

analysis is absent, and the book is primarily descriptive, characterized by transcriptions of the primary sources alongside a text that describes them.

Morris's book asks a good question about rural industry, but ultimately, I find that not only is the analysis thin but that Morris has not taken full advantage of the available sources for his book, despite an innovative use of material culture. While free access to a number of Crawfordsville newspapers only became available in 2016, maybe too late for this project, there were some available through Google newspapers as early as 2011. Newspapers may have revealed efforts to bring a railroad through Yountsville in the late nineteenth century, which would have provided cheaper transportation and in turn made it possible to expand and prevent the closing of the mill circa 1907. Likewise, I was surprised to find no use of the U.S. Census Bureau's Censuses of Manufacturing from 1850 to 1880, which could have illuminated aspects of the early period of the mill.

The important lesson that *Yountsville* brings for scholars of Iowa and the Midwest is that we need to explore rural industry more. Morris' work is a starting point, but subsequent work needs to be more thorough and more analytical. For lay readers of history, I don't believe this volume will have much appeal beyond the confines of western Indiana.

Scandal on Plum Island: A Commander Becomes the Accused, by Marian E. Lindberg. New York: East End Press, 2020. 416 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$17.95 paperback.

Reviewer Suzanna Krivulskaya is assistant professor of history at California State University San Marcos. She studies the relationship between sexuality and religion in modern U.S. history. Her current project is tentatively titled *Disgraced: How Sex Scandals Transformed American Protestantism*.

All students of the history of sexuality inevitably run into a problem: how to interpret today the sexual dispositions and behaviors of eras past—eras which did not contain the categories of sexuality we now employ. When this methodological issue arises, it may be comforting to remember that the problem of appropriate categorization extends much farther than our own relatively recent realization that sexuality itself has a history. The past, too, contains a traceable archive of sexuality's illegibility. Marin E. Lindberg's excellent new book *Scandal on Plum Island: A Commander Becomes the Accused* spotlights a case of what we might today label a queer sex scandal. At the time, though, the strange ordeal eluded the categories available to either the accusers or the accused.

In 1913, Major Benjamin Koehler, who grew up in Le Mars, Iowa, was forced to publicly reckon with the question of the boundaries of

sufficient masculinity and appropriate sexuality. On the surface, Koehler had the credentials to pass both tests. After training at West Point, fighting in the Spanish-American War, and serving in San Francisco, Koehler took command of Fort Terry on Plum Island, New York, in 1911. Small in stature but imposing in his commitment to strict discipline and proper protocol, Koehler was in charge of hundreds of men—until sixteen of his subordinates accused the commander of inappropriate advances and groping.

Koehler was an easy target for speculations of queerness. For a man of high rank, Koehler was short—a mark of deficient masculinity at the time. He was middle-aged, single, and shared a house with his unmarried sister. Koehler's upbringing in Le Mars—a town of upper-class British immigrants—had exposed him to the more refined things in life: the opera, theater, and literature. Later, these same interests would render Koehler “a little bit too refined” in their approximation to effeminacy (18). So, when complaints of unwanted touching reached Koehler's superiors, the men in charge of the investigation were not entirely surprised. Then again, they were not quite sure how to classify the precise misbehavior of which the Major was being accused.

Koehler's court-martial was not a homosexual scandal per se; not in the traditional sense. Homosexuality did not yet exist as a punishable offense in the bureaucracy of military discipline. Instead, Koehler's investigation and subsequent trial became a kind of testing ground for the contours of appropriate maleness within a largely homosocial environment. Throughout the book, Lindberg insightfully demonstrates how the broader cultural investment in virile masculinity made Koehler vulnerable to attacks by his disgruntled subordinates, who, Lindberg believes, conspired to destroy the commander's career and reputation.

The book is accessibly written for a popular audience, but its engagement with historiography is deep and impressive. The story, gripping as it may be, is never just about the details of Koehler's singular case. Instead, Lindberg paints a layered picture of the places that shaped Koehler's life and of the culture that insisted that Koehler's way of being in the world was, in the end, incompatible with military service and masculine authority. Supplementing court-martial transcripts with intimate letters recovered in the archive of Koehler's family, Lindberg draws a compelling picture of courage and intrigue at the start of the twentieth century. *Scandal on Plum Island* eloquently captures a time when the categories of sexuality we have embraced did not yet exist and explains how the legacies of cultural investment in binary expressions of gender continue to shape our present.