

## OUR READERS WRITE:

Inspired to write by Jane King Hession's "Postwar Prefab, Minnetonka" feature describing homes designed by architect Lisl Close, R. Richard Gauger of St. Paul shared his family experience with earlier prefabricated houses, the Gunnison Homes. This company was established in 1936 in New Albany, Indiana; its architects designed numerous models with interchangeable parts, and workers produced them using assembly-line methods similar to Henry Ford's.



"My father, architect Ray R. Gauger, was the local representative for the Gunnison Homes in Minnesota in the late 1930s. The home at 1950 Highland Parkway, St. Paul, was constructed in 1939 and was my boyhood home. Additional Gunnison homes were built in Newport, Minnesota, as well as North Dakota prior to World War II.

"After World War II, U.S. Steel purchased the Gunnison Homes . . . perhaps because the windows were of steel construction. The price of the home in 1939 was about \$11,000. It was constructed in one day less than a month. It had three bedrooms, a dining room, living room, and kitchen, all on one floor."

■ History Day award: Korlekuor Akiti's paper, "Sister Kenny: A Struggle Against Two Evils," has won the 2013 *Minnesota History Magazine* Award for the best senior-division History Day paper on a Minnesota topic. Addressing this year's theme, "Turning Points in History: People, Ideas, Events," her paper examines both the Australian-born nurse's revolutionary—and successful—new treatment for polio and how her persistence in the face of medical disbelief eventually transformed the practice of physical therapy. Ms. Akiti is a student at Blake School in Minneapolis.

■ Spanning the nation and nearly two centuries of practice, *Food Co-ops in America: Communities, Consumption, and Economic Democracy* by Anne Meis Knupfer (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013, cloth, 273 p., \$29.95) examines the economic and democratic ideals of these stores that have long existed to serve laborers, ethnic communities and, of course, the general population. The first chapter gives a helpful overview of American cooperatives from the 1830s up until the Great Depression. Successive chapters move forward in time with both overviews

and case studies of specific shops with specific economic, political, environmental, and/or social goals. The final chapter is devoted to co-ops in the Twin Cities, including an introduction to its pre-1970s ventures but largely focusing on the more recent ones and the story of the co-op wars, previously told in Craig Cox's *Storefront Revolution*. Knupfer asks readers to imagine the possibilities for change that food co-ops might offer to their communities, members, and a globalized world.

■ Not just the structures, but the stories behind them dot volume two of William Towner Morgan's charming miscellany, *Earth, Wood, Stone: Central Minnesota Lives and Landmarks* (Sartell, MN: the author, 2013, 167 p., paper, \$19.95). This series of articles, originally written for publication in the *St. Cloud Times*, covers buildings and landscapes ranging over 150 years, describing and picturing the region's building types, ruins, trails, and protected natural areas. The volume is available from the author, 834 Village Ave. Sartell, 56377 or [wtmorgan@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:wtmorgan@stcloudstate.edu); include name, address, and email address along with \$3.00 for shipping.

■ A comprehensive collection of 14 essays plumbs the question: What does it mean to be Metis? In *Contours of a People: Metis Family, Mobility, and History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012, 482 p., cloth, \$39.95) editors Nicole St-Onge, Carolyn Podruchny, and Brenda Macdougall have gathered essays that consider issues ranging from Metis rights under Canadian law to how the Library of Congress categorizes scholarship about the Metis and the role of women in maintaining economic and social networks.

■ While historians have long realized that history is as much interpretation as pure fact, Erik Christiansen provides case studies in *Channeling the Past: Politicizing History in Postwar America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013, 302 p., paper, \$29.95, e-book, \$21.95). Basing his arguments on selected phenomena beginning in the late 1940s—History Book Club, Du Pont's *Cavalcade of America* and CBS's *You Are There* programs, the Freedom Train that traveled the country with historical documents and flags, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History—he argues that history is constantly being remade by those with the resources to do so. *Channeling the Past* may focus mainly on corporations rewriting history to influence public opinion, but it also delves into attempts by various groups on the political left to bolster their messages by invoking the past.

