

friendship between Sitting Bull and Walsh allows Utley to go beyond the familiar image of dour, taciturn Lakota leaders sitting sternly in council, air filled with the smoke from the ceremonial pipe, to see the enthusiastic hand shaking and even the occasional wry smile of Sitting Bull that characterized these meetings.

For Sitting Bull's Lakotas, sovereignty meant the freedom to continue buffalo hunting and move about their land as they chose. Yet even in Canada their options were limited. As buffalo herds diminished, Blackfeet and Cree came to resent the Lakota's take of this dwindling food source. Eventually, poverty and starvation forced the Lakotas to return south of the border and face life on reservations. Finally, even Sitting Bull succumbed, as Utley remarks, because "he could stand up to his enemies. . . but not to children crying of hunger" (97).

Yet the struggle for Lakota sovereignty did not end with the surrender of their leader. Utley treats us to delightful moments from Sitting Bull's later years as the intransigent buffalo hunter, devoted to the old ways, morphed into an advocate for dignity and sovereignty in the circumscribed circumstances of his new reality—smiling while eating his first ice cream, learning to sign his name and charging for autographed photos. Most unexpectedly of all, Sitting Bull became a successful farmer, achieving a measure of independence by raising livestock and growing crops. All the while he adamantly opposed the allotment of reservation lands and supported the Ghost Dance movement (although he did not himself dance) as a form of psychic resistance.

Ultimately this is a hopeful book, one that finds gentleness, truth-telling, and deep humanity in a tragic story. It should find a wide audience and add to the rich legacy of Robert Utley's many contributions to western history.

The Life of Anna Ott: Money, Marriage, and Madness, by Kim Nielson. Disability Histories. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2020. x, 135 pp. Notes, bibliography, index, images, timeline. \$22.00 paperback.

Reviewer Courtney Lacy is an independent scholar based in Naperville, Illinois. She received her Ph.D. from Southern Methodist University. Her research examines the intersection of gender, insanity, and religion in nineteenth-century midwestern mental hospitals.

Kim Nielson's *The Life of Anna Ott: Money, Marriage, and Madness* provides a glimpse into a world that based on conventional wisdom we should not have access to. Nielson chose an unusual figure for her analysis because Anna Ott, a female medical doctor in the late nineteenth century, experienced both sides of the medical field; as a medical doctor, she diagnosed

patients, and as a patient in an insane asylum, she received a troubling diagnosis of her own. In short, the book is the pieced-together story of a woman's life as a doctor, mother, abused wife, divorcé, and patient.

Nielson brilliantly contrasts the differences that occurred once Ott swiveled from doctor to patient. Before her institutionalization, her financially astute decisions were taken seriously and her expertise was at least considered by outside legal and medical authorities. After she was diagnosed as insane, everything that she did became "unconventional," "erratic," or just another way to reinforce that she was, in fact, always insane. The diagnosis of manic insanity retroactively defined every previous decision she made throughout her life.

Ott did not leave written records in her own words and so we follow Nielson on a painstaking journey which ultimately does not satisfy our curiosity. The details of this woman's life, especially in her own words, did not survive. While the process can be downright frustrating at times, Nielson is doing the work *because* Ott's life was nearly erased by time. Often women, especially disabled or institutionalized women, do not receive attention because their lives have been all but erased from the records; however, the prominent men who made their decisions for them continue to have full historical lives. Nielson wants readers to understand that even when the process of recapturing a "silhouette biography" proves sketchy and incomplete, not doing so would be to accept that the lives of these women were not significant and would indirectly reinforce our already biased historical records.

The book is relevant to a midwestern reader in general because our protagonist lived in the region after emigrating from German-speaking Switzerland in 1834, first in Winesburg, Ohio, and later in Madison, Wisconsin. Throughout her life, she also bought property in and traveled throughout Indiana and Illinois. Nielson includes medical history in those states as it is relevant to the developing story and Ott's life. The way that she sketches Ott by coloring the negative spaces makes the reader wonder how this strategy might be used in other instances. Yes, it is limited, but it is also a powerful way of backing into the story of a life that would otherwise be completely lost.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in medical history, but I believe a more casual reader would also benefit from struggling through some of the historical processes with Nielson. She spends the book detailing her methods in a way that is so vivid that you sometimes forget that so much of her subject's history has been lost to time and active omission.