

Keeper of the Wild: The Life of Ernest Oberholtzer

By Joe Paddock

(St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001. 323 p. Cloth, \$27.95.)

MINNESOTAN ERNEST OBERHOLTZER

was one of the nation's great conservation activists during the early- and mid-twentieth century. Known primarily for his work as president of the Quetico-Superior Council, "Ober" spent a lifetime battling to preserve the boundary waters' roadless areas from logging, power dams, and airplanes, which to him posed unwarranted intrusions into the region's quiet and solitude. From his home island, called "The Mallard" on Rainy Lake, Oberholtzer took on and eventually prevailed against the great lumber baron Edward Backus, who wanted to build power dams in that watershed during the 1920s. Oberholtzer and his allies also triumphed in securing passage of the Shipstead-Nolan Act of 1930, which prohibited the logging of national-forest shorelines.

In this biography, Joe Paddock furnishes a warm and affectionate portrait of Oberholtzer—from his early years in Davenport, Iowa, and his attendance at Harvard University to his return to the Midwest and his conservation career at The Mallard. Paddock brings back all of Ober's driving passions in rich detail, including his fierce dedication to preserving the boundary waters and his lifelong affection for the Ojibwe, who named him "Atisokan" or Storyteller.

Interested in exploring the far north, Ober, joined by an Ojibwe, Billy Magee, canoed in 1912 from Cumberland House up the Saskatchewan River to Hudson Bay and back via the Hayes River and Lake Winnipeg, winning plaudits from those who doubted that anyone could make such a journey in one season. Paddock views the Hudson Bay journey as the central event of Ober's life; it acquainted him with native peoples and instilled a lifelong interest in them, and it taught him about the vast northern wilderness that became his passion to preserve.

In the genre of environmentalist biographies, which includes David Backes's study of Sigurd Olson, *A Wilderness Within*, Paddock's book is unique. In his preface the author makes clear that he does not intend to write a typical scholarly biography but, rather, a rich portrait. While Paddock does not ignore larger social or political contexts, he draws heavily on Oberholtzer's own words to drive the narrative forward, relying extensively on oral interviews from 1963 and 1964 that Oberholtzer left to the Minnesota Historical Society.

There are obvious strengths in such an approach. At times, the book is a page-turner. For this reader, the chapters about the 1912 Hudson Bay journey stand out, when



Ober and Magee exhausted themselves and endured many anxious hours lost or struggling to survive. The immediacy of the book makes compelling reading.

At other times, Paddock's liberal use of Ober's own words seems overdone, though that is a matter of personal taste. For historians, the book offers little on Oberholtzer's conservation activism after the Shipstead-Nolan Act of 1930, slighting his role in the battle to prohibit airplane flights over the roadless areas in the late 1940s and his contributions to the national campaign for the Wilderness Act of 1964. Oberholtzer was an important figure in the Wilderness Society in the post-World War II years as well, hosting two of the annual meetings of the Wilderness Society council at The Mallard.

But such comments should not detract from what Paddock achieves. He succeeds grandly in offering a rich portrait of Oberholtzer and reveals how "Atisokan" was a legend in his time: gifted storyteller, generous host at The Mallard, lover of books, friend of the Ojibwe, inveterate canoeist, and uncompromising preservationist. Paddock has told his story well.

Reviewed by Mark Harvey, an associate professor of history at North Dakota State University in Fargo. He is the author of an article on the politics of noise in the Boundary Waters forthcoming in the fall 2002 issue of this magazine and is completing a biography of Howard Zahniser, executive director of the Wilderness Society from 1945 to 1964 and a close friend of Ernest Oberholtzer.

Living Our Language: Ojibwe Tales & Oral Histories—A Bilingual Anthology

Edited by Anton Treuer

(St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001. 272 p. Cloth, \$29.95, paper, \$19.95.)

LIVING OUR LANGUAGE is a collection of stories, life experiences, and instruction from ten Ojibwe Indian elders of Minnesota's Leech Lake, White Earth, Red Lake, and Mille Lacs Reservations, as well as Wisconsin's St. Croix Reservation. The title introduces the author's purpose: An understanding of values, tradition, and ways of being Ojibwe must include the use of the Ojibwe language in our lives—living our language. By sharing their own life experiences, the elders, in their gentle and indirect voices, have given this instruction to Anton Treuer and now, through this collection, to others.

