

Curator's Choice



Photographs by Eric Mortenson/MHS

In 1915 Alice Maud Brown Covell of Minneapolis designed and stitched this enchanting gift for the birth of her sister's grandchild, Alice Arlene Kinney. The 51 x 53-inch quilt imaginatively interprets Sunbonnet Sue, the only quilt pattern believed to have originated in Minnesota.

Sunbonnet Sue was the creation of Bertha Corbett, an illustrator for the *Minneapolis Journal*, who at the turn of the century was challenged to design a faceless human image. In 1900 Corbett self-published *The Sun-Bonnet Babies*, a book of illustrated rhymes showing the girls emerging from an ink bottle to brave a series of mischievous adventures. Two years later *Sunbonnet Babies, A First Reader* launched the faceless figures into national fame, selling more than a million copies before the Dick and Jane series appeared in the 1930s. No doubt inspired by Corbett's rapt little figures and fanciful rhymes, quilter Covell embroidered a rhymed message to little Alice around her circle of busy babies.

Alice's quilt, on loan from Jennelle Cuning of Fairmont, is part of an all-new "Q is for Quilts" in the perennially popular History Center exhibit *Minnesota A to Z*. A collaboration with Minnesota Quilters, Inc., and the Minnesota Quilt Project, "Q" opens October 17, 1997. An original copy of *The Sun-Bonnet Babies* can be viewed in the MHS Research Center.

—LORIS CONNOLLY, exhibit curator

FRONT COVER: More than 200,000 onlookers in St. Paul welcomed home the 151st U.S. Field Artillery (the "Gopher Gunners") and other servicemen on May 8, 1919, almost six months after World War I's end. Construction crews worked ten days around the clock, completing the gleaming white victory arch on Sixth at Wabasha Streets just in time. Architect Clarence H. Johnston designed the temporary monument, and the Brioschi Minuti Company provided the decorative plasterwork. Visiting tenor Enrico Caruso, who gave a well-received concert that night, called the parade celebration "most wonderful."



Not everyone had supported the country's entry into the war two years earlier, however. For the story of 15 youthful St. Paul Socialists who resisted conscription in 1917, turn to the article beginning on p. 286. The cover photograph, digitally colored by *Minnesota History's* designer, is in the MHS collections.

Book Reviews

JEROME LIEBLING: THE MINNESOTA PHOTOGRAPHS, 1949–1969

*Photographs and comments by Jerome Liebling;
essay by Alan Trachtenberg*

(St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1997.
129 p. Cloth, \$45.00.)

A stark and graceful portrait of a tough but boyish grain worker on the cover tells us right off that *Jerome Liebling: The Minnesota Photographs* is no Chamber of Commerce, central-casting stereotype of the state. (Having once been coerced into doing a promo piece—*The Face of Minneapolis* in 1966—the photographer was unlikely to have consented to another bit of boosterism.) But for those willing to yield to these multilayered, gently insistent images, “Jerome Liebling’s Minnesota”—as Alan Trachtenberg titled his astute introductory essay—emerges as a surprisingly accurate portrayal. Minnesota is remade and refigured, enlightened and uplifted on Liebling’s gray-scale terms.

From the Minneapolis Gateway district and the grain trade, across the Mississippi to South St. Paul’s meat yards and a marvelous miniportfolio of youths from St. Paul’s West Side, then up to the Iron Range and Red Lake Reservation, this is a fresh imagining of Minnesota. But it is never alienating. Even—perhaps especially—when Liebling ventured into the tough territory of state hospitals and homes, humane concern guided his work.

Set a generation ago, the collection manifests the calm air of the settling past. The book’s real hook lies in the faces filling its pages. Speaking cinematographically, medium shots and close-ups prevail. Subjects directly regarded Liebling’s lens. Rarely are images unpopulated. The book structures its host of human connections around a few well-chosen establishing shots (typically made from a distance and elevated from the scene at hand—“God’s eye” views) and a handful of “end product” photographs—soybeans, barley, corn, potatoes, livestock (in both State Fair and slaughterhouse contexts)—that record the collusion of natural forces and man-willed intentions. The crops demonstrate the uniformity and predictability characteristic of mid- to late twentieth-century agribusiness. But Liebling’s records of processes, whether farming, canning peas, or “knocking” cattle, reveal the human richness underlying the leveling profit motive.

The artist’s well-rendered politicians are also yoked to a process. One famous image, *U.S. Senate candidate Eugene J. McCarthy and U.S. Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Memorial Stadium, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1958*, shows the two esteemed Minnesotans seated at a football game. Future rivals for the 1968 Democratic presidential nomination, they are simply absorbed spectators with their public personae on hold for a moment. Arrayed behind them, in rows reaching beyond the top of the frame, is a crowd that could reasonably be deemed the electorate—those whose collective interests are distilled in their elected leaders, who sit before and below them. Even in leisure, McCarthy and Humphrey bear the will and weight of this endless democratic process.

