

*The Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening*, by Wilhelm Miller. Centennial Report Series of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002. xxxiii, 34 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Cathy Ambler is a preservation consultant and independent scholar. She lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Wilhelm Miller's *Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening* is a reprint of an Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station circular first published in 1915. Now a part of the Centennial Report Series of the American Society of Landscape Architects, it provides a portal for understanding the philosophy and aesthetics of a group of contemporary architects, artists, and landscape gardeners who were interested in promoting "American" design based on naturalistic native midwestern landscapes.

Miller's publication was a treatise on the "prairie" philosophy and its practical application. Presented in an Extension circular, Miller's outright sermonizing about the prairie aesthetic made it remarkable. However practical a plant list or strong a rationale for the conservation of native regional plants, such advice was nearly overwhelmed by Miller's demanding "we will" checklist, which summoned rural residents with a missionary zeal to plant his way.

Christopher Vernon's introduction places the context of Miller's writing in perspective. Vernon carefully links Miller's ideas to broader thoughts, ideas, and movements of the time. The Progressive Era nourished the prairie philosophy in other Chicago-based architects and landscape designers such as Jens Jensen, Ossian Cole Simmons, Walter Burley Griffin, Frank Lloyd Wright, and George W. Maher. Iowa readers interested in the landscape, architectural, and cultural history of midwestern states, the value of native plants in gardens and landscapes, and the prairie philosophy of design will welcome this reprint and Vernon's insight.

*Fredrick L. McGhee: A Life on the Color Line, 1861–1912*, by Paul D. Nelson. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002. xxvi, 234 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer William D. Green is associate professor of history at Augsburg College. His research and publications have focused on African Americans' struggles for civil rights in Minnesota.

The history of civil rights during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—indeed, the history of African Americans—is usually based on experiences that occurred largely east of the Mississippi River. Where there is an absence of a large black population, Jim Crow laws,

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