During the mid-to-late-nineties, Treuer, assistant professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University, conducted a



series of interviews with Ojibwe elders. Excerpts from those interviews, which he transcribed and translated into the English language, are the heart of *Living Our Language*, and they honor the reader as well as the author by sharing the elders' lives and knowledge. The book includes an introduction in which Treuer discusses issues related to the loss, use, and viability of the Ojibwe language today as well as how he collected these stories. A brief history of the Ojibwe Indians of Minnesota from the time of European contact provides a foundation for readers not familiar with Ojibwe life to more fully understand and appreciate the elders' words. Each of the interviews, which vary considerably in length, begins with a photograph and introduction to the elder's life; they are presented in the Ojibwe language on the left page and the English language on the right.

Living Our Language creates a portrait of Minnesota Ojibwe country that spans the twentieth century and begins the twenty-first. Against a landscape of years, the lives of the ten elders, their ancestors, and descendants continually emerge while gracefully creating room for the generations that they care for and educate—generations that will become elders in their own times. To view the experiences of one generation without acknowledging the contributions and gifts of lives before and after would be to miss seeing the depth and beauty of the portrait in its entirety; in the indirect fashion traditional to the Ojibwe, the ten elders guide us toward that view with humility and gratitude. Their stories contribute to our cumulative survival as a people, adding to our collective portrait while leaving space on the canvas to honor the experiences of generations to come.

That the number of both native and fluent speakers of the Ojibwe language has declined at a steadily accelerating rate throughout the past century continues to concern Ojibwe communities both on and off the reservations. In many communities just a handful of native speakers remain, and as they leave this life much of the knowledge of traditional Ojibwe history and ways of being leaves with them. As the opportunity to use Ojibwemowin in everyday life decreases, so does knowledge of the culture and traditional ways integral to survival as a people.

The worldview of the Ojibwe is collective, with a consciousness of community, of the individual's physical and spiritual sense of place, of gratitude for life, and of the ability and obligation to contribute to the good of the community. The interviews in *Living Our Language*, while spoken by individuals, are in fact group interviews in that the speakers acknowledge and include the teachings and experiences of the generations that preceded them. The stories in this collection are from both long ago and not so long ago, of teaching and learning by the oral tradition, of listening and observing, of reflecting and experiencing. In learning by doing what generations had done before them, these ten elders learned how to live as Indians should and what has been important to the survival of our communities. These

teachings sustained our elders through experiences that took them from their homes, families, and communities to Indian boarding schools, to government relocation programs, or to work in cities away from home.

The elders' life stories are striking in their simplicity and dignity; they are heartening, heartbreaking, and plainly beautiful in their demonstration of courage and spirit. The elders share with us by both words and examples the ways in which Indian people have lived and survived, the importance of one's place in the group, the necessity of living in a world parallel to Western ways with courage, resilience, acceptance, respect, and the understanding that everything in life is a gift from the Creator. Some of the stories are humorous and some are serious; they are about things that happened to the elders themselves, to others, or to Nana-boozhoo, that spirit being who in walking the world has provided an ongoing and everlasting education to the Anishinaabe people. And some are about everyday aspects of people's lives—their dogs, houses, extended family, and community—the foundation for a view of the world from the perspective of lives lived humbly and well, a connection between life and spirit, tangible and intangible, past to present, present to future.

Living Our Language is a gift from the elders to us all. Onishishin. Migwech.

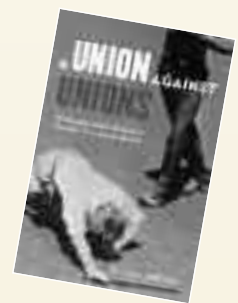
Reviewed by Linda LeGarde Grover, a member of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, who is an assistant professor of education and American Indian studies at the University of Minnesota—Duluth.

A Union Against Unions: The Minneapolis Citizens Alliance and Its Fight Against Organized Labor, 1903–1947

By William Millikan

(St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001. 495 p. Cloth, \$34.95.)

