphs, tables, color photograph insert, notes, reference lists, index. $19.00 paper.

The 1,000-Year Flood: Destruction, Loss, Rescue, and Redemption along the Mississippi River, by Stephen J. Lyons. Guilford, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press, 2010. xxvi, 229 pp. Map, color photograph insert, statistical appendix, notes, bibliography, index. $16.95 paper.

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These two books offer critical insight into the ramifications, historical context, and future implications of the Midwest floods of 2008. While focused mainly on the local and regional impact of these events, both volumes emphasize the necessity of viewing the floods within their broader ecological, political, and social contexts. Alhough their methodological approaches differ greatly, the issue at the heart of each work is how to balance the needs of various local, regional, and national communities during flood recovery and prevention efforts. Read together, the volumes emphasize the complexity of these issues while highlighting the myriad approaches available for studying local and regional history within a national context.

In *A Watershed Year* editor Cornelia Mutel has compiled 25 interdisciplinary essays in an attempt to "clear up confusion, address complexity, and confront misinformation by explaining the science and facts necessary for dealing with future floods and recovering from this one" (viii). To balance media coverage often concentrated on the floods' social factors, this book focuses instead on explaining hydrological and ecological data in a style that is accessible to lay people while still useful to scientists and administrators. The resulting volume does an admirable job of fulfilling this goal through both its content and organization. The essays are divided into four sections — each with a brief introduction by Mutel — that broadly explore the history and effects of flooding in Iowa; possible causes of the 2008 floods; their specific impacts, both positive and negative; and potential future approaches to mitigating flood damage. The essays also stand individually, defining technical terms, relying on footnotes to explain scientific matters that exceed their general scope, and including a generous number of helpful figures and photographs that visually reinforce discussions.

The book's data are drawn primarily from the 2008 and, to a lesser degree, 1993 floods in Iowa, although these events are explained within the larger historical context of the hydrology of the Corn Belt, in which floods have become part of "ongoing cycles of destruction and response" (237). Early in the project Mutel insists that she "decided to concentrate on the scientific and fact-based aspects of the floods but to minimize discussion of their social and policy aspects" (viii). It quickly becomes apparent, however, that such an intention is impossible to fulfill. Issues of policy change arise naturally, if subtly, in many of the essays — especially those in the latter half of the book. This, indeed, turns out to be one of the book's greatest strengths. While the essays at times usefully offer diverging opinions, they largely stress the need to reconsider the relationships between humans and the environment and between political groups at various levels.

Ultimately, the volume is a powerful call to action, stressing the need to recognize the interconnectedness of our hydrologic, ecologic, and political systems, and encouraging discussion of the means by which to explore these issues. If we are to learn from the 2008 floods and deal with future threats, Mutel and her coauthors persuasively suggest, we must communicate historical scientific data and work together to incorporate that knowledge into preventive efforts that cross political, administrative, and scholarly boundaries.

While Mutel's work leads readers to consider the future of flood prevention, Lyons's reminds us that this future should not come at the cost of erasing the past. *The 1,000-Year Flood* also sets the 2008 floods in the context of the cultural, ecological, and political concerns that have affected recovery in Iowa. Although the book's subtitle suggests a broad exploration of the Mississippi River, in fact Lyons concentrates his discussion on Cedar Rapids, exploring the human element of flood damage from the Cedar River and probing its psychological impact on the city's citizens. On the way, he raises issues of collective and personal memory, nostalgia and rhetoric, and the roles they played in helping and hindering recovery efforts.

The strength of this book is its narrative, which preserves the voices of the people directly involved in the floods and their immediate aftermath. Lyons discusses political speeches, local and national news stories, federal reports, and statistical data that track recovery efforts in the year after the disaster. But centering the volume are the personal interviews he conducted with a wide range of subjects, from residents to community leaders. The author also often interjects his own personal history (as a boy he spent summers with his grandparents, who lived in the Time Check neighborhood).

Although at times lacking clear organization and a cohesive narrative flow, the book is nevertheless a quick and easy read that underscores the human impact of natural disaster. Often the boosterism of city officials — relying on a rhetoric of midwestern resiliency — is juxtaposed with the frustration of residents concerned with the direction of recovery efforts and the lack of federal support. Debates about what to do with Czech Village and the working-class neighborhood of Time Check, both critically damaged, echo larger questions about the importance of communities — local neighborhoods, the city of Cedar Rapids, and the region of the Midwest more generally — within the national consciousness.

The book becomes a lament on the potential loss of these places — through natural disasters themselves, but also via recovery and mitigation efforts that have the potential to gentrify and homogenize as

they seek to protect. Near the end of the volume Lyons asks whether "the executive 'communities' of America [are] an improvement over tree-lined Ellis Boulevard or 16th Avenue SW? Is the new plan to raze those neighborhoods *progress*?" (177). Clearly, he suggests, we have much to lose when we rebuild "bigger and better"; in the case of Cedar Rapids, it is the very details of the old communities — class, ethnic, cultural, and industrial — that add value to the Midwest and to the nation. This argument is directly pertinent to local and regional historians, one well worth exploring in more detail specifically as it relates to the history of natural disaster.