■ A comprehensive volume of short articles both chronicles and preserves the history, culture, and personal stories of German Bohemians in the New World. From the midnineteenth century through the post-World War II era, these immigrants left their homes in the German-speaking areas of what is now the Czech Republic (Sudetenland), settling across North America and Canada, including notable communities in Minnesota. In *Heimatbrief: Stories of German-Bohemians* (Roseville, MN: Edinborough Press, 2013, 422 p., paper, \$34.95), the German-Bohemian His-

torical Society offers informative articles from previous issues of its newsletter. These are grouped thematically into sections such as German-Bohemians to the New World (containing several articles on New Ulm, Brown County, and St. Paul as well as Wisconsin, Canada, and Brazil); Homeland Letters; History; Culture; Dialect; and Finding Our Roots. The book is available from the German-Bohemian Heritage Society, PO Box 822, New Ulm, MN, 56073-0822; please include \$4.00 for shipping.

■ “Objects in museums are living entities,” states author Amy Lonetree in the preface to her new book, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012, 221 p., cloth, \$65.00, paper, \$24.95). “They embody layers of meaning, and they are deeply connected to the past, present, and future of Indigenous communities.” Based on that important understanding, Lonetree analyzes the complexities of developing exhibitions through collaborations between museum

curators and Native communities, with the goal of telling stories that honor the Native worldview and way of knowing, challenge stereotypes, and speak the hard truths of colonization. The book presents three case studies—“Collaboration Matters: The Minnesota Historical Society, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and the Creation of a ‘Hybrid Tribal Museum,’” “Exhibiting Native America at the National Museum of the American Indian: Collaborations and Missed Opportunities,” and “The Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways: Decolonization, Truth Telling, and Addressing Historical Unresolved Grief.” A conclusion discusses transforming museums into “places that matter” for indigenous peoples.

■ Readers looking for an easy introduction to the history of North and South Dakota will enjoy Norman Risjord’s *Dakota: The Story of the Northern Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013, 269 p., paper, \$25.00). Meant for a general audience, light on annotation, and breezy in tone, the book

makes its way from the geological formation of the northern plains through the late-twentieth century. Along the way, it touches on famous personalities, economic development and busts, electrification, the 1973 stand-off at Wounded Knee and, briefly, the twenty-first-century North Dakota oil industry. Several pages of “selected reading” suggestions at the book’s end will help readers seeking more detail.

■ Another volume in the *Images of America* series from Arcadia Publishing is Julie M. Jensen’s *Hutchinson*, written for the McLeod County Historical Society (Charleston, SC, 2013, paper, \$21.99). The book’s 127 pages are densely packed with vintage photographs, largely from the collections of the county historical society, accompanied by detailed captions. Six chapters—Beginnings, Cityscapes, Services, Livelihoods, Diversions, and Arts—portray the community’s history, while an introduction offers some brief but interesting details about present-day Hutchinson. All of the author’s proceeds from sales of the book will go to programming at the McLeod County Museum.

■ Family diaries and daguerreotypes as well as other historical resources are the starting point of Anne Engelking Wellman’s novel, *Vermont Boys, Minnesota Men* (Newark, DE: Unami X-Press, 2013, 333 p., paper, \$15.00 plus \$4.00 shipping or Kindle edition, \$5.99, *amazon.com*). Wellman uses her imagination to embellish this material, invent the daily details of the eventful lives of the Howe brothers of Grafton, Vermont, one of whom leaves home for the gold fields of California while the other moves to Olmsted County, Minnesota, and winds up serving in the Seventh Regiment—in the U.S.—Dakota War, Sibley’s expedition, and finally, in the South. Photos of family artifacts dot the book, which also contains endnotes and a selected bibliography. *Vermont Boys, Minnesota Men* is available from Unami X-Press, 216 Unami Trail, Newark DE, 19711. The author will send a signed copy, if requested.

## MINNESOTA HISTORY

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