THIS STUDY IS AMONG the most important works of history ever published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. It carefully traces the history of organized employer resistance to unions in Minneapolis, offering a rich portrait of the constant industrial warfare produced by the refusal to recognize unions. Most of the book concentrates on the period from 1903, when the Citizens Alliance, Minneapolis's famous anti-union employer association, was formally founded, to the passage in 1939 of the Minnesota Labor Relations Act during the first administration of Governor Harold Stassen. It demonstrates that the enduring local opposition to labor



unions among owners, managers, and bankers in Minneapolis, as well as in St. Paul and Duluth, eventually had a national impact by influencing the design of the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, the statute that governs American labor relations today and that amended the National Labor Relations Act of 1935.

It has long been known that owners and managers in the U. S. will, with very rare exceptions, assert complete control over every aspect of the work process in their firms. Typically, scholars and nonscholars alike treat such a managerial approach as perhaps a bit extreme but also as unsurprising in a society that values entrepreneurship, individualism, and self-help.

But the independent historian William Millikan argues convincingly that ordinary psychology has little to do with what he chronicles. An understandable reluctance to share control over a company that you or someone you know owns or helps to manage will not explain the elaborate development of a theory of “Americanism” and a constant monitoring of how newspapers and schools portray industrial relations. It cannot explain persistent efforts to colonize and expand the law-enforcement and military institutions of national, state, and local government so that they can be quickly deployed against workers who join unions. It cannot explain the cultivation of a friendly judiciary and an insistence that, legally, trade unions are criminal conspiracies in restraint of trade. Proprietary feelings any one of us might have cannot quite explain why left-wing worker newspapers ought to be closed for sedition. Nor will simple psychology explain a hysterical and highly organized reaction to a campaign by the League of Women Voters to make child labor unconstitutional.

If sharing control over the shop floor were simply a case of grudging hesitation, would a thorough system of vocational education be erected and presented as a national model for apprenticeship training and for managing the transition from grade school to work? Would the creation of public art collections and museums to elevate the culture of ordinary people be contemplated and then accomplished? Would an underground of agencies for industrial espionage be established and financed? Or does a slow burn over who runs the workplace typically lead to the establishment of a highly complex set of interlocking organizations, each with an innocuous and civic-sounding name, each with a well-paid full-time staff whose job it is to collect and disseminate information about the labor market and to discipline firms that actually do want to share control over the workplace with unions?

It all happened in Minnesota, Millikan shows. Indeed, he goes well beyond the conventional wisdom to paint a new portrait of managerial ideology in America. The resistance to collective bargaining that he describes was not just bottomless hostility. Instead, it represented a highly creative, rampant will to social and political power. To be sure,

eventually an adversary every bit as tough and visionary—the legendary Local 574 of Minneapolis—emerged to challenge this ideology and its leaders and institutions. Yet, in a terrible irony, the union victory in the truckers’ strike of 1934 in Minneapolis sowed the seeds of a successful amendment of national labor law in ways that today still subtly undermine trade unions.

This book should alter how business history, labor history, and labor-relations scholarship are practiced. It is a masterpiece of painstaking, irrefutable historical research based on exceptionally thorough, diligent, and careful use of a very wide range of hard-to-find primary sources.

Reviewed by Richard M. Valelly, professor of political science at Swarthmore College and author of Radicalism in the States: The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the American Political Economy (1989).

The Jeffers Petroglyphs: Native American Rock Art on the Midwestern Plains

By Kevin L. Callahan

(St. Paul: Prairie Smoke Press, 2001. 114 p. Paper, \$16.95.)

MINNESOTA’S JEFFERS PETROGLYPHS

is one of the world’s premier aboriginal rock-art sites. It consists of thousands of images pecked into a ledge of red quartzite. First mapped by Theodore Lewis in 1889, it lies in the prairie of northern Cottonwood County in southwestern Minnesota. In 1966 the main concentration of petroglyphs was purchased by the State of Minnesota and given to the Minnesota Historical Society, which began interpreting the site in the early 1970s and has recently built a new visitors’ center there.

In 1971 Gordon Lothson directed the only detailed archaeological examination of the site and five years later published his study in the Minnesota Historical Society’s Prehistoric Archaeology Series. Lothson illustrated almost 2,000 individual glyphs in 218 clusters. Most were located on MHS property, with another 11 clusters nearby.

Lothson suggested that the glyphs were carved during two periods: an early period documented by representations of atlatls (throwing sticks) and large projectile points, and a later period documented by images similar to those used on the hide paintings of Plains Indians. Lothson saw four basic types of images at Jeffers: animals, hunting tools, human figures, and geometric designs. He interpreted their purpose to be associated with hunting magic, sacred ceremonies, and records of events.

Author Kevin Callahan has long been interested in Native American spirituality and archaeological attempts



to gain insight into the deeper meanings of past cultures. Rock-art locations are one of the few archaeological sites where this type of insight is a natural avenue of research, and this book is an obvious extension of Callahan's interests. Divided into three major sections with a glossary and a detachable foldout map of the site, the book is a relatively quick read with its generous spacing and wide margins. A foreword by Alan Woolworth, former chief archaeologist for the MHS, provides brief historical background.

The first section presents what Callahan calls "frequently asked" questions. While most probably are frequently asked by visitors, a few are out of place, such as "What pigments were used to make pictographs?" (The Jeffers glyphs are not pictographs) and "What is the focus of contemporary Dakota and Ojibwe spirituality?" (Why include Ojibwe, and why blend two different views?). The glossary also includes some irrelevant entries.

The second section describes common motifs and symbols at Jeffers, interspersed with information that may help to interpret the glyphs. Some of Callahan's categories are descriptive (sun-headed figures), some are speculative (ear spoons), and some are largely intuitive (medicine bags). In this section, Callahan goes beyond Lothson's four basic categories to provide some additional insight into possible glyph meanings.

In the final section, Callahan interprets a scene depicting two adjacent figures with down-turned arms and atlatls. He believes these figures, as well as several others in the immediate vicinity, were made by the same artist. The scene, he says, is a mythic battle where one warrior has thrown an atlatl dart into another. He sees war paint on one figure and perhaps ear ornaments on the other. If Callahan's interpretation is right, it is puzzling why the atlatl is still attached to the dart in the wounded warrior's chest, but the suggestion about identifying individual artists is insightful and goes beyond Lothson's work.

The main strength of Callahan's book is its extensive use of ethnographic material, which is lacking in Lothson's volume. Because of the subject matter, because culturally diagnostic artifacts are so sparse near the site, and because the glyphs themselves cannot be precisely dated, ethnographic materials are perhaps key in our ability to interpret the Jeffers site. Callahan is on the right track.

The lack of some key information, however, makes Callahan's book a less than satisfying guide to Jeffers. While extensively illustrated, the illustrations focus on a few glyphs and never give us a sense of what larger panels look like and how the glyphs are related to each other. The power of the Jeffers site is in its great mass of petroglyphs in close proximity. It is also puzzling why some key references from *Minnesota Archaeologist*, including Dean Snow's 1962 article on southern Minnesota petroglyphs and Mark Dudzik's 1995 article on Minnesota rock art, were omitted. Dudzik's map depicts a recently located petroglyph complex

only a few miles north of Jeffers in Brown County, a complex of which Callahan seems unaware.

The failure to provide the reader with a brief overview of southwestern Minnesota prehistory is another flaw in Callahan's book. The major published work is not even cited (Scott F. Anfinson's *The Archaeology of Southwestern Minnesota*, 1997). How can the glyphs be related to prehistoric lifeways in the region without knowledge of those lifeways? For example, Callahan repeats Lothson's interpretation of an Archaic period at Jeffers due to representations of atlatls and large projectile points supposedly made of copper. Yet post-Archaic peoples in southwestern Minnesota were still using large projectile points probably affixed to darts delivered by atlatls. Furthermore, almost no copper has been found in southwestern Minnesota, and certainly no copper points of Archaic age.

While the Dakota were the dominant occupants of southwestern Minnesota at the time of white settlement, they were apparently relative newcomers to the area. Callahan is right to introduce the ethnography and legends of other tribes in order to investigate links to the Late Prehistoric, but why discuss Ojibwe spirituality? The Ojibwe were never present in southwestern Minnesota.