While this ideal of the citizen politician was waning in Minnesota, Liebling states that his goals were “to find the politicians at their most wary, most vulnerable, and perhaps most truthful moments, [and] to reveal the person through stance and stare.” Simply stated, simple sounding, but very difficult to execute effectively. Liebling’s unerring ability to connect, at times embarrassingly intimately, with his subjects (he describes it as “giving” to each other) and create sophisticated photographs that build upon this exchange has led many to refer to Liebling as a photographer’s photographer.

Trachtenberg suggests how Minnesota, like its people, may have given to the photographer during his two decades here. Liebling arrived as a Brooklyn-born outsider and a young artist. Getting acquainted with “the visual facts of the place,” Trachtenberg writes, “revealed him to himself, provided the stuff and substance of the art he was then intensively in the process of learning and perfecting.” The art that clearly coalesced in Minnesota drew from social humanism and photographer Paul Strand’s combined approach of concerned morals and formal aesthetics. The end product of this intensive process, Liebling’s style, infuses portraiture with contrasting doses of both literal and metaphoric darkness and light.

The photographer’s comments, which introduce his motives and signal the eight chapters in the pictorial sequence, tremendously benefit the book. Also contributing to its success is a letter from the daughter of a coal worker Liebling photographed in 1951. In familiar Minnesota fashion, she understates the power of these photographs when she writes, “You captured so many people of all kinds. In a time when things were hard.”

Despite hardships and apparent disjunctions, these motley Minnesotans seem elevated, united in an unprecedented, inconceivable community through what Trachtenberg aptly calls the artist's "alchemical imagination."

Reviewed by George Slade, a St. Paul-born freelance curator and historian of photography. Besides editing the pARTs Journal, a quarterly published by pARTs Photographic Arts in Minneapolis, he is also a charter and continuing member of the Minnesota 2000 Documentary Photography Project Steering Committee, sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society, and a frequent writer and speaker on issues related to photography.

SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA ARCHAEOLOGY: 12,000 YEARS IN THE PRAIRIE LAKE REGION

By Scott F. Anfinson

(St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1997.

146 p. Paper, \$18.00.)

This publication in the Minnesota Historical Society's prehistoric archaeology series is welcome, indeed, and the state's archaeological community must hope that this will revive the old practice of publishing archaeological monographs. Archaeology in Minnesota is sorely underreported, and all of us would do well to follow this example and communicate our findings to others. As Anfinson himself states, "Archaeology must be public or it will be nothing."

Southwestern Minnesota Archaeology is based on Anfinson's 1987 doctoral dissertation. It contains seven chapters. The meat of the book may be found in chapters 4 through 6, dealing respectively with the Early, Middle, and Late prehistoric periods; of these, chapters 5 and 6 are the most substantial. In these, the Middle and Late prehistoric time periods are divided into phases: Mountain Lake, Fox Lake, and Lake Benton for the Middle prehistoric, and Great Oasis, Cambria, Big Stone, and Blue Earth for the Late. Each phase is organized into sections on sites, technology, subsistence, settlement pattern, mortuary treatment, and dating. Chapters 2 and 3 on the regional environment and history of archaeological exploration are integral to the book's consistent themes. Maps, tables, and artifact illustrations assist readers, although the illustrations are of uneven quality. Ceramics are generally well done; lithics are nicely rendered in some figures but poorly in others, where only projectile-point outlines are provided. For later prehistoric periods, lithic illustrations are not provided at all. The maps are useful and sufficient, although I was puzzled by the lack of a map showing the many lakes of the Prairie Lake Region. Major lakes are, however, listed in Table 2.

Anfinson's thesis emerges out of what he perceives as the relative conservatism of archaeological cultures in southwestern Minnesota. The lack of Hopewellian influences, the absence of horticulture in the later part of the Middle Prehistoric period, and the long-lasting Fox Lake ceramic tradition all suggest to him that this region was immune to the forces of change that affected other portions of the prairie Midwest. This resistance to change probably arose out of the relative isolation of the region

and the self-sufficiency of the Prairie Lake peoples of early times. They had the resources of two worlds—large game such as bison and an abundant aquatic food base including beaver, muskrat, turtle, and fish. Anfinson postulates two major transformations in prehistoric times. One occurred about 5,000 years ago, with the settlement of isthmuses and islands and the broad-spectrum use of prairie and lake resources, and another about 1,000 years ago with the appearance of horticulture and some degree of sedentary living.

This raises an issue for all Plains and Midwest archaeologists content with the longstanding Paleo/Archaic/Woodland/Village classification of prehistoric cultures. If I read Anfinson correctly, Paleo and part of the Archaic fit together (although he does not formally lump them), while the later Archaic and Woodland stand together as well. Only the village-horticultural tradition from the old classification is maintained. I wish this had been addressed more thoroughly, since this is an important issue that American archaeologists have refused to take seriously in spite of occasional reminders, such as the one presented here. But Anfinson feels that the old system retains some useful meaning, and in this he reflects the sentiments of the majority of American archaeologists.

