

with Brianna Theobald's *Reproduction on the Reservation* will make connections between this work and the practices of Indigenous women, but additional comparisons would have enriched this text. The practices detailed are not only specific to this place and time but also to many rural women. There was an exciting but underdeveloped section about the collusion of anti-midwife and anti-immigrant sentiments in the Mountain West that leaves space for other scholars to investigate.

The book includes a lovely photo collection of children delivered by midwife Mary Kassmeier, which speaks to the close ties that bound child-bearing women to the circle of support that helped them through a dangerous and vulnerable time. This work contains examples that many will find poignant and provides a fine introduction to the topic of rural childbirth and networks of female cooperation.

Grasslands Grown: Creating Place on the U.S. Northern Plains and Canadian Prairies, by Molly P. Rozum. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2021. 500 pp. Notes, photographs, illustrations, maps, index. \$75.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Julie Courtwright is Associate Professor of History at Iowa State University. Her research focuses on the Great Plains of North America. She is the author of *Prairie Fire: A Great Plains History* (2011), which is the first book in her trilogy on fire, wind, and water in the Great Plains.

The grasslands of the northern United States and Canada is a region continually neglected by writers (and practically everyone else). Therefore, Molly P. Rozum's innovative *Grasslands Grown: Creating Place on the U.S. Northern Plains and Canadian Prairies* is a particularly welcome addition. Rozum, who is associate professor and Ronald R. Nelson Chair of Great Plains and South Dakota History at the University of South Dakota, has written a transnational history that also manages to be intimate. This is no insignificant task. Personal stories of grasslands people dominate this book, and Rozum skillfully uses their experiences to consider larger issues such as Indigenous influence, the role of myth in culture, the transition from a grass to grain ecosystem, and both United States and Canadian policies within a shared environment.

The focus of *Grasslands Grown*, however, is people. Specifically, Rozum studies the first generation born after American and Canadian colonization. This generation grew up in the grassland—they were “grasslands grown”—and, influenced by their exploration, play, and work within the prairie/plain environment, “root[ed] their own stories in the land” (7). In other words, they made the northern grasslands their

home. They created very personal senses of place while, in a larger collective context, they transitioned out of the age of colonization to one of settler colonialism.

The first chapter of *Grasslands Grown* provides background for this first generation of settler colonials to grow up within the northern plains. Rozum ably moves back and forth across the international boundary to discuss the process of settlement, the influence of the railroads, and the impact of conquest on Indigenous peoples. Canadian colonization, she notes, “pulled U.S. settlement northward” and away from the more centrally located Overland Trail route (28). By the end of this chapter, the grasslands grown generation is poised to write their own stories onto the land, which they do through interaction with the animals, plants, and elements of the northern plains. Rozum employs sensory history to discuss the touch, sounds, sights, and smells that children encountered as they played and worked on the landscape. Alberta native Annora Brown, for example, remembered the diverse textures of prairie grasses that she touched near her home.

As the grasslands grown generation matures, Rozum follows them into adulthood, investigating their relationships with Indigenous peoples and their contributions to literature and art. In addition, this generation was the one that first applied modern agriculture to the northern grasslands. The action was, Rozum notes, this generation’s “contribution to settler colonialism on the ground level” (293). Having grown up in the region, they could still see the land, sky, and grass in their memories even as the “native grasslands habitat . . . disappear[ed] under expanding agriculture” (294). Canadian Elsie Hammond, among others, struggled to stay on the land during the economic and environmental challenges of the Dirty Thirties.

Most of Rozum’s book is approachable and highly readable for all students of history. Personal stories draw the reader into the lives of historical actors such as Era Bell Thompson, a young African American girl from North Dakota who loved dogs and horses. As an adult, Thompson became a writer and drew on her grasslands experiences for her work. It is people like Thompson who are the strength of Rozum’s book. Iowa readers will feel right at home in the U.S. and Canadian grasslands that Rozum’s historical actors explore, and their individual stories instruct, entertain, and inspire.

The exception to Rozum’s approachable style is in the book’s introduction, which carries a different tone than the body of the book. It sets up the author’s larger arguments and historiographic contribution, and even hints at the more personal accounts to come with an opening story of “rediscovery” in 1913 South Dakota, but it reads less nimbly than the

other eight chapters and conclusion. Improved consistency of style would have allowed readers to get a sense of the book's strengths from the beginning. Also slightly clunky, at first, is the author's phrase for this generation of children. "Grasslands Grown" does not initially land as a memorable descriptor, but as the reader gets to know this generation through Rozum's work, the phrase somehow becomes more suitable. I even liked it by the end of the book, a shift in attitude facilitated by my growing acceptance of Rozum's argument and the importance of her work.

Grasslands Grown is an important book on a neglected topic. The research and analysis are impressive, demonstrated through people and their stories. Rozum's book will be enjoyed for years to come by academics, students, and history enthusiasts alike.

Spoon River America: Edgar Lee Masters and the Myth of the American Small Town, by Jason Stacy. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2021. x, 234 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$110.00 hardcover, \$27.95 paperback.

Reviewer Patricia Oman is associate professor of English at Hastings College. Her research focuses on twentieth-century American regional literature and culture, with a specific emphasis on the Midwest, forgotten writers, and popular culture.

Jason Stacy's *Spoon River America: Edgar Lee Masters and the Myth of the American Small Town* is a biography of Edgar Lee Masters's most famous and enduring book, *Spoon River Anthology*. Masters's book of poetry may not be as popular now as it was in the decade following its original 1915 publication, but it has never been out of print and it still shows up occasionally in high school and university courses. As Stacy notes, "Masters is neither quite a leading light nor a forgotten poet. He is generally remembered and, therefore, never really rediscovered" (6).

Spoon River Anthology is a collection of 244 poems, mostly first-person epitaphs from the deceased citizens of the fictional small midwestern town of Spoon River. Each character posthumously narrates the most significant event of their life or characteristic of their personality, as they see it, in a short free-verse poem. Taken together, these epitaphs provide an accessible introduction to modernist aesthetic forms—particularly fractured perspective and non-linear narrative—forms that many later American regional writers adopted. The famous and often-anthologized cluster of poems connected to the poetess Minerva Jones, for example, demonstrate multiple perspectives on a single event. Through the epitaphs of Minerva, Butch Weldy, Doctor Meyers, and