

Pictures of Longing: Photography and the Norwegian-American Migration

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Green's dense narrative, although an extensive read that is occasionally encumbered by the inclusion of extensive quotations, reveals the complex realities of state, regional, and national politics during the Reconstruction Era. Green's work joins a growing chorus of historians, such as Leslie Schwalm, Elliott West, and Steven Hahn, who argue for a "Greater Reconstruction" narrative that examines the whole continent and the effects of Reconstruction rather than an isolated Southern account. Green's work should become required reading for those interested in the contradictory positions taken by white Republicans who championed black suffrage and equal citizenship rights but eventually abandoned black citizens to navigate by themselves continuing racial hostility and inequalities in both the North and South.

Pictures of Longing: Photography and the Norwegian-American Migration, by Sigrid Lien, translated by Barbara Sjøhom. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018. x, 290 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$120 hardcover, \$29.95 paperback.

Reviewer L. DeAne Lagerquist is Harold H. Ditmanson Distinguished Professor of Religion at St. Olaf College. She is the author of *In America the Men Milk the Cows: Factors of Gender, Ethnicity, and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian-American Women* (1991).

Photography and photographs convey anticipation and memory in *Sweetland*, Ali Selim's film adaptation of Will Weaver's short story "A Gravestone Made of Wheat." When his parents arrange for him to marry German Inge Altenberg, Olaf Torvik, a Norwegian farmer in the Red River Valley, sends her a letter, enclosing a photograph of himself. She carries both with her to Minnesota. But, because a crease in the folded photograph obscured his face, initially Inge does not recognize him. In the train station she mistakes his friend Franzen for Olaf. At Olaf's farm, Franzen makes a photograph of Inge in her traveling clothes in front of the house. Before the film ends, we see Franzen and Inge looking at the photo after Olaf's funeral and then watch her grandson gaze at her image as a young woman as he considers selling the farm. None of this appears in Sigrid Lien's intriguing book, and yet her nuanced, detailed, and theoretically rich exploration of photography and Norwegian American migration suggests the absolute rightness of Selim's use of photographs and photography to convey a range of emotions, including longing—both for what is not yet and for what is no longer.

Although its format is small for the genre, this volume offers far more than what might be expected from a coffee-table book illustrated with interesting, old photographs. Certainly there are interesting, old

photographs here, but in addition to close reading of the photographs reproduced in the book, Lien skillfully places their subjects in their cultural and geographic contexts, addresses the historiography of Norwegian American migration, and engages critical study of photography. Readers interested primarily in the photographs can certainly skim over the more theoretical discussions. Those readers will still take pleasure in the book. They will learn a great deal about the people in the pictures and about the photographers who made the pictures. These include immigrants in Spring Grove and Lanesboro, Minnesota, and in the Red River Valley, Norwegians in their own country, and a Norwegian American in twentieth-century Brooklyn.

Those intrigued by the relationship between American letters and photographs or by the role of memory in reanimating the photographs' subjects will find the introduction and conclusion particularly valuable. There Lien develops her notion that photographs are interventions, that they offer more than illustration and confirmation of a familiar notion of the past. Rather, like sharp shards, she argues, photographs have the "potential to cut into the fabric of established historical narratives . . . the capacity to complement, correct, challenge, or disrupt such narratives" (243). In this English translation, Lien reflects on criticism of the earlier Norwegian edition by some men who objected to her identification of longing in the photographs. She defends her reading as appropriate to both the experience of migration and the medium of photography, each of which is located "between something, between countries, cultures, past and present" (248). Photographs allow the viewer to travel from present to past and to engage the emotions evoked by the experience of being between cultures and countries.

The book's six chapters are informed by and address these theoretical concerns. Four explore the work of individual photographers, including Andrew Dahl's familiar family portraits, Haakon Bjornass's whimsical postcards, Mina Westbye's (possibly) self-portraits, and Peter Julius Rosendahl's documentation of ordinary life just north of the Iowa-Minnesota border. Thus readers encounter the range of subjects and styles of photography practiced and gain an appreciation for the functions photography served. The final chapters address the photographs' continuing work for more recent viewers, particularly as gathered into collections either in "Norwegian Rural Communities" or in "The Chronicles of Norwegian-American Families." Lien also includes a directory of Norwegian American photographers—amateur and professional, some in Iowa—active from 1860 to 1960.

Discussing female photographers, Lien suggests that the photographs offer "a glimpse into a vanished time and the chance to create

our own stories around the image and the cultural-historical context it springs from." She cautions, "This is a process of making choices, for the world in itself is not a bearer of meaning. Events of the past, like those happening in the present, contain an abundance of single episodes and meanings. What we do as historians is to reconstruct a kind of order and connection within this chaos through language" (105). Throughout the book, Lien guides readers in this continuing work (or perhaps pleasure) of making meaning with photographs. *Pictures of Longing* will reward both the casual viewer and the serious student of photography and Norwegian immigration.

Deadwood's Al Swearingen: Manifest Evil in the Gem Theatre, by Jerry L. Bryant and Barbara Fifer. Helena, MT: Farcountry Press, 2018. x, 142 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$14.95 paperback.

Reviewer Terrence J. Lindell is professor of history at Wartburg College. His research interests have included a wide range of topics in Iowa and South Dakota history.

Ellis Albert "Al" Swearingen, the subject of this brief work, was born in Oskaloosa, Iowa, in 1845 and buried there after his mysterious death in Colorado in 1904. He spent much of his adult life in the West hunting his fortune by supplying entertainment, alcohol, and prostitutes to the inhabitants of mining towns, most notably Deadwood in Dakota Territory's Black Hills. Fans of the HBO 2004–2006 series *Deadwood* will recognize him as the inspiration for the central character "Al Swearengen." Jerry Bryant spent years researching Swearingen and his principal business, the Gem Theatre, but died before this book reached completion. Barbara Fifer took up Bryant's work and brought it to print.

Through six chapters Bryant and Fifer trace Swearingen, his businesses, and characters with whom he associated in Deadwood. A final chapter recounts the life of Al's twin brother, Lemuel, an Oskaloosa businessman. The Deadwood chapters are chronological and are divided into multiple segments that recount loosely connected incidents in Swearingen's life or Deadwood's history. Bryant's research—overwhelmingly in local newspapers—clearly reveals Swearingen's disreputable nature as brawler, abuser, cheat, and human trafficker. The book does not make links to relevant scholarly work on Deadwood such as Watson Parker's *Gold in the Black Hills* and *Deadwood: The Golden Years* or to the larger body of scholarship on life in mining towns. The book will appeal primarily to individuals interested in the colorful figures of the Black Hills gold rush.