

■ “More than anything else, the Lincoln Memorial encapsulates Americans’ struggle to capture, use, and find meaning in the matter and energy that swirl around and through them,” writes Mark Fiege in his new book, *The Republic of Nature: An Environmental History of the United States* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012, 584 p., cloth, \$34.95). “Like the nation that created it, the Lincoln Memorial is a monument to nature and to the efforts of citizens to shape nature in the image of their ideals.”

To show how humans, resources, landscapes, ideologies, and actions are all part of the environment, Fiege examines eight landmark moments in U.S. history. These include some case studies with obvious environmental impact—building the atomic bomb, creating a transcontinental railroad—and some surprising ones, such as the Salem witch trials and racial issues culminating in *Brown vs. Board of Education*. The book is long and the type is small, but the writing is compelling and will reward general readers as well as environmental historians with a new way of thinking about history.

■ The exploits of Iktomi, the Lakota trickster whose mischief and missteps know no bounds, are retold in the beautifully illustrated children’s book . . . *Walking Along . . . Plains Indian Trickster Stories*. In this 68-page hardbound book (with reference notes!), Caldecott Medal winner Paul Goble retells six stories, all of which traditionally begin with Iktomi “walking along.” A foreword by Albert White Hat Sr. explains the history of Iktomi and American Indian oral tradition. Published in 2011 by the South Dakota State Historical Society Press, the book is available for \$19.95.

■ Paul L. Hedren’s *After Custer: Loss and Transformation in Sioux Country* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011, 272 p., cloth, \$24.95) examines the effects of the Great Sioux War on the northern Great Plains in the late-nineteenth century. After the war, U.S. military control led to major changes in the area: The railroads expanded, and

hunters discovered and then wiped out the great buffalo herds. With the buffalo gone, cattlemen moved into the area, bringing along their own culture. Forced to surrender their lands, the native peoples of the northern Great Plains were confined to reservations, where they endured more hardships than they had during the war itself. Hedren examines the aftermath of the events as a whole, telling a sad and dramatic story.

■ Minnesota’s Twin Cities rank fourth in the nation and forty-fifth in the world when it comes to the number of patents issued per capita, according to Doug P. Cornelius, author of *Good News—I Failed: A Story of Inventing in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: Mill City Press, 2012, 185 p., paper, \$13.95). This hybrid book is mostly the fictional tale of a young boy learning the history of invention and Minnesota inventors from his grandfather. An interesting appendix, “The Minnesota 80,” lists the inventors Cornelius deems to be the state’s “greatest,” along with their trade or education, major inventions, number of patents, company affiliations, and other research. “Self-taught engineer” appears often on this list. Included among the men and women who gave the world medical devices, tape, sticky notes, and knitting machinery is the author’s father, Richard T. Cornelius, who gained 180 U.S. patents, including one for widely used beer and soft-drink dispensing equipment.

■ In his memoir *Blue Guitar Highway* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, 271 p., cloth, \$24.95), musician and Minnesotan Paul Metsa shares the details of his life, largely but not entirely focused on his career as a singer-songwriter. The Iron Range native got his first guitar and began taking lessons at age seven. He moved to Minneapolis at the end of the psychedelic 1970s, lived there through the 1980s, when the city was “ground zero” of American popular music, and has been part of the local and national music scenes ever since. Metsa’s highway winds through personal and family matters, the ups and downs of a

musician’s work and lifestyle, and the famous people he has known as friends and fellow players.

■ The memoir of author Wendell Affield’s experience, *Muddy Jungle Rivers: A River Assault Boat Cox’n’s Memory Journey of His War in Vietnam and Return Home* (Bemidji: Hawthorn Petal Press, 2012, 319 p., paper, \$19.95) is a deeply personal account of a Minnesota man’s service in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. Affield’s account is highly detailed and brutally honest, holding back little, if anything, about the horrors of his war experience.

■ Repress the desire to hop into your car and visit the sites profiled in Tony Dierckins’ and Maryanne C. Norton’s new book: they’re gone. *Lost Duluth: Landmarks, Industries, Buildings, Homes, and the Neighborhoods in Which They Stood* (Duluth: Zenith City Press, 2012, 215 p., paper, \$24.00) is a comprehensive and informative chronicle of the vanished buildings and places listed in the book’s title. The authors go beyond dates and architectural description to tell the life story of each place: its builder and owner or residents or workers; its changing uses and ultimate demise. More than 400 photographs and drawings illustrate this look at a city that was home to wealthy industrialists, comfortable middle-class folks, and impoverished workers alike.

■ In the nineteenth century, economic reasons propelled many Europeans to seek a better life in the United States—among them, the Finns. Arnold A. Alanen’s new book, *Finns in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012, 114 p., paper, \$16.95), carefully describes the “why and where of immigration,” explaining how America Fever led many impoverished rural folk to move to Minnesota’s forests, farms, mines, towns, and cities. Minnesota has had the nation’s second-largest Finnish population since the 1880s—Michigan is first—while Minnesota’s current population holds the nation’s highest proportion of Finnish Americans. Alanen’s book,

part of the *People of Minnesota* ethnic history series, examines specific Finnish communities in the state as well as occupations, religious life, organizations, and politics. A separate section describes Minnesota's communities of Finland Swedes, the "minority within a minority" of Swedish-speaking ethnic Swedes born in Finland.

■ *Bad Blood and Economics: A History of Teacher Strikes in Minnesota* by Michael Resman (St. Cloud: North Star Press, 2011, 276 p., paper, \$16.95) explores the "hows" and "whys" of teacher strikes within the state. Resman stresses the importance of negotiation for both sides involved and offers chapters dedicated to preventing strikes and explaining the importance of the right to strike. The second half of the book is a chronological history of strikes across the state between 1946 and 2005, including five chapters dedicated to the 35 that occurred in 1981.

■ To celebrate its sesquicentennial, Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter commissioned two books from Twin Cities author Dave Kenney. *Gustavus: 150 Years of History* (St. Peter: Gustavus Adolphus, 2011, 267 p., cloth \$35.00) is a straightforward narrative of the evolution and growth of an institution founded by Swedish American pastor Eric Norelius in a church house in Red Wing in 1862. The book chronicles the school in war and peace, times of serenity and turbulence, updating a previous centennial history.

The companion volume, *Gustavus: 150 Years of Images & Stories* (130 p., paper, \$24.99), takes a different approach. Arranged alphabetically (an "Adolphabet") this large-format volume uses photos—color and black-and-white—quotes, and short essays to cover topics ranging from Ancestry to Zeitgeist. The books may be ordered online from the college bookstore: [www.bookmark.gustavus.edu](http://www.bookmark.gustavus.edu).

■ The *Journal of American History* called David A. Nichols's *Lincoln and the Indians: Civil War Policy and Politics*, first published in 1978, "provocative and

original," adding that "Nichols has given us a valuable study of a wretched side of the Lincoln era." This important book, now back in print with a new preface by the author (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012, 223 p., paper, \$16.95) is the only thorough treatment of Lincoln's Indian policy during the Civil War and the corrupt "Indian System" of government aid that mainly benefited ambitious whites.

■ Who was the only girl ever to play in the state boys' hockey tournament? Who scored the winning goal in the longest game in tournament history? *Puck Heaven: Minnesota State Boys' Hockey Tournament Trivia* by Jim Hoey (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2011, 295 p., paper, \$19.95) is an essential read for anyone who loves hockey. More than one thousand questions and answers fill this book. Even the most die-hard hockey fans are bound to learn something new.

## MINNESOTA HISTORY

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