

again, Elmore uses this literary device as she attempts to solve the mystery, writing, for example, “a scenario that may have unfolded something like this . . .” (264). She acknowledges that the crucial new lead that undergirds the final section of the book is of questionable use: “Whether that [the recently revealed information] was true or the figment of an aging and clouded memory is hard to say” (278).

Finally, the author’s depiction of the historical context is a bit stylized. Elmore describes the local residents, for instance, as “all good Christians” and “friendly souls” (11). Yet some among these “good and trustworthy” people (13) committed a gang-rape, attempted to kidnap the victim and lynch the suspects, and levied threats against one another. Clearly social life in a small Illinois town in the 1880s was not entirely harmonious. In addition, Elmore might have consulted recent studies on sex crime, criminal justice, and journalism in the late nineteenth-century Midwest to place the trial more effectively in the legal context of the era. When the defendants were acquitted, for example, Elmore asserts that local residents were shocked. But observers of the trial certainly knew better, for prosecutors rarely won convictions in criminal cases during this period.

In short, the final section might have been better supported with evidence, and the description of the trial might have been better contextualized. Still, *Nameless Indignities* is a fascinating, thoroughly engaging book.

The Quack’s Daughter: A True Story about the Private Life of a Victorian College Girl, by Greta Nettleton. Revised edition. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014. xxiv, 371 pp. Illustrations, notes, glossary, bibliography, name index. \$24.95 paperback.

Reviewer Jane Simonsen is associate professor of history and women’s & gender studies at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. She is the author of *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860–1919* (2006).

Cora (Corize) Keck, daughter of Davenport’s famously unlicensed medical practitioner Mrs. Dr. Keck, was the “trophy daughter” whose acceptance at Vassar was a way of thumbing her nose at the midwestern elites who marginalized her family. Like other microhistories, Nettleton’s meticulous study of institutional records, Cora’s diary, and (most fascinatingly) her scrapbooks sets one life in the stream of other historical currents. It charts the social and work opportunities that education presented eager co-eds—and the gendered conventions that closed the door on them as resoundingly as they had on Cora’s mother.

Nettleton—Cora's great-granddaughter—begins in Davenport, Iowa, where Keck's widely successful alternative medical practice allowed her family to flaunt their wealth but subjected them to public humiliation through repeated court challenges. The Kecks took advantage of lax acceptance standards at the premier but financially strapped Vassar, sending Cora there to study piano. Cora, however, was more interested in studying her social opportunities: her scrapbooks were filled with studio photos of her with various galpals and "dudes" who trolled Poughkeepsie for outgoing rich girls. She cut classes, went to late-night soirées, and escaped to New York City with friends who gave her a taste of the life she craved. Hers is a story of intense yearning for social attention, musical mastery, and escape from her mother's control and infamy. Nettleton ends the story back in the Midwest, where Cora's wings are clipped and she resigns herself to rebellion via a profitable marriage to a much older man. Her college chums and crushes, meanwhile, suffer their own tragedies.

Nettleton's personal investment in the story is both a draw and a distraction. She inserts details of her quest into the narrative; doing so gives readers a taste of the thrills and frustrations of the hunt while exposing key questions that historians ask. Yet mid-paragraph insertions such as "Here's how I interpret the situation" (179) or asides on her personal distaste for banjo playing (337) can be unnecessary diversions. This history goes deep rather than broad, painstaking in detail but sometimes lacking easily researched contexts of women's history. The rich section based on Cora's diary sacrifices some narrative coherence in organizing the account strictly around the dates when events occur—characters and emotions come and go as in real life, but the reader needs to work hard to hold onto thematic threads. Likewise, because of sparse citation, it's sometimes difficult to tell which episodes are directly derived from the evidence and which are pure invention. Because inferring is so central to the historian's craft, it's important to signal the difference.

Yet Nettleton's creative and plausible inferences are what make the book so compelling to professional and lay historians alike. She constructs a gripping narrative from the tiniest of details: a page torn from and taped back into a scrapbook, a word boldly underlined, the positioning of one clipping next to another, the set of a chin in a photograph. She reconstructs whole months of Cora's life by "reading" the story told by various objects—programs, hairpins, bits of tinsel—pasted into her scrapbook. Clippings, especially, reveal the absorbing backstory of Vassar alumnae's increasing institutional power. In this way the book provides a guide for reading the sorts of texts so crucial to social, women's,

local, and family history that should instruct any kind of student. While some passages are windy, even Nettleton's asides remind us of the reasons we love history: people in the past were more surprising than we imagine and anchor our present sense of self by tying us more firmly to those who came before.

The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Construction of the Virginia Kendall Reserve, 1933–1939, edited by Kenneth J. Bindas. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press. 146 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer Angela Sirna is a doctoral candidate in public history at Middle Tennessee State University. Her dissertation is "Recreating Appalachia: Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, 1922–1972."

Kenneth Bindas, professor and chair of the Department of History at Kent State University, assigned his students to study the New Deal history of a familiar landscape—Virginia Kendall Reserve (VKR) in Cuyahoga Valley National Park, located between Akron and Cleveland, Ohio. VKR was established in 1933 as a state park project for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a New Deal program that put unemployed young men to work on conservation projects. Bindas's students drew on government documents, oral histories, historical photographs, and other primary sources to examine the park's creation and the CCC experience. Bindas edited his students' best papers and presents them in this volume.

In August 1933 Harold Wagner, landscape architect and director of the Akron Metropolitan Park District, requested from the federal government a CCC camp to turn a 430-acre farm into a public park at VKR. Young CCC enrollees immediately set to work when the camp was organized a few months later. The CCC did more than create a park at VKR. It remade young men by inculcating "positive masculine values of work in a modern society" and giving them hope in the nation's future (63). Similarly, VKR planners used modern organizational and planning principles to remake nature as "modern, controlled, designed, and authentic," which Bindas and his students explored through VKR's landscape design (63). In both CCC camp life and VKR's design, they found a New Deal desire to use recreation as a form of learning to create better citizens. The CCC ended in 1942, but much of its work remains to be enjoyed by visitors today. VKR became a popular destination for Akron and Cleveland residents and was absorbed into the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreational Area in 1978.