

Chunk regalia and again in western dress, in cloches and derbies, blankets and turbans, with the long locks of Wild West performers and the cropped hair of New Women. Against the floral, classical backdrop, they pose with props from Van Schaik's studio: guns and pets, birds and bikes, books and whiskey. The visual codes tell stories, some clear, some unintelligible: in an 1898 image a man poses with a bankbook; a self-referential image from 1893 reveals a cabinet card photograph as a prop. Veteran Ruby Whiterabbit poses, in the 1940s, with an eagle-feather war bonnet reserved for warriors. Gazing straight into the camera, often touching one another, the subjects display self-assurance, community, and sometimes a sense of playful self-performance.

Even as a compilation of studio portraits taken by a single photographer, quite apart from their subject matter, the collection is remarkable for its scope, visual appeal, and the intimacy with subjects who appear and reappear in the studio across decades. That the images are all of Ho-Chunk in a period of upheaval lends new dimension to our understanding of the cultural work of portraiture. The book stands as a testament to the possibility of regional archival collections and as a model of collaborative work, particularly in the area of indigenous studies. The work of the collaborators is particularly prominent in the meticulous identification of nearly every subject with both anglicized and Ho-Chunk names, so that family relationships can be traced over time and to emphasize "the visual evolution of Ho-Chunk culture" (31). The images suggest the possibility of new directions in scholarship on indigenous photographs—particularly those in local and regional archives—as such collections may reveal the intimacy, familial connections, and complex realities of indigenous life as the subjects themselves experienced it.

A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community, by Nicole Etcheson. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011. xii, 371 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Kenneth L. Lyftogt is a lecturer in history at the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of several books on Iowa and the Civil War, including *From Blue Mills To Columbia: Cedar Falls and the Civil War* (1993).

The great challenge of Civil War scholarship is to find the reasons behind the violent passions that divided the nation and plunged it into war. Nicole Etcheson, author of *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (2004), a truly fine study of the role of the Kansas crisis in the making of the Civil War, puts her talents to this challenge.

Etcheson's work is local and social history at their best. Her focus is Putnam County, Indiana. Indiana was the sixth most populous Union state and provided more than 208,000 soldiers. Indiana troops fought in every major theater of the war. Putnam County sent more than 2,000 of its sons into the Union military. A study of Indiana's part in the war is as typical a Union story as a scholar could find.

This is an Indiana study, and Etcheson makes no state-to-state comparisons, but there is much here that is applicable to Iowa. One of the most important similarities is that both Iowa and Indiana had majority populations from farms and small towns. That is significant because the Civil War is too often explained as a struggle between the industrial North and the agrarian South, a far too simplistic explanation. Etcheson could be describing Iowa when she writes, "the rural and small-town nature of the county offers a contrast to the urban focus of previous home-front studies." And "a rural Midwestern community such as Putnam County, Indiana, may tell us much about a Northern society that was itself primarily agrarian" (12-13).

Indiana's Civil War politics were much the same as Iowa's. Each was a strong Union state, but each had powerful antiwar voices as well. Political battles between Republicans and Democrats tore Putnam County apart, as was true across Iowa as well. There were times when the political battles turned violent, to the point of threatening civil conflict within the state itself. Indiana had its "Battle of Pogue's Run," and Iowa had its "Skunk River War."

Racial attitudes in Indiana during the Civil War era were much the same as those in Iowa. Both were free states, but the vast majority of whites in both states were fiercely and proudly racist. This was not a cause of shame. Their attitudes were reflected in the anti-black immigration clauses in the constitutions of both states and in the simple fact that neither state had a sizable population of African Americans: They were simply not welcomed. Even so, African Americans did not just sit on the sidelines; emancipation was as much earned as given. There were black regiments from both states: Indiana gave the Union the 28th Colored Infantry, and Iowa provided the 60th Colored Infantry.

Etcheson addresses each of these issues with admirable thoroughness and clarity. The strength of the book is in her sources as well as in her rather unique perspective on them. She opens the book with a story of a murdered wife from Putnam County. The story establishes a woman's perspective that dominates the book but never distracts from it. Within a few pages, Etcheson shows the murder of the young wife as an example of the political divisions that tore the country apart—from domestic abuse to Civil War-era politics in one reasonably smooth step.

The book has an epic quality: an examination of a generation that, from its youth to its old age, was consumed by the war. Young men who came of age in the political struggles of the 1850s carried the fight into the war and then into the postwar years of Reconstruction. They carried a generation of grudges with them.

The racism that was at the heart of the war did not disappear with emancipation and Union victory; it lived on to sour the victory long after the war was over. Etcheson pulls no punches on such things, and the Reconstruction part of the book gives her study a depth that many other books lack.

Those seeking a reference book on Indiana and the Civil War will be disappointed. There is little actual history of the war here. There are no descriptions of the recruiting, mustering, and equipping of troops; no regimental histories; no combat scenes with glorious charges and dashing soldiers. The book does not need such things, but potential readers should be cautioned.

The major fault of the book is in Etcheson's format. The book is a series of scholarly studies of Putnam County and the war that are linked together into a book. The result is that the book lacks the dynamic quality of a Civil War story. It cries out for a traditional historical narrative. The characters introduced by the author are the true center of the book, but the reader does not actually get to know them; too often buried too deep in the scholarship, they don't come alive on the page. Etcheson the scholar would be well served by the storyteller's muse. Such criticism aside, this book is a fine contribution to Civil War scholarship.

The Plains Political Tradition: Essays on South Dakota Political Culture, edited by Jon K. Lauck, John E. Miller, and Donald C. Simmons Jr. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2011. 391 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, index. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Michael Schuyler is professor emeritus of history at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He is the author of *The Dread of Plenty: Agricultural Relief Activities of the Federal Government in the Middle West, 1933-1939* (1989).

The Plains Political Tradition is an excellent contribution to our understanding of South Dakota history and politics. The editors did an outstanding job of making each chapter unique while staying on course about the political culture of South Dakota. Each of the 12 chapters in the book are well written and carefully documented. They include "The Foundations of Political Culture in East River South Dakota" by Jon K. Lauck; "Immigrants and Politics in South Dakota,