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In This Issue

DURWOOD BALL, associate professor of history and editor of the *New Mexico Historical Review* at the University of New Mexico, offers an account of Captain Edwin V. Sumner's expedition to the northern reaches of Iowa Territory near the Canadian border in 1845. The campaign, as originally conceived, had a straightforward mission to inscribe U.S. sovereignty on the land, impress national authority on Native Americans living in the region, and assess the military threat posed by the Santee Sioux, Métis, and British. Ball argues, however, that President James K. Polk's expansionism at the time, and the resulting tensions with Great Britain and Mexico, elevated the importance of the campaign.

PAUL MOKRZYCKI, a doctoral candidate in the history department at the University of Iowa, assesses what the disappearance of Des Moines paperboys Johnny Gosch in 1982 and Eugene Wade Martin in 1984 meant for Iowans and other midwesterners and how they shaped the national discourse about missing children since the 1980s.

STACY PRATT MCDERMOTT, assistant director and associate editor for the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, reviews four brief topical books about Abraham Lincoln.

Front Cover

In September 1984 President Ronald Reagan held a campaign rally at the Cedar Rapids airport. With Air Force One parked behind him, Reagan grieved the disappearances of Des Moines paperboys Johnny Gosch and Eugene Martin and assured those gathered at the airport that "none of us will rest until the streets in Iowa and throughout this nation are once again safe, particularly for our children." For more on missing paperboys in the 1980s, see Paul Mokrzycki's article in this issue. Photograph courtesy of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California.

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Beyond Traverse des Sioux: Captain Edwin V. Sumner's Expedition to Devil's Lake in 1845

DURWOOD BALL

IN SUMMER 1845, Captain Edwin V. Sumner commanded a squadron of First United States Dragoons on a diplomatic mission that took him from southeastern to far northwestern Iowa Territory just below British Canada. His principal task was to deliver the Canadian Métis a federal prohibition of their annual buffalo hunts on U.S. soil. The region of the upper St. Peter's and Red rivers encompassed a borderland society defined and bound by cultural, economic, and political exchanges among diverse Native, mixed-blood, and Euro-American peoples.¹ The federal government and its army, however, viewed the area as a geographic and international frontier inhabited by unruly, often lawless peoples ignorant of U.S. territorial limits or defiant toward its national sovereignty. As originally conceived, Sumner's operation was a typical summer tour of Native villages on distant frontiers intended to encourage amity and peace among the Indians and to impress "all with the friendship, the vigilance, and the power of the United States."² In that context, Captain Sumner conducted his campaign to inscribe U.S. sovereignty on the land, impress

1. The St. Peter's River is now known as the Minnesota River. For a definition of *borderland* in this regional context, see David G. McCrady, *Living with Strangers: The Nineteenth-Century Sioux and the Canadian-American Borderlands* (Lincoln, NE, 2006), 2-4.

2. Major General Winfield Scott describes the standard dragoon operation in his "Annual Report," in U.S. Senate, *Report of the Secretary of War*, 28th Cong., 2nd sess., 1844-1845, S. Ex. Doc. 1/4, ser. no. 449, p. 130.

national authority on Native Americans, and assess the military threat posed by the Santee Sioux, Métis, and British in the region.

President James K. Polk's strident expansionism, however, elevated Sumner's expedition and several other army operations deployed that summer to bold projections of U.S. nationalism that directly confronted or challenged British and Mexican power in North America. At his inauguration in early March 1845, Polk promised to "re-annex" Texas ("unwisely ceded away to a foreign power") and to "re-occupy" Oregon ("our title . . . is 'clear and unquestionable'"). In private, he soon added California, weakly held by Mexico, to his list. The president's guiding principle was the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. proscription of any new European colonies in the Americas. Polk particularly targeted Great Britain, which had jointly occupied Oregon with the United States since 1818. In the spring of 1845, the British unsuccessfully tried to broker a last-minute peace treaty between Mexico and Texas that would recognize Texas independence, block U.S. annexation of the Lone Star Republic, and thus check American expansion into the Southwest. The Anglophobic Polk, like most American expansionists, saw John Bull as the most formidable imperial impediment to the march of American liberty and national sovereignty across North America to the Pacific Ocean. In Polk's mind, U.S. geopolitical expansion, the rational force of nature, and the will of God equaled human progress—social, economic, and political—of the highest order.³

In this contest between empires and nations, Sumner's expedition was no mere summer "excursion" to shoo unwanted Natives from U.S. soil. In fact, army operations, such as Sumner's campaign to the Red River of the North, would be the Polk administration's primary tactical tool for challenging Great Britain and Mexico in North America. Of the five expeditions dispatched

3. Robert W. Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs: James K. Polk, the Mexican War, and the Conquest of the American Continent* (New York, 2009), 9–10, 131–32; Thomas M. Leonard, *James K. Polk: A Clear and Unquestionable Destiny*, Biographies in American Foreign Policy no. 6 (Wilmington, DE, 2001), 50–56, 73, 77–78, 80; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848*, Oxford History of the United States (New York, 2007), 701–9. Polk's inaugural address is reprinted in James Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1897*, 10 vols. (Washington, DC, 1896–99), 4:373–82.

in summer 1845, Sumner's march to Devil's Lake has received the least attention from American historians. The only existing full account of Sumner's expedition frames it generally as an exercise in Indian policy, not as an imperial operation in continental expansion.⁴ The sudden appearance of Sumner's expedition so close to the border, however, unnerved British authorities in Canada and England to the point that its ramifications were discussed in the highest circles of the British ministry in London during a critical stage in its negotiations with the United States over the final division of Oregon.

THE ROOT of Sumner's mission lay in a complaint filed by Amos J. Bruce from the St. Peter's Indian Agency at Fort Snelling in Iowa Territory during late summer 1842. Bruce reported that the "half-breeds" (the Métis) who lived on the Red River of the North in Canada were arming themselves "with three small cannon" to fight any Yanktons, Sissetons, or other Sioux encountered during their "annual incursions" to hunt buffalo south of the international boundary each spring and fall. Bruce accused these "British Red River half-breeds" of trespassing on U.S. soil and Sioux hunting grounds. Their massive slaughter threatened the bison herds, and their intrusions triggered warfare with the Sioux, the Sissetons in particular. Summer drought, crop failures, and game scarcity were already impoverishing and starving the Dakota Sioux on the upper St. Peter's River. The federal government, declared Bruce, was legally and morally obligated to protect them, their territory, and their game from these foreign intruders.⁵

4. Nancy L. Woolworth, "Captain Edwin V. Sumner's Expedition to Devil's Lake in the Summer of 1845," *North Dakota History* 28 (1961), 79–98. Other historians who sketch or mention Sumner's campaign are Louis Pelzer, *Marches of the Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley: An Account of Marches and Activities of the First Regiment of United States Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley between the Years 1833 and 1850* (Iowa City, 1917), chap. 11; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783–1846*, Wars of the United States (New York, 1969), 386–88; and Samuel J. Watson, *Peacekeepers and Conquerors: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1821–1846*, Modern War Studies (Lawrence, KS, 2013), 75.

5. Agent Amos J. Bruce to Governor John Chambers, 9/15/1842, St. Peter's Agency, Iowa Territory, in U.S. Senate, *Annual Report of the Office of Indian Affairs*, 27th Cong., 3rd sess., 1842–1843, S. Ex. Doc. No. 1/7, ser. no. 413, pp. 427–31.

Iowa territorial governor John Chambers, a veteran of frontier campaigns against “British” Indians during the War of 1812, added a dose of frontier Anglophobia. These “hardy and daring” Canadian “half-breeds” – the American and British term for the Métis – secured Sioux acquiescence “with presents of ardent spirits and other articles.” Should war with Great Britain erupt, he warned, they would “exercise a dangerous influence over all the Indians on our northwestern border” and “greatly endanger our border settlements.” In the meantime, the Métis traded and sometimes skirmished with the Yanktons and Sissetons. Although silent on the Métis in 1843, Bruce and Chambers reissued their protest the following year. Would the U.S. government remonstrate “to Her Majesty’s government” and dispatch a “military force” to coincide with the “annual incursions of the half-breeds”?⁶ Captain Sumner’s expedition was the federal government’s response to the alarm raised by Bruce and Chambers.

Sumner’s mission to far northwestern Iowa was one of five significant U.S. Army deployments that advanced Polk’s expansionist agenda in the summer of 1845. To confirm the annexation of Texas, the president ordered Brigadier General Zachary Taylor and some 3,000 regulars to confront enraged Mexican forces at the Rio Nueces in south Texas. Captain John C. Frémont led a topographical unit over the southern Rockies toward California. Frémont detached his assistant, Lieutenant James Abert, at Bent’s Fort on the Arkansas River, to survey the Canadian River valley in eastern New Mexico and northern Texas. And Colonel Stephen W. Kearny circumnavigated the central plains with 250 First Dragoons, penetrating deeply into South Pass toward Oregon.⁷

6. “Report of His Excellency John Chambers, Iowa Superintendency,” 1842, U.S. Senate, *Annual Report of the Office of Indian Affairs*, 27th Cong., 3rd sess., 1842–1843, S. Ex. Doc. No. 1/7, ser. no. 413, pp. 421–24; Gov. John Chambers, “Report on Indian Affairs in the Iowa Superintendency,” 9/27/1844, in U.S. Senate, *Report of the Office of Indian Affairs*, 28th Cong., 2nd sess., 1844–1845, S. Ex. Doc. No. 1/5, ser. no. 449, p. 419; Bruce to Chambers, 9/1/1844, St. Peter’s Agency, in U.S. Senate, *Report of the Office of Indian Affairs*, 28th Cong., 2nd sess., 1844–1845, S. Ex. Doc. No. 1/5, pp. 422–23; Bruce to Chambers, 9/1/1843, St. Peter’s Agency, Iowa Territory, in U.S. Senate, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 28th Cong., 1st sess., 1843–1844, S. Ex. Doc. 1/5, ser. no. 431, pp. 377–79.

7. U.S. Senate, *Report of the Secretary of War*, William Marcy, 29th Cong., 1st sess., 1845–1846, S. Ex. Doc. 1/4, ser. no. 470, pp. 193–207; General Winfield Scott, “Annual Report of the Commanding General of the Army,” *ibid.*, 208–10; K. Jack

Like the other four, Sumner's operation assessed foreign influence among the Indians, Native amity or belligerence toward Americans, and regional military threats posed by Mexico or Great Britain, while reconnoitering roads and trails for civilian and military expansion into geographic frontiers.

ON APRIL 9, 1845, as Texans debated the United States' official offer of annexation, Adjutant General Roger Jones gave Colonel Kearny permission to field the two dragoon expeditions, his own and Sumner's, that he had proposed the previous month. Kearny's battalion would proceed from Fort Leavenworth over the Platte River Road to South Pass, turn south to Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River, and return east on the Santa Fe Trail. Four weeks later, Kearny's headquarters ordered Captain Sumner to locate the British "half-breeds" in far northwestern Iowa Territory and instruct them to cease their "intrusions" on U.S. soil. On paper at least, both Kearny's and Sumner's commands would represent the "roving column," the "standard" War Department deployment of dragoons "to prevent Indian hostilities by the exhibition of military force" deep in Native homelands.⁸ The same day that Jones wrote to Kearny, however, the adjutant general also instructed Brigadier General Matthew Arbuckle at Fort Smith, Arkansas, to withhold his dragoons from any "distant

Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846–1848* (1974; reprint, with a new introduction by Robert W. Johannsen, Lincoln, NE, 1992), 18–19; William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration of the American West, 1803–1863* (New Haven, CT, 1959), 116–27; Tom Chaffin, *Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont and the Course of American Empire* (New York, 2002), part 5; Dwight L. Clark, *Stephen Watts Kearny: Soldier of the West* (Norman, OK, 1961), 92–100; Prucha, *Sword of the Republic*, chap. 18.

8. Kearny pitched the dragoon expeditions two weeks after Polk's inauguration. See Kearny to Adjutant General Roger Jones, 3/18/1845, St. Louis, vol. 1 (1 DMo), Letters Sent, Third Military Department, in Sixth Military Department, 1832–1853, entry no. 45, part 1, Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, Record Group 393, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as vol. 1, 3MD, LS, no. 45, part 1, RG 393, NA); AAAG Henry S. Turner to Sumner, 5/7/1845, St. Louis, *ibid*; Jones to Kearny, 4/9/1845, Washington, DC, A46, box 3, Letters Received, 1831–48, Sixth Military Department, 1832–53, entry no. 49, part 1, Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, Record Group 393, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as LR, [year], 3MD, no. 49, part 1, RG 393, NA). General Scott reiterated this policy in his "Annual Report" for 1844, in U.S. Senate, *Report of the Secretary of War*, 28th Cong., 2nd sess., 1844–1845, S. Ex. Doc. 1/4, ser. no. 449, p. 130.

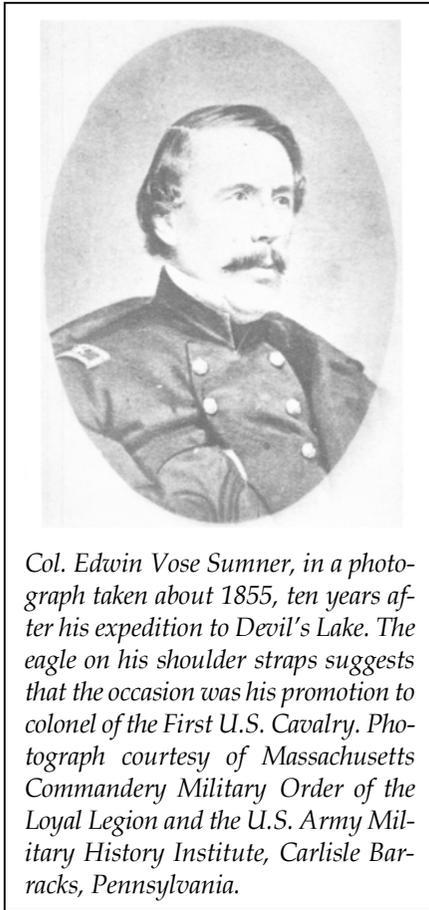
prairie circuits this season"; the government might want them "in Texas."⁹ Mexican and British outrage over Polk's Texas and Oregon policies elevated Kearny's and Sumner's dragoon expeditions from routine frontier patrols of Indian country to campaigns of international diplomatic and military significance in North America.

At Fort Atkinson, picturesquely perched on a bluff above Turkey Creek in eastern Iowa Territory, Sumner was a little apprehensive about the disposition of the upper Dakota Sioux. A U.S. infantry guard detail at Fort Snelling had recently wounded a Sioux "steersman" when it fired on canoes "attempting to run a quantity of whiskey up the St. Peters River" to Lake Traverse. Captain Sumner reasoned that the shooting "must have a tendency to make the Indians hostile." On May 4, anticipating the possibility of combat in upper Dakota country, Sumner requested the deployment of infantry from Fort Snelling to guard the rear of his column while it operated deep in Sioux country. In addition, should the "half-breeds or Indians" create "difficulty" for his dragoons, a "surgeon" would provide valuable service to his men.¹⁰ Kearny assigned the surgeon, but Sumner's squadron operated hundreds of miles in the interior of Dakota country with no infantry screen.

On May 7, prior to receiving Sumner's letter, Kearny's headquarters spelled out the details of the mission. The captain should march his dragoon squadron, consisting of his own Company B and Captain James Allen's Company I, from Traverse des Sioux north along the "St. Peter's toward the North Red River" beyond "Lake Travers [*sic*]" and make contact with the British "half breeds." Colonel Kearny had three aims in mind: (1) to "warn them [the Métis] of the necessity of confining themselves in the future to their own limits"; (2) to counsel the Sisseton Sioux to keep the peace with the whites and with other Indians; and (3) to survey the country above the Blue Earth River for a "temporary

9. Jones to Arbuckle, 4/9/1845, Washington, DC, A45, 1845, LR, 3MD, box 3, no. 49, part 1, RG 393, NA.

10. Sumner to AAAG Henry S. Turner, 5/4/1845, Fort Atkinson, S45, 1845, LR, 3MD, box 4, no. 49, part 1, RG 393, NA. Captain Electus Backus reported the shooting in a letter to Turner, 4/23/1845, Fort Snelling, enclosure, K113, 1845, Letters Received, Adjutant General's Office, microfilm, roll 300 (Washington, DC, 1964), *Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, Main Series, 1822-60*, Microcopy No. 567, National Archives Microfilm Publications, National Archives (hereafter cited as [letter number], [year], LR, AGO, [roll number], M567).



Military Post." Headquarters also enclosed a list of "provisions" warehoused "at Traverse des Sioux" and available to supply Sumner's squadron.¹¹

Kearny neither anticipated nor addressed an issue uppermost in Sumner's mind. The previous October, on the upper St. Peter's River, Sumner had arrested five Sisseton Sioux whose war party had allegedly attacked white cattle drovers, scattered or killed their livestock, and murdered one man, "Mr. Watson."

11. AAAG Henry S. Turner to Sumner, 5/7/1845, St. Louis, vol. 1, LS, 3MD, no. 45, part 1, RG 393, NA; AAAG to Allen, 5/7/1845, St. Louis, *ibid.* Allen's company was posted at Fort Des Moines.

However, they escaped confinement during the return to Fort Snelling. Did the colonel want Sumner to “demand . . . the murderers of Watson” — both the warriors the Sisseton chiefs had never delivered to U.S. authorities and those who were now fugitives?¹² Preparing for his plains expedition, Kearny left the matter entirely to Sumner’s discretion. The Sissetons would likely remember the bellicose, uncompromising Captain Sumner.

The 48-year-old Sumner was an old Iowa hand. Since his first posting there in 1834, he had removed Indians, hunted whiskey peddlers, ejected white trespassers, and reconnoitered the frontier. Wholeheartedly committed to the professional army, he was later described as “old school, rugged and stern, honest and brave . . . devoid of sensibility . . . austere and sober.” One of Captain Allen’s sergeants aptly summed up Sumner’s reputation among the dragoons: “all expect to be blown up like the devil.”¹³ No officer defended federal prerogatives as tenaciously, advanced state power as persistently, and enforced army regulations as vigorously as did Captain Sumner. He demanded of himself an even higher standard of action, devotion, and discipline than he expected of his officers and men.¹⁴ His experience, courage, and

12. Sumner to AAAG Henry S. Turner, 5/4/1845, Fort Atkinson, S-45, 1845, LR, 3MD, box 4, no. 49, part 1, RG 393, NA; Sumner to AAAG, 3rd Military Department, 5/11/1845, Fort Atkinson, S-45, 1845, LR, 3MD, box 3, *ibid.*; Kearny to Adjutant General Roger Jones, 9/6/1844, vol. 1, LS, 3MD, no. 45, part 1, RG 393, NA. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Wilson commanded the battalion that invaded Sisseton country. Sumner handed his prisoners over to the custody of Wilson, who lost them. See Wilson to AAAG Henry S. Turner, 10/24/1844, Fort Snelling, enclosure, K139, 1844, LR, AGO, roll 287, M567.

13. For biographies of Sumner, see F. Stanley, *E. V. Sumner, Major General, United States Army (1797–1863)* (Borger, TX, 1969); William Wallace Long, “A Biography of Major General Edwin Vose Sumner, United States Army, 1797–1863” (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1971); and Thomas K. Tate, *General Edwin Vose Sumner, U.S.A.: A Civil War Biography* (Jefferson, NC, 2013). Stanley and Long briefly narrate Sumner’s expedition; Tate omits the operation. The sergeant’s assessment is [Anonymous], 1 June 1845, “A Journal of March for the Year 1845,” in “The Dragoons in the Iowa Territory, 1845,” ed. Robert Rutland, *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 51 (1953), 161. Donald C. Pfanz quotes Thomas Claiborne in *Richard S. Ewell: A Soldier’s Life* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998), 29.

14. William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784–1861*, *Modern War Studies* (Lawrence, KS, 1992), xiii–xiv; Samuel J. Watson, *Peacekeepers and Conquerors: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1821–1846*, *Modern War Studies* (Lawrence, KS, 2013), vii–viii, xiii–xv. Skelton and Watson explore the development of professional military culture among

hardiness would well serve his frontier mission into the homeland of hard-pressed, often angry upper Dakota tribes.

Spring 1845 had been a busy season for Captain Sumner. As he was investigating wagon roads between the Mississippi River and Fort Atkinson, a Native male made "a violent attempt to ravish" a "respectable woman" at the nearby Winnebago agency. On his return, the outraged captain stormed onto the reserve, seized the "barbarous" culprit, and ordered him flogged. The Office of the Adjutant General endorsed the punishment.¹⁵ The expedition to the Red River of the North would be a break, not entirely unwelcome, from the many nettlesome duties of army service at a frontier post.

SUMNER'S EXPEDITION to the Red River of the North got under way on May 29, when Captain Allen's Company I, with about 57 officers and men, departed the second Fort Des Moines and snaked north along the Des Moines River.¹⁶ Violent storms

U.S. Army officers during the first half of the nineteenth century. Professionalization was well under way by the 1840s, and Captain Sumner was a significant professional force in the mounted branch.

15. AAAG Henry S. Turner to Sumner, 4/8/1845, St. Louis, vol. 1, LS, 3MD, no. 45, part 1, RG 393, NA; Sumner to AAAG, Third Military Department, 5/12/1845, Fort Atkinson, copy, S-159, 1845, LR, AGO, roll 304, M567; Sumner to AAAG, Third Military Department, 5/11/1845, Fort Atkinson, S-45, 1845, LR, 3MD, box 3, no. 49, part 1, RG 393, NA; Assistant Adjutant General Samuel Cooper to Commanding Officer, Third Military Department, 6/12/1845, Headquarters, Western Division, New Orleans, D-45, 1845, LR, 3MD, box 3, no. 49, part 1, RG 393, NA.