Southwestern Minnesota Archaeology is a technical book and will not appeal to readers without some archaeological background. Much of the book deals with artifact typology, site types, and subsistence economies, along with the organization of this information into a concise cultural taxonomy. This is, in fact, the great strength of this volume and the reason it should be in the collections of all archaeologists, cultural-resource managers, and regional libraries. Archaeologists will use this book in the same way that so many of us came to use Anfinson's *Handbook of Minnesota Prehistoric Ceramics*. Serious avocational archaeologists may see how careful recovery of information makes it possible to piece together a coherent picture of the ancient past. Those of us in the professional archaeological community may use this volume as a research tool, and perhaps as a prod to publish comparable archaeological monographs for other parts of Minnesota.

Reviewed by Michael G. Michlovic, professor of anthropology at Moorhead State University, Minnesota, who has been active in archaeological work on the northeastern plains of Minnesota and North Dakota since 1975. He is former editor of Minnesota Archaeologist and currently serves as a member of Minnesota's review board for the National Register of Historic Places.

FROGTOWN: PHOTOGRAPHS AND CONVERSATIONS IN AN URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

By Wing Young Huie

(St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1996.

154 p. Cloth, \$50.00; paper, \$24.95.)

Frogtown, a neighborhood in St. Paul, dramatically reflects the changing ethnic composition of the Twin Cities. Situated northwest of the state capitol, bounded by Rice, University, and Dale Streets and Minnehaha

Avenue, it has long served as a port of entry for migrants. Settled in the nineteenth century by German, Irish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Polish immigrants, for many years it was a working-class residential area. Although jobs in nearby railroad yards and industries are largely gone, in recent years cheap housing has attracted several streams of newcomers to the neighborhood.

The people of Frogtown today, a mix of Southeast Asians, Mexican Americans, African Americans, American Indians, and a remnant of European Americans, are the subject of Wing Young Huie's poignant photographic essay. In some 130 photographs, annotated sparingly with quotations from more than 100 interviews (see also "Notes on Selected Photographs" at the back of the volume), Huie presents a collective portrait of the neighborhood.

While Frogtown figures in the media as a place of youth gangs, shootings, crack houses, and prostitution, social pathology is not the theme of this documentary. Although some quotations allude to fears of violence and several photographs have an ominous cast, Huie clearly did not set out to record those behaviors. Rather, he sought to present the human face of Frogtown, a face that is engaging, appealing, and, at times, disturbing. In this photographic essay, he succeeds admirably. Through his images and words, one confronts an array of human beings who in their rich diversity shatter stereotypes and preconceptions.

In an unpretentious introduction, Huie tells why and how he set about this project. Born in Duluth, son of a Chinese restaurateur, educated at the University of Minnesota, he became a freelance photographer. A devotee of Asian restaurants along University Avenue, Huie determined to document Frogtown's vivid rainbow of cultures and races. Overcoming his initial timidity (and with the assistance of the Minnesota Historical Society and other funding agencies), he devoted two years to photographing and talking with neighborhood residents. Becoming known as the "picture man," he was amazingly successful in gaining entree to their homes, churches, and lives. His photographs capture candid and intimate moments: a Hmong shaman's ceremony, an interethnic couple kissing, a black young man with his pit bull. For the most part, Huie lets his pictures speak for themselves. He makes no claim to factual reportage; a photograph, he asserts, is as much a piece of fiction as it is a representation of reality. His method was serendipitous, collecting photographs "as one collects seashells." The composition and arrangement of these images, rather like a mosaic of seashells, appears to be dictated more by aesthetic than by strictly documentary concerns. Huie confesses that at the end of the project he was not sure whether he understood the neighborhood better or whether it was more mysterious. Many of his evocative photographs convey a sense of ambiguity and mystery.

Neither ethnography, history, nor sociology, *Frogtown* inspires insights and questions that would inform studies in those disciplines. The Hmong, the largest ethnic group in the neighborhood, are more often portrayed in cultural, ritualistic activities than, say, African Americans who appear in individual portraits or family groups. The quotations and photographs suggest a high degree of separateness among the groups, yet there are pictures of

interethnic and interracial groups on the street, in church, and in block-club meetings. Particularly affecting are photos of a black girl and a white girl sitting in a wagon, reading, and of a white boy and a black boy who are "best friends." Are these the exceptions? The last photograph in the volume is bemusing: an elderly white man in a wheelchair and a black baby in a stroller sit side by side but are looking away from each other. Its meanings could be multiple: together, but separated by age and race; the past and the future; or something else. Many of Huie's photographs are similarly provocative.

