

OUR READERS WRITE:

Many readers were touched by the article “Smartest Horse in the U.S. Army: Whiskey of Fort Snelling,” which appeared in the Winter 2009–10 issue. Suzanne Laukka of Eden Prairie wrote to thank author Marilyn Slovak for her research and added:

“I went to grade school in Minneapolis in the mid-1950s. We routinely had several field trips a year. I remember none of them—except a portion of one trip when our bus passed Whiskey’s grave at Fort Snelling. The bus driver/narrator spoke of Whiskey with such enthusiasm, wonder, and affection that I absorbed his feelings.

“I’m one of those who occasionally put flowers on Whiskey’s grave, but until now I had no firm idea of the real Whiskey’s talent and accomplishments. (How sad, though, that he and Hazelrigg weren’t allowed to get together again.) Thanks for filling in the blanks. He more than lives up to my imaginings.”

■ In *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008, 390 p., paper, \$29.00), authors Maria E. Erling and Mark Granquist trace the synod from its founding in 1860 by a small group of Swedish and Norwegian immigrants in Wisconsin through the mergers of the twentieth century, culminating in the group’s membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Setting their detailed history in the context of the diverse and sometimes argumentative story of American Lutheranism, the authors probe the ways in which “ethnic, linguistic, social, religious, and political aspects functioned to unite an immigrant Lutheran people” as well as how personality, geography, and memory worked together to shape the community into a church.

■ Sixty-two annotated documents, now translated from the French language and gathered from archives in France, Canada, and the United States, comprise *Edge of Empire: Documents of Michilimackinac, 1671–1716* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press and Mackinac State Historic Parks, 2008, 192 p., cloth, \$39.95). Together, these resources provide an overview of the French fur trade and a detailed look at Michilimackinac—a node in an important commercial enterprise—and the

people who lived and traded there. The documents reveal the personal and professional relationships among the traders as well as the roles of Native Americans and women in the trade. All translations are by Joseph L. Peysner who coedited the book with José António Brandão.

■ Local boy makes good: Bob Dylan departed Hibbing in 1959 but cast a backward glance with the album *Highway 61 Revisited*, released just six years later. Now Colleen J. Sheehy and Thomas Swiss have brought together eminent Dylan scholars and experts in such far-reaching fields as labor history, African American studies, and Japanese studies to assess Dylan’s career, influences, and global impact on music and culture. *Highway 61 Revisited: Bob Dylan’s Road from Minnesota to the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, 302 p., paper, \$22.95) presents a cultural and historical geography of his dramatic rise, storied career, and unmatched iconic status—a map to what Dylan termed his “place in the universe.”

■ A heavily embellished “jewel box” of a theater, the Sheldon in Red Wing first opened in 1904 and has survived fire and changes in theater-goers’ tastes over the ensuing decades. This dazzling survivor plays the leading role in *Sheldon’s Gift: Music, Movies and Melodrama in the*

Desirable City (St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press, 2009, 268 p., paper, \$16.95) by Thomas L. Olson. Olson traces the story of itinerant actors and musicians, grand and not-so-grand opera houses, Hollywood’s beginnings and Golden Age, the disappearance of single screens, and the rebirth of the Sheldon: 150 years of theaters and show business as played out in one of the region’s small cities.

■ Performance of a different sort abounds in *The Basis of Belief: A Century of Drama and Debate at the University of Minnesota* (Lakeville, MN: Pogo Press, 2008, 304 p., paper, \$15.95). Steven J. Keillor considers selected controversies energetically debated by educators, administrators, and students for over a century at the university. The clash between an experimental, scientific basis for knowledge and a reliance on testimony prompted discussion about the place of science, religion, literature, academic freedom, and loyalty in the curriculum and in student life. Drawing upon diaries, letters, published accounts, and interviews, Keillor assesses how religion affected these subjects in academic life.