16. Kearny's headquarters had instructed Allen to report to Sumner at Traverse des Sioux by June 12. AAAG Henry S. Turner to Allen, 5/7/1845, St. Louis, vol. 1, LS, 3MD, no. 45, RG 393, NA. Allen had graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1829 and was promoted to captain of Company I eight years later. He had served on the Iowa frontier since 1842. See George W. Cullum, "James Allen," *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.: From Its Establishment, March 16, 1802, to the Army Re-organization of 1866-67*, 2 vols. (New York, 1868), 1:355-56. The aggregate of Allen's company is in the table "Position and Distribution of the Troops in the Western Division, under the Command of Brevet Major General Edmund P. Gaines," in U.S. Senate, *Report of the Secretary of War*, 29th Cong., 1st sess., 1845-1846, S. Ex. Doc. No. 1/5, ser. no. 470, between pp. 220 and 221. Robert W. Frazer, "Des Moines II," *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios and Posts Commonly Called Forts West of the Mississippi River to 1898* (Norman, OK, 1965 [1972]), 46-47.

soaked men, horses, and mules almost daily, and all labored mightily to cross rain-swollen bogs, sloughs, and rivers, and stay upright on slippery prairies. Sumner's Company B, with 56 officers and men, departed Fort Atkinson four days later on June 2. Sumner later reported that "full" streams, "wet" prairies, and muddy roads slowed the northward progress of his men. Companies B and I rendezvoused near Rice Lake on June 13, marched another ten miles, and bivouacked at a "grassy Lake." In camp that evening, the surgeon's assistant wrote in his journal, "All doing well and harmoniously."¹⁷

The next day, Sumner led the squadron north toward Traverse des Sioux. The surgeon's assistant admitted, "Can't but admire the way in which Captain Sumner and Lt. [Leonidas] Jenkins take the water," and praised Company B's two-wheeled "carts." On June 17, the day after the Texas Senate resolved to accept the United States' annexation proposal and reject the British-brokered peace treaty with Mexico, Private Howard of Company I accidentally fired a pistol round that wounded him "above the thigh" and Private Berry "in the knee." The following day, the dragoons hauled their agonizing comrades over a rough trail to the St. Peter's River, where Sumner "embarked" the wounded troopers in "canoes" for Traverse des Sioux. The men's reward that evening was "the fashionable [repast] of the prairies, strawberry punch," mixed from the abundant wild fruit found along their route.¹⁸

The following day, fording the swollen Le Sueur River tested Sumner's frontier soldiering. The captain sent the wagons, carts, and baggage aboard a mackinaw boat downriver to Traverse des Sioux, while the squadron unsaddled its horses and "swam" them across the river. On June 21, after marching east down the south bank of the St. Peter's, the dragoons again drove their

17. Maj. George Dearborn to Adj. Gen. Roger Jones, 6/2/1845, Fort Atkinson, D102, 1845, LR, AGO, roll 297, M567; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 5/29-6/13/1845, pp. 160-63; Sumner to AAAG, Third Military Department, 8/23/1845, Fort Atkinson, enclosure, K-113, 1845, LR, AGO, r. 300, M567 (hereafter cited as Captain Sumner's Report); Fort Atkinson, Return, June 1845, microfilm, roll 47 (Washington, DC, 1965), *Returns from Military Posts, 1800-1916*, Microcopy No. 617, National Archives Microfilm Publications (hereafter cited as [roll number], M617).

18. Captain Sumner's Report; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 6/17-18/1845, pp. 164-65.

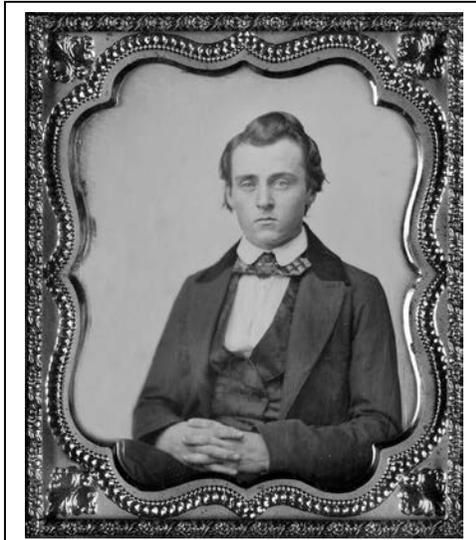
mounts into the current and crossed the river to Traverse des Sioux, a trade and mission outpost. Tied up along the bank was "a boat from Fort Snelling" with two brass Howitzers, shells, rockets, provisions, and other items for Sumner's column, but the captain exploded when he found that Snelling's commissary officer had dispatched only 17 of the 31 barrels of flour in his requisition. Sumner later growled, "This mistake subjected my command to great inconvenience, for I was not in a country where it could be corrected by purchase."¹⁹

Resting the men on June 22, a Sunday, Sumner and other officers attended the church services conducted by Presbyterian missionary Stephen R. Riggs. Afterward, Riggs and his wife, Mary, hosted a simple reception and dinner for the officers at their one-room rectory. The next day, Sumner ordered shells and rockets fired "to astonish" the local Sisseton Sioux—a long-standing tactic in U.S. diplomacy with Indians. Every trooper tightly gripped the reins of his mount. The dragoons left Traverse des Sioux "with small regret" on Wednesday, June 25.²⁰

Joining Sumner's command were agents of a different empire. Norman W. Kittson, Joseph Rolette, and Martin McLeod represented the American Fur Company (AFC) in the upper St. Peter's and Red River region. For decades, American fur traders had competed with their British rivals for the Indians' peltries, business, and allegiance in the vast country wedged between the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. The previous year, Kittson had

19. [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 6/14–21/1845, pp. 165–66; Captain Sumner's Report; Fort Atkinson, Return, June 1845, r. 47, M617.

20. Riggs to Mother, 6/23/1845, Traverse des Sioux, excerpted in *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux* (1880; reprint, with introduction by Rev. S. C. Bartlett, Minneapolis, 1969), 119; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 6/22–25/1845, pp. 166–67. The country of the St. Peter's River and Red River was generally known to the army. Major Stephen H. Long had surveyed the Red River in 1823, and Joseph Nicolet and John C. Frémont had explored the Sheyenne, Red, and St. Peter's drainages in 1838–1839. See Roger L. Nichols, *Stephen Long and American Frontier Exploration* (Newark, DE, 1980); and Chaffin, *Pathfinder*, chaps. 3–4. Sumner had gone north twice in 1844, the second time beyond Lake Traverse. Col. Stephen W. Kearny to Adjutant General Roger Jones, 8/2/1844, St. Louis, K94, 1844, LR, AGO, roll 287, M567; Lt. Col. Henry Wilson to AAAG Henry S. Turner, 10/24/1844, Fort Snelling, enclosure, K139, 1844, LR, AGO, roll 287, M567. Captain Allen had explored the Missouri River drainages to the west. See U.S. House, *Captain J. Allen's Expedition*, 29th Cong., 1st sess., 1845–1846, H. Ex. Doc. No. 168, ser. no. 485, pp. 5, 11.



Norman Kittson. Kittson operated trading posts north of Traverse des Sioux, including one at Pembina frequently visited by the Métis. He traveled with Sumner's column partway to Devil's Lake. Photograph from daguerreotype, por. 16013 p1, Unique Images Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, negative number 90264.

established a trading post at Pembina on the Red River a few miles below the international line. His enterprise directly challenged the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) of the fur trade with whites, Indians, and Métis in Rupert's Land to the north and disrupted its trade networks into Sioux and Chippewa country below the line. Chafing under the HBC grip, the Canadian Métis, Indians, French, and others illegally crossed the border to exchange their furs, buffalo robes, and pemmican for finished goods at Kittson's station. The Americans' operation worried HBC authorities, who already distrusted the loyalty and stability of the "half-breeds." Real U.S. power, if it mattered in the upper St. Peter's and Red River country, lay in AFC trade networks serving mixed-blood, Dakota, and other peoples, and reaching eastward to Rainy Lake, westward onto the Great

Plains, and now northward into Rupert's Land. The coming of Captain Sumner's column helped Native and Euro-American peoples to break down the isolation on which the HBC monopoly counted in the Red River valley, and reinforced the Métis-Dakota peace negotiated by Kittson in 1844, which was so critical to the success of his far northern enterprise.²¹

For three days, the horses and sometimes the men waded through water and mud on the Red River Trail that paralleled the St. Peter's River. Their soggy route led them by Swan Lake and over Beaver Creek. The weather was "remarkably hot," but at last, on June 28, the column began to enjoy "good marching" on firm prairies along the east bank of the St. Peter's. Sumner's dragoons crossed the "beautiful clear" Chippewa River and reached the southeastern extremity of Lac qui Parle on July 1. There they found AFC factor Joseph Renville's trading post and Thomas S. Williamson's mission.²²

At Lac qui Parle, Captain Sumner held his first "council" with Sioux peoples, the Wahpetons of the Santee division. Hard-pressed by white settlement to the east and removed Indians to the south, these Native people, numbering about 400, were impoverished, hungry, and angry. During their exchanges, the captain assured the Wahpetons of the U.S. government's "deep interest in their welfare" and its promise to protect them "so long as they conducted themselves properly and did not wantonly molest the whites." The U.S. government was now "so strong," warned the captain, that "no crime could remain unpunished" anywhere in the "Indian country." After Wahpeton leaders delivered "a few speeches," the captain distributed "a part of the presents," but the Wahpetons' remonstrances led Sumner to conclude, "I do not think the disposition of the upper Sioux toward us [the United States] is very friendly."²³ Sumner's Wahpeton

21. Clarence W. Rife, "Norman W. Kittson, a Fur-Trader at Pembina," *Minnesota History* 6 (1925), 227-32; John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869* (New York, 1977), 61-64.

22. [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 6/25-7/1/1845, pp. 167-68; Rutland, "Dragoons in Iowa Territory," 168n; Captain Sumner's Report.

23. Captain Sumner's Report. Agent Amos J. Bruce had reported the Wahpeton's hardships to Iowa governor John Chambers on September 15, 1842, St. Peter's Agency, *Annual Report of the Office of Indian Affairs* (1842), S. Ex. Doc. No. 1/7, ser. no. 413, pp. 427-31. He did so again on September 1, 1843, St. Peter's

council demonstrated the white paternalism of federal Indian policy, which treated the Natives like unruly children. The captain's stern tone, exercised repeatedly on the journey, was intended to impress on the Sioux and other tribes that U.S. sovereignty was a fact in the upper St. Peter's and Red River region.

The council proceedings—welcoming ceremonies, distribution of presents, and “several speeches”—bored the surgeon's assistant, but Captain Sumner was puzzled when the meeting adjourned. Who “had made the complaint about the inroads of the Half Breeds,” he had asked the Wahpetons? They looked at one another, shook their heads, and “professed their ignorance.” The captain suspected that the Wahpetons wanted the Métis to “continue to hunt upon their lands” and preferred the British to the Americans. The Wahpetons had “no annuities” arrangement with the United States, and the British government or its proxies, explained Sumner, had been “more liberal in its presents to them.”²⁴

On July 3, Sumner's column resumed its procession over the “prairie” along the St. Peter's. A steady “rain” dampened any festive mood among the dragoons on the Fourth of July, the same day that a special Texas convention assembled to accept the United States' terms of annexation and draft a state constitution. Coming to Big Stone Lake on July 5, the dragoons bivouacked at “Kittson's trading house,” the headquarters of his network. “Some eight or nine” lodges of Sisseton Sioux stood “one hundred yards” from the dragoons' camp. The Sissetons, a division of the Santee Sioux, may have been the source of Agent Bruce's complaints about the Métis incursions. In 1842 the Sissetons had lost several hunters to an attack by the Métis, who mistook them for Plains Sioux with whom they had skirmished during buffalo hunts. That vengeance killing may have sparked the unsuccessful Sisseton war party that fell on the cattle drovers and killed Watson. The success of Kittson's new operation at Pembina de-

Agency, U.S. Senate, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 28th Cong., 1st sess., 1843–1844, S. Ex. Doc. No. 1/5, ser. no. 431, p. 379. Riggs noted that the Wahpetons numbered about 400 when he and his wife, Mary, arrived to open a mission at Lac qui Parle in 1837. Riggs, *Mary and I*, 54.

24. [Anonymous], “Journal of March,” 7/3/1845, pp. 168–69; Captain Sumner's Report.

pended on keeping the peace between the Sissetons and Métis in the Red River country.²⁵

Captain Sumner called the Sissetons to a council on July 6. Among the "chiefs" in attendance were "War Eagle, Red Thunder, and Terre qui Brule." Captain Sumner and the Sissetons knew one another from Lieutenant Colonel Wilson's intrusion to arrest Watson's killers nine months earlier. After admonishing the Sissetons not to "molest the whites," he distributed "the residue of the presents" among them. Labeling the Sissetons "great beggars," the surgeon's assistant noted, "They would like to have had more [gifts] but could not get any more." Scraping by to survive, according to Agent Bruce, these lake Sioux strolled among the dragoons and asked "for a little to eat," but the column's commissary had no rations to spare. Captain Sumner later groused, "I am much inclined to think that the small presents we make to the Indians, do more harm than good, for they serve as a contrast to the very liberal presents they formerly received from the English agents." Why not terminate gift giving altogether?²⁶

Native scorn or disappointment obviously embarrassed or discomfited the captain. His few and small presents marked him as ungenerous and unfriendly among indigenous peoples. Gifts were ritual objects with intrinsic power, and their exchange obligated the parties to observe the friendship and responsibilities symbolically represented in the transaction. Sumner's power now resided in the men, musketoons, pistols, and artillery of his dragoon column. The absence of generosity toward the Wahpetons and Sissetons deprived him and his men of the Native vigilance, assistance, and welfare that would have protected the rear of his column far better than a screen of infantry.

The following day, the dragoons crossed the portage between Big Stone Lake and Lake Traverse—the divide between the St. Peter's River and Red River of the North and between the Gulf of Mexico and Hudson's Bay—passed Lake Traverse, and encamped near Polecat Lake. On July 8, as the column moved north toward the Sheyenne River, it encountered a Sioux village,

25. [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 7/3-5/1845, pp. 168-69; Captain Sumner's Report; Rife, "Norman W. Kittson," 227-29.

26. Captain Sumner's Report; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 7/3-7/1845, pp. 168-69.

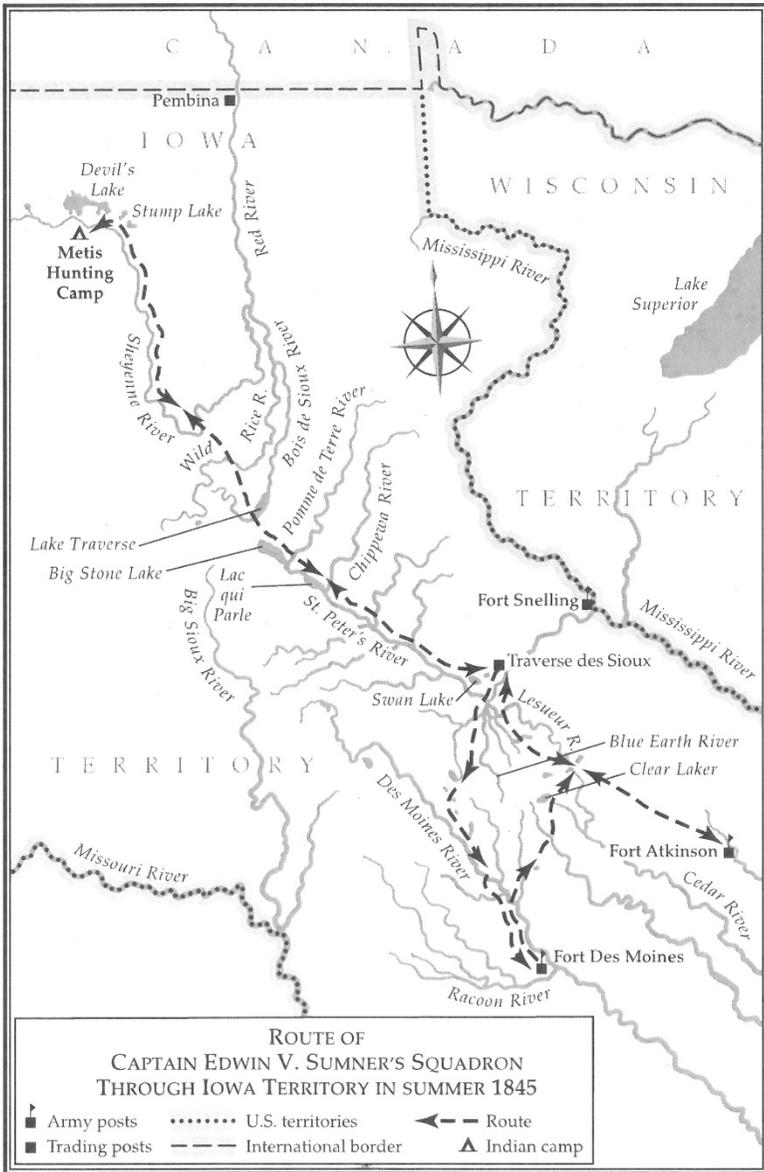
whose chief was "anxious to talk." As Captain Sumner parleyed "in the saddle . . . three of the murderers of Watson" boldly walked "into the council." Sumner later related, "I recognized them at once, and instantly seized them as fugitives from justice." The arrests triggered "a good deal of excitement" among the Sissetons, but the icy captain issued a challenge: should they have anything more to "say," they could tell him when his column returned in a month. With Sisseton prisoners in tow, the squadron stepped off toward the Sheyenne River. Ironically, Sumner had arrested these men at about the same place nine months earlier.²⁷

Sisseton boasts raised Sumner's hackles. Their intention, he learned, was to take his "fine horses" and send his men home "on foot." In Sumner's mind, this posturing was simply another expression of Sioux "ill-will" toward Americans. Horse stealing enhanced the honor status of a Sioux warrior among his people but categorized him as a heinous criminal among whites. Sumner ordered his men to shoot any "Indian" found near the herd "at night," and the surgeon's assistant noted that "the greatest care [was] taken with our horses" after reaching Big Stone Lake. At campaign's end, Sumner gloated, "Not an animal was stolen."²⁸

Sumner's squadron set off on the last leg of its northward journey on July 9. "Excessive heat" prostrated some men; "bad water" turned many bowels to water. Captain Allen got "sick." At the Sheyenne River, reached on the tenth, the men gawked at a Sioux "battle ground" with "horses['] heads laid up in a circle" and with a scatter of equine and human bones. The water was still unpalatable at that point on the river, but the farther the squadron rode north up the Sheyenne, the more the water improved and the men's health rebounded. "Buffalo signs" and the proximity of large herds lifted all spirits by July 15. The civilians and some officers, Second Lieutenant Alfred Pleasonton among

27. Captain Sumner's Report; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 6/7-8/1845, pp. 169-70. Sumner's July return does not document his Sioux prisoners. See Fort Atkinson, Return, July 1845, roll 47, M617. With Lieutenant Colonel Wilson, Sumner had gone "thirty miles" north of Lake Traverse to capture Watson's killers in October 1844. Wilson to AAAG Henry S. Turner, 10/24/1844, Fort Snelling, enclosure, K139, 1844, LR, AGO, roll 287, M567.

28. Captain Sumner's Report; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 7/4-7/1845, p. 169.



Deborah Reade

them, gave chase to bison stragglers and antelope. Wolves stalked the column on all sides. When "Mr. Bird," the captain's guide, fired his gun at one, "his horse pitched him over his head."²⁹

On July 16, as Secretary of State James Buchanan delivered an official "letter" to British minister Sir Richard Pakenham in Washington, D.C., proposing to divide Oregon at the 49th Parallel, Sumner's squadron pushed across the plains along the Sheyenne River toward Devil's Lake. The troopers saw eaten grass and buffalo trails in all directions. In two days, the dragoons "struck the half breeds trail" and bivouacked next to Devil's Lake, in Sumner's words, "at the 48[th] degree of N latitude," his bow to the military and natural sciences. Sumner immediately dispatched "Mr. Bird" to contact the Métis. After dark, Bird returned with "ten of the principal men." The surgeon's assistant described them as "fine large fellows and . . . the best Buffalo chasers in the country." That night a "dreadful storm" blasted the camp, flattened tents, and rained "all wrath" on Sumner's dragoons and his Métis guests.³⁰

WHO WERE these so-called "half-breeds"? The Métis were a mixed-race people born of European empire and the North American fur trade. Well-acquainted with them from his service at Sault Ste. Marie and Mackinac on the Great Lakes in the 1820s, Sumner described them as "descendants from the English, Scotch, Irish, and French." He gave no Indian ancestry, but it was Cree, Chippewa, and Dakota Sioux in this region. The Métis now inhabited Lord Selkirk's former Red River colony, Rupert's Land, which had originally straddled both sides of the 49th Parallel. About 1820, the Métis began venturing onto the northern plains to harvest the bison. Twice a year, more than a thousand Métis

29. [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 7/9-16/1845, pp. 170-72; Captain Sumner's Report. Neither Sumner's report nor the assistant's journal indicates that the captain joined the pursuit of the buffalo.

30. Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs*, 173-74; Captain Sumner's Report; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 7/17-19/1845, pp. 172-73. These Métis visitors were probably the "ten captains" elected by their people each season to organize and oversee the bison hunt. See Josephy Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire: A Narrative of the Northwest* (1952; reprint, with a new introduction by Nicholas C. P. Vrooman, St. Paul, MN, 1994), 302-3.

men, women, and children—most were Canadian—gathered near Pembina for a massive bison hunt south and west of Devil's Lake. In the early 1840s British and American observers estimated that the Métis harvested over a million pounds of meat during each hunt, much of which they sold to the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada. Those large hunts had triggered intermittent clashes with the Dakota, who were no less dependent on the bison. At the same time, the Métis traded goods and, according to Agent Bruce, alcohol to the upper Sioux. Bruce wanted to end that exchange, but a Métis free-market movement was vigorously challenging the HBC's monopoly on their trade in furs, robes, and other items.³¹ Keenly aware of their restlessness, Kittson was encouraging the Métis, French Canadians, and Indians to cross the international line to trade their peltries and robes at his Pembina post and his satellites to the east and west.