Frogtown provides us with a glimpse of the future of St. Paul and of the United States. At least some of those involved have a sense of this historic significance. One resident observed: "It's like they put all the nationalities in one area. . . . Like a test to see how they would get along with each other and live with each other. On this block we got Hispanic, we got Laos, we got white, we got black, we got everything here." Another commented: "It's the kind of place where the experiment in living together has to be carried out. . . . And this is the kind of neighborhood it has to happen in." It may come as a surprise to some, but the destiny of the republic is being decided, not in Circle Pines, but in Frogtown.

Reviewed by Rudolph J. Vecoli, professor of history and director of the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of various works on American immigration history; his most recent article is "The Significance of Immigration in the Formation of an American Identity," which appeared in the November 1996 issue of The History Teacher.

IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN: VOICES FROM THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Bonnie Watkins and Nina Rothchild
(St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1996.
353 p. Cloth, \$29.95; paper, \$16.95.)

Bonnie Watkins and Nina Rothchild adopted the oral history methods of Studs Terkel to capture the meaning and experience of feminism for women in Minnesota during the last 30 years. The narratives collected in this volume spring from interviews with 83 women ranging in age from 21 to 93. The backgrounds of most reveal the Scandinavian, German, and English stock that peopled historic Minnesota. The authors also manage to identify voices that reflect the contemporary religious, racial, and economic diversity of the state. Women from 25 states and 18 foreign countries appear, some of them well-known and privileged but more of them obscure, economically struggling women. The result is an invaluable contribution that both enhances and complicates our understanding of feminism's second wave.

Each short narrative opens with a brief biographical introduction. The stories are loosely organized into two sections: "Beginnings," which includes chapters on roots, awakenings, pioneering, boat rocking, and the many firsts accumulated by Minnesota women; and "Sisterhoods," which considers women's attitudes and activism in various

institutional and cultural locations including the media, politics, the academy, law, religion, and medicine. The stories explicate several questions about the history of feminism: How did women at the grassroots construct feminism, and how and why did they transform their worlds and their conception of self? Did the midwestern heartland produce a distinct feminism with regional roots? This collection begins to answer these questions as it documents a feminism that expands and draws upon midwestern populist and progressive traditions.

For many of the women, feminist practice preceded theory, though all self-identified as feminists at the time of the interviews. Frequently, after battling for social justice or professional and personal goals, they realized the political significance of their personal struggles. Originally, their determination to be doctors, bankers, or police officers had inspired action, but pursuit of these goals triggered political recognition of gender constraints.

Another surprising aspect of the stories is the degree to which activism originated from well-established traditions of women's collective efforts in rural and small-town settings. Unlike many urban and middle-class women whose feminism represented a rebellion against their mothers' choices, rural women often looked to their mothers and their cultural traditions for inspiration. Author Meridel Le Sueur noted, "It was the women who organized these little Farmer-Labor clubs in every town, the men didn't. . . . Farmer-Labor women had to fight men. To keep it going, or to keep it radical, to keep it educational." Arvonne S. Fraser, one of the founders of Women's Equity Action League, similarly recalled the radical politics of her father and the advice of her mother to "get a good husband, but always be able to support yourself." Margaret Boyer, who grew up on farm in Pennsylvania, recalled a grandmother active in the Women's Temperance Union: "She was one of those bar-smashers." Her family carried on a tradition of standing one's ground: "I learned from both my parents, you should always speak up for what you thought was right. I would in my family, knowing that I might get hit for doing it. But I still would do it because it was valued." Her background prepared her to be independent and self-willed and to act on the basis of a strong sense of justice. These accounts suggest the persistence of the nineteenth-century politics of cooperation and mutuality that had shaped the gender strategies of rural women and informed agrarian politics.

Working-class and minority women also described their actions as consistent with their mothers' and grandmothers' traditions of assisting a community of women. Laura Waterman Wittstock's mother, along with the matrilineal traditions of the Seneca Indians, shaped her ideals and activism. Wittstock noted that "civilization and colonialism progressively undercut the status of women." JoAnn Cardenas Enos, the daughter of migrant farm workers, grounded her feminism in her family and ethnic background. Women, she noted, always worked beside men. "It was a partnership in my family, and that had a lot to do with why I became a feminist. I was raised to be equal." Born in 1947, she created St. Paul's first women's shelter for Latinas in 1982. This effort to help battered

women continued her mother's ways. She traced her family's activism back to Mexican history. "The women's movement here was not like the women's movement I was raised in. We were doing that already."

For rural, minority, and working-class women, feminism functioned as an extension of family and community politics and culture. It was identified with the promotion of a traditional group interest as opposed to a highly individual ethic. These women also valued diversity and were concerned about the dangers of silencing within the women's movement the voices of rural, older, farm, and poor women. For example, Sharon Rice Vaughan, who organized the first battered woman's shelter in the country, found, "Women who were poor and struggling were my role models." Early feminists struck her as privileged women who maintained "a sort of stance that I couldn't connect with."