■ Stearns County, home to the greatest density of Catholic hamlets in the United States, contains fifty Catholic churches, most built between 1871 and 1930. *Legacies of Faith: The Catholic Churches of Stearns County* (St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press, 2009, 240 p., paper, \$19.95) by John Roscoe and Robert Roscoe, with photography by Doug Ohman, tells the stories of these churches and the people who built them. Divided by early and modern designations, worship spaces ranging from Albany’s Church of the Seven Dolors to Sartell’s Church of St. Francis Xavier are presented with parish histories, architectural descriptions, and handsome interior and exterior views.

■ Railroad books, old and new: Two volumes from the University of Minnesota Press picture venerable roads that once served the state. Don L. Hof-sommer’s *The Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway, A Photographic History* (Min-

neapolis, 2009, 277 p., paper, \$49.95) traces the company from its birth in the 1870s through decades of ups and downs until it was finally absorbed by the Chicago & North Western in 1960. Copious, large illustrations, meaty captions, and short explanatory essays at the beginning of each chapter tell the story of this mid-western railroad.

Back in print is Jim Scribbins's *Milwaukee Road Remembered*, first published in 1990 (Minneapolis, 2008, 167 p., paper, \$29.95). This book, too, introduces each photo-rich chapter with a brief essay, examining topics such as the famous Hiawathas and other "name" trains, types of cars, and the road's electric, steam, and diesel freights.

■ From the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth, many parlors featured stereopticon viewers, hand-held devices that rendered images, printed in duplicate, into three dimensions. Professional and amateur photographers alike produced hundreds of stereoscopic cards of scenes ranging from men at work to children at play. *Minnesota in 3D: A*

Look Back in Time, edited by Michael Dregni (Minneapolis: Voyageur Press, 2009, n. p., hard cover, \$19.99) provides reproductions of 45 of these photos along with a viewer that folds out of the book's front cover. Scenes range from familiar views of the 1886 St. Paul Winter Carnival ice castle to less frequently seen shots of threshing, mining, and shipping. Each image faces a page of explanation, some of it faulty (for example, the Washburn A Mill is misnamed the Washington Mill in the caption for the famed explosion picture). The book contains no contents page or index, so readers will have to leaf through to discover the selections.

■ With a sure eye for a good story, author Frederick L. Johnson recounts the history of a place transformed. In five thematic sections, *Suburban Dawn: The Emergence of Richfield, Edina and Bloomington*, written with Thomas U. Tuttle, recounts the development of southern Hennepin County from the 1820s, when it was "Dominion of the Dakota" to "Suburban Satisfaction" in the 1970s, when the entertainment strip

along I-494 lured visitors to Bloomington, which became Minnesota's fourth-largest city. Along the way, we learn of claim jumpers, the arrival of airmail service, tract housing, and the "red scare" in the suburbs. *Suburban Dawn* (Richfield, MN: Richfield Historical Society, 2009, 224 p., cloth, \$29.95) is well written, amply footnoted, and brimming with illustrations.

■ Drawn from the pages of the beloved *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* magazine—published by the Department of Natural Resources since 1940—*Our Neck of the Woods: Exploring Minnesota's Wild Places* edited by Daniel J. Philippon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, 304 p., paper, \$19.95) collects writings that evoke a strong sense of place and celebrate the state's great outdoors. Sigurd F. Olson, Paul Gruchow, Bill Holm Jan Zita Grover, Greg Breining, Laurie Allman, and many others explore themes ranging from embracing winter to finding wilderness amid development, from hunting to birding to other outdoor activities that help define the very essence of Minnesota.

■ For almost twenty years leading up to 1900, John Beargrease delivered the mail between Two Harbors and Grand Marais using dogsled, canoe, or horses depending on the season. His tireless efforts played a pivotal role in the successful development of this once remote region. *John Beargrease: Legend of Minnesota's North Shore* (Duluth: Holy Cow! Press, 2009, 173 p., paper, \$14.95) by Daniel Lancaster offers the first comprehensive biography of this celebrated adventurer—now the namesake of the annual dogsled marathon—and the relationship that developed among prospectors, fishing families, and the Ojibwe—the people who chose scenic surroundings amid a challenging climate.

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