No storm, even of biblical ferocity, would delay Captain Sumner. On July 17, he sat in council with the Métis leaders. According to legendary HBC agent Alexander Ross, Métis men wore "a common blue capote, red belt, and corduroy trousers" and were "mild," "unassuming," "bashful," "sedate," "grave," and "humble." Their habit of pipe smoking, ubiquitous among them, contrasted with Sumner's abstention from tobacco, but the captain immediately warmed to the Métis, whom he found to be "shrewd and sensible" men. He explained that their "incursions" were "violations" of U.S. "territory" and thus must end. Responding to Bruce's and Chamber's accusations, the Métis protested that "they had no idea of resisting the authority of the American government." These savvy diplomats, while acknowledging their British status, argued that "they were only hunting on the lands of their Indian parents," that their Canadian homeland lacked "game enough" to feed their families, and that this way of life, "followed from childhood," was the only one they knew. Given

31. Howard, *Strange Empire*, 39–40, 299–306; Gregory Scott Camp, "The Turtle Mountain Plains-Chippewas and Metis, 1797–1935" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1987), chap. 3; Rife, "Norman W. Kittson," 229–30. McCrady, *Living with Strangers*, 13–15, notes that in the winter of 1844–45, the Sioux and Métis negotiated a treaty after a series of deadly clashes. Kittson had a hand in that diplomacy.

those conditions, would the U.S. government “overlook” their “hunting excursions” south of the line?³²

A mere captain of dragoons lacked the authority to grant extraordinary privileges. He kindly but firmly held the line: “All governments were rightfully very jealous on these matters.” The Métis offered another proposal: What if their people relocated “across the line”? The surprised captain instantly quashed the idea; offering the Métis any “inducement . . . to secede as a body” would be “an improper interference with the rights of their government.” Would the U.S. government grant a reprieve during which their people “could change their habits,” the Métis asked? This suggestion struck a chord. The captain later reported, “After due reflection, I advised them to address a letter to our government, asking *as a favor* that a year or two might be granted to them in order to give them a little time to commence some other course of life.” For a quarter-century, the captain had witnessed the dislocations and destruction of Native life wrought by U.S. and British expansion, and he was not without sympathy—maybe even empathy—for their unfortunate plight.³³

After this initial council, Captain Sumner relocated his bivouac to the “half breed camp” on the west bank of the Sheyenne River. Some “six hundred carts,” parked in a huge square, formed an impressive and imposing stockade, and Sumner estimated the band at 600 men. The same number of Métis women butchered carcasses, dried meat, and rendered fat, while clouds of children swirled through the enclosure and among the carts. On July 20, Sumner held another council with the Métis and probably received their petition. Afterward, wasting no time, he ordered his men to break camp and march south. The dragoons and Métis traded “in great style” as the column moved out.³⁴

32. Captain Sumner’s Report. Alexander Ross lived among the Métis during this period. See his *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State; With Some Account of Its Native Races, and Its General History, to the Present Day* (London, 1856), 190–91. Agreeing with Sumner, the surgeon’s assistant wrote, “They seem a most reasonable and friendly people.” See [Anonymous], “Journal of March,” 6/19/1845, p. 173.

33. Captain Sumner’s Report.

34. *Ibid.* The surgeon’s assistant guessed that “200” hunters were present. [Anonymous], “Journal of March,” 6/19–20/1845, pp. 173–74. Sumner’s estimate was probably closer. According to Howard, *Strange Empire*, 301–2, the typical Métis

Captain Sumner, a hard-headed regular soldier, rode away with a favorable impression of the Métis. He admitted that they would return annually: "They know very well that their families and themselves will always be safe with the United States troops, so long as they do not resist them." Ross pessimistically predicted, "There is no earthly consideration would make them relinquish the pursuit [of the bison]." Sumner reported that some Métis were developing a strong economic relationship with the trading post run by Kittson in Pembina, and he had heard unofficially that some Métis planned to relocate from Rupert's Land to Pembina to take advantage of American establishments such as Kittson's. The captain foresaw many "half breeds" becoming U.S. citizens.³⁵

UNDER SUMNER'S ORDERS, the squadron "scrupulously" retraced its course to Traverse des Sioux. The irritated surgeon's assistant, who believed that Captain Allen would have explored a new route home, attributed Sumner's choice to his lack of "confidence in his own prairie craft."³⁶ But Sumner's campaign agenda prescribed flying the flag and showing courage in Sioux country, not exploration and novelty.

As promised, Sumner returned to the Sisseton homeland, encamping at Lake Traverse on July 28 and Big Stone Lake on July 29. Although the Sisseton "manifested but little friendship, they took care to show no hostility." Farther south at Lac qui Parle, the dragoons learned that Private Berry had died after his leg was amputated and that Texas had accepted annexation to the United States. What they likely did not learn is that the van of Brigadier General Zachary Taylor's Army of Occupation had sailed from New Orleans for Corpus Christi, Texas, on July 24 and that Sir Richard Pakenham had rejected President Polk's Oregon proposal five days later. The stakes of North American empire had

hunt in the 1840s brought about 1,500 Métis, of whom 600 were men and the same number, women. The classic account of a Métis bison hunt is in Ross, *The Red River Settlement*, chap. 18.

35. Captain Sumner's Report; Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 260.

36. Captain Sumner's Report; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 7/21-8/7/1845, pp. 174-76.

risen appreciably during the squadron's absence, adding substantial military and diplomatic value to Sumner's expedition.³⁷

With the weather hot and the ground hard, the squadron covered 20 to 30 miles a day, resting only on Sundays. The column pulled into Traverse des Sioux on August 7. Captain Sumner rested his men and horses the following day. For amusement, some troopers witnessed a Sisseton war dance, but the ever vigilant captain seized a Sioux warrior who had stolen three horses and a mule from Captain Allen's command the previous summer. Incredulous, Sumner wrote, "I heard of this man frequently. He had been running about the country boasting of this feat." A Sioux warrior was *supposed* to advertise his coup, even livestock theft, but a U.S. officer was obligated to arrest him—to make all the Indians "know that the horses of the government . . . are inviolable, and that they cannot be touched . . . without the certainty of punishment at the time, or afterwards." Lacking any "testimony" against the man, Sumner turned him over to the commanding officer at Fort Snelling, not to the "civil authority," probably for a legal hearing before a military court.³⁸

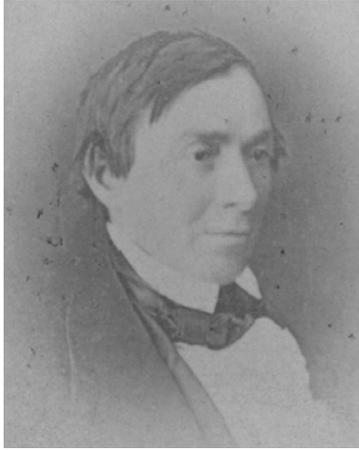
During the next two days, the squadron received provisions from Fort Snelling, and the men lounged about camp and tended their horses. Captain Sumner dispatched his three Sisseton prisoners under guard to civil authorities in Dubuque. His report boasted, "I took these prisoners with me to the end of my march[,] having them in confinement about 40 days."³⁹

On August 11, Sumner broke up the squadron. Captain Allen took Company I along a route west and then south to Fort Des Moines. The surgeon's assistant sneered, "Captain Sumner true to his route could not desert his old trail, so he took it, knowing before he started it was a very bad one." Sumner pushed his Company B for a week and pulled into Fort Atkinson on August 19. Floundering through swamps, sloughs, creeks, and rivers, Allen's command reached its station at Fort Des Moines on August

37. Walter R. Borneman, *Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America* (New York, 2008), 162; Bauer, *The Mexican War*, 18.

38. Captain Sumner's Report; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 8/1/1845, pp. 175–76.

39. Captain Sumner's Report.



Portrait of James Allen, 1st Lieutenant with the 1st U.S. Dragoons. Allen was in fact a captain when this image, probably a daguerreotype, was made sometime between 1840 and 1846, the year of his death. Print made ca. 1860s, possibly from a daguerreotype image, by photographer Alexander Gardner, Washington, D.C. Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

28.⁴⁰ Sumner's squadron, his Company B specifically, had traversed about 1,200 miles of Iowa's prairie-woodlands and plains country in 77 days; Allen's company did so in 91.

FOUR DAYS LATER, Sumner reported a successful mission to the Third Military Department. His squadron had flown the U.S. flag in the upper Sioux country, and he had delivered the federal

40. Captain Sumner's Report; Fort Atkinson, Return, August 1845, r. 47, M617; [Anonymous], "Journal of March," 8/11-28/1845, pp. 177-82; Captain James Allen to AAAG Henry S. Turner, Third Military Department, 8/29/1845, Fort Des Moines, A-45, 1845, LR, 3MD, box 3, no. 49, part 1, RG 393, NA. The three Sisseton prisoners escaped again, this time from civilian custody in Dubuque. Riggs, *Mary and I*, 119-20. Riggs said that Sumner arrested four Sissetons for murder, but the captain said that he took three.

government's hunting prohibition to the Canadian Métis. During the long march northward, he and Captain Allen had also examined the country between the Blue Earth River and Lake Traverse for the potential site of a temporary "military post." With "but little timber" standing along the banks of the St. Peter's River, only three points offered the "stone," wood, and "rich soil" necessary to construct a post and support a garrison. From south to north, they were the "mouth of the Blue Earth River," "Pattersons Rapids," and "Big Stone Lake."⁴¹

The two captains agreed that Big Stone Lake, the source of the St. Peter's River, was the most suitable site for a post. Richly endowed with "building material, fuel, and soil," the area enjoyed "great salubrity . . . from the great elevation and dryness of the soil and country around." Especially advantageous to the federal government was that a "garrison" at Big Stone Lake "would perhaps exert a greater influence on the Sioux Indians than at any other site on the St. Peters R[iver]." Big Stone Lake, and Lake Traverse a few miles north of it, were "places of great resort for purposes of residence and trade" among the Sioux. The garrison would also be "within striking distance of the Chippewas" and the "Half Breeds" to the north and east. Despite their distrust of the Sioux, the captains expressed sympathy for their current hardships, cautioning their superiors that "the establishment of a military post" deep in "Sioux country" would drive away the buffalo, "their only means of subsistence," and thus "cause immediate injury to this people."⁴² In that case, the upper Dakota Sioux would have to rely on the generosity of the American people and their government to subsist and survive—a reality that Sumner had witnessed repeatedly from frontier to frontier during his quarter-century of service.

Addressing the Métis threat, Captain Sumner found them far less "formidable" than they had been portrayed. As he explained, "They have no discipline, no capable leaders, and they are hampered by their families. A few regular troops [would] have nothing to fear from them." At the same time, Sumner liked the Métis, clearly preferring them to the Sioux, whom he found unfriendly,

41. Captain Sumner's Report; Captains Edwin V. Sumner and James Allen, Report on a site for a military post above the Blue Earth River, 8/10/1845, Traverse des Sioux, S-45, 1845, LR, 3MD, box 4, no. 49, part 1, RG 393, NA.

42. *Ibid.*

unsteady, and unpredictable.⁴³ Sumner believed that the United States need not worry about the Métis in the event of war with Great Britain or, more immediately, with Mexico.

Sumner's report, penned at Fort Atkinson on August 23, 1845, aggravated Agent Bruce at Fort Snelling, who objected because it was generally "favorable to the half breeds." Bruce argued that the Métis, upon learning that the United States would soon end their "incursions," had fabricated their claim to the buffalo ranges through ancestral practice. In fact, he claimed, the Sioux had hunted those ranges since "time immemorial." Governor Chambers agreed. These "British subjects" had "at no time resided within our jurisdiction," he reported. Responding to the Métis's petition, Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Medill concurred that the president should "remonstrate to the British government" and suggested that the United States "employ its strong arm," the federal army, to defend its "Indians and others." These lawless "half-breeds" not only slaughtered the "game" but sold spirits to the Sioux in violation of "the intercourse act of 1834." Under no circumstances, Medill declared, should the government indulge them.⁴⁴ Captain Sumner's optimistic and generous views of the Métis gained no traction among the federal Indian bureau authorities and agents, who were already straining to manage Indian populations on the nation's frontiers.

The publicity garnered by the expedition must have been a heady experience for Captain Sumner. Commanding General Scott, in his annual report, devoted a full paragraph—nearly as much space as he gave Kearny's South Pass expedition and Taylor's observation in Texas—to describing Sumner's campaign above the "45th parallel." He praised the captain's "impressive councils or *talks* with the *half-breeds* and other Indians who reside within the British line." In three paragraphs, Secretary of War William Marcy boasted that Sumner's dragoons had impressed on "the more restless natives" the long and powerful reach of the

43. Captain Sumner's Report.

44. Agent Amos J. Bruce to Gov. John Chambers, 9/1/1845, St. Peter's Agency, Iowa Territory, U.S. Senate, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 29th Cong., 1st sess., 1845–1846, S. Ex. Doc. 1/6, ser. no. 470, p. 489; Gov. John Chambers to Medill, 9/28/1845, Burlington, Iowa, *ibid.*, 481–82; Medill to Secretary of War William L. Marcy, 11/24/1845, Office of Indian Affairs, *ibid.*, 454.

United States. The Métis now wanted to settle on the U.S. side, he bragged, for the “privilege of hunting within our borders.”⁴⁵ Although Bruce, Chambers, and Medill likely frowned on the prospect of the Métis settling south of the border, Kittson and other AFC agents foresaw developments advantageous to their trade: weakening the HBC in the Red River region; and expanding the AFC’s trade with the Métis, Indians, and other Canadian subjects along the border. Profits and power would accrue to the victor in the economic struggle.

Despite the warm official light showered on Sumner’s march to Devil’s Lake, his firm “talk” with the Métis failed to stop their spring and fall buffalo hunts on U.S. soil. According to Agent Bruce, the Métis’s incursion in spring 1846 exceeded their “usual” number of hunters. Governor Chambers’s successor, James Clarke, gave notice that Sumner’s mission had failed to deter the “repetition” of Métis invasions. He called their bison hunts a bald-faced theft of Sioux game. Mentioned by name in their reports was the Hudson’s Bay Company, to whom the Métis supplied buffalo meat and hides and which was still a powerful force along the U.S.-Canadian border.⁴⁶ The Métis had not weaned themselves from the mother corporation despite their desire, registered with Captain Sumner, to resettle in the United States.

DURING THE SUMMER OF 1845, Captain Sumner pursued his mission along a narrow diplomatic and military front. His intention was to wave the U.S. flag, talk with the Sioux and Métis, and return to Fort Atkinson without the loss of men or horses. As an officer appointed from civilian life, he lacked the extensive education in natural sciences and natural philosophy received by U.S. Military Academy graduates such as Captain Allen, and his narrow focus on the mission left little room for ethnographic recording of Native societies encountered along the upper St. Peter’s

45. U.S. Senate, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, William Marcy, 29th Cong, 1st sess., 1845–1846, S. Ex. Doc. No. 1/4, ser. no. 470, p. 197; Scott to Marcy, 11/20/1845, Headquarters of the Army, *ibid.*, 208.

46. Amos J. Bruce to Clarke, 9/1/1846, St. Peter’s Agency, U.S. Senate, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 29th Cong., 2nd sess., 1846–1847, S. Ex. Doc. No. 1/5, ser. no. 493, p. 246; Clarke to Comr. Ind. Affs. W[illiam] Medill, 10/2/1846, Iowa Superintendency, Burlington, *ibid.*, 214.

and Sheyenne rivers. He appears to have derived special satisfaction from recapturing the three Sisseton fugitives. Successfully transporting them back to Traverse des Sioux and then on to Dubuque added luster to his reputation as a highly capable professional officer.

Probably unknown to Captain Sumner was that the subject of his expedition engrossed the highest levels of government in England, particularly as it negotiated an Oregon settlement with the United States. His squadron's surprise appearance so close to the international border alarmed George Simpson, the Hudson's Bay Company's resident governor in North America. According to Chief Factor Alexander Christie on the Red River, the Métis responded warmly to Sumner's equanimity, and they had talked incessantly of their petition and of settling near Pembina since the captain's departure the previous summer. Meanwhile, Simpson and other HBC executives, who had already been pressing Her Majesty's government for military protection of the company's assets in Oregon, began to lobby Whitehall vigorously for a garrison of British Red Coats at Red River to thwart any American armed or economic invasion and to intimidate anyone who would offer private resistance to HBC authority, such as that practiced by the "half breeds." Indeed, the British government deployed 346 troops to Upper Fort Garry on the Red River in 1846 but withdrew them two years later in the wake of the Oregon settlement and the war between Mexico and the United States.⁴⁷

The impact of Sumner's mission on the U.S.-British negotiations over Oregon is hard to measure. Sir Richard Pakenham's rejection of the U.S. proposal, without forwarding it to the British Foreign Ministry, surprised, insulted, and infuriated the president, who, out of deference to his predecessor, had reluctantly offered to accept the 49th Parallel as the international boundary. Three days after Sumner submitted his report to Kearny on August 23, a miffed President Polk withdrew the U.S. offer and reasserted its claim to all of Oregon to 54' 40", his personal preference as well as his party's. In concert with Taylor's occupation of southern Texas, Kearny's campaign to South Pass, and Frémont's

47. For a discussion of Simpson's response to Sumner's contact with the Métis, see C. P. Stacey, "The Hudson's Bay Company and Anglo-American Military Rivalries during the Oregon Dispute," *Canadian Historical Review* 18 (1937), 289-95.

penetration of the Mexican far north, Sumner's dragoon expedition to Devil's Lake was another graphic example of American nationalism aggressively expanding northward and westward into North America. Foreign Minister Lord Aberdeen, who would have settled for 49 degrees, immediately ordered the scoffing Pakenham to express to Secretary James Buchanan his regrets over the rejection and offer to reopen negotiations. Polk believed that British Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel would not wage a war for an Oregon boundary at 42 degrees, although he had dispatched a large fleet to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in response to Polk's bombastic inaugural speech. In the months that followed, the two nations engaged in a great deal of diplomatic maneuvering and negotiation, but the British eventually did settle for 49 degrees in the summer of 1846, understanding that a little less was a lot more in the face of the tirelessly expansive United States.⁴⁸

The efficacy of his expedition and diplomacy probably mattered little to Sumner by mid- to late 1846. With the U.S. declaration of war on Mexico on May 13, Company B was transferred from Iowa to the war. While en route to Bent's Fort to join the U.S. invasion of New Mexico, Sumner was promoted to major in the Second U.S. Dragoons. His brigade of First Dragoons assisted Colonel Kearny's occupation of Santa Fe in August. That fall Sumner returned to St. Louis. During the rest of the war, he gallantly commanded the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen and the Second Dragoons in Major General Scott's invasion of central Mexico, earning brevets to colonel.⁴⁹ By the war's end, the Métis were likely a distant, albeit colorful, memory in his frontier service.

48. Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs*, 190; Paul H. Bergeron, *The Presidency of James K. Polk*, American Presidency Series (Lawrence, KS, 1987), 119–20; Leonard, *James K. Polk*, 113.

49. Adjutant General Roger Jones to Captain Edwin V. Sumner, 6/6/1846, Washington, DC, vol. 22, LS, AGO, microfilm, roll 14 (Washington, DC, 1965), *Letters Sent by the Office of the Adjutant General, Main Series, 1800–1890*, Microcopy No. 656, National Archives Microfilm Publications; *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, s.v. "Sumner, Edwin Vose."

Lost in the Heartland: Childhood, Region, and Iowa's Missing Paperboys

PAUL MOKRZYCKI

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD ELIZABETH COLLINS and her cousin, ten-year-old Lyric Cook-Morrissey, vanished on July 13, 2012. The two went for a bike ride in what has since been renamed Angels Park in Evansdale, Iowa, and never returned home. Their disappearance triggered massive searches and received considerable local media attention. A group of hunters eventually found their bodies in December of the same year. Their murders devastated the Evansdale community. "They're our girls," one local woman, standing with her children, explained to a reporter. "They're everybody's girls." With the gruesome discovery of the girls' bodies, one news account gestured to the past: "Once again,

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Iowa lost more of its innocence."¹ The following summer, another disappearance and slaying—this time of 15-year-old Kathlynn Shepard from Dayton, Iowa—rocked the state. “This is a safe community,” an area mother contended after the Shepard tragedy. “This kind of thing should not happen. It’s unfathomable.” Another woman from Dayton lamented, “It’s a small community and we’re hurting.” The county sheriff shared these women’s concerns, commenting, “We were robbed of some innocence in this whole thing. We’ll never quite be the same.”²

These cases brought a specific type of trauma to these Iowa communities, one that journalists, law enforcement officials, and ordinary people found all too familiar. The Evansdale and Dayton incidents spurred numerous comparisons to the unsolved disappearances of Des Moines paperboys Johnny Gosch in 1982 and Eugene Wade Martin in 1984. A 2012 newspaper article, for instance, remarked on the similarities between the Gosch episode and that of the Evansdale cousins. “Both cases involved children doing the activities children are supposed to do without worry: Gosch was delivering newspapers around his neighborhood,” while the young girls “were riding their bicycles on a hot summer afternoon.” The same account touched on the Gosch case as a moment of fracture, much as the Evansdale and Dayton tragedies had been for their communities.³

For many Iowans, Gosch’s disappearance represented a loss of innocence; it imposed new strictures on childhood and parenthood while casting a pall on the midwestern idyll. “It’s not the type of crime that happens in Iowa,” the *Des Moines Register* reported. An interviewee concurred. “There were kidnappings but it was never kids, at least not that we’d seen in our lives. We were

1. Alison Gowans, “‘Dancing Up with Our Savior’: Iowa Mourns the Missing Cousins of Evansdale,” *Cedar Falls Patch*, 12/9/2012; Emily Schettler, “Bodies Confirmed to Be Missing Iowa Cousins,” *Des Moines Register* (hereafter cited as *DMR*), 12/11/2012.

2. Barbara Rodriguez, “Iowa Residents Saddened Body Could Be Missing Girl,” Associated Press (hereafter cited as AP) news release, 6/8/2013. Police believe a 42-year-old convicted sex offender named Michael Klunder abducted and murdered Shepard. Authorities have also implicated Klunder in the slayings of Elizabeth Collins and Lyric Cook-Morrissey, although that case remains open.