By listening to and documenting the diverse voices of Minnesota's feminist movement, the editors of this collection call into question both popular and academic assumptions that feminism has involved only elite women or women from the East and West Coasts. In addition, by listening to what women say about themselves, the authors directly challenge stereotypes about rural, minority, and working-class women's experience. This book eloquently demonstrates a fundamental reality of feminism—that it is a grass-roots mass movement with origins deep in the American experience. Respectful and skillful editing created a book that is compelling to read and should be of interest to both the general public and the historian.

Reviewed by Jane Pederson, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, who is the author of Between Memory and Reality: Family and Community in Rural Wisconsin (1992).

JOSEPH R. BROWN, ADVENTURER ON THE MINNESOTA FRONTIER, 1820–1849

By Nancy and Robert Goodman

(Rochester, Minn.: Lone Oak Press, 1996. 343 p.

Hard cover, \$29.95.)

Authors Nancy and Robert Goodman present this as "more than part one of the first full-length biography of Joseph R. Brown . . . probably the best-known man" in Minnesota Territory. Readers with varied interests must be indebted to them for a description long overdue. No one lasted longer than Brown as a prevailing influence across the east end of historic Sioux country. From his arrival to help with the founding of Fort Snelling in 1820 to his retirement about the year 1868, Brown was a legendary force in Indian-white relations. Even after that, his son Samuel sustained a prominent influence in the tradition of his father into the twentieth century. This volume carries the life story to the year 1849.

The reviewer hopes the Goodmans will publish a second volume. Brown went on to serve four years as U.S. agent for the Dakota. During his term, he greatly influ-

enced their treaty of 1858, which shrank the Minnesota reservation and introduced family allotments. Had Abraham Lincoln not removed him—for political purposes—he might have prevented the Dakota War.

Brown claimed the rank of major during the 1862 war, during which he managed scouts for both Generals Henry Hastings Sibley and Alfred Sully. In the aftermath, he took charge of Dakota prisoners at Mankato, then became a primary architect of the Renville Scouts, who for three years kept the races apart. By then, he had created a trading place near the continental divide at Big Stone Lake and worked on the development of Fort Wadsworth. Perhaps his final important action was his involvement in placing one Sisseton-Wahpeton reservation at Lake Traverse.

Rev. Thomas Williamson wrote in 1858 that he had known the U.S. Indian agent since 1834, when Brown was “engaged as he had been for several years previous, in selling whiskey to Indians. He is a man of little education, handsome talents, much kind feeling, and very little principle.” Yet he was “probably more thoroughly acquainted with the Dakotas than any other [white] man living.” Inasmuch as his first and third wives were mothers to 10 mixed-blood children, Brown had a “kind feeling” about Dakota people. Yet they disliked him for his lack of principle.

During the period under study in this volume, Brown became a merchant along the Minnesota River valley, appeared at a trading post near Lake Traverse by 1838, left the trade due to the Dakotas’ hostility in 1839, moved to Grey Cloud Island on the Mississippi, and worked on the establishment of the town of Henderson. After he died in New York, relatives took his body back to Henderson for burial in 1870.

This is a fascinating chronicle. Some professional scholars might malign it for a paucity of historical context or for missed opportunities to link Brown with critical developments in Indian-white relations. Some might wonder why the Goodmans never sifted the wheat from the chaff of evidence or why they failed to verify critical details. The application of such academic standards could nibble the image of the text to death. Such a disposition would deprive prospective readers of the information that is the sterling quality of this book.

With simple documentation, the Goodmans track the career of Brown to 1849 and, at the same time, create a remarkable encyclopedia. Using its index, a scholar can find descriptions of federal employees and fur-trade operatives elsewhere unavailable except in original sources. Many tribal members will discover mention of their ancestors. Properly, the photographic image of the third wife, Susan Freniere, is larger than that of Henry Rice. A genealogy at the end includes the heritages of all three wives, including the Sisseton Helen Dickson and the Mdewakanton Susan Freniere—both mixed-bloods from leading families in the fur trade.

Few might read this volume from cover to cover, but many will keep it at hand as a valuable reference work. Users of all dispositions who are familiar with fur-trade operations, federal administration, or territorial affairs in Minnesota will find useful information throughout the text. Accordingly, librarians with interests in the fur trade

and Minnesota Territory or in important players and places in eastern Sioux country down to midcentury are advised to regard this biography as an essential acquisition.

Reviewed by Herbert T. Hoover, professor of history at the University of South Dakota, Vermilion. The author of about 20 books, he is currently working on a 5-volume study encompassing the histories of 25 Sioux reservations.

**DER WANDERER OF ST. PAUL,
THE FIRST DECADE, 1867–1877:
A MIRROR OF THE GERMAN-CATHOLIC
IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN MINNESOTA**

By John S. Kulas

(New York: Peter Lang, 1996. 285 p. Hard cover, \$53.95.)

