

■ The Solon J. Buck award for the best article published in *Minnesota History* during 2011 has been won by co-authors Tom Beer and Tom O'Connell for their article in the Summer issue, "Father Francis Gilligan and the Struggle for Civil Rights." Born in Massachusetts and trained to be a priest and professor of moral theology, Gilligan was released from his home diocese to teach at St. Paul Seminary after earning his doctoral degree in 1928. Arriving in St. Paul, he combined his teaching career with a personal mission to combat discrimination, merging Catholic social-justice teachings with sociological approaches to the state's social, economic, and cultural environment. Using a wide array of print and manuscript sources, the authors show how Fr. Gilligan skillfully built a coalition of labor, religious, civil rights, and government workers to effect social change long before the activist 1960s. Co-author O'Connell is a professor of political studies at Metropolitan State University, St. Paul; Beer is a former community organizer and union business agent, lobbyist, and political director.

The Theodore C. Blegen Award for the best article by a Minnesota Historical Society staff member goes to Christopher G. Welter for "How Jesse James Nearly Robbed Northfield . . . in 1948," which appeared in the Winter 2011-12 issue. Welter's interest was piqued when, as an MHS collections assistant (he is now archivist at the Minnesota Discovery Center in Chisholm), he was digitizing letters to the warden of Stillwater State Prison. Among them were inquires about incarcerated James Gang member Cole Younger, sent by Frank Dalton, a Civil War comrade of Jesse James. Working outward from these letters, Welter mined local and national records in order to trace the tale of Dalton's attempt to pass himself off as the infamous outlaw (long believed to be dead) and how that masquerade affected Minnesota. Northfield, about to launch its first-ever Jesse James Day celebration, invited the old man (whoever he was) to be the parade's honorary grand marshal. Welter's article details the resulting controversy: Hoax

or not, should a murderous outlaw be allowed to lead a town parade?

This year's judges were Thomas Saylor, professor of history at Concordia University, St. Paul, and Kate Roberts, senior exhibit developer at the Minnesota Historical Society. Each award includes a prize of \$600.

■ Historian Carroll Englehardt's memoir, *The Farm at Holstein Dip: An Iowa Boyhood* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012, 229 p., paper, \$22.00), is a clear-eyed portrait of coming-of-age on a northeastern Iowa farm in the middle of the twentieth century. Unlike many memoirs, this one balances a remembered life with a historian's interest in the bigger picture. Reaching far beyond family history, Englehardt interviewed former friends and neighbors and delved into local repositories as well as the national literature to set his personal story in broader perspective, reaching back several generations and forward to the present. Chapters on home, farm, town (Elkader), church, and school move the story in ever-widening circles, as the fourth-generation farm boy raised by hard-working and frugal parents grows up in a radically changing rural world shadowed by the Cold War and the threat of economic decline. A concluding chapter, studded with facts and figures, presents Elkader and the area, including his former family farm, today. Rooted in Iowa and Englehardt's personal experiences, this book tells a larger story about midwestern America.

■ In collaboration with photographer David Brisance, naturalist Jim Gilbert has produced an attractive chronicle of the North Star State's flora and fauna, all in their appropriate seasons. *Minnesota's Outdoor Wonders: Exploring the Wonders of Minnesota Month by Month* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2012, 159 p., paper, \$19.95) combines color photographs with brief paragraphs explaining, for example, what that chipmunk is doing with its forepaws on a slender branch (looking for hazelnuts). While the photos and the paragraphs range from

the unexpected and delightful to the more mundane, the book provides much to interest and inform general readers.

■ *The White Earth Nation: Ratification of a Native Democratic Constitution*, edited by Gerald Vizenor and Jill Doerfler (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012, 100 p., paper, \$16.00) is a slender book that tells an important story. Ratified in 2009 in northern Minnesota, this document is the country's first indigenous democratic constitution, and it provides a clear Native perspective on sovereignty, independent governance, traditional leadership values, and the importance of individual and human rights. Wrapped around the full text of the constitution are an introduction by legal and political scholar David E. Wilkins, who was a special consultant to the constitutional convention; an essay, "Constitutional Consent: Native Traditions and Parchment Rights," by scholar and prolific author Vizenor, a delegate and one of the writers of the constitution; and "A Citizen's Guide to the White Earth Constitution," a collection of eight articles by Doerfler, a University of Minnesota professor, that were previously published in the reservation's official newspaper.

■ Children's books, old and new: *Greet the Dawn the Lakota Way*, written and illustrated by S. D. Nelson of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2012, 48 p., hardback, \$18.95), counsels "We greet the dawn with a smiling heart, for all is beautiful at the beginning of a new day." The story proceeds through an appreciation of the world and its gifts as dawn turns to day and then evening and night. An introduction by the author explains the Lakota way of living life in balance, and an afterword provides some information about Nelson, his illustrations and sources of inspiration. The book is meant for children between the ages of five and nine; the younger ones will need an adult to read it for them.

Back in print is *Children of the Northlights* by Ingrid d'Aulaire and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire (Minneapolis: University of

Minnesota Press, 2012, 40 p., hardback, \$16.95). First published in 1935, the book recounts the adventures of a Sami brother and sister in far northern Norway as they play through the long winter and then journey with a reindeer herd, leaving their home in the mountains for school in a faraway village. Along the way, readers learn about Sami culture and traditions in the polar north. (Sami has replaced Lapp as the preferred name; while this edition acknowledges the change, it retains the wording of the original.) Beautiful illustrations by the Caldecott-award winning authors-and-illustrators accompany the text. No age level is given, but like collections of fairy tales and legends, this story is not meant to be an elementary reader.

■ James Morton Turner begins his book, *The Promise of Wilderness: American Environmental Politics since 1964* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012, 520 p., cloth, \$39.95), where many other environmental histories end: with the passage of the federal legislation that established protection for wilderness areas. Looking

at the debates that have raged and the politics, coalitions, schisms, and processes that have developed since 1964—about *how* rather than *whether* to protect wilderness—Turner locates the politics of wilderness at the center of all environmental history of the last half-century. This book tells and analyzes that complex story, connecting the dots from grassroots activists through state, regional, and national players, places, and policies.

■ The first book in a three-volume collection, *From America to Norway: Norwegian-American Immigrant Letters, 1838-1914*, edited and translated by Orm Øverland (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Assn., 2012, 472 p., cloth, \$50.00), offers rich details about successes and troubles, life, and social institutions in various Norwegian immigrant communities. Covering the period from 1838 to 1870, this volume presents many letters sent to the homeland from Wisconsin as well as from settlements stretching from New York to Texas and including Minnesota (in the later years) and Iowa. The series is a translation of a

seven-volume Norwegian edition, itself based on letters in the Norwegian National Archives. This book has no index; later, a comprehensive index to all three volumes, plus appendixes, will be issued as a fourth volume. Meanwhile, an online index for this collection is available on the Norwegian-American Historical Association's website.

■ While most natural disasters and related tragedies hold the public's attention for a while and then fade away, fascination with the 1975 wreck of the ore carrier *Edmund Fitzgerald* in Lake Superior has proved enduring. Back in print again (the first edition was in 2005) is Michael Schumacher's well-written and comprehensive account, *Mighty Fitz: The Sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012, 243 p., paper, \$16.95). One of the largest ships on the Great Lakes, it went down unexpectedly, despite being caught in the storied gales of November, and no cause has ever been determined. All crew members lost their lives. Schumacher's book begins with a description of the ship and the weather and takes readers through the events of the fateful day, as best as they can be reconstructed. The final chapter, "The Tarnished Gravesite," surveys the media coverage and successive expeditions to the wreckage, much to the distress of the victims' families.

## MINNESOTA HISTORY

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