

Central well, and in so doing, he suggests the difficulties faced by countless other small railroads operating around the country at the same time.

Don't let the size and shape of these books fool you. Although they appear designed to grace coffee tables, they are comprehensive histories of two understudied midwestern railroads and will be worthwhile reading for those interested in transportation history, Iowa, or the Midwest generally.

*Fire Light: The Life of Angel De Cora, Winnebago Artist*, by Linda M. Waggoner. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. xxviii, 355 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

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This biography of the famed late nineteenth-century artist Angel De Cora is a chronological narration from her childhood in Nebraska until her death from the Spanish flu in 1918. The author interprets De Cora as a vaguely defined "culture broker" whose life was dedicated to the pursuit and diffusion of native art and design. She intimates that De Cora inherited the tendency to cultural mediation from her maternal lineage, which included intermarried Winnebagos and French fur traders. De Cora's father, who returned to the Wisconsin Winnebagos permanently when she was quite young, was a grandson of a significant Winnebago leader. Given that the book begins with a rather confusing discussion of De Cora's maternal and paternal genealogy, readers would have benefited from a genealogical chart. Although contemporary Winnebagos surely will find the genealogy useful, it appears that it mainly serves the author's purpose of supporting the culture broker thesis.

De Cora's early years demonstrate a commitment to studies in drawing and painting. She studied with Dwight William Tryon at Smith College, Howard Pyle at the Drexel Institute of Art, Science, and Industry, and Joseph Rodefer DeCamp at the Cowles Art School. She subsequently studied for two years at the Museum of Fine Arts before leaving Boston for New York City, where she sought to support herself as an artist while combating various debilitating illnesses.

De Cora was a combination of reserved native woman, sophisticate in the worlds of art and federal Indian affairs, and public intellectual. Despite her talents and great influence in the world of design, in challenging conventional views of native people, in shaping Indian education, and in representing native people to white audiences, she seemed

to work in the shadows. Others took credit for the work she carried out. De Cora brought Indian Affairs Commissioner Francis E. Leupp's vision of Carlisle to fruition in her classroom, but never really received credit for her successes. Her work, personal problems, and tendency to isolate herself created highly stressful circumstances that she seemed to internalize. When William Lone Star Dietz came into her life, she thought she had found a partner in domesticity and in work. Her blindness to his corruption and false native identity allowed him to exploit her carefully built career and professional home at Carlisle for his own gain.

De Cora pushed the envelope of native womanhood through her advanced art studies, her influential position at Carlisle Indian School, and her position as a public intellectual. She believed in the innate visionary gifts of native people and their ability to translate them into art. She labored under the paternalism of her teachers at Hampton and Indian affairs bureaucrats with a seeming understanding of the colonial dynamics at work. This book leads me to believe that she kept many thoughts to herself which, if known, would help us better understand a woman in her unique circumstances.

The thesis of Angel De Cora as cultural broker, an outdated framework, diminishes her. The author herself provides evidence that De Cora was far more concerned with her own productivity, the education of native children, and an expansive pedagogical vision than with translating native culture for white people. Her appearances, talks, and essays should be understood as the work of a public intellectual who spoke for the sake of advancing ideas — a different kind of project than that of the naturalized, powerless culture broker. This biography is not theorized; the dynamics of colonialism and gender theory, for example, are completely absent. The author relies on De Cora's isolation and quiet demeanor to suggest why she received so little credit for her work at Carlisle and in the politicized discourse of Indian education.

Nonetheless, once past the first chapter on her genealogy, this biography tells us much about De Cora's families of origin and by informal adoption, her education, the connections she built in the art world, her philosophies of Indian education and art, and the impact she had on both. It is obvious that the book rests on much research, a wide array of sources, and, significantly, the consent of the Winnebago people of Nebraska.