In a recent history of American Catholicism, Charles R. Morris describes the Catholic Church as being “*in* America, usually enthusiastically *for* America, but never quite *of* America.” The fact that the Catholic Church in the United States was for much of its history an immigrant institution, dependent upon Europe for clergy and devoted to serving the often haphazardly catechized workers and peasants seeking jobs and security, accounts in part for its separatist tendencies. More to the point, though, was the success of the Irish-American hierarchy, proudly defiant in the face of nativist persecution, in building an alternative American Catholic culture, one that rivaled mainstream Protestantism in its embrace of middle-class values while at the same time maintaining a sense of distance and difference from the larger culture.

German Catholics were even more skeptical of the dominant culture and, as John Kulas, a professor of German at St. John’s University, Collegeville, reminds us in *Der Wanderer*, they, too, struggled to create a cultural realm in but not totally of America. Indeed, the contest that played out in the pages of *Der Wanderer*, a St. Paul newspaper originally published in German and directed toward a German-Catholic audience, “between the desire of cultural preservation and the demands of integration” was and remains universal for the nation’s immigrants.

In focusing on the immigrant press, simultaneously a mirror of traditional values and an active agent for change, Kulas identifies a key instrument in negotiating new transitional identities. *Der Wanderer* included ample commentary on American politics, both local and national, not surprisingly often supporting the Democratic Party line and thus, tragically, serving to inculcate immigrants with the period’s hyper-racism. At the same time, the paper presented news from the Fatherland, as well as German prose and poetry, most of it written by Catholics and intended to reinforce traditional verities of belief and behavior. Through its detailed description of the paper’s early editors as well as the short biographies of *Der Wanderer*’s shareholders, this book reasserts the prominent role of the immigrant middle class in brokering the needs of the ethnic community with the demands of the larger culture. In short, *Der Wanderer of St. Paul* is an important book and should be interesting to any reader concerned with the area’s immigrant past.

But the book is more than an abstract account of the immigrant experience, and Kulas succeeds in advancing our understanding of the unique situation of German Catholics in Minnesota. In contrast to the Irish, dispossessed and demoralized after centuries of British colonization and often despised by nativist Americans, German immigrants were thought to represent an advanced culture, one especially admired and respected by educated Americans. In addition, at the time *Der Wanderer* began publication, Germany stood at the brink of great power. German-American newspaper editors were hardly awed by American culture; rather, they considered it to be semibarbarous, pointing in pride to the pantheon of great German composers, philosophers, and writers. For these men, as well as for other immigrants, adjustment to American life was not—to quote a common metaphor—a simple matter of discarding the battered and empty cultural baggage of the Old World for something shiny and new.

Still, the editors of *Der Wanderer* and presumably the paper's readers faced an even more difficult dilemma: their pride, for instance, in German imperial triumphs was compromised by news of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* and by long memories of Prussian anti-Catholicism. Yet their Catholicism did not totally undermine their German chauvinism, and one of the paper's editors was able to

turn the traditional notion of assimilation on its head and argue that the task for Germans in America was to assimilate Americans! This suggestion, which directly contradicted the dominant Anglo conformity of the period, represented, to be sure, a real arrogance, but it also anticipated a more multicultural, twentieth-century vision of national life. Interestingly, it came from someone whose own identity—as an immigrant and a Catholic—was in a dual sense marginal.

Kulas is surely right in emphasizing the paper's important, albeit ambivalent, role in effecting the construction of a specific ethnic identity. However—and, to be fair, this was not his task—he might have concentrated more on the role of *Der Wanderer* and, by extension, the ethnic press in general in building a larger American pluralism. But this is a minor quibble with a book essential to understanding ethnic identity in midwestern America.

Reviewed by Stephen J. Gross, who did his graduate work at the University of Minnesota and is currently teaching American history at the University of Idaho. His dissertation, "Family, Property, Community: Class and Identity among German Americans in Rural Stearns County Minnesota, 1860–1920," examines of the relationship between economic development and local society and culture.

News & Notes

IN APRIL of this year a hitherto unknown topographical sketch or map of Fort St. Anthony, now Fort Snelling, came to light in a collection of papers being sold by a Connecticut dealer. The map, drawn in 1823 by Sergeant Joseph E. Heckle, includes extensive notes written by Major Josiah H. Vose, in whose papers the map has rested for more than 150 years. Vose's notes give important insights into the fort's construction and early operation. Through the generosity of John and Elizabeth Driscoll, the map has been added to the Minnesota Historical Society's collections.

Topographical Sketch of Fort St. Anthony (Fort Snelling), 1823 (trim size 24x37 inches, image size 18x26 inches, \$6.95) has been reproduced by the Minnesota Historical Society Press as a full sized, four-color art reproduction.

