

one of the war's greatest achievements, even as some GAR posts (especially in Iowa, she notes) refused to integrate black members. Janney also vividly portrays the rise of the Lost Cause ideology in the South, in a manner similar to Blight, but she makes a new and important point about how Lost Cause proponents at the turn of the twentieth century shifted their dominant emphasis from military defeat to the "abuses" of Reconstruction. She also brilliantly addresses how and why the Lost Cause became feminized.

Overall, Janney's point about Northerners resisting amnesia about slavery is potent, but she does not end up demolishing Blight's thesis. For instance, Janney points out how many Southern veterans were "buying into" the "Union Cause" by mourning the death of Ulysses S. Grant in 1885, but she fails to note how many Northerners likewise had endorsed Robert E. Lee as a great man immediately upon his death in 1870—helping to boost the Lost Cause (173). If the "Union Cause" became so dominant a theme in a generic American patriotism by 1898, such a bland umbrella that everyone from temperance activists to imperialists could insist upon it generically, did this still constitute Civil War memory, or had it changed into something else entirely?

Janney's most important lessons are that historians must be careful when discussing the loaded terms of Civil War memory: reunion and reconciliation are not the same, and neither are race and slavery. Her book will become important in the field, and it will need to be read alongside Blight's to emphasize the subtle power of Civil War remembrance.

"Dear Unforgettable Brother": The Stavig Letters from Norway and America, 1881–1937, edited by Jane Torness Rasmussen and John S. Rasmussen, with essays by Edvard Hoem and Betty A. Bergland. Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2013. 148 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$19.95 paperback.

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Norwegian immigrants to America wrote thousands of letters to their friends and relatives back in "the old country," just as those in Norway wrote countless missives in reply. Many collections of letters are found on both sides of the Atlantic, but rarely do both sides of a set of correspondence survive. The Stavig letters from Norway and America is one of those rare instances. The edited volume of this correspondence includes letters written by two half-brothers, Lars and Knut

Stavig. The letters begin a few years after Lars left Norway in 1876 and continue until his death in 1933; Lars's sons continued the correspondence with Knut until 1937 (as they had also done on several occasions before Lars died).

The letters, which constitute approximately one-third of this volume, reflect significant elements of the Norwegian experience, particularly in providing a comparison to conditions the immigrants had left behind in Norway. By almost any standard, Lars Stavig's experience in America would be considered a success. Through hard work and the benefits of the Homestead Act, Lars was able to establish a farm near Sisseton, South Dakota. It was far more productive than what he believed he would have owned if he had stayed in Norway. At times, he sent money back to Norway to help Knut weather financial difficulties there. Lars's sons chose not to follow in his footsteps as farmers, but instead established a successful business in Sisseton. After his wife died and he became too old to manage his farm alone, Lars lived with one of his sons. Because he never learned English, his last years were increasingly frustrating for him. He could not communicate with his grandchildren, who spoke only English, and as his hearing began to fail in his later years, the world around him seemed increasingly alien and uncomfortable.

Sometimes several years passed between letters, but in their correspondence Lars and Knut continued to demonstrate the strong bond that remained between them. The editors have provided annotations that explain many details that might be confusing to readers who are not familiar with some aspects of conditions in Norway or the immigrant experience in general. These are particularly useful regarding family relationships or locations in Norway. Photographs from Norway and America provide excellent illustrations of the individuals and subjects described in the letters.

In addition to the Stavig letters, this volume includes two essays that provide perspectives from each side of the Atlantic. In "One Family, Two Lands: Why Did We Leave?" Norwegian novelist Edvard Hoem provides a Norwegian view of the immigration experience. In a few places, the details of personal relationships (which include Hoem's own family, who are distantly related to the Stavigs) become a bit complicated. Nonetheless, he offers an interesting and informative perspective on Norwegian immigration to America. American historian Betty A. Bergland's essay, "Norwegian Immigration to the United States and the Northern Great Plains," is a valuable complement to the letters. She first gives a brief, yet thorough, overview of Norwegian immigration to America and then ties that specifically to

the Stavig letters, which she places clearly within the framework of the general immigrant experience. Readers who are not familiar with the history of Norwegian immigration may find it useful to read her essay before reading the letters; they would thus gain a better understanding of how the Stavigs' experience represents broader trends in immigration history. In particular, she shows clearly how the lives of second- and third-generation immigrants were vastly different from those of the immigrants themselves. Lars's inability to communicate with his grandchildren, since he had not learned English and they could not speak Norwegian, illustrates the bittersweet character of the immigrant experience: While they were materially successful, many settlers nonetheless felt alienated in their new environment.

As Bergland notes, "The Stavig letters can be seen as both typical and atypical" (129). It is unusual to have both sides of the correspondence survive, and the letters cover a much longer period than most other sets of communication. Yet they also represent many of the overarching themes of Norwegian immigration to America. This volume is a valuable contribution to the study of Norwegian American history and a useful resource for anyone wishing to learn more about the subject.

Skull in the Ashes: Murder, a Gold Rush Manhunt, and the Birth of Circumstantial Evidence in America, by Peter Kaufman. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013. 287 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paperback.

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On February 3, 1897, fire destroyed the general store owned by Frank Novak, an ambitious businessman in the small community of Walford, Iowa. A corpse, burned beyond recognition, was found in the smoldering ruins and assumed to be Novak, who often slept in an upstairs room. But reports quickly surfaced about Novak's gambling habits, his ongoing financial troubles, and his recent purchases of life insurance policies. Also, another man was reported missing: Edward Murray, a hard-drinking drifter, who had been seen with Novak the night before the fire. When the few remaining features of the corpse's "ghastly grimacing skull" (5) appeared to match Murray and not Novak, the newly elected Benton County Attorney set out to find Frank Novak and bring him to justice. Neither the lawyer nor the insurance companies financing the search could have anticipated what