3. Emily Schettler, “Living without Answers,” *DMR*, 9/4/2012. For more on “fracture” as a defining feature of late twentieth-century political culture, see Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, MA, 2011).

all raised watching the *Andy Griffith Show* and *Leave It to Beaver*, and these things didn't even occur to us. That was the most bothersome thing was that this kind of stole our innocence from us." Another report struck a similar chord. "We still remember the names. Their faces. Details of their disappearances. Johnny Gosch, 12. Vanished nearly 30 years ago while delivering newspapers. Eugene Martin, 13. Went missing 28 years ago. . . . Now two more Iowa children have disappeared. And like the others, their names are etched on the hearts of Iowans. . . . Lyric Cook-Morrissey, 10. Elizabeth Collins, 8."⁴ The Gosch and Martin cases occurred just as the issue of "missing children" began to coalesce in the American political consciousness. But those mysteries, more so than other famous missing children cases of the late 1970s and 1980s, remain metaphorically linked to the state in which they transpired.

This article explores the Gosch and Martin disappearances — what they meant for Iowans and other midwesterners and how they have shaped the national political discourse about missing children since the 1980s. These incidents shattered notions of "innocence" in the midwestern political imagination. Parents, child welfare advocates, media representatives, and public officials contended that the Gosch and Martin cases signaled a shift away from safety, order, and idealized childhood and toward chaos, criminal depravity, and imperiled childhood. The incidents provoked responses rooted in notions of midwestern communitarianism, pastoralism, and virtue. The political and rhetorical responses to these high profile cases indicate how notions of regional innocence intersected with broader national concerns animating the conservative counterrevolution. The Gosch and Martin tragedies helped advance arguments about pornography, crime, prostitution, law enforcement ineptitude, homosexuality, religious cultism, and other forces ostensibly antagonistic to the "traditional" American family. Such arguments stemmed from and grounded larger anxieties about familial and, by extension, national decline.⁵ This article focuses on these responses and

4. Schettler, "Living without Answers"; idem, "FBI Believes Girls Are Alive," *DMR*, 7/22/2012.

5. For more on these hallmarks of midwestern identity, at least as they appear in the popular imagination, see Victoria Johnson, *Heartland TV: Prime Time Television and the Struggle for U.S. Identity* (New York, 2008); James H. Madison, ed.,

their political salience while providing a narrative overview of the paperboy cases and their role in the national missing children campaign of the 1980s.

The Midwest is often constructed and construed, both within and beyond the region, as America writ small. Iowa, for one, is commonly the butt of jokes regarding American “averageness” or “typicality.”⁶ Test marketers flock to the Midwest because of its reputation as “the most American region.” They believe that “if a product will sell in Des Moines or Columbus,” one historian observes, “it will sell anywhere.”⁷ Politicians, too, understand the cachet of the “heartland” as a site of “Americanness” and traditional virtue.⁸ Political commentator Thomas Frank contends that, at least in the popular imagination, contemporary conservatism has become “the faith of the hardworking common people of the heartland, an expression of their unpretentious, all-American ways just like country music and NASCAR.”⁹ It is both possible and fruitful to probe the political meanings of such ideas without accepting the problematic notion that the Midwest is, in fact, an “innocent” site.¹⁰

Just as the Midwest functions in the political consciousness as a space of pure “Americanness,” the region also serves as the “normative” site of American childhood. The historical construc-

Heartland: Comparative Histories of the Midwestern States (Bloomington, IN, 1988); and James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence, KS, 1989).

6. The satirical newspaper the *Onion* takes goodhearted aim at Iowa with some regularity. See, for example, “Iowa Fashion Week Begins,” *Onion*, 3/11/2013.

7. R. Douglas Hurt, “Midwestern Distinctiveness,” in *The American Midwest: Essays on Regional History*, ed. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Susan E. Gray (Bloomington, IN, 2001), 173.

8. See, among others, Shortridge, *The Middle West*; Jon K. Lauck, *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History* (Iowa City, 2013); and Frank Tobias Higbie, “Heartland: The Politics of a Regional Signifier,” *Middle West Review* 1 (2014), 84–90. Too few historians have examined the particularities of midwestern political culture in the late twentieth century. While this article seeks to rectify this elision, it is important to recognize the difficulties inherent in defining a region and assigning it distinctive characteristics without essentializing.

9. Thomas Frank, *What’s the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York, 2004), 20.

10. For studies of Iowa that cast the state as “typical,” see Joseph Frazier Wall, *Iowa: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1978); and Dorothy Schwieder, “Iowa: The Middle Land,” in *Heartland*, ed. Madison, 276–96.

tion of childhood innocence reifies and reflects existing indicators of privilege along racial, class, and gendered lines. As white paperboys from middle-class midwestern suburbs, Johnny Gosch and Eugene Martin epitomized boyhood innocence and vulnerability. In fact, they became the *literal* pictures of boyhood innocence and vulnerability as the first missing children featured on milk cartons. One literary theorist describes how “children, as an *idea*, are likely to be both white and middle-class.” In her rendering, it is “a privilege to need to be protected—and to be sheltered—and thus to have a childhood. Not in spite of privilege, then, but because of it, the all-important feature of weakness sticks to these markers (white and middle class) and helps to signal innocence.”¹¹ Gosch and Martin fit within this model and add new wrinkles to it. For many midwesterners, their disappearances symbolized not just physical losses, but also the losses of innocence, childhood, whiteness, middle-classness, and midwesternness.

AT ABOUT SIX O’CLOCK on the Sunday morning of Labor Day weekend in 1982, Johnny Gosch and a fellow paperboy picked up their allotment of newspapers from the United Methodist Church in West Des Moines. Gosch, a husky, freckled 13-year-old with a mop of light brown hair, departed the church with his friend, and they diverged on their respective routes. Johnny’s dachshund, Gretchen, walked beside him. Soon after the boys left the church, Gosch’s fellow carrier recalled, “a man wearing a baseball cap and driving a dark blue car . . . asked both boys, in separate conversations” for directions to the same location. The other paperboy, “whose frightened mother asked that his name not be used” in newspaper accounts, saw Johnny speaking to a man near the intersection of 42nd Street and Marcourt Lane. In the predawn darkness, the young carrier could not determine whether it was the same man who had asked for directions earlier. An adult neighbor corroborated the boy’s version of events, confirming that he, too, had provided directions to a man in a blue car. There is little agreement about what happened next. Some insist that a man followed Johnny around a street corner

11. Kathryn Boyd Stockton, *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC, 2009), 31 (emphasis in original).

before snatching him and whisking him away. Others say they heard a car door slam and tires screech before witnessing a vehicle run a stop sign and travel north toward Interstate 235 “at a high rate of speed.” The Gosches’ dachshund returned home without Johnny, and his father found the boy’s wagon still full of newspapers two blocks from the family’s home.¹²

The Gosches initially applauded the law enforcement response to Johnny’s disappearance. One newspaper report indicated that 25 to 30 area law enforcement officials participated in searches for Johnny within a few hours of his disappearance. A television news segment stated that 40 city police officers, Polk County sheriff’s deputies, and state highway patrolmen engaged in searches on that Sunday. The following day—Labor Day—Boy Scouts, sheriff’s deputies, other law enforcement authorities, and approximately 1,000 volunteers scoured the area for Johnny’s body or any clues that might lead to his recovery. The “somber searchers,” as the *Des Moines Register* characterized them, “anxiously” combed through “woods and parks, fields and ditches,” vacant lots, and apartment buildings, but ultimately found nothing. John Gosch, Johnny’s father, expressed his confidence in the West Des Moines police force, calling their work “fantastic” and observing, “They are working overtime like I’ve never seen anybody in my life work before.”¹³ Yet the official investigation yielded few leads in the days following Johnny’s disappearance—or ever since. Police publicized their search for two vehicles: a “blue over blue” full-size car with Warren County, Iowa, license plates and a silver late-model Ford Fairmont with a large black stripe at the bottom. The Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) shortly thereafter announced that it had discovered a photograph depicting a Ford Fairmont similar to the one spotted at the scene of the disappearance.¹⁴

12. KCCI-TV, CBS affiliate, Des Moines (hereafter cited as KCCI-TV), 9/5/1982; Carol Pitts, “Police Hunt for Missing W.D.M. Boy,” *DMR*, 9/6/1982; Noreen N. Gosch, *Why Johnny Can’t Come Home* (West Des Moines, 2000), 3; *Missing Johnny*, MSNBC documentary, originally aired 12/23/2012.

13. Pitts, “Police Hunt for Missing W.D.M. Boy”; Carol Pitts, “1,000 Volunteers Search for Missing W.D.M. Boy,” *DMR*, 9/7/1982; KCCI-TV, 9/5/1982, 9/6/1982, 9/7/1982.

14. Pitts, “1,000 Volunteers Search for Missing W.D.M. Boy”; KCCI-TV, 9/6/1982.

Authorities never located either vehicle, however, thereby stoking the ire of Johnny's parents and shaking their confidence in the investigation. One month after their son went missing, the Gosches publicly articulated their frustrations with the police: first, for their insistence that the Gosches submit to polygraph testing and, second, for their inability to find what John Gosch called two "distinctive" automobiles. The relationship between the Gosches and law enforcement officials deteriorated from there. Johnny's mother, Noreen, soon cultivated a vigilante ethos that she has deployed ever since. In October she called the office of Iowa Governor Robert D. Ray and left a message with his administrative assistant. The secretary's handwritten note read, "There is a 'white-washing' job being done as far as what is being done . . . considering class action suit because of ways [the case is] being handled. Wants someone with 'clout' to [oversee] their file." Noreen Gosch phoned Governor Ray at least once more in 1982 to cast aspersions on the police investigation and express her disdain for conventional law enforcement methods. The Gosches' distrust of authority, coupled with their belief that "the police ha[d] reached a dead end," pushed the couple to seek the assistance of private investigators.¹⁵ Their antagonism culminated in a spate of public feuds with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other law enforcement entities throughout the 1980s and into the 2000s.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS had few leads to pursue and no concrete evidence to suggest that Gosch had been abducted. Still, both the Gosches and the authorities seemed ready to negotiate with Johnny's supposed captors. The day after Johnny vanished, a television reporter for KCCI in Des Moines asked DCI agent Gene Meyer if the authorities would have usually received a call from the kidnappers by that point, to which Meyer replied, "Normally, yes." His response suggests that

15. KCCI-TV, 10/7/1982; "While You Were Out," written message from Noreen Gosch transcribed by an assistant for Gov. Robert D. Ray, n.d., folder 21, 532/5/7, John Gosch-disappearance, 1982, box 7, Departmental and Subject Files, Governor Robert D. Ray Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines (hereafter cited as SHSI-DM); Personal notes, Gov. Robert D. Ray, n.d., *ibid.*; Frank Santiago, "Gosches Refuse Lie-Detector Tests," *DMR*, 10/8/1982.

authorities either did not believe that Johnny had been abducted or that his case would not involve a ransom. Two days later, Gosch's parents made a direct televised appeal to the purported abductors. Noreen assured the kidnappers that the family would "meet their demands" and provided a telephone number that she guaranteed would connect to a live operator 24 hours a day.¹⁶

Ransom kidnappings, especially of children, had periodically riveted the American public since the late nineteenth century. By the early 1980s, though, the phenomenon was being supplanted by a focus on "missing children," a term popularized in 1981 that the Department of Justice later codified to include lost, abducted, runaway, and "throwaway" youths.¹⁷ Although many different types of cases fit under the missing children umbrella, media accounts and political rhetoric fixated on the rarest of those episodes: kidnappings by "strangers." Some journalists, child welfare advocates, and public officials insisted that strangers took 50,000 youths from their homes annually.¹⁸ In reality, only a few hundred young Americans, at most, were snatched in any given year

16. KCCI-TV, 9/6/1982, 9/8/1982.

17. These categories received extensive attention in various congressional hearings held in the 1980s. A more rigid and well-defined taxonomy appeared in subsequent Department of Justice studies on the incidence of missing children. See, among others, U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Exploitation of Children: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice*, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 11/5/1981; U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, *Missing Children's Act: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights*, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 11/18/1981 and 11/30/1981. The National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Throwaway Children (NISMART), mandated by the federal Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984, offer the most comprehensive statistical overviews of the missing children issue. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention published two such studies in 1988 (NISMART-1) and 1999 (NISMART-2). Both downplayed the severity of "stranger abductions," which had captured national headlines in the early 1980s. From NISMART-2: "Stereotypical kidnappings are the particular type of nonfamily abduction that receives the most media attention and involves a stranger or slight acquaintance who detains the child overnight, transports the child at least 50 miles, holds the child for ransom, abducts the child with intent to keep the child permanently, or kills the child." For more, see U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, NISMART, "National Estimates of Missing Children: An Overview," Oct. 2002, ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/196465.pdf, accessed 9/14/2013.

18. See, for example, "Protecting Kids: A Matter of Growing Concern," *Time*, 11/18/1985.

by someone they did not know.¹⁹ As historian Paula Fass has illustrated, fears about the sexual exploitation of young Americans by strangers, although implicit in many earlier child kidnapping cases, dominated the discourse surrounding missing children in the late twentieth century.²⁰ That local law enforcement seemed reticent to call Gosch's disappearance a kidnapping and that the Gosches still hoped to negotiate with their son's alleged captors suggest an uncertainty about the case rooted in the historical milieu – in which fears about “missing children” were just beginning to gain currency – and the regional context. More specifically, the notion that a sexually or otherwise nefariously motivated abduction of a child “couldn't happen here,” in the seemingly secure suburb of West Des Moines, remained firmly entrenched in the minds of many Iowans.

The confusion and disbelief surrounding the Gosch case no doubt made Iowa parents and children anxious. Just a few days after Johnny went missing, Noreen observed “how many mothers were stationed along the way, escorting their children home” from school. She affirmed that Johnny's disappearance had “created a sense of panic in people, and rightly so.”²¹ This collective tension appeared even more plainly the next Sunday, as young paper carriers set out on their routes amid drastically heightened security. Police established checkpoints around the site where Johnny had vanished, questioning motorists and looking for any suspicious activity. Many parents accompanied their children as

19. NISMART, “National Estimates of Missing Children.”

20. Paula S. Fass, *Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America* (Berkeley, CA, 1997). Most child abduction cases do not involve a sexual motive. See James N. Tedisco and Michele A. Paludi, *Missing Children: A Psychological Approach to Understanding the Causes and Consequences of Stranger and Non-Stranger Abduction of Children* (Albany, NY, 1996). For more scholarship on the missing children phenomenon, most of which takes a decidedly quantitative approach, see Martin L. Forst and Martha-Elin Blomquist, *Missing Children: Rhetoric and Reality* (New York, 1991); Joel Best, *Threatened Children: Rhetoric and Concern about Child-Victims* (Chicago, 1990); Noah J. Fritz and David L. Altheide, “The Mass Media and the Social Construction of the Missing Children Problem,” *Sociological Quarterly* 28 (1987), 473–92; Cynthia Gentry, “The Social Construction of Abducted Children as a Social Problem,” *Sociological Inquiry* 58 (1988), 413–25; Karen Ann Joe, “Milk Carton Madness: The Heart of the Missing Children's Crisis” (Ph.D. diss., University of California–Davis, 1991).

21. KCCI-TV, 9/9/1982.

they delivered papers. The *Des Moines Register*, furthermore, kept tabs on its 2,000 young carriers, conducting periodic checks on their routes and issuing emergency whistles to each of them. A television report featured a representative from the paper as he tried to reassure the public, and especially the families of young *Register* carriers, about the safety of paperboys and girls. "We're very, very concerned about creating some unnecessary panic amongst our carriers, and I hesitate to use the word 'panic,' but we don't want to unnecessarily scare a carrier." He continued, "Newspaper work traditionally has been a good learning experience for young people, and this is an unfortunate situation. It's the first [child carrier abduction] that I'm aware of in the Des Moines area." The spokesman aimed to restore community members' faith not only in the *Register* itself, but also in the security of young carriers and their romanticized tradition of paper delivery. Gosch's disappearance was an aberration, he reminded viewers, one that did not warrant any "unnecessary panic."²²

Yet the increasing attention paid to Johnny Gosch in the state and nationwide convinced many Iowans that his case was not unusual but rather part of a national epidemic that until then had not presented itself in Iowa. The Gosches and others invested in their son's case harnessed the rhetoric and moralistic tenor of the missing children movement while couching that language in conceptions of midwestern exceptionalism. After Johnny vanished, Candy Gilchrist formed a Des Moines chapter of Child Find, Inc., a national organization founded in 1980 in New Paltz, New York. In a press release she noted, "People don't want to believe that these things happen in little Iowa."²³

John and Noreen Gosch involved themselves in local and national organizing related to the missing children campaign. They established the Johnny Gosch Foundation, alternately called Help Find Johnny Gosch, Inc., within two months of their son's disappearance.²⁴ Under the auspices of that organization, the Gosches raised funds to help pay for private detectives, hosted

22. KCCI-TV, 9/12/1982.

23. AP, "Gosch Case Is Just One of 150,000," *DMR*, 11/21/1982.

24. Gosch, *Why Johnny Can't Come Home*, 14.

bimonthly group gatherings at their home, and convened large seminars and town hall meetings within and beyond Iowa.²⁵

Earlier child abductions in the Des Moines area had received significant press coverage, but they did not signal a larger social problem or regional crisis as Gosch's case did. On Christmas Eve, 1968, 10-year-old Pamela Powers was kidnapped from the Des Moines YMCA, raped, and murdered by Robert Anthony Williams, a fugitive from an area mental hospital. Williams surrendered to police two days later in Davenport, about 170 miles east of Des Moines. As the authorities transported him back to Des Moines, he directed them to Powers's body. Defense attorneys argued that the information Williams furnished during the car ride to Des Moines could not be admitted as evidence; the judge disagreed, and the jury at the subsequent trial found Williams guilty of first-degree murder. The Iowa Supreme Court upheld the decision, but the U.S. Supreme Court did not. In *Brewer v. Williams* (1977), the high court overturned Williams's conviction on the grounds that detectives had denied Williams his right to counsel, "used psychological coercion," and violated explicit instruction "not to interrogate Williams without his attorney present."²⁶ The murder and the judicial wrangling it prompted generated substantial attention in the *Register* and elsewhere, but the media focused primarily on the legal dimensions of the case, not the broader threats the tragedy might have represented. Likewise, the 1973 disappearance of an 11-year-old Boy Scout named Guy Heckle from Cedar Rapids—the oldest active unsolved missing persons case in Iowa—had garnered much less press coverage than Gosch and Martin's.²⁷ Even though Heckle van-

25. See, for example, KCCI-TV, 2/4/1983; KGAN-TV, 5/18–22/1984, clip no. 238, Archives of Iowa Broadcasting, Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa (hereafter cited as AIB).

26. *Brewer, Warden v. Williams*, no. 74-1263, 430 U.S. 387, 97 S. Ct. 1232, 3/23/1977; Robert M. Regoli and John D. Hewitt, *Exploring Criminal Justice: The Essentials* (Burlington, MA, 2010), 134; Mara Bovsun, "Bury Her for Christmas: How the Murder of Pamela Powers, 10, Reached the Supreme Court," *New York Daily News*, 12/16/2012; Mark Brown, "Fugitive from Mental Hospital Charged in Murder of Iowa Girl, 10," *Gettysburg (PA) Times*, 12/27/1968.

27. For a list of missing persons in Iowa administered by the state's Department of Public Safety (DPS), beginning with Boy Scout Guy Heckle in 1973, see the Missing Person Information Clearinghouse, Iowa DPS, iowaonline.state.ia.us/mpic/Controller.aspx, accessed 12/24/2013.

ished in a year of profound national turmoil, his disappearance did not seem to alert Iowans to a larger national problem.²⁸ On the other hand, media treatment of Gosch's case referred to the boy as "a statistic, one of 150,000 children who disappear each year" in the United States, and a "unique statistic" at that: "the only Iowa child who is believed to have been abducted and who is still missing."²⁹

As Johnny's invisibility became more visible, the missing boy began to serve as a cautionary tale in Iowa and a symptom of a regional crisis. He became the basis upon which adults taught youngsters about safety and a phantom upon which they projected their fears. Campaigns to fingerprint children cropped up around the country in the early 1980s. Gosch's disappearance directly informed such efforts in Iowa. A *Register* article from 1983 alluded to the Gosch case as it covered a fingerprinting drive in Ames, hosted by the city's police department and the Iowa State University Air Force ROTC. The volunteers in Ames fingerprinted some 500 children at the event. In March 1983 the small town of Conrad, Iowa, with a population of just 1,133 in 1980, sponsored the fingerprinting of 200 children, according to a television news report. The TV piece referred to the Gosch incident as evidence of the purportedly "rising number" of youth kidnappings and the idea that such atrocities "can happen anywhere." Similarly, the Des Moines police department and the city's PTA council joined forces with local public and private schools in April 1983 "to provide a uniform identification system to assist law enforcement agencies in locating lost, missing, or abducted children." The fingerprinting program, dubbed K.I.D.S. (Kids

28. For more on 1973 as a watershed year, see Andreas Killen, *1973 Nervous Breakdown: Watergate, Warhol, and the Birth of Post-Sixties America* (New York, 2006); Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality* (Princeton, NJ, 2011); Benjamin C. Waterhouse, "Mobilizing for the Market: Organized Business, Wage-Price Controls, and the Politics of Inflation, 1971-1974," *Journal of American History* 100 (2013), 454-78. For more on Heckle, see Jeff Burnham, "Murdered. Missing. Unsolved. [series]: 2 Iowa Boys Gone but Not Forgotten," *Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Gazette*, 3/20/1992; Cindy Hadish, "'Not Knowing Is Hard,'" *Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Gazette*, 7/24/1995; Steve Gravelle, "How Did Guy Die?" *Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Gazette*, 2/3/2002.