The detailed information sheet provided with the map includes a discussion of what it shows about the fort, a description of events at the fort in 1823, and reproductions of two other maps of the fort. It is available at the museum stores at Fort Snelling and the History Center or from the order department, 612/297-3243 or 1-800-647-7827.

A LIGHTHEARTED bit of Americana comes to life in the 53-minute video, *The Signs and Rhymes of Burma Shave* (Cincinnati: Sentimental Productions, 1991, \$29.95). In this rags-to-riches story, the Minneapolis family-owned Burma Vita company went from near bankruptcy in the mid-1920s to a position second only to the giant Barbasol, thanks to the ingenious advertising campaign of Allan Odell, son of the

company founder. Using interviews with family members, former workers, collectors, and winners of the annual jingle contest, the video documents the rise and demise of the small firm that marketed brushless shaving cream with its famous six-sign highway campaign. Tying the company's fortunes to its founders' ingenuity and currents in American social history, including automobile culture, the video offers many examples of the squeaky-clean jingles that commented on dating, air travel, and inflation and promoted safe driving, defense bonds, and—Burma Shave. It is available at the Minnesota Historical Society's museum shop or from Sentimental Productions, 1-800-762-0338.

TWO SLIM PUBLICATIONS recall celebrations of times past. *Christmas*

and *New Year's on the Minnesota Frontier* (Afton: Afton Historical Society Press, 1996, 64 p., annual limited edition, cloth, \$23) is a handsome reprint of Bertha L. Heilbron's account, originally published in the December 1935 issue of *Minnesota History*. The text touches on merrymaking at Fort Snelling beginning in 1827, Governor Alexander Ramsey's holiday table in St. Paul, and family celebrations in other pioneer communities.

A Frontier Army Christmas (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1996, 136 p., paper, \$12.95) includes contrasting descriptions by residents of frontier army posts, for whom Christmas was a treasured break in routine, if largely "an exercise in imagination." Lori A. Cox-Paul and James W. Wengert assembled the 1865–1900 accounts produced at forts and camps between Minnesota and the Pacific Coast.

A LOVELY little handmade book, *A Red River Journey in 1851: Charles Cavileer Remembers*, reprints the traveler's 1891 speech to the Red River Valley Old Settlers' Association. John Parker's four-page introduction traces both Cavileer's history and the genesis of his lively speech (six pages), full of adventure, humor, and the details of his party's trek from Sauk Rapids to Pembina. A map of the Red River Valley helps readers follow his journey. This 1997 publication may be ordered from Cleora Press, Box 6493, Minneapolis 55406 for \$10.00 plus \$1.90 sales tax and shipping.

IN "*THE SIOUX War Panorama and American Mythic History*" (*Theatre Journal*, October 1996) theater historian John Bell offers a fresh (and sharp) look at John Stevens's late-nineteenth century painting, one version of which survives in the MHS art collection. The story of how Stevens, a self-taught Olmsted County painter, displayed his huge canvas to the accompaniment of his own "lecture" has been told in Bertha L. Heilbron's "Documentary Panorama," *Minnesota History* (March 1949). Bell examines Stevens's painting and prose as "an epic propaganda performance that treated the elimination of Indians as an inevitable and ultimately reasonable consequence of American manifest destiny." Presenting the panorama as an example of

picture performance, a worldwide storytelling genre, Bell finds that it "gave midwestern settlers the opportunity to see the actions of their fellow settlers assume mythic status as national protagonists, and the chance to watch local events become inscribed into a developing epic history of America's taming of the frontier." His reading offers a rationale for the panorama's seemingly disjointed final scenes of the California gold rush, which Bell presents as a logical culmination of manifest destiny. The author's rhetoric is in itself an index of shifting viewpoints toward historical artworks: as recently as 1949, the Stevens panorama served as an example of pioneer entertainment in Territorial Centennial exhibits at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MHS, and other venues. —*Thomas O'Sullivan*

DULUTH'S Holy Cow! Press has produced a treasure for midwesterners of Finnish descent. In *Dovetailed Corners* (1996, 111 p., paper, \$14.95) Jim Johnson narrates a fictional account of two Finnish immigrants in prose poetry filled with passion, sincerity, and humor. The text is illustrated with early twentieth-century photographs printed from glass-plate negatives of Marlene Wisuri's grandfather, in addition to contemporary images she photographed in northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. *Dovetailed Corners* can be purchased from the press, P.O. Box 3170, Mount Royal Station, Duluth 55803.—*Molly Schnepf*

ABORIGINAL WOMEN have multiple voices, histories, and cultural experiences; a single, universal definition of woman's role cannot possibly represent their diversity. This is the argument presented in *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996, 226 p., cloth, \$39.95, paper, \$18.95), a compilation of papers selected from the 1989 National Symposium on Aboriginal Women of Canada and edited by Christine Miller and Patricia Chuchryk. The publication contains 16 essays by women with varying perspectives, including aboriginal and not, scholarly, activist, and feminist. Although this book focuses on Canada, readers will find that many of the issues transcend both a time and a place. —*Molly Schnepf*

