
BOOK NOTES

Great Plains Geology: Discover the Great Plains. By R. F. Diffendal, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017, xxii + 211 pages, paper \$14.95.)

Diffendal has identified at least fifty different determinations of the boundaries of the Great Plains. So how does he distill the essence of a place with so many different academically defined boundaries? He sensibly outlines the contours of the Great Plains along geological determinants, with ten subsections identified within the boundaries. He then takes ten chapters to highlight geological sites in Canada, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Diffendal's work includes lovely illustrations so that anyone who wants to learn the basic landforms of the Great Plains will profit by reading it. Moreover, if you are traveling through the Great Plains—as Diffendal describes them, a “beautiful place, often of few people and much livestock”—you will come to see and appreciate the region in a clearer light.

Indians Illustrated: The Images of Native Americans in the Pictorial Press. By John M. Coward. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2016, viii + 232 pages, cloth \$95.00, paper \$29.95.)

A volume in the University of Illinois Press's History of Communication series, *Indians Illustrated* contains sixty-three nicely reproduced black-and-white illustrations mostly from *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*, where they were first published in the late nineteenth century. “By describing and analyzing the various themes and visual tropes across the years of the illustrated press,” writes John M. Coward, associate professor of communication at the University of Tulsa, “this book provides a deeper understanding of the racial codes and visual signs that white Americans used to represent Native Americans in the era of western expansion and Manifest Destiny” (p. 4). Since Kansas is at the center of much of this activity, readers of *Kansas History* will be familiar with some of the images, such as the gruesome depiction of the discovery of the skeletal remains of Lieutenant L. S. Kidder and his party near present-day Goodland, Kansas, that was published in *Harper's Weekly* on August 17, 1867 (p. 102).

Still Turning: A History of Aermotor Windmills. By Christopher C. Gillis. (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2015, 296 pages, hardcover \$35.00.)

Windmills have existed for thousands of years, used by civilizations across the globe as a means of pumping water, grinding flour, and completing many other industrial jobs. In the United States, one company has obtained icon status: the Aermotor Windmill Company, first organized in Chicago in 1888. In his groundbreaking and unique study, *Still Turning*, Christopher Gillis provides readers with “the first book-length academic account of any wind pump,” placing “a genuinely human face on one of the icons of rural life, the Aermotor windmill” (p. xiii). In doing so, Gillis's work stands as a significant contribution to the history of wind power while also speaking to the broader history of American scientific innovation and industrial development. Although the technical jargon is slightly overwhelming at times, *Still Turning* contains an extensive number of detailed drawings, blueprints, and photographs as well as a glossary of terms pertaining to the windmill industry and Aermotor specifically.

Tilted: The Post-Brain Surgery Journals. By Louise Krug. (San Francisco: 99: The Press, 2016, 99 pages, paper \$16.00.)

“By now,” Louise Krug writes in *Tilted*, “I know things are not what they look like. They are more” (p. 2). When she was twenty-two, Krug underwent two brain surgeries to remove a cavernous angioma from her brain stem. The surgeries saved her life but left her with physical impairments and drastically changed her appearance. In *Tilted*, Krug, now assistant professor of English at Washburn University, writes in the third person about her struggles to come to terms with her new life and look ten years after her surgeries as she embarks upon marriage, motherhood, and a college teaching career. While some of her experiences are certainly unique—adjusting to a hearing aid, putting Scotch tape over the left lens of her glasses so she will not see double when driving, worrying that her students secretly refer to her as Professor Lazy Eye—Krug's memoir explores with refreshing honesty, humor, and insight the ways in which our bodies shape our lives, always.

A Sugar Creek Chronicle: Observing Climate Change from a Midwestern Woodland. By Cornelia F. Mutel. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016, 251 pages, paper \$16.00.)

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues in today's world, with scientists and world leaders actively writing and speaking on the subject to convince populations at large of the need to reduce carbon emissions. For the public, the overabundance of statistical data and technical terms often leads to confusion or, worse, disinterest. Cornelia Mutel's *A Sugar Creek Chronicle* is thus a welcome addition to the literature. Structuring her narrative around two timelines—four “Weather and Climate Journal” chapters about one year (2012) in her Iowa woodland home and four condensed “Memoir” chapters—Mutel creates a study that seeks to “invite you, my readers, to consider the importance of climate change and to realize that we can . . . rapidly take action to limit its expression” (x). The result is a personal and accessible study that also includes helpful tips on finding more information and an extensive bibliographic essay.

Sioux Women: Traditionally Sacred. By Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve. (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2016, 101 pages, paper \$16.95.)

“The circle is an important concept to the Sioux,” explains Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve. “It is a sacred symbol of life: people are born and they live within the circle of family, tribe, and nation” (p. 1). In *Sioux Women*, Sneve examines how women are the center of this circle, “caring for family and acting for community.” Piecing together the oral records of her ancestors, she demonstrates the ways in which women have managed to maintain tribal life, stories, and traditions even as outside circumstances and influences have changed dramatically. Sneve, who has authored several books for young adult readers, is an experienced and gifted storyteller. Wonderful photographs of Sioux women throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries complement the text. *Sioux Women* follows the story of these women to the present, uncovering their ongoing efforts to maintain and adapt traditional values to the modern world.