

*Commonwealth of Compromise* is a wealth of knowledge, well written, and worth the read for anyone interested in Civil War commemoration and reconciliation.

*Iowa Gardens of the Past: Lost & Historic Gardens of Iowa, 1850–1980*, by Beth Cody. Iowa City: Iowa Garden Press, 2020. 320 pp. Photographs, illustrations, select bibliography, index. \$38.99 hardcover.

Reviewer Heidi Hohmann is an associate professor of landscape architecture at Iowa State University. Her research interests include historic landscapes and their preservation, landscape architectural history, and late nineteenth and early twentieth century parks and park systems.

*Iowa Gardens of the Past* documents 150 years of Iowa gardens, from 1830 to 1980. The book is an ambitious effort because, as the author points out, “gardening is the most ephemeral of all arts” (ix) and many of the state’s historic gardens no longer exist. Yet the author brings more than fifty of these lost landscapes back to life, using hundreds of images from atlases, archives, and magazines to immerse the reader in their verdant spaces. Like a gardener’s version of “Where’s Waldo?” the book is an invitation to spend a few delightful hours scanning text and photographs in search of unique plants, old-fashioned garden implements, and glimpses of the gardeners themselves.

The book approaches its subject chronologically. Initially, the author attempts to categorize periods of garden design by the different forms of imagery—engravings, photographs, and postcards—produced to depict them. This works best in chapters one through four but is less successful in chapters five through ten, which default to more standard historical periods. Each chapter begins with some historical garden context and then describes two to ten gardens, telling detailed stories of how their creators developed them. The final chapter—something of an outlier—describes two long-lasting, “multigenerational” gardens—the exceptions, perhaps, that prove the author’s rule about the ephemeral nature of gardens. Sidebars sprinkled liberally throughout the chapters make narrative and pictorial forays into associated historical and gardening topics. These include a tally of Iowa’s extreme weather events, a history of Iowa’s garden clubs, a discussion of Iowa State University Extension farmstead design, and a history of one of the state’s most important horticultural exports, the Griffith Buck roses. Images from seed catalogs are also distributed throughout the book, adding vivid color (and perhaps some visual distraction).

Despite its ambitious scope and authoritative tone, the book may have a limited impact on future garden history research. Although all

images and quotations are clearly sourced, the narrative text lacks citations for other scholars to follow. The selected bibliography is heavily skewed toward local and regional sources, and the book does little to place the individual gardens into broader, national contexts of garden design and landscape architecture. The book's two-page "Timeline of Garden Styles" extends only to 1900, and misses important design trends such as the stylistic eclecticism of the country place era or "form follows function" Modernism, both of which greatly influenced U.S. residential garden design. And overall, despite the mention of important landscape architects working in Iowa, the differences or intersections between vernacular and designed gardens go largely unexamined. But these issues are perhaps irrelevant. This is not a book that pontificates on what Iowa's gardens mean historically or accomplished artistically. It is instead a book that imagines what these gardens were like—and what they meant to their makers. As a result, *Iowa Gardens of the Past* is much like the personal gardens it documents: visually exuberant, a little bit quirky, and a wonderful place to spend an afternoon.

*Angel De Cora, Karen Thronson, and the Art of Place: How Two Midwestern Women Used Art to Negotiate Migration and Dispossession*, by Elizabeth Sutton. Iowa and the Midwest Experience Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2020. xix, 196 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, index. \$49.95 paperback.

Reviewer Betty A. Bergland is professor emerita of history at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She studies Norwegian immigration and ethnicity and co-edited *Norwegian American Women: Migration, Communities, and Identities* (2011).

The women central to the book *Angel De Cora, Karen Thronson, and the Art of Place: How Two Midwestern Women Used Art to Negotiate Migration and Dispossession* represent distinct cultures—Ho-Chunk and Norwegian—and the divergent forces of migration that crossed the Midwest. De Cora's family faced removals and forced migration, while Thronson's family pursued transatlantic migration, supported by U.S. policies of dispossession and ideologies of westward expansion. The well-researched study weaves together the lives of two women, De Cora and Thronson, exploring their artistic expressions inspired by traditions found in the Midwest. Foregrounding a sense of place, Sutton first maps the migrations of the De Cora and Thronson families across the Midwest (especially, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa), revealing the forces that shaped their lives and the region's layered histories. Then, in alternate chapters, Sutton chronicles their lives and emerging