BILOINE YOUNG and Mary Wilson had a mission—a mission to ease their midlife restlessness. Their means of accomplishing it: a journey to Mexico to purchase folk art for a sale at their St. Paul homes. Call the idea outrageous, but among the results were a small business and a hilarious account of their adventures. *Mexican Odyssey* (St. Paul: Pogo Press, 1996, 270 p., paper, \$15.95) details the experiences of the two women, both south of the border and on St. Paul's Grand Avenue, the site of their entrepreneurial endeavor. It is not only an inspiring tale that will encourage readers to revive the spontaneity of their youth but a wonderful guide to the people, history, and art of Mexico.

RESEARCH GUIDE to the Turner Movement in the United States, compiled by Eric L. Pumroy and Katja Rampelmann (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996, 392 p., hard cover, \$85), locates the scattered records of the powerful nineteenth-century German immigrant societies that helped shape life in many midwestern cities and towns. Brought to the United States by refugees from the failed Revolution of 1848 in Germany, the Turner movement provided a cultural and social home until World War I for liberal German abolitionists, workers' rights advocates, physical-culture enthusiasts, and other reformers.

Nine pages of entries describe records in Minnesota repositories (including MHS). They document the activities of Turner strongholds in Minneapolis, St. Anthony, New Ulm, and St. Paul. An annotated list of known Turner societies also mentions chapters in Duluth, Hastings, Jordan, Mankato, Osseo, Owatonna, Red Wing, Rochester, Stillwater, Wabasha, and Winona.

REMINDER: Handsome, sturdy slipcases, open at the back for maximum protection and convenient storage, keep your back issues of *Minnesota History* within easy reach on your bookshelf. Each container holds eight issues. The maroon-colored cases are embossed with the magazine title and come with a gold-foil transfer for marking the year and volume number on the spine. Available for \$9.95 plus tax and shipping from MHS Press: (612)297-3243 or 1-800-647-7827.

New in the Collections

James Rosenquist's career stretches from a stint at painting billboards through notoriety in the Pop Art movement of the 1960s to his status today as a painter and printmaker of international renown. Born in North Dakota in 1933, he grew up in western Minnesota and in Minneapolis, where he studied with Cameron Booth at the University of Minnesota. Rosenquist supported himself by painting billboards and signs in rural Minnesota before moving to New York at Booth's encouragement. There, he combined bright, realistic, larger-than-life fragments of faces and objects in a signature style that leads the viewer to puzzle out the meaning of his compositions.

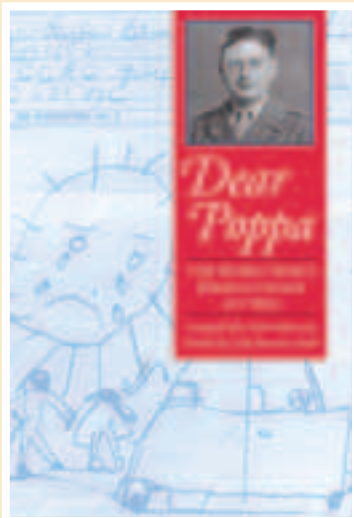


Sheer Line (color lithograph, 1978) brings together images that allude to writing and recording, travel, and speaking—though the artist's message is deliberately and playfully ambiguous. The first example of Rosenquist's work to enter the MHS collections, *Sheer Line* was a gift of members of the MHS Executive Council and Committee in honor of Nina M. Archabal's tenth anniversary as the Society's director. Her selection of this print also acknowledges her friendship with Rosenquist's mentor Booth, whom Dr. Archabal profiled in *Minnesota History* in 1980. —THOMAS O'SULLIVAN, curator of art

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Dear Poppa

The World War II
Berman Family Letters

Compiled by Ruth Berman
Edited by Judy Barrett Litoff

"This innocent plea appeared in a letter dictated in May 1943 by four-year-old Sammy Berman, shortly after his 'Poppa' departed for overseas duty in Europe. It captures the anxiety and longing that children throughout the United States experienced when their fathers left for war. . . . The publication of this unique collection of letters from the Berman children, along with selected correspondence about family life from their parents, offers us the first significant opportunity to incorporate the actual wartime voices of America's children into accounts of the Second World War."—Judy Barrett Litoff, Introduction

"*Dear Poppa* tells not only of children's wartime toys, movies, and radio shows, but also their participation in paper drives, victory gardens, and war bond campaigns, their dreams and nightmares, and their deep longing for Poppa's safe return."—William M. Tuttle Jr., author of *Daddy's Gone to War*

*"I wish you would come
back because I want to see
you. I wish you would
come back right now. Are
you going to come back
some day, Poppa, are
you, are you?"*

—SAMMY BERMAN

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