Which of Callahan's and Lothson's books on Jeffers would best help to interpret the site? They are complementary, with Lothson's aimed more at the serious student of archaeology and Callahan's at the general public. Lothson's book provides a better overview of all the glyphs, while Callahan's gives us much-needed ethnographic background. Since Lothson's is out of print, there is no choice of which to buy.

All books about ancient spirituality are highly speculative, but the good ones are also highly intriguing and provide insight into various ways of looking at the world. Robert Hall of the University of Illinois has spent much of his career pursuing this topic, and his 1997 book, *An Archaeology of the Soul*, is a worthwhile read for all archaeologists and rock-art enthusiasts. I would encourage these same people to pick up Callahan's book, not so much as a guide to the Jeffers petroglyphs but as an example of available avenues of research and a celebration of a premier rock-art site that is open to the public.

Reviewed by Scott F. Anfinson, author of The Archaeology of Southwestern Minnesota and the National Register archaeologist at the Minnesota Historical Society.

■ Anna M. Rice is the winner of this year's *Minnesota History* Publication Award for the best senior-division History Day paper on a Minnesota topic. This year's theme was "Revolution, Reaction, Reform," and Rice's paper examined one man's passion for reform in "General Christopher C. Andrews: Leading the Minnesota Forestry Revolution." Awarded by the editors of *Minnesota History*, the prize includes \$50 and publication in a future issue. Rice, who later took first place at nationals, is a tenth grader at St. Paul Central High School.

■ A clutch of new community histories will interest readers with Minnesota roots. New releases in Arcadia Publishing's small paperback Images of America series include photo histories of Duluth (by Sheldon T. Aubut and Maryanne C. Norton), Hibbing (by Heather Jo Maki),

Spring Grove (by Chad Muller), and North Minneapolis's Jewish community (by Rhoda Lewin). Another Arcadia paperback, *Growing Up On a Minnesota Farm* (by Michael Cotter and Beverly Jackson), has vintage images and personal stories of farm life between 1930 and 1970. Each publication is priced at \$19.99.

Another community history, *Pelican Lakes—The History of a Minnesota Community* (287 p., paper, \$25.00) by Justine M. Kingham and Howard W. Ottoson is available from the Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls. Included in the illustrated volume is detailed information about early resorts, beaches, and specific cottages and properties.

■ "To save the small houses of working men and women is to bring a needed perspective to our history, to offer a corrective to the fixation on the big and elegant."

So begins historian Helen McCann White's new book, *A Small Yellow House* (Edina: Beaver Pond Press, 2001, 84 p., paper, \$16.95). Meticulously researched, engagingly written, and handsomely illustrated, the book takes readers on a journey of discovery as the indefatigable White pursues her aim of restoring the derelict Taylor's Falls property while learning everything she can about its former inhabitants. Family and community history, preservation ideals, nuts-and-bolts restoration work, and the author's own voice mingle gracefully in this slender volume, available from the publisher at 5125 Danen's Drive, Edina 55439-1465.

■ Obituaries distill what society values and wants to remember about its deceased. Nineteenth-century men, for example, were brave, gallant, vigilant, bold, honest, and dutiful; women were patient, resigned, obedient, affectionate, amiable, pious, gentle, virtuous, tender, and useful. *Obituaries in American Culture* by Janice Hume (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000, 198 p., cloth, \$45.00, paper, \$18.00) examines newspaper obituaries from New York, New Orleans, Baltimore, Chicago, and San Francisco between 1818 and 1930 to show how American values and social attitudes have changed.

■ Innovators in landscape architecture in the Midwest created some of our most recognizable parks, cemeteries, recreation areas, and other public gathering places. *Modern Landscape Architecture*, edited by William H. Tishler (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000, cloth, \$37.50), includes essays on 13 landscape architects, many of whose names may be unfamiliar to readers but whose boulevards, parks, suburbs, and cemeteries are part of many Midwesterners' everyday lives. Minnesota readers will be particularly interested in Tishler's essay on Horace Cleveland, whose vast Twin Cities regional park system "remains one of the great works of landscape architecture in America," and Lance Neckar's essay on Warren H. Manning, whose commissions included several large private estates on Lake Minnetonka, as well as Minneapolis's Loring Park and the University of Minnesota expansion in the early 1900s.

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