29. AP, "Gosch Case Is Just One of 150,000."

Identification and Description System), was offered to approximately 21,000 children enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade in the Des Moines area.³⁰

Such initiatives and the attitudinal shifts that activated them exacerbated Iowa children's anxieties about kidnappings and safety more generally. A 1983 survey of 500 first, third, and fifth graders in Des Moines elementary schools exposed the children's concerns about death, safety, and other, more mundane matters. Sixty-three percent of respondents said they "worry about the safety of their neighborhood," a figure that local researcher and guidance counselor Jan Kuhl attributed to the Gosch case.³¹ In order to ameliorate some of these tensions, the *Des Moines Register* started a "carrier safety program," called Homes Offering a Protective Environment (H.O.P.E.), "designed to tell carriers and parents what they can do to prevent or respond to dangerous situations." The *Register* project designated certain homes as "safe" spaces "where carriers can seek assistance."³² The *Register's* circulation director, Mike Murray, denied the project's "direct" relationship "to the mysterious disappearance of Johnny Gosch," perhaps in order to defend the paper from charges of negligence or culpability in the Gosch case.³³

In September 1983, when 13-year-old paperboy Danny Joe Eberle went missing delivering the Sunday *Omaha World-Herald* in the suburb of Bellevue, Nebraska, many speculated that his

30. Willis David Hoover, "Kids' Fingerprinting Makes Mark," *DMR*, 2/20/1983; KGAN-TV, 3/23-29/1983, clip no. 249, AIB; Tom Alex, "D.M. Students Are First to Get Fingerprinted," *DMR*, 4/6/1983.

31. Mark Horstmeyer, "What Worries Our Kids," *DMR*, 5/26/1983.

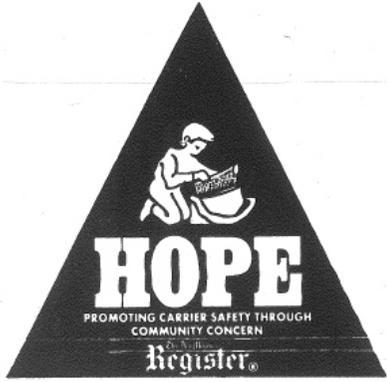
32. The "safe space" prong of the H.O.P.E. program resembled earlier efforts in Atlanta — as it struggled to address a rash of child abductions and murders from 1979 to 1981 — and in Chicago, Oakland, and other urban centers as they grappled with crime and unrest in the "law and order" sixties and seventies. See Memorandum, Jaci M. Vickers to Lee P. Brown, 6/1/1981, box 177, MS 509, Series I: Office Files (1960-2004), Lee P. Brown Papers, Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston (hereafter cited as LPB); "'Block Parents' to Aid Hyde Park Children," *Chicago Tribune*, 2/4/1968; Stephen Crews, "Gary Anti-Crime Group Receives Official Support," *Chicago Tribune*, 8/25/1968; "Hand Symbol to Aid Young in Distress," *Chicago Tribune*, 11/20/1966; Joy Baim, "'Helping Hands' Aid Waukegan Pupils," *Chicago Tribune*, 1/8/1967; "Children Get Help from Block Parents," *Oakland (CA) Post*, 2/19/1970.

33. "News Carrier Program Is Set," *DMR*, 5/17/1983.

disappearance was related to Gosch's. Herb Hawkins, special agent in charge of the FBI in Iowa and Nebraska, saw Eberle's disappearance as a potential break in the Gosch investigation. "When I heard [Eberle] was missing, the first thing I thought of was the Gosch case," Hawkins recalled. "I thought at that point we could solve the Gosch case at the same time. The circumstances and the modus operandi were so close to the Gosch case. They were paper boys. Their looks were almost identical." Hawkins's observation about the boys' similar appearances suggests a sexual motive in both cases, although no evidence of molestation ever emerged. The print media also speculated about the possibility of sexual abuse. Two Iowa DCI agents assigned to the Gosch case joined the Eberle investigation to determine whether a connection existed between the two incidents, but no link ever materialized.³⁴

Just days after Eberle vanished, a search party discovered his body in a ditch "some three miles from where he disappeared." The Eberle case caused four young carriers with the *Des Moines Register*, likely already shaken by the Gosch incident one year earlier, to quit their positions. Murray, the *Register's* circulation director, vowed to "step up" the newspaper's H.O.P.E. initiative in the wake of the Eberle tragedy, and the *Omaha World-Herald* contacted the *Register* to inquire about instituting a similar program. Another kidnapping and slaying of a 12-year-old suburban Omaha boy in December invited further comparisons to Gosch's case, but law enforcement denied any such linkage. Still, the *Register* took special interest in the Omaha incidents and emphasized, as it had with the Gosch case, the middle-class and mid-western serenity they shattered. "In less than three months," one article read, "13-year-old Danny Joe Eberle and 12-year-old Christopher Paul Walden were abducted from the streets of *peaceful middle-class* Omaha suburbs a few miles apart, and killed." A 20-year-old Air Force pilot was arrested and convicted for the abductions and slayings of Walden and Eberle, but authorities de-

34. Gabriella Stern, "Mrs. Gosch: Iowa Errors Helped in Sarpy," *Omaha World-Herald*, 3/4/1984; Frank Santiago, "Hideous Picture of Killer Emerging," *DMR*, 12/11/1983; "Omaha Carrier Disappears," *DMR*, 9/19/1983; Frank Santiago, "Several Leads' in Case of Missing Paper Carrier," *DMR*, 9/21/1983.



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After Johnny Gosch disappeared, the Des Moines Register established a "carrier safety program" called Homes Offering a Protective Environment (H.O.P.E.). The initiative encouraged subscribers to sign up and designate their homes as "safe" spaces "where carriers can seek assistance" in the event of an emergency. The Register intensified efforts to keep its young paper carriers secure after Eugene Wade Martin went missing. This advertisement for the H.O.P.E. program appeared in the Des Moines Register, August 22, 1984. Courtesy of Des Moines Register and Register Media.

terminated that the airman had not been in the Midwest in September 1982 when Gosch disappeared.³⁵

ALTHOUGH POLICE DETECTIVES ultimately rejected any relationship between the Gosch and Omaha episodes, ordinary Iowans — and Nebraskans — imagined the cases as moments of disjuncture that challenged their basic assumptions about midwestern innocence and security. As white paperboys from middle-class families, Eberle and Gosch personified midwestern boyhood, and many residents of the region perceived their disappearances as assaults on their communities. One woman from Goldfield, Iowa, wrote to the *Register* to express her frustration with the Eberle case: “I was angry and concerned at the abduction of Danny Eberle in Omaha. . . . Needless to say, my family was deeply affected [by the incident]. . . . There are so many parents, in Iowa alone, concerned with the problem.” She went on to advocate school programs “to inform our children and the public what they should do to avoid, prevent or reduce the risks they face as potential victims of abduction, molestation and other crimes committed against children.”³⁶

In response to such concerns, staff members at Midlands Community Hospital in Papillion, near Omaha, devised a program “to provide advice to parents dealing with children’s fears stemming from the killings of Christopher Paul Walden and Danny Joe Eberle.” The lead nurse urged parents “not to minimize their children’s fear” because “their fears are realistic,” despite the infrequency of child kidnappings. Residents of tiny Carter Lake, Iowa, along the Iowa-Nebraska border, first proposed creating a youth “protection group” in their self-described “peaceful little town” after Johnny Gosch disappeared, and the

35. Frank Santiago, “No Suspects in Massive Search for Nebraska Newsboy’s Killer,” *DMR*, 9/23/1983; idem, “Hideous Picture of Killer Emerging” (emphasis added); idem, “Airman Charged in Omaha-Area Slayings,” *DMR*, 1/13/1984; idem, “Gosch, Slayings Not Related,” *DMR*, 1/18/1984.

36. Charlene Zatloukel, letter to the editor, *DMR*, 10/19/1983; Alice Noble, “Missing Paperboys Prompt Carrier Protection Programs,” United Press International press release, 9/25/1983.

Eberle and Walden incidents generated a “surge of public sentiment” in favor of such a “public patrol program.”³⁷

Anxieties related to the Eberle and Gosch cases also shaped the lives of paperboys outside of Omaha and Des Moines. A Cedar Rapids television news broadcast aired in October 1983, about a month after authorities found Eberle’s body, detailed an encounter in Brighton, Iowa, between an 11-year-old paperboy and a “strange man” in a green pickup truck. The man allegedly attempted to lure the young carrier into his vehicle, but the boy darted away. The boy kept his paper route but admitted that he was “scared,” especially when passing the area where the man in the truck had accosted him.³⁸

The emphasis on abnormality, specifically regarding “strange” or “weird” men, recurred in rhetoric surrounding the Gosch and Martin cases. On the morning Johnny went missing, he apparently told two witnesses regarding the suspicious man in the blue car, “That man is really weird.”³⁹ In the 30 years since the disappearance, Noreen Gosch has regularly evoked the image of the “weird man.”⁴⁰ Another individual, referred to in newspaper reports as the “mystery man,” phoned the Gosch parents on November 22, 1982, and told them that he “gave Johnny a lift from Des Moines to Atlantic,” a small town in Cass County, Iowa. Authorities soon ascertained that the man had lied about giving Johnny a ride; he had “called because he said he felt sorry for the parents.”⁴¹

In the early months of the investigation, moreover, Noreen Gosch implicated a religious cult in Johnny’s disappearance.⁴² She targeted a group called The Way International, which had allegedly mailed literature to the Gosches in the months before

37. James Ivey, “Slayings Bring Nightmares, Sleeplessness,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 12/19/1983; Gary Newman, “Carter Lake Takes Steps to Prevent Child Abductions,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 12/8/1983.

38. KGAN-TV, 10/19/1983, clip no. 163, AIB.

39. Frank Santiago, “Gosch Talk with ‘Weird’ Man Told,” *DMR*, 11/25/1982.

40. See, for example, Gosch, *Why Johnny Can’t Come Home*, esp. p. 3.

41. Frank Santiago, “Officials Clear Gosch ‘Mystery Man,’” *DMR*, 1/5/1983.

42. AP, “News in Brief: Missing Boy,” *Oelwein Daily Register*, 9/22/1982. See also United Press International, “2nd Boy’s Disappearance Fuels Gosch Hunt,” *Chicago Daily Herald*, 9/3/1984; Charles Bullard, “Mother Fears Missing Son Abducted by Religious Cult,” *DMR*, 9/22/1982.

Johnny went missing. In Noreen's telling, The Way contacted Johnny preceding his disappearance and triggered in him a slight personality change. He became more of a contrarian, she asserted, a week or so before he vanished. The Way denied the charges and resented being called a "cult." One representative dismissed Noreen Gosch's accusations as "ridiculous" and maintained that the group adhered to conventional religious doctrine. "We're not a cult," the spokesman avowed. "A cult conjures up thoughts of Jonestown, Charlie Manson, Hitler. . . . We believe that the Bible is where it's at."⁴³

The theme of deviance also appeared in Noreen Gosch's subsequent criticism of pornography, child prostitution, and what she called "homosexual groups." In particular, Noreen argued that unspecified "homosexual groups" undertook "a broad-based effort to embarrass her" in the mid-1980s. During a 1984 Senate hearing, she took aim at the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA)—likely one of the "homosexual groups" to which she had referred earlier—and blamed the controversial organization for her son's disappearance. "Information . . . has surfaced during the investigation" into Johnny's presumed abduction "to indicate organized pedophilia operations in this country in which our son perhaps is a part of it [*sic*]," Noreen Gosch testified. Although the hearings focused on pornography's effects on women and children, broadly conceived, much of the witness testimony concentrated on child sex abuse, and media attention fixated on the phenomenon of man-boy sex. A segment airing nationally on ABC's *World News Tonight* devoted considerable time to NAMBLA and its putative role in the Gosch kidnapping. When asked to explain why she believed NAMBLA might have taken her son, Noreen Gosch pointed to instructional literature distributed within the organization, which some identified as one of several "clearinghouses for information on child pornography." Gosch included with her testimony an issue of NAMBLA's *Bulletin* that made numerous mentions of her son's disappearance. The publication urged Johnny Gosch to "PHONE HOME!" and encouraged all runaway youngsters to call the National Runaway Youth Hotline, both to "relieve anxiety at home

43. KCCI-TV, 9/29/1982; Frank Santiago, "Leader of The Way: We Didn't Kidnap John Gosch," *DMR*, 10/9/1982.

and resolve the question about the conditions under which leaving occurred." The *Bulletin* also expressed dismay that the public perceived NAMBLA to be "well informed" on issues related to runaway youths, calling that conception "both wrong and being used by the FBI against us." Indeed, the FBI zeroed in on NAMBLA in the early phases of the missing children campaign, and the organization criticized what it considered the "continuing efforts" of law enforcement "to blame boy-lovers for the disappearance of children, [and] to portray boy-lovers as bad guys and the police as good guys." NAMBLA representatives also denied the group's participation in "any illegal activities including the production and dissemination of 'kiddie porn' or the transportation of minors across state lines for 'immoral purposes,' or indeed any connection to exploitative operations that may involve young people."⁴⁴

For Noreen Gosch, the very fact that the FBI placed NAMBLA in its crosshairs deserved scrutiny, as did NAMBLA's reliance on the Fifth Amendment. Among "a great many other crude articles involving sex with men and boys," she advised, the *Bulletin* instructed NAMBLA "members not to submit to questioning regarding the disappearance, kidnaping of our son Johnny." Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) asked for clarification: "And in the course of that publication there is a suggestion that your son Johnny is in [NAMBLA's] custody?" Noreen Gosch did not respond directly to Senator Specter's question but alluded again to NAMBLA's noncompliance with the FBI. "They are vehemently opposing any type of questioning, so this did arouse our suspicion," she explained. "We have, through Senator [Charles] Grassley's [R-IA] office and Senator [Roger] Jepsen's [R-IA] office, requested information from the FBI as to why they visited NAMBLA

44. Frank Santiago, "Noreen Gosch Denies Assault," *DMR*, 8/28/1984; ABC, *World News Tonight*, 8/8/1984, Vanderbilt Television News Archive, Vanderbilt University, Nashville (hereafter cited as VTNA); "JOHN GOSCH—PHONE HOME!" *NAMBLA Bulletin* 4, no. 5, June 1983, 3, in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Effect of Pornography on Women and Children: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice*, 98th Cong., 2nd sess., 8/8/1984, 9/12/1984, 9/25/1984, 10/18/1984, 10/30/1984, 80; Editorial, *NAMBLA Bulletin* 4, no. 5, June 1983, 2, *ibid.*, 79 (emphasis in original). NAMBLA has been a lightning rod for controversy since its inception in 1978, but no evidence suggests that the organization has ever endorsed or facilitated the abduction of minors for sexual purposes.

regarding our case. What was the reason to suspect them in the first place? . . . We have not got that resolved as yet." She further lamented in a prepared statement, "When I was a child the major threat to children was 'POLIO' [;] that has been changed [;] it is no longer that disease [;] we now have something new which is growing at an alarming rate in this country. The danger is 'PEDOPHILE'S' [sic]." ⁴⁵ Many others involved in the missing children campaign shared Noreen Gosch's understanding of abduction and pedophilia as "new" and demonstrative of social and sexual liberation gone awry. Such discussions of nonconformity shed light on the disappearances—not just of Gosch and Martin, but also of Eberle and Walden—as events that shattered midwestern perceptions of "normalcy."

ONE OMAHA NATIVE writing in 2002 conflated the Gosch, Eberle, and Walden incidents and described the terror they inflicted on her idealized midwestern community. The Johnny Gosch disappearance, author Rainbow Rowell recalled, brought national concerns about child abductions to the Midwest, while the Eberle and Walden tragedies delivered them directly to her doorstep, "Right here. In Bellevue." Her "parents clamped down tight" and forbade her from entering public restrooms alone. Fears of "white slavery," AIDS, nuclear holocaust, and other threats, Rowell averred, deprived Omaha youngsters of a part of their childhoods. "Omaha kids stopped feeling like kids that year," she wrote. "We felt like prey. Scared all the time. Every car—or God forbid, van—that drove by us too slowly. . . . Our nightly prayers filled up with new anxieties. Please God, protect me from kidnapers. And rapists. And people who put AIDS-infected needles in phone booth change slots. And if I am kidnapped and raised in another state, please help me to remember my real name and phone number, so that someday, after the kidnapers start to trust me, I can call 911." For Rowell, neither her childhood nor her previously secure midwestern environs could save her from the dangers that seemed to be gathering around her. ⁴⁶

45. Committee on the Judiciary, *Effect of Pornography on Women and Children*, 70–71.

46. Rainbow Rowell, "Another Summer of Fear for Kids," *Omaha World-Herald*, 9/4/2002.

The Gosches used the Omaha cases to advance their claims about law enforcement ineptitude. "The amount of publicity my husband and I generated brought faster action to the boys in Bellevue," Noreen Gosch claimed in March 1984. "The city of Omaha has just suffered two terrible tragedies. In that case, the police acted immediately. The FBI got involved right away. The reason there was such prompt action was because there had been a great many mistakes in our case."⁴⁷

The authorities had taken to ignoring Noreen as she sharpened her attacks against them. As the Gosches turned to private investigators and publicly castigated law enforcement efforts, West Des Moines police chief Orval Cooney fired back, on the record, in early 1983. "I really don't give a damn what Noreen Gosch has to say. I really don't give a damn what she thinks. I'm interested in the boy [Johnny] and what we can do to find him. I'm kind of sick of her." The tensions spilled over into a West Des Moines city council meeting, during which attorneys representing the Gosches and Polk County aired their respective grievances. After the hearing, both sides took the conversation outside. In the bitter January cold, Noreen Gosch engaged in a heated exchange with the Polk County attorney. As the lawyer gesticulated, Noreen reprimanded him, "Don't shake your finger at me!" In letters to elected officials and in other writings Noreen later denounced Cooney as an incompetent alcoholic, calling him, among other things, a "known drunk" and the "town drunk."⁴⁸

Throughout 1983, the Gosches developed an impressive campaign to help find their son, a movement they positioned within the burgeoning national child safety apparatus and against the traditional mechanisms of investigative police work. John and Noreen sold candy bars, buttons, and raffle tickets for a miniature race car to raise money for the investigation. A year after Johnny's disappearance, a television news report noted, the

47. Stern, "Mrs. Gosch: Iowa Errors Helped in Sarpy."

48. Frank Santiago, "Anger Flares as Gosch Hunt Drags," *DMR*, 1/2/1983; West Des Moines City Council Proceedings, tape 143, side A, 000 to 729, 1/3/1983, in author's possession; KCCI-TV, 1/3/1983; John and Noreen Gosch to Iowa State Representative Virgil E. Corey, 12/22/1983, "Missing Children" folder, N41/8/3, box 8, Departmental and Subject Files, Gov. Terry Branstad Papers, SHSI-DM; Gosch, *Why Johnny Can't Come Home*, 5.

Gosches could still be seen “on any given night” at Des Moines area shopping malls, grocery stores, or community events distributing flyers imprinted with their child’s face. Noreen appeared in the TV segment, accompanied by her husband, and stridently shared an anecdote about a woman who asked her if she was “embarrassed” by selling candy bars. “I said, ‘I’m *appalled* that in this country, where we have ‘Save the Seals,’ ‘Save the Whales,’ and ‘Save the Battleship’ funds, that we don’t have *something* for missing children,’ but I said, ‘We’ll do whatever’s necessary to find our boy. So embarrassed? No. Appalled? Yes.’”⁴⁹

These efforts and the populist rhetoric deployed to support them gained traction among Iowans and midwesterners. Many individuals who did not personally know John and Noreen Gosch volunteered in the search for Johnny, dedicating their time to raise money, attend meetings, distribute flyers, and write letters. A woman named Jeanne Wunn walked across Iowa with her two German shepherds to benefit the Help Find Johnny Gosch Fund. In one news clip, she wore a “HELP FIND JOHNNY” trucker hat as she slowly trudged along a deserted highway in the bleak mist, flanked by her dogs and followed by her husband in a rusted pickup truck. The pastoral scene evoked Iowa’s agricultural tradition and a sense of statewide unity. To solicit donations, Wunn sold her dog’s puppies and named them after the places through which her walk passed. Wherever the Wunns stopped, they circulated petitions and screened a documentary about missing children. Ultimately, the walk raised nearly \$5,000 for the Gosch fund—specifically, to hire and keep on private investigators.⁵⁰ Noreen Gosch and her husband also developed an abduction awareness presentation, called “In Defense of Children,” which they delivered hundreds of times across Iowa and the Midwest in the early 1980s.

SUCH PUBLICITY EFFORTS elicited passionate responses from ordinary Iowans who believed that Johnny Gosch’s disappearance represented a blight on their state and revealed a threat to their

49. KCCI-TV, n.d. [1983] (emphasis added).

50. KGAN-TV, 5/2-5/1983, clip no. 312, AIB; KCCI-TV, 5/5/1983; Frank Santiago, “Walk, Dog Add \$4,700-Plus to Gosch Fund,” *DMR*, 5/18/1983.

communities. Iowans joined the Gosches in adopting the rhetoric of childhood, vigilantism, and region to petition for changes in state and federal laws pertaining to missing children. Influenced by these and other mobilization strategies, Iowa state legislators proposed in 1983 and passed in 1984 Senate File (S.F.) 517, also known as the Johnny Gosch Bill. The legislation established a taxonomy of missing children and required law enforcement agencies to respond “as soon as practicable” to a report of a missing child.⁵¹

In letters to Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, who had been inaugurated in early 1983, Iowa mothers pleaded for governmental action on missing children. “My daughter Allyson and I attended a meeting last night on child safety,” Carolyn Schultze noted. “The speaker was Noreen Gosch. What she said angered and shocked me. Our children are a very special gift and should be protected” through “greater involvement and interest by State and Federal employees.” Shirley Frette from Story City explained in a letter to the governor how “fortunate” she “was . . . to hear Mrs. Norene [*sic*] Gosch speak in [her] community about the statistics on this problem” of child abduction and molestation. She continued, “God is speaking through her to alert us of the growing operation of molesters and abductors.” Frette excoriated public officials while encouraging vigilantism on the part of embattled parents. “I was amazed, shocked, and downright furious that this problem is being taken so lightly by the police force, FBI and government officials. . . . If our government officials won’t take a stand on this issue then it is up to us, as parents, to protect the innocent victims, our children.” Finally, Frette struggled to grasp whether tragedies like the Gosch disappearance occurred in places like Story City, a town of 2,762 in 1980. “I have never heard of any incidents of this nature in Story City. Could it possibly be that this never happens here? I doubt it.” For Frette, the Gosch case united West Des Moines and Story City and illustrated that no community was safe from the scourge of child kidnappings. Carolyn Heuser from Manson also alerted the governor to the ubiquity of the missing children problem. “I have one

51. Ch. 1084, Investigations of Missing Persons, S.F. 517, Acts and Joint Resolutions passed at the 1984 Regular Session of the Seventieth General Assembly of the State of Iowa, approved 4/13/1984, 117-18.

question which is really bothering me and I suppose many many other concerned parents and citizens [*sic*] of Iowa," she wrote. "'How can we make our laws stricter and punishment more severe on child abductors'? . . . This is a very real and severe problem and getting worse all of the time. We are in a small community but very aware that we are not immuned [*sic*] to such crime."⁵²

Other mothers from small Iowa towns presented similar views about the state's duty to protect children as well as the ways the Gosch case refashioned their roles as parents. Ellen Burton from Madrid urged Governor Branstad to support S.F. 517. "I want all of Iowa's children to have a safe place to live," she wrote. "We need stiffer penalties [*sic*] and more thorough investigation of these cases. This is a real fear of myself and many here in my community. We are voters [and] our children will one day vote." Referring to the youngsters of Madrid as citizens and future voters, Burton employed children's rights to protection and, in a sense, political representation to frame her argument.⁵³ In a letter to her state senator, Debbie Carlson of Webster City likewise explained how the Johnny Gosch disappearance, and the proposed bill that followed it, at once affected her children, state, and nation. "As a concerned parent of three children," she asserted, "I am aware of the growing threat of abductions in this state and the entire country. I believe the passage of Bill 517 is crucial to Iowa and especially it's [*sic*] children. . . . Hopefully this law would be an important deterrent to anyone considering Iowan children an easy target."⁵⁴

These missives evinced an anxiety shared by parents across the nation. But Iowa parents, more so than those in other parts of the country, concentrated on statehood and region in their

52. Carolyn M. Schultze to Gov. Terry Branstad, 5/18/1984, Constituent Correspondence (McK-Z), box 2, Almo Hawkins files (1983-84), Branstad Papers; Shirley Frette to Gov. Terry Branstad, Feb. 1984, *ibid.*; Carolyn Heuser to Gov. Terry Branstad, 5/5/1983, *ibid.*

53. Ellen Burton to Gov. Terry Branstad, 12/12/1983, Constituent Correspondence (McK-Z), box 1, Almo Hawkins files (1983-84), Branstad Papers. For more on this "slippage" between the ideal child and citizen, see Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, NC, 1997).

54. Debbie Carlson to State Sen. C. Joseph Coleman, 12/4/1983, Constituent Correspondence (McK-Z), box 1, Almo Hawkins files (1983-84), Branstad Papers.

conceptualizations of the missing children program. Furthermore, it was mostly mothers who wrote to Branstad on the issue, suggesting that Noreen Gosch's experience resonated with Iowa's women more than its men. Perhaps Johnny's disappearance challenged their prescribed positions as guardians of the household at a time of shifting gender roles; in this reading, these women supported S.F. 517 because it offered a safety net for Iowa mothers, an instrument by which the state could intervene to keep intact the "traditional" American household. Women also might have felt more comfortable than men in asking for state protection for their children.⁵⁵

Advocates of the Johnny Gosch Bill hoped it would fortify the Iowa home against the dangers and perversions that confronted it. One state senator diagnosed the "sickness" that legislators sought to counteract with the bill's passage in the spring of 1984. "We live in a sick and rotten society that is getting sicker and rottener every day. I don't know what's happened to the United States, but it has become more animalistic, not more humanistic in recent years."⁵⁶ This yearning for a bygone America, one devoid of the "sickness" and "rotteness" that ostensibly wrought the Gosch disappearance and other such tragedies, appeared in the broader national discourse as well. But the Gosch case offered a particularly captivating study in "normality" purportedly crushed by external forces. Media scholar Victoria E. Johnson has explored the ways prime time television in the late twentieth century deployed the mythic image of the Midwest as a site of serenity, ordinariness, whiteness, and heteronormativity devoid "of urbanity, people of color, and non-agrarian industry."⁵⁷ Those mythic images converged in popular conceptions of the Gosch disappearance.

Although media accounts regularly depicted child abductions and murders in other parts of the country as "tragic" and evidence

55. As an analog, see Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (New York, 1988). Gordon shows how heightened concerns over domestic violence corresponded with spikes in feminist consciousness in the 1880s, 1890s, and 1960s.

56. Tom Witosky, "Bill Requiring Faster Responses to Missing Children Reports Passes," *DMR*, 3/1/1984.

57. Johnson, *Heartland TV*, 19.

of a “sickness” threatening American children, they did not portray the places in which those cases occurred as somehow impervious to larger national trends. In fact, it was commonly understood that the urban settings of the 1979 Etan Patz kidnapping and Atlanta youth disappearances and murders of 1979 to 1981 explained, at least partially, why they happened. According to newspaper and television reports, Patz, a six-year-old who vanished from his Manhattan neighborhood, fell victim to the widespread criminal depravity coursing through New York City at the time.⁵⁸ In Atlanta, some accounts held, the South’s gothic racism and a national resurgence of conservatism could be blamed for the slayings of nearly 30 poor African American youngsters. One *Los Angeles Times* piece addressed the early 1980s political milieu and the “black nihilism,” to use Cornel West’s term, that it engendered. “Now, more than in a long time, blacks feel the depression that comes with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, the violent, unsolved killings of blacks, the erosion of civil rights, the bleak economic picture and, most recently, the election of a conservative President and a much more conservative Congress.”⁵⁹ Southern color writer and Atlanta resident Lewis Grizzard, a white man, rejected that view but underscored its potency. Racism became “the logical explanation,” he opined, for these cases of “black children being murdered in a major southern city. . . . Behind every Atlanta building and tree, the world was led to believe, there lurked the hooded menace.”⁶⁰

Whereas many African Americans worried that the Atlanta killings marked a return to the racial violence of years past, some white Americans envisioned Johnny Gosch as the embodiment of white America, a fictive tradition now under siege by deviance and social change. A write-up in the *Chicago Tribune* in mid-1983 stressed the symbolic weight of the Gosch case. “By all accounts, Johnny was indeed the all-American boy,” the article affirmed.

58. See, for instance, Kyle Riisman, “Under Siege: The Discursive Production of Embattled Suburbs and Empowered Suburbanites in America, 1976–1992” (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 2010), esp. 95–96.

59. Cornel West, *Race Matters*, 1st ed. (New York, 1994); Lee May, “More U.S. Blacks Are Singing the Blues,” *Los Angeles Times*, 11/27/1980.

60. Lewis Grizzard, editorial, ABC, *Nightline*, 3/1/1982, audio tape recording, box 90, Series VII: Videos and audiocassettes, LPB.

Noreen Gosch advanced a similar idea in the piece: "Paperboys symbolize the all-American boy," she noted. "I guess when this happens to these kids, it hits a little too close to home." The story also quoted James Gannon, editor of the *Des Moines Register*, who painted West Des Moines as a community that should be exempt from such tragedies. "This case sends home the message that if you're not safe in West Des Moines in a nice neighborhood, you're not safe anywhere."⁶¹

Such nostalgic formulations advanced a narrow view of white American boyhood. Their racial, class, sexual, and regional implications would become even more apparent after Eugene Martin's disappearance. In Noreen Gosch's rendering, it was perversion and depravity that jeopardized the idyll of a protected, white, middle-class, midwestern childhood. At the aforementioned 1984 Senate hearing on the "effect of pornography on women and children," she lamented, "We lived in a nice quiet neighborhood in which one would least expect this type of tragedy to occur." Gosch diagnosed her son's alleged kidnapping as a symptom of national moral failings. "I think that we must begin to realize that we are living in a society in this country that has been programmed to believe: If it feels good, do it. If you want it, take it."⁶² Her testimony took direct aim at the libertinism and narcissism that, according to her, was shaking the country from its moorings.

WHEN EUGENE WADE MARTIN WENT MISSING on August 12, 1984—just days after Noreen Gosch had addressed the Senate hearing—it again fixed national attention on the Des Moines area. Like Johnny, the 13-year-old Martin—effortlessly handsome, appearing both boyish and mature—had set out to deliver the *Sunday Register* in the early morning hours and never returned.⁶³ Right away, Iowans drew parallels between the incidents and conjectured about what they meant for their children,

61. Eileen Ogintz, "... If You're Not Safe in W. Des Moines . . ." *Chicago Tribune*, 6/20/1983.

62. Committee on the Judiciary, *Effect of Pornography on Women and Children*, 70, 68.

63. Tom Alex, "Missing Paper Carrier Is Believed Kidnapped," *DMR*, 8/13/1984; Frank Santiago, "Martin Case Is a Photocopy of Disappearance of Gosch," *DMR*, 8/16/1984.

communities, and region. In a feature on ABC's *World News Tonight*, Donald Martin, Eugene's father, quietly spoke into the camera. "I'm afraid of what I think now. I think we got another deal like that poor Johnny Gosch setup." Noreen Gosch, in the same news segment, concurred. "They're disappearing rapidly. Our child, the Martin child . . . it's the same story repeated all over the country." Yet the news story also accentuated the distinctively "all-American" landscape in which these events occurred. Standing before a row of boxy police cruisers in Des Moines, reporter Karen Burnes declared, "But it's hit home this time. These are Iowa's paperboys." Back in the New York studio, anchor Peter Jennings introduced the piece by waxing nostalgic: "It wasn't so long ago in this country that having your own newspaper route was part of the American dream. It's an early way to learn responsibility and earn a little pocket money at the same time. It has *not* been that way in Des Moines, Iowa. Karen Burnes explains why."⁶⁴ This enmeshment of childhood, regional, and historical innocence-under-siege revealed itself again and again in local and national news coverage. Within these depictions, of course, resided particular assumptions about race, sex, gender, and class. Comparisons between Gosch and Martin abounded, but no one seemed willing to interrogate their similarities along those vectors.

Gosch and Martin were both white, middle-class, midwestern, suburban paperboys, all descriptors that allowed them to be rendered innocent and vulnerable in the popular imagination. Literary theorist Kathryn Boyd Stockton ably analyzes the white, middle-class, asexual childhood that Americans seek "to safeguard at all costs." Stockton and others have identified Americans' fascination with innocence and youthful purity. Innocence itself, in this view, can be understood as an alternate sexuality celebrated by adults who no longer possess it.⁶⁵

64. ABC, *World News Tonight*, 8/13/1984, VTNA (emphasis added).

65. Stockton, *The Queer Child*, 30. See also Lee Edelman, "The Future Is Kid Stuff: Queer Theory, Disidentification, and the Death Drive," *Narrative* 6 (1998), 18–30; James Kincaid, *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting* (Durham, NC, 1998); Judith Levine, *Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex* (Minneapolis, 2002); Anne Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood* (New York, 1998).

Media accounts imbued the paperboys “with more meaning than [they could] possibly hold,” and in the process, the youngsters shouldered the anxieties of a region. After Eugene Martin vanished, *Register* editor James P. Gannon published a searing editorial that illustrated the symbolic heft Iowans gave the paperboy cases. “Somebody has singled out Des Moines, Iowa, for a special brand of terror,” he opened. “Here, in the normally safe-and-sane heartland of middle America, where clean living, neighborliness and a sense of security are supposed to prevail, a sinister shadow darkens our doorways and our lives.” These incidents, Gannon proclaimed, “raised questions that violate everything we hold dear about living in this comfortable, contented community: Is it no longer safe to let our youngsters walk our neighborhood streets? Will Des Moines, as if it were Detroit or Newark or Chicago, shut itself behind closed doors and cede the streets to the shadowy threat of terror?”⁶⁶

The editor’s “light versus dark” formulation and denunciation of American cities with lengthy histories of racial unrest suggest other dichotomies as well: rural versus urban; white versus black; safe versus dangerous. For Gannon, the Martin disappearance disproved once and for all “the ‘it can’t happen here’ myth.” The national media had seized on the issue, he bemoaned, and challenged the midwestern idyll. “The television networks and the national press are fascinated with an unlikely tale: terror in Des Moines, of all places. We are on display, each one of us bit players in a drama that examines what’s wrong in a place that’s supposed to be so right.” Because of that, Gannon insisted, “We should be mad as hell.” The editorial touched on familiar themes. Gannon posited a collective midwestern trauma inflicted by the paperboy disappearances and identified an anticrime populism as the appropriate response. In addition, the presumed abductions challenged the fundamental tenets of midwestern identity.

66. James P. Gannon, “Commentary: The Dark Threat of Terror Now Stalking D.M. Should Make Us All ‘Mad as Hell,’” *DMR*, 8/15/1984. In “The Era of Lost (White) Girls: On Body and Event,” *Differences* 19 (2008), 101, literary scholar Rebecca Wanzo argues that media outlets obsessed over white and telegenic missing girls in the 2000s and, in turn, “reconfigured and imbued” the female body “with more meaning than she can possibly hold.” That body, she continued, became “a powerful symbol through the carefully crafted representation of her disappearance or death.”

"I didn't move my family to Des Moines to live in fear behind locked doors," Gannon continued. "I do not cede the right to shadowy figures who hide by day. I do not accept the notion that my children's freedom of movement is a daytime right only. The sun should never set on freedom and personal security," two rights that he implicitly linked with Des Moines and, by extension, the Midwest.⁶⁷

Other Iowans echoed Gannon's claims. "The citizens of Des Moines and surrounding areas should be mad. We should be mad as hell," Scott B. Neff of Des Moines wrote in a letter to the *Register*. "This city and this geographical area are supposed to be comfortable, safe places to raise children, work and lead productive lives. This entire situation tarnishes every citizen in this community. Kidnappings, murders, rapes and this type of terrorism should be a call to arms and a call to anger for all law-abiding citizens." Neff conceived of the Gosch and Martin episodes as blemishes on the Midwest that should mobilize the region's residents to combat "this type of terrorism." Paul Jackson of Sioux City agreed. These "newspaper-boy crimes . . . have stained the city of Des Moines. . . . Let us roll up our sleeves and go to work on crime prevention by biting the bullet now!" William Peterson from Iowa City also took the paperboy disappearances as a call to action and framed citizens' anticrime initiatives as an existential imperative. He implored his fellow Iowans, "Join a neighborhood-watch program, or better yet, start one. This has been going on in some neighborhoods as a *method of survival* in Des Moines for years. Now the whole city needs to watch. We all can and should take more responsibility to protect our children."⁶⁸

CITIZENS' SAFETY PROJECTS, like those promoted by William Peterson, cropped up throughout Iowa in the early 1980s.

67. *Ibid.* Gannon's use of "mad as hell" invokes the famous line from the 1976 feature film *Network*, which became a touchstone for politically disaffected Americans in the mid- to late seventies. *Network*, dir. Sidney Lumet (1976). For a popular history of the 1970s that deploys the "mad as hell" ethos as an organizational schematic, see Dominic Sandbrook, *Mad as Hell: The Crisis of the 1970s and the Rise of the Populist Right* (New York, 2011).

68. Letters to the editor, *DMR*, 8/29/1984, 9/5/1984 (emphasis added).

Neighborhood watch programs first gained widespread popularity in the late 1960s, but only in the early to mid-1980s did the current vision of “community crime prevention” take hold as a cooperative enterprise between law enforcement and ordinary citizens.⁶⁹ After Gosch went missing and even more so after Martin vanished, Des Moines residents organized neighborhood watch squads. “Children can’t even play in the [neighborhood] by themselves,” one father from eastern Des Moines declared to justify his local crime prevention program.⁷⁰ By September 1984, according to President Ronald Reagan, each of Iowa’s 99 counties had “established a crime prevention Citizen’s Watch program,” which he praised as “an accomplishment that few States can match.”⁷¹ Whether or not the Gosch and Martin disappearances catalyzed these initiatives, it is safe to assume that they played a strong role in their development.

The local child safety infrastructure that the Gosches helped to establish following their son’s disappearance expanded after Martin’s. A month after Eugene Martin vanished, the Iowa State Patrol introduced a program called Stranger Danger. It comprised “a talk by a patrol community service officer, a film and free wallet-size cards with safety tips” for children. A patrol chief cited “concern arising from the apparent abductions of Des Moines news carriers Eugene Martin and Johnny Gosch” as the program’s impetus. About two months after Martin went missing, the Johnston police department launched a similar project, dubbed Operation Kids, which intended “to acquaint parents, children, merchants and school officials with the dangers facing children and how to deal with them.” The *Des Moines Register* promoted its H.O.P.E. program with greater fervor following Martin’s disappearance, dedicating large advertising spots in the paper to raise awareness about the initiative. The paper also published public

69. Dennis P. Rosenbaum, “Community Crime Prevention: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature,” *Justice Quarterly* 5 (1988), 323–95; see n. 47 for antecedents to these programs.

70. Kay Logan, “Child Watch Program Set on East Side,” *DMR*, 7/11/1984.

71. Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a Reagan-Bush Rally in Cedar Rapids, Iowa,” American Presidency Project, 9/20/1984, presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=40407#axzz2j1cL4U5h, accessed 4/19/2013.

service announcements asking locals to “leave an outdoor light on for your *Des Moines Register* carrier.”⁷²

Amid this growing concern for child safety, Governor Branstad organized a conference in November 1984 called Children in Jeopardy, billed as “the only gathering of its kind in the nation.” Many of the state’s top policymakers attended the conference, one newspaper article observed, “to defuse some land mines that threaten to explode the notion that Iowa is a safe place for children.” By arranging the event, Branstad hoped to demonstrate that “the state might be ready to get tough” on crimes against children. The conference pressed for stricter background checks on those who worked with young Iowans, as well as harsher penalties for child molesters. Conference organizers also underlined the importance of developing a “public and a private partnership” between business and government.⁷³ That “partnership” could be seen in the milk carton campaign triggered by the paperboy incidents and in corporate programs dedicated to “keep children safe” from abduction, molestation, and general corruption. President Reagan consistently encouraged such initiatives, perhaps because they cast the private sector in a positive light.⁷⁴

While Gannon, Branstad, and other Iowans embraced anger and organized civic initiatives in an attempt to trump their fear, others seemed resigned to the “sick society” that the paperboy disappearances ostensibly unearthed. Parents took their children off their paper routes, monitored their play in neighborhoods as never before, and had them walk in front of them in shopping

72. “Child Safety Program Set,” *DMR*, 9/22/1984; “Happenings: Operation Kids Program Planned,” *DMR*, 10/10/1984; H.O.P.E. advertisement, *DMR*, 8/22/1984; Public service announcement, *DMR*, 11/11/1984.

73. Frank Santiago, “Leaders Meet to Tackle Issues of Child Safety,” *DMR*, 11/25/1984.

74. For more on President Reagan’s promotion of private-sector responses to the missing children problem, see U.S. Congress, Senate, *Private Sector Initiatives Regarding Missing Children: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 5/22/1985; Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Luncheon for the Presidential Board of Advisors on Private Sector Initiatives,” 1/22/1986, Public Papers of Ronald W. Reagan, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1986/12286d.htm, accessed 6/19/2013; “Remarks at a White House Meeting with Members of the National Newspaper Association,” 3/7/1985, Public Papers of Ronald W. Reagan, reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1985/30785a.htm, accessed 6/19/2013.

malls, lest an abductor snatch the child from behind their backs.⁷⁵ For many Iowans, the Gosch and Martin cases heralded a crisis of childhood, parenthood, and statehood. One mother lamented to the *Des Moines Register* that her “three young boys . . . are being deprived of their youth”; another called the disappearances “a blight on the state of Iowa . . . a utopia for murderers and kidnapers because it will not impose the death penalty for these crimes.” (The state had outlawed the death penalty in 1965.) For Karl Schilling of Des Moines, the city’s inhabitants needed to “show the country” that they “are concerned for one another.” Roger Corbin of Traer, Iowa, wrote to the *Register* “only because of the need I feel to say and/or do something about the shameful problems we have with missing children here in Iowa. I’m sure this problem exists in other areas as well, but it tugs at the heart more here when it hits close to home.”⁷⁶

The Martin disappearance hit particularly close to home for Iowa’s young paperboys and girls. A 1984 national television news segment on ABC’s *World News Tonight* underlined the fears among the state’s young carriers while portraying their craft as both idealized and endangered. “The newspaper boys are still missing,” Peter Jennings segued from a previous feature. His blunt hook implied that Americans were following the Gosch and Martin cases with considerable interest. In the field, reporter Karen Burnes praised the newspaper carriers who courageously kept their routes and delivered papers in pairs rather than alone. She called them “reliable as always” but remarked that the “fear of kidnapping is so deeply etched in this community now that some will not even allow their faces to be photographed.” The subsequent frame showed only the back of an adolescent, clad in a ball cap and hooded sweatshirt, speaking to Burnes. He tried to grapple with the enormity of the situation. “This has happened twice now, and [it] could happen again, so . . .” Burnes interviewed an even younger paperboy next. His bright blond locks and summer tan made him the picture of boyhood innocence, but he trembled imagining the horrors he might endure as an abductee. “Oh, I don’t know what I’d do if somebody kidnapped me because it’d

75. Melinda Voss, “Recent Tragedies Take Toll on Parents Trying to Protect Children,” *DMR*, 8/19/1984.

76. Letters to the editor, *DMR*, 9/11/1984.

be kinda scary 'cause they might kill me or take me away and then brainwash me or something. I'd never see my family again."⁷⁷

Others saw the paperboy cases as signs of a national immorality now seeping into Iowa's suburbs. "Another child has been snatched from our streets," Irish Cowell from Sioux City bemoaned. "Why? We are obsessed with sex! Nothing pinpoints its vulgarities and sadist pleasure more than the porno material. Our children have become victims of untold horrors for the explicit purpose of bringing joy to those who receive their monthly publication." Cowell echoed Noreen Gosch's condemnation of pornography as a likely cause of Johnny's disappearance. Carolyn Keown from Des Moines faulted pornography but also religious cultism, as Noreen Gosch had earlier, for the moral depravity supposedly gripping the country. "As a parent, I raise my 15-year-old to believe that the world is a good and just place. Now it makes you wonder if it is still good and safe. You could never have told me when I was 15 years old that people are like they are now. So many just don't care for one another. There are so many wicked, perverted people. So many religious cults. So much hatred for each other. So much pornography involving children." Larry Riley from Perry concurred. "This is one sick country. Our morals and spiritual values are practically nonexistent. When are tougher laws going to be made for the crime of child molesting?"⁷⁸

Even though no definitive evidence ever emerged linking child pornographers, pimps, or predators to the Gosch or Martin disappearances, the notion that both paperboys fell victim to a seedy underworld of child prostitution remains a plausible explanation for many Iowans. Consistent with this view, there have been numerous reported sightings of both paperboys throughout the United States since 1982, particularly in the South and Southwest.⁷⁹ Many seem unwilling to consider that the boys

77. ABC, *World News Tonight*, 8/14/1984, VTNA.

78. Letters to the editor, *DMR*, 9/2/1984.

79. For examples of such sightings, see Frank Santiago, "Family Reports Nine Sightings of Gosch Youth," *DMR*, 6/25/1983; Steve Kline, "Newspaper Carrier Cases Eerily Similar," AP news release, 9/25/1983; "Report: Child Kidnapped in 1982 Sighted," AP news release, 1/30/1984; Mark Mittelstadt, "Johnny Gosch's Mother Says Her Son Seen in South," AP news release, 2/23/1984;

simply ran away or that one or more locals stalked, abducted, and possibly murdered Gosch and Martin. Perhaps by transferring blame onto a faceless monster like a child prostitution ring or a religious cult operating outside—or even within—the Midwest, Iowans could absolve their region, their state, and their community from any culpability.

Either way, the paperboy cases belied notions of midwestern exceptionalism and convinced many that Iowa was not immune to the national forces threatening their children's innocence. In a November 1984 poll of 602 Iowa adults, two-thirds of respondents agreed that young Iowans were "less safe . . . than they were five years ago," before the Gosch and Martin disappearances. Nearly nine out of ten parents surveyed attested that they were "more strict and cautious in the supervision of their own children as a result of the [Gosch and Martin] kidnappings" and other cases of child exploitation.⁸⁰ A "climate of fear," one newspaper story observed, enveloped West Des Moines, Johnny Gosch's hometown. "The mood of uneasiness shows itself in several ways," the article continued. "Many children are no longer allowed to walk to school alone. . . . Several neighborhoods have started procedures to 'track' neighborhood children as they play at different homes. . . . Children who were once warned against trusting strangers are now drilled on the subject by parents who stage examples of how strangers might try to get children into a car."⁸¹ The boys' disappearances had transformed Iowa childhood and parenthood.

These regionally tailored anxieties made it all the way to the Oval Office. President Reagan seized upon the Gosch and Martin tragedies and positioned them within his rhetorical appeals to family, law and order, and midwestern exceptionalism.⁸² He

Margaret Stafford, "Parents Keep Working to Find Missing Son," AP news release, 3/3/1984; Frank Santiago, "Martin Look-Alike Is Reported Hitchhiking in Washington State," *DMR*, 9/19/1984; idem, "Possible Martin Sighting Likely Another Mistake," *DMR*, 10/31/1984; idem, "Noreen Gosch: I Saw Johnny," *DMR*, 2/7/1999; idem, "Johnny Gosch's Dad Questions that His Ex-Wife Saw their Son in 1997," *DMR*, 2/8/1999.

80. David Elbert, "Poll Finds Fear for Safety of Children on Rise in Iowa," *DMR*, 11/25/1984.

81. Anne Carothers-Kay, "Climate of Fear in W.D.M.," *DMR*, 10/31/1984.

82. For more on law and order politics and the ways it helped undermine the New Deal order, see Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest*,

phoned *Register* editor James Gannon soon after Eugene Martin went missing, extending his “regrets and sympathies” and assuring Gannon that he would “get right on it.” “Thank God we’ve reached the Ivory Tower,” Noreen Gosch exclaimed in response to Reagan’s phone call. “Thank God they recognize that our kids are in danger.”⁸³ At a campaign stop in Cedar Rapids the following month, Reagan deployed the Gosch and Martin cases, situating them within a romanticized vision of Iowa history. “This was open prairie,” he proclaimed. “And then the pioneers began to settle here: Yankees, Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, and immigrants from many other nations — men and women as hardy as the land. They ploughed the sod, they planted crops, they dotted the land with farmhouses and built lovely towns like Cedar Rapids. And soon, Iowa contained some of the richest farmland in history, feeding tens of millions in America and around the world.” Reagan then wedded this triumphal past with 1980s America. “As our economy grows, we’ll need to go forward with the bed-rock values that sustained the first Iowa settlers and that nourish us today. And they’re the simple values of faith, family, neighborhood, and good, hard work. And we’re already making a good start.” To actualize these values, he implored, “We must continue cracking down on crime. We say with no hesitation . . . there are such things as right and wrong. And yes, for hardened criminals preying on our society, punishment must be swift and sure.”⁸⁴ Reagan vowed to get “tough on crime” and rejected the culture of permissiveness that had, in his formulation, sanctioned criminal predation.

Iowa was facing this scourge of crime just as other places were, Reagan implied, but things were improving under his leadership. “There’ve been two tragedies in Iowa that have saddened us all,” he lamented. “In 1982, young Johnny Gosch disappeared while delivering newspapers on his morning route in

and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s (New York, 2005). For a discussion of how Cold War ideas about family, crime, and security have shaped American life since World War II, see Elaine Tyler May, “Security against Democracy: The Legacy of the Cold War at Home,” *Journal of American History* 97 (2011), 939–57.

83. Frank Santiago and Tom Alex, “Reagan Calls to Offer Aid on Missing Boys,” *DMR*, 8/17/1984.

84. Reagan, “Remarks at a Reagan-Bush Rally in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.”



In September 1984 President Ronald Reagan held a campaign rally at the Cedar Rapids airport. With Air Force One parked behind him, Reagan championed Iowa's "open prairie" and its pioneer spirit, and he celebrated "the bedrock values that sustained the first Iowa settlers and that nourish us today" before grieving the disappearances of Johnny Gosch and Eugene Martin. He assured those gathered at the airport that "none of us will rest until the streets in Iowa and throughout this nation are once again safe, particularly for our children." Photograph courtesy of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California.

Des Moines. Then, just [six] weeks ago, another newspaper boy, Eugene Martin, also disappeared." The president then reassured his audience,

Well, I want you to know that I've spoken with Jim Gannon, the editor of the *Des Moines Register*. We've pledged our full support in the search for these two boys. And this past June, we established the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Washington [D.C.] to help locate missing children across America. So far, the Center has received thousands of telephone calls and helped hundreds of parents. Nancy and I join all of you, I'm sure, in praying for the safe return of Johnny and Eugene. And I pledge to you that none of us will rest until the streets in Iowa and throughout this nation are once again safe, particularly for our children.⁸⁵

85. Ibid.

Reagan juxtaposed Iowa's rich farmland with its crime-infested "streets" and upheld the virtues ascribed to the state's pastoral tradition. While he maintained that Americans "need to go forward with the bedrock values that sustained the first Iowa settlers," he actually advocated a *return* to that "open prairie" undergirded by "faith, family, neighborhood, and good, hard work."

THE NOW ICONIC MILK CARTON CAMPAIGN initiated soon after Eugene Martin went missing also drew heavily on notions of midwestern pastoralism and traditionalism. Des Moines's own Anderson-Erickson Dairy pioneered the program in response to the paperboy disappearances. Taking cues from the child safety infrastructure that developed in Iowa after Johnny Gosch vanished, including the *Register* ads and eighteen-wheelers featuring photographs of both missing paper carriers, Anderson-Erickson began printing milk cartons with the boys' faces on them in September 1984. The following week, Prairie Farms Dairy, also headquartered in Des Moines, started doing the same on the side panels of their milk cartons. Although these first efforts stimulated little media attention, other milk processors around the Midwest soon helped the campaign — which eventually featured missing youths from all over the country — gain traction nationwide.⁸⁶

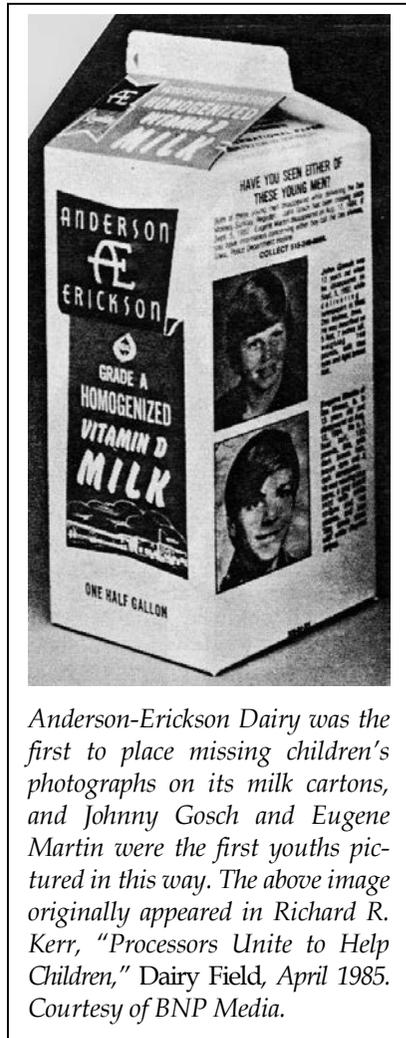
By January 1985 the project had entered the national consciousness, as stories about the milk cartons appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and the *New York Times*, and on ABC's and CBS's nightly news programs.⁸⁷ Both the ABC and CBS reports underscored the midwestern setting from which the milk carton campaign emerged. "In various cities across the continent, parents in search of their children have thought long and hard of ways to keep their missing children's image in the public eye," Peter Jennings explained. "One very dramatic idea appears to

86. Richard R. Kerr, "Processors Unite to Help Children," *Dairy Field*, April 1985, 46-53. For truckers' efforts to publicize the paperboy disappearances, see KGAN-TV, 5/7-9/1984, clip no. 480, AIB; "Truckers to Aid Gosch Search," *DMR*, 5/8/1984; "Cross-Country Eye-Catcher," *DMR*, 9/15/1984.

87. John Kass, "Milk Cartons to Carry Missing Kids' Pictures," *Chicago Tribune*, 1/1/1985; Lenore Look, "Missing Youngsters: Milk Cartons Join Hunt for Children," *Los Angeles Times*, 1/18/1985; Andrew H. Malcolm, "Milk Carton Snapshots Delivering a Warning," *New York Times*, 1/29/1985.

have started in the Midwest, and, as Gary King reports, it is now an idea which is spreading." With the help of the Chicago police department, a now-defunct Illinois dairy, modeling its program after Anderson-Erickson's, brought the milk carton program onto the national stage. Because the dairy sold two million milk cartons per month in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Indiana, the issue of missing children—inscribed on dairy products—became symbolically tied to the American Midwest.⁸⁸ By February 1985, with the endorsement of the National Child Safety Council, more than 600 dairies were participating in the campaign. At the program's peak, an estimated three to five billion milk cartons carried missing children's photographs. Similar programs were also discussed or instituted as far away as Australia, Sweden, and Great Britain.⁸⁹

In conceptualizing, producing, and distributing these milk cartons, midwestern dairies provided a script for use in American kitchens. The products offered families a chance to



Anderson-Erickson Dairy was the first to place missing children's photographs on its milk cartons, and Johnny Gosch and Eugene Martin were the first youths pictured in this way. The above image originally appeared in Richard R. Kerr, "Processors Unite to Help Children," Dairy Field, April 1985. Courtesy of BNP Media.

88. ABC, *World News Tonight*, 1/16/1985, VTNA; CBS, *Evening News*, 1/1/1985, VTNA; ABC, *World News Tonight*, 1/16/1985, VTNA.

89. Robert M. Andrews, "Milk Cartons: New Role," *New York Times*, 2/13/1985; Eleanor Blau, "Follow-Up on the News: Pictures of Children," *New York Times*, 10/5/1986; ABC, *Good Morning America*, interview with Walter Woodbury, n.d., [1985?]; ABC, *World News Tonight*, 1/16/1985, VTNA; Vicki Quade, "Missing Kids: Milk Cartons Help the Hunt," *American Bar Association Journal* 71 (1985), 28.

discuss over a glass of milk or a bowl of cereal the plight of missing youths and to develop guidelines to ensure their children's safety, thereby connecting the American home with the idealized midwestern landscape from which the cartons originated. However, dairies discontinued the practice in the mid-1980s because it frightened children and failed to return missing youngsters to their homes in significant numbers.⁹⁰ Still, that dairy processors evoked midwestern landscapes and farming traditions—and that milk connoted youthful innocence and health—can partially explain why the short-lived milk carton project sparked such interest and why it still resonates today.⁹¹

The milk carton programs that Gosch and Martin's disappearances helped activate ultimately informed new means by which activists publicized the missing children cause, from the ubiquitous "Have You Seen Me?" leaflets mailed nationwide by ADVO, Inc. (now Valassis) to Walmart's Code Adam campaign and the Department of Justice's AMBER Alert initiative.⁹² Through their

90. Rick Bowers, "Milk-Carton Photos Cited for Scaring Kids," *Miami Herald*, 1/11/1986.

91. See, for instance, Caroline B. Cooney's popular young adult novel *The Face on the Milk Carton* (New York, 1990); Alice Sebold's bestselling novel *The Lovely Bones* (New York, 2002) and its 2009 film adaptation by the same title; *The Lost Boys*, a 1987 "teen horror" film; and rapper Eminem's music video for "The Real Slim Shady" (2000). For more on "scriptive things," see Robin Bernstein, "Dances with Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race," *Social Text* 27 (2009), 67–94; idem, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York, 2011). For more recent examples of milk cartons as a cultural and political touchstone, see photo illustrations by Lauren Nassef for Lori McIlwain, "The Day My Son Went Missing," *New York Times*, 11/13/2013; and Mauricio Alejo for Éd Caesar, "Too Hot to Handle," *New York Times Magazine*, 11/17/2013, table of contents, 4. Special thanks to Landon R. Y. Storrs for bringing these recent examples to my attention. For just one more example, in a January 1988 Democratic presidential primary debate hosted in Des Moines, candidate and former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt addressed Al Gore's two-month absence from Iowa: "Al, it's good to see you back. You know, I thought they might start putting your picture on milk cartons." The auditorium and Babbitt's fellow presidential hopefuls met the joke with laughter, but the jab "brought protests from the parents of missing children," including Noreen Gosch, who chided, "I think it's in bad taste. Why should he make fun of it? To us, it's a big deal." ABC, *World News Tonight*, 1/16/1988, VTNA; Marcia Dunn, "Babbitt Blames 'Spontaneity' for Inappropriate Joke," AP news release, 1/17/1988.

92. For more on these and other undertakings, see Marilyn Ivy, "Have You Seen Me? Recovering the Inner Child in Late Twentieth-Century America," *Social Text*, no. 37 (Winter 1993), 227–52; Eric Freedman, "'Have You Seen This Child?'"

use of children's photographs, these efforts since the early to mid-1980s have transfixed the American public and transmitted powerful messages about lost childhood innocence and the need to protect American youths.

THE GOSCH AND MARTIN CASES continue to loom large in the Iowa consciousness. They fractured, at least in the public imagination, a pristine past. As one outsider shrewdly observed, the disappearances belonged within a series of tribulations that left Iowans "tenuous in a time of change." Indeed, before the early 1980s, "Iowans were relaxed in a rural atmosphere where doors could be left open, keys left in the ignition and kids left out to play on the lawn. Problems could be isolated, defined, confronted and solved. Then corporations began to buy out family farms, debts exploded and newspaper boys began to disappear."⁹³ The Gosch and Martin disappearances fused together with the farm crisis to define a moment of human misery in the Midwest. Today, activists and politicians on either side of the death penalty debate continue to invoke the boys' names.⁹⁴ Noreen Gosch remains a proponent of state and federal mechanisms intended to thwart child abductions. Other parents who have endured similar losses have emulated her activism. Iowans Heather and Drew Collins began "crusading for quicker community notification when children disappear" after their daughter Elizabeth was kidnapped and murdered in 2012. They also articulated their "concerns over sex offenders who have shirked their registration requirements."⁹⁵

Theories regarding Gosch and Martin still abound. In 1991 Noreen Gosch went public with information provided to her by

From Milk Carton to *Mise en Abyme*," in Eric Freedman, *Transient Images: Personal Media in Public Frameworks* (Philadelphia, 2011), 25–52; and Perry Howell, "Got Worry? Missing Children Notices on Milk Cartons in the United States," *Interactions: Studies in Communication & Culture* 2 (2010), 35–46.

93. Mitch Gelman, "On the Road to the Future, but Where Does it Lead?" *DMR*, 11/4/1984.

94. For just a few examples, see Rod Boshart, "Petitioners Back Capital Punishment," *Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Gazette*, 9/7/1994; idem, "Death-Penalty Foes Speak," *Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Gazette*, 2/27/1997; MacKenzie Elmer, "Lawmaker Seeks Death Penalty Bill," *Dubuque Telegraph Herald*, 1/26/2013.

95. Jeff Reinitz, "1 Year Later: Collins Family Remains Active after Disappearance of Elizabeth, Lyric," *Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier*, 7/12/2013.

a private investigator concerning a “child-sex ring of four men” that had “planned and carried out the abduction of her son.” Those men, she insisted, might have also been “involved in other abductions, including [Eugene] Martin’s and the October 1989 kidnapping of Jacob Wetterling in St. Joseph, Minn.”⁹⁶ Conspiracy theories about Gosch specifically have flourished online since the 1990s. A quick Internet search yields myriad websites on which skeptics implicate the government, and specifically the first Bush administration, in an organized child prostitution syndicate, based at an Omaha credit union, that allegedly stole Johnny.⁹⁷

Iowans have their own stories about the Gosch and Martin mysteries. In one way or another, their names mean something to the state’s children and adults. Fully 99 percent of Iowans polled in 1984 said they had “read or heard about” Johnny Gosch and Eugene Martin. Thirty years later, the cases remain central to Iowans’ conceptions of crime, security, childhood, and region.⁹⁸ For many, the two separate yet interconnected tragedies caused the state, the region, and its children to lose at least a modicum of their innocence, freedom, and charm. Frank Santiago, the primary *Register* journalist assigned to the Gosch case, ruminated on its significance in 2012. “We’re talking about the early 1980s. Kids were out playing in the dark. Their moms let them go to school unescorted. This was a part of Americana for a long, long time, and it’s gone, and it started with those two stories.” Also in 2012 a Des Moines television reporter offered a similar reflection on Iowa exceptionalism. “I think people thought, ‘I can’t believe this could happen here.’ I mean, this kind of stuff doesn’t happen here.”⁹⁹ The Gosch and Martin disappearances may not have actually transformed Iowa, but many people believe that they did. Examining these cases, their representations, and the attitudes they fostered enables us to look closely at the ways we construct myths: about our communities, our homes, our families, our children, and the political fabric that stitches them together.

96. AP, “Johnny Gosch: Family, Investigators Disagree on Evidence,” *Daily Iowan* (University of Iowa, Iowa City), 7/22/1991.

97. Erin Crawford, “Is He Johnny Gosch?” *DMR*, 4/5/2005.

98. Elbert, “Poll Finds Fear for Safety of Children on Rise in Iowa.”

99. *Missing Johnny*, MSNBC.

Lincoln in Brief: A Review Essay

STACY PRATT McDERMOTT

Lincoln and the Union Governors, by William C. Harris. Concise Lincoln Library. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013. 163 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$24.95 hardcover and e-book.

Lincoln and the U.S. Colored Troops, by John David Smith. Concise Lincoln Library. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013. 156 pp. Notes, index. \$24.95 hardcover and e-book.

Lincoln's Campaign Biographies, by Thomas A. Horrocks. Concise Lincoln Library. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014. 148 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 hardcover and e-book.

Lincoln and Religion, by Ferenc Morton Szasz with Margaret Connell Szasz. Concise Lincoln Library. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014. xviii, 103 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 hardcover and e-book.

IN 2011, Southern Illinois University Press launched the Concise Lincoln Library, a series of short, focused books covering various topics on Abraham Lincoln. The purpose of the series is to offer students and lay readers approachable volumes that bring a fresh perspective to well-known topics and to provide a venue for examining previously overlooked areas of Lincoln's life. Well-known Lincoln scholar Michael Burlingame provided one of the first volumes, *Lincoln and the Civil War*; ultimately, the press will publish more than 20 books in the series, covering such topics as

THE ANNALS OF IOWA 74 (Winter 2015). © The State Historical Society of Iowa, 2015.

Lincoln's sense of humor, his assassination, the election of 1860, medicine, race, and Reconstruction. Most of the authors tapped to contribute to the series are well known to Lincoln scholars and voracious readers of books on Lincoln and the Civil War. As can be expected with any series, some books in the series overachieve, some hit the mark, and others are not quite up to the task. Given that enthusiasm for Lincoln seems never to abate and that his life still has the power to motivate and inspire us, the series makes a worthy contribution. Students and lay readers will find the short books to be good starting points for understanding Lincoln and the fascinating contexts of his era.

This review essay focuses on four of the books in the series, two published in 2013 and two in 2014, evaluating them individually on their own merits and providing a brief assessment of their overall contribution to Lincoln scholarship. The authors of all four of the books considered here are well-established scholars who published full-length monographs prior to their work for the Concise Lincoln Library. Three books cover topics that are not widely known or debated: campaign biographies, the role of Union governors in the Civil War, and the history of the U.S. Colored Troops. The fourth book, and by far the best of those reviewed here, offers a brief overview of a topic that Lincoln historians have widely written about and debated: religion.

In *Lincoln and the U.S. Colored Troops*, John David Smith, a prolific historian and editor, traces the use of black soldiers in the Civil War, examines the political and military purposes for their service, and details the hardships, inequalities, and racism black men suffered when they donned the uniform of a Union soldier. Smith covers the connections between emancipation and black military service, discusses the ways the U.S. Colored Troops changed the attitudes of many white soldiers and leaders who witnessed their abilities and bravery, and devotes several pages to the horrific attack at Fort Pillow, in which Confederates massacred some 200 black soldiers in April 1864. This volume would be a useful introduction for students investigating the Civil War and Reconstruction, African American studies, the history of race, or civil rights in the United States.

Smith's approach in this tidy volume reflects the excellent work of the scholars who contributed essays to a volume Smith

edited in 2004 titled *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era*. In fact, that book of essays in combination with Smith's succinct general narrative in *Lincoln and the U.S. Colored Troops* would provide students a broad understanding of this fascinating topic. At the end of his book, Smith offers readers some glimpses of how Abraham Lincoln's steps towards emancipation, particularly the use of black troops, "empowered African Americans and changed America" (115). In that final paragraph, Smith also suggests that Lincoln sparked a "revolution" with his policies, and "after another century of struggle, it finally allowed people of color to attain full American citizenship" (115). In the context of the shooting death of Michael Brown and the resulting riots in Ferguson, Missouri, in the summer and fall of 2014, midwestern students might view these concluding words of the book as a springboard for a lively discussion about the definition of revolution and the legacy of Abraham Lincoln and emancipation in American history.

Thomas A. Horrocks, director of the John Hay Library at Brown University, has long been interested in nineteenth-century media and its connections to American politics. In *Lincoln's Campaign Biographies*, he situates those political publications within the dramatic historical contexts of the 1860 and 1864 presidential campaigns, comparing and contrasting the constructed images of Lincoln and the public's response to them. Horrocks explains that honesty, integrity, and humility were characteristics that surfaced most prominently in campaign biographies of the era and that campaign biographies of Lincoln reflected that trend. Horrocks astutely recognizes that Lincoln understood the power of the written word as well as the power of photography; and that, as a politician, Lincoln expertly used the media and understood its importance to his political successes. Thus, the printed campaign biographies, with their deliberately evocative text and images of Lincoln, are valuable sources for historical analysis. As Horrocks correctly asserts, campaign biographies are "a lens through which scholars can examine what party leaders, commercial firms, the American reading public, and, in some cases, candidates, thought were essential qualities of character and leadership" and how nineteenth-century Americans "packaged and promoted these attributes" (73).

Students familiar with the packaging of modern political candidates will find comparisons to the packaging of nineteenth-century politicians fascinating. Some of the descriptions in *Lincoln's Campaign Biographies* will sound familiar; others will surprise. In that regard, the book is entertaining and useful. Yet while this volume focuses on an area of Lincoln studies that most historians have given only a cursory glance, it feels a bit stretched out into book length. A deeper analysis of a biography from each campaign, perhaps paired with an annotated transcription, might have made the book less like an academic article dressed up in a hardcover book. That small criticism aside, Horrocks offers students and lay readers a window into the relationship of public relations and politics in nineteenth-century America, a topic that will seem quite current to observers of the political spin so prevalent today.

Lincoln and the Union Governors, by noted Lincoln historian William C. Harris, brings to the fore the importance of northern state executives to Lincoln's war efforts. There is no new primary research in this volume—no systematic investigation of the papers of any of the 59 governors who served their states during the Civil War, for example. However, the book does provide a general understanding of Lincoln's relationships with governors. Harris pays particular attention to those governors who, basically, served as war ministers, including Oliver P. Morton of Indiana, Richard Yates of Illinois, and Samuel J. Kirkwood of Iowa. Likely, most students who have limited familiarity with the particulars of the Lincoln presidency and the American Civil War will know very little about the governors who oversaw Union army recruitment in their states. While Civil War historians have given border-state governors quite a bit of attention—Harris's own award-winning *Lincoln and the Border States* is a recent example—few books on the Civil War give much if any credit to governors in Union states like Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa.

In 1948, in *Lincoln and the War Governors*, William B. Hesseltine diminished the importance of the role of Northern governors, and historians have generally followed that interpretation. Harris argues that the war governors were at least as important in winning the war as were the generals who fought the battles. He also makes a compelling case that the gubernatorial conference

at Altoona, Pennsylvania, in September 1862, was an example of the governors and Lincoln working together to end the war and to end slavery. Whereas Hesseltine and others have seen the Altoona event as insignificant, Harris devotes an entire chapter to the conference, contending that it provided an imperative morale boost to the governors and their constituents. Harris suggests that a full understanding of the Civil War is hindered by a focus that privileges the federal perspective over the perspective of the various Northern states, and his book makes clear the cooperation necessary for Union victory.

For Ferenc Morton Szasz, the Lincoln Concise Library series provided an opportunity to achieve a lifelong goal to publish a book on Lincoln and religion. An American cultural and social historian, Szasz was thrilled to finally begin that work, but a diagnosis of leukemia hindered his effort. Ultimately, the disease took his life before he could refine the manuscript. His wife, daughter, and son deciphered the draft that Szasz was able to complete, and the result is a wonderfully measured and thoughtful analysis of the historical contexts of Lincoln's personal perspectives on religion. Richard E. Etulain, one of the editors of the series for Southern Illinois University press and a close friend of Szasz, wrote a historiographical essay at the end of the book that is a useful complement to Szasz's narrative. The book offers an excellent and balanced introduction to the topic of Lincoln and religion for students and general readers.

Perhaps the book's most significant contribution is its expression of the centrality of religion to nineteenth-century Americans and the ways religious ideologies and rhetoric played a role in political discourse. For most students, this will be a new idea; and the knowledge that Abraham Lincoln arguably understood that connection better than most politicians and political observers of his era will open up a new dimension of Lincoln's famous words with which most students are already acquainted. As Szasz explains so succinctly, "during the Civil War era, politics, religion, and sacred language overlapped on a variety of fronts" (49). Students cannot fully understand Lincoln's famous speeches without first understanding this simple but often forgotten historical truth. Other historians – Allen Guelzo in *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* and Ronald White in *A. Lincoln: A Biography*,

for example—have analyzed Lincoln’s religion in the context of the importance of religion in nineteenth-century American life. In this tidy volume, however, Szasz delicately avoids the temptation to appropriate Lincoln for one particular religious perspective or historical interpretation. The resulting narrative leaves readers in a position to interpret Lincoln’s religion for themselves.

Overall, the authors of the volumes in the Concise Lincoln Library keep inquisitive students and lay readers in mind; the narratives of all four are engaging and easily accessible. Smith, Horrocks, and Harris offer excellent introductory chapters that lay out the historical contexts of their subjects for readers who may be new to the topics those books cover. Although Szasz’s book lacks such an introduction, his summaries at the end of each chapter reflect his four decades of teaching and his ability to make historical material comprehensible to undergraduates. All but Smith’s book offer either a useful bibliographical essay or a selected bibliography, which students will find useful for further investigation of the interesting topics within the volumes. At just over 100 pages of text each, the volumes are well suited for students as well for casual readers of history.

Undergraduate students and their professors in the Midwest, where Lincoln’s resonance is particularly strong, will find most of the books in the series engaging and useful. Few of the books offer much in the way of new historical interpretation of Lincoln, but they do provide solid historical analysis. As well, and perhaps more importantly, students and lay readers alike will appreciate shorter treatments about diverse topics written by different historians with particular perspectives, approaches, and styles. Reading three or four books in the series along with a solid full-length biography of Lincoln would help students better understand the nuances of Lincoln’s life and the complexities of the historical contexts in which he lived and worked.

Book Reviews and Notices

The Tallgrass Prairie Reader, edited by John T. Price. A Bur Oak Book. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014. xxxi, 352 pp. Map, references, author and title index. \$25.00 paperback.

Reviewer Marcia Noe is professor of English at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and editor of *MidAmerica*. She is also a senior editor of the *Dictionary of Midwestern Literature*, volumes 1 and 2.

"These are the gardens of the Desert," wrote William Cullen Bryant in "The Prairies" (1832). Bryant's oxymoronic characterization echoes throughout *The Tallgrass Prairie Reader*, a compendium of 42 first-person accounts of travelers, sojourners, settlers, farmers, conservationists, and ecological workers—among them 13 Iowans—who experienced and wrote about the ecosystem from 1673 to 2012. Excerpted here in the first such anthology of writings about this unique biome, they emphasize its sublimity, fragility, and, above all, multiplicity of contradictions. Thus, George Catlin describes the deadly beauty of the burning prairie; Margaret Fuller reports that the prairie's monotonously wide expanses also offer the brilliance of its crimson and gold flowers; and Francis Parkman finds that its "graceful and pleasing" vistas conceal a great deal of unpleasantness: wagons that get stuck in the mud, runaway horses, broken harnesses and axles, snakes at one's feet and tadpoles in one's drinking cup (52).

Most of the selections center on the writer's relationship to the prairie. For Aldo Leopold, it is one of respect and stewardship; for Benjamin Vogt, the prairie is a purveyor of small miracles. For Elizabeth Dodd, the prairie takes on cosmic dimensions, as she explores the nexus of Pawnee language and astronomy with the here and now of nature on the prairie, noting that it comprises "exploded stars, exhaled to the universe to fetch up in sand grains in a prairie streambed or in dead grass left standing after summer's passed" (345). For William Quayle, the prairie is a source of inspiration, delight, and wonder; and for Paul Gruchow, in one of the most eloquent and insightful pieces in the book, the prairie is a teacher that demonstrates "that our strength is in our neighbors," instructs us "to save our energies for the opportune moment," shows us how to "see the virtue of ideas not our own and the possibilities that newcomers bring," and, above all, that "there need be no contradiction between utility and beauty" (239).

Several selections focus on efforts to preserve and restore the prairie, the victim of more than two centuries of agricultural practices, introduced species, and human blunders. Lisa Knopp relates with admirable restraint the depredations inflicted by salt baron J. Sterling Morton, who failed to appreciate the virtues of Nebraska's treeless prairie and brought in hundreds of trees in his quest to make Nebraska "America's best timbered state" (287). Stephen I. Apfelbaum writes of confounding his neighbors, who can't understand why he won't let them plant corn or hunt in his apparently idle fields that are actually sown with prairie plants in an attempt to resurrect the landscape that Catlin, Fuller, and Parkman experienced. Cindy Crosby finds unexpected spiritual sustenance and community while working to restore the Schulenberg Prairie.

Throughout these accounts runs the tension between two opposing views of the prairie: should it be treated as a commodity to exploit for our own use or as a habitat to preserve and restore? Many of the prairie's earliest chroniclers emphasize its practical value as a rich resource; more recent writers, adherents of Leopold's land ethic, take the latter line. Mark Twain, waxing nostalgic about hunting excursions on his uncle's farmlands, notes that pigeons were so numerous that the hunters needed no guns; they simply clubbed them to death with sticks. By contrast, the editor of this volume, John T. Price, reflects that the plethora of wild birds lured to the prairie by the summer floodwaters of 1993 suggests "the possibility of restoration, renewal, and, at last, hope" (317).

The Tallgrass Prairie Reader makes for delightful recreational reading but would also be an ideal text for courses in environmental studies, midwestern and western history, and midwestern and western literature.

We Called Him Rabbi Abraham: Lincoln and American Jewry, A Documentary History, by Gary Phillip Zola. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014. xiv, 529 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$49.50 hardcover.

Reviewer Shari Rabin is a doctoral candidate at Yale University. She is the author of "'A Nest to the Wandering Bird': Iowa and the Creation of American Judaism, 1855-1877" (*Annals of Iowa*, 2014).

The relationship between American presidents and the Jews has been a scholarly growth area in the past decade, with studies examining the cases of George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Into this field comes Gary P. Zola's documentary history on Abraham Lincoln, gaining steam from the Civil War sesquicentennial and a growing literature on historical memory. Zola, the director of the American Jewish Archives, enthusiastically gathers and, in brief introductions

to each section, analyzes materials illuminating the role of Jews in Lincoln's life, politics, and postmortem celebration.

As a young lawyer in Illinois, Lincoln interacted with some among the growing number of local Jews, and after the launch of his political career, he found himself in the company of Jewish campaign supporters as well as intimates like Isachar Zacharie, his presidential chiroprapist and sometime emissary. Although some Jews opposed his policies, several times during his presidency Lincoln removed impediments to Jewish rights, and following his death Jews full-throatedly mourned the president, even exaggerating his admirable qualities into evidence of Jewish values. Into the twentieth century, new immigrants from Eastern Europe also participated in scholarship, commemoration, and collecting Lincoln memorabilia, honored him in Jewish settings, and produced artistic interpretations of his legacy, all the while continuing to imagine that Lincoln might have been a Jew.

Zola admirably presents a wide range of sources, introducing a cast of colorful characters and shedding light on the dynamics of religion and politics in antebellum America, the vibrancy of nineteenth-century American Jewish life, and the robust twentieth-century Lincoln industry. Readers of this journal will be particularly interested in the vivid early chapters on Lincoln's Jewish acquaintances in the Midwest.

Zola provides sturdy overviews of his material, but his analysis is limited by his tendency to find sympathy and harmony instead of complexity or uncertainty. For instance, given the diverse political and economic alliances that "friendship" connoted in nineteenth-century America, a bit too much is read into Lincoln's description of various Jews as "friends." Likewise, many of the reprinted sermons on Lincoln were written for the anniversary of his birthday, showing that Jewish leaders adapted to the American calendar, but not that Lincoln sermons were more common or important than sermons on other topics, figures, or even presidents. Lincoln, Zola argues, "served as a metaphoric nexus that linked Americanism and Judaism" (235), but he avoids exploring the larger conceptual limits, pitfalls, or exclusions of that linkage. For instance, there is more to be written on the racial component of Jews' engagement with Lincoln, whose allegedly Hebraic features were crucial to arguments for his Jewish identity. Luckily, this is a documentary history, helpfully aggregating sources for students and scholars to further question, analyze, and contextualize.

To identify with the president—especially for anxious minority groups—is to stake a claim to particular understandings of the nation. As time passes, different executives have more or less staying power. As Zola has made plain, Lincoln has proved especially generative for Jews.

The Politics of Faith during the Civil War, by Timothy L. Wesley. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013. xi, 273 pp. Notes, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Mark S. Schantz is professor of history at Birmingham-Southern College. He is the author of *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (2008).

The subject of Timothy L. Wesley's new volume is not Iowa history (indeed, the state is scarcely noted in the book), but it will be of interest to readers who want a broadly framed study of how the American clergy—both North and South—weathered the storm of the Civil War. Wesley's central argument is that things did not go well for American ministers, with the exception of those Northern pastors who strapped on the full armor of the Union and wore it until the end. Even for them, though, the story does not end happily, for Wesley sees in the crucible of war a situation in which ministerial authority was compromised under the weight of political pressure. "In straightforward terms," he writes in his introduction, "Civil War ministers were removed from their pulpits, excommunicated from their churches, and treated roughly by local members and nonmembers alike for what they said" (3). Wesley makes an important case that the political allegiances required by the state (either the Union or the Confederacy) began to trump the faith commitments of American ministers and church members. His book thus contributes to a body of literature that reveals the underpinnings of a more secular, postwar American culture.

Wesley is sure-footed in guiding readers through the challenges ministers faced during the Civil War. Those ministers in the North suspected of "disloyalty" could be hauled up before annual conferences and ecclesiastical bodies and held accountable for their opinions. For example, Wesley finds in one sounding that Methodists in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio brought up 121 ministers on charges of not being fully loyal to the Union cause (77). Other churches demanded that their members subscribe to "loyalty resolutions" that inevitably undercut the authority of ministers, even where they might have supported the cause (81). In the South, the perils came in a different form. Because most Southern ministers lined up behind the Confederacy (indeed, Wesley reminds us that Pope Pius IX "came nearer a formal recognition of the Confederacy than did any secular European leader"), there would be hell to pay when they found themselves on the losing side (101). Union commanders remembered the full-throated endorsement Southern ministers offered the Confederate government and swept down on their churches with a vengeance. Wesley reminds us, too, that Union war policy "placed the property of disloyal churches in the occupied

South under the control of select northern denominational leaders" (148). Religious independence melted away before the exigencies of war. Perhaps Wesley's most chilling accounts are those showing what happened to Unionist clerics in the Upper South. Although the evidence is not fully explicated, Wesley proposes that "there were more than a few wartime murders of denominational ministers throughout the South, murders of and by both Confederates and Unionists. The bulk of such atrocities were carried out in the Upper South, and a majority of them featured victims who were in the Unionist clergy" (164). The suppression of religious speech and the outright murder of ministers—regardless of side or cause—form a vital part of Wesley's case regarding the decay of wartime clerical authority.

His concluding chapter, "Black Church Leaders and Politics in the Civil War," is a disappointment and puts in jeopardy the scope of his argument. Wesley rightly problematizes the idea that "black leaders" thought in any single way about important political issues—such as colonization or the recruitment of troops—but misses the ways the war empowered rather than diminished them. It offered many such opportunities, perhaps nowhere more powerfully than when a group of 20 black ministers met with General William T. Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in Savannah, Georgia, on January 12, 1865. Sherman and Stanton took the meeting in order to help solve the refugee problem plaguing Sherman's invading armies. The black ministers proposed land ownership as one solution, and Sherman delivered for them. Four days after that historic meeting, Sherman's Special Field Order No. 15 opened the door for freed people to lay claim to thousands of acres of abandoned plantation lands. Black ministers, too, exerted new power in officiating at the weddings of thousands of freed people (a ministerial office denied them under slavery) and by running for elective office during Reconstruction. Had Wesley counted more fully the experiences of black ministers and church leaders, his overall assessment of the damage the war did to clerical authority might have been more carefully circumscribed.

The Steamboat Bertrand and Missouri River Commerce, by Ronald R. Switzer. Norman: The Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 376 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Maria Howe is a doctoral candidate in the Rural, Agricultural, Technological, and Environmental History Program at Iowa State University. Her research focuses on the intersection of environmental and legal history in the rural Midwest, with a specific focus on federal water projects.

On April 1, 1865, the day before Jefferson Davis was forced to flee Richmond as Union troops captured the Confederate capital, a steamboat over a thousand miles away bound for the distant Montana mining frontier hit a snag in the Missouri River and sank. While the Civil War was drawing to a close, with General Lee's surrender at Appomattox just a week later, the story of this ill-fated steamboat reminds us that commerce on the Missouri River was nevertheless thriving. Although the sinking of the *Bertrand* was not unique at the time – indeed, it was only one of several steamboats that sunk in that month alone on a short stretch of the river north of Omaha – the excavation of the *Bertrand* over a hundred years later did offer a unique lens into the material culture of the mid-nineteenth century. Ronald R. Switzer, an archeologist and retired National Park Service superintendent, has undertaken the daunting task of making accessible that treasure trove of over 300,000 artifacts in *The Steamboat Bertrand and Missouri River Commerce*.

The centerpiece of the book is chapter six, which catalogs the cargo unearthed in the *Bertrand* wreckage. Buried under feet of sand and clay in a dried meander of the river, the excavation crew found such varied items as Bourbon Whiskey Cocktail, London Club Sauce, mining and agricultural implements, and munitions. Switzer traces the history of the artifacts, exploring their invention, manufacture, marketing, and intended use. According to Switzer's research, much of the cargo that was destined for the mining camps and military forts in Montana Territory was produced in the eastern United States and consisted predominantly of staples, foodstuffs, and materials needed on the frontier, not luxury items.

The remaining chapters provide context for these archeological findings. Chapter one documents the steamer's construction in West Virginia; its early trips to river cities like St. Louis, Cairo, Paducah, and New Orleans; and the various shifts in its ownership among merchants along the way. In chapter two, Switzer assesses the economics of Missouri River trade between St. Louis and Ft. Benton, the last main stop on the river. Making this trip promised high profits, as supplies on the frontier were in high demand, but also presented substantial economic risks. Navigation routes constantly shifted due to seasonal flooding and the resulting silt, snags, and meanders that floods produced, yet boat owners were often only willing to pay to insure a portion of their cargo. Chapter three presents firsthand accounts of the sinking, and chapters four and five offer biographies of the officers, crew, and passengers

onboard, as well as the consignees of the cargo waiting upstream. Chapter seven briefly addresses the decline of steamboat commerce by the 1870s as railroads expanded westward.

Ultimately, the trail of the *Bertrand* impresses upon readers the many connections that existed within the vast steamboat network that covered the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri river valleys. Switzer successfully demonstrates how that network linked commerce, transportation, and migration throughout the region, and provides insight into the peak of the steamboat era and the final years before the first transcontinental railroad heralded the steamboat's decline. The book would have benefited from additional attention to more recent secondary literature on the subject. It lacks mention of Adam Kane's book, *The Western River Steamboat* (2004), which was part of a series on nautical archeology. Switzer does engage with William Lass's *The History of Steamboating on the Upper Missouri* (1962) but fails to mention Lass's more recent work, *Navigating the Missouri: Steamboating on Nature's Highway, 1819–1935* (2007). Bibliographical references to newer syntheses of western history, like Anne F. Hyde's *Empires, Nations, and Families: A History of the North American West, 1800–1860* (2011), also would have strengthened the book.

These suggestions notwithstanding, Switzer's work provides a valuable resource for scholars focused on the steamboat era, Missouri River commerce, nineteenth-century material culture, or the trans-Mississippi West. Switzer's explanations of the design of light-draft steam-driven river vessels will appeal especially to those interested in the history of technology. Anyone familiar with the *Bertrand* Discovery Site in Missouri Valley, Iowa, will also enjoy learning more about this fascinating capsule of the past. Overall, the work provides an excellent companion to the first assessment of the *Bertrand* written in 1974 by Jerome T. Petsche, to whom the book is dedicated.

The Maid Narratives: Black Domesticity and the White Families in the Jim Crow South, by Katherine van Wormer, David W. Jackson III, and Charletta Sudduth. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012. xviii, 298 pp. Illustrations, references, index. \$36.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Valerie Grim is professor and chair of the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies at Indiana University. Her research and writing have mostly focused on African American women in the rural U.S. South, but she is also the author of "African Americans in Iowa Agriculture: A Portrait," in *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838–2000* (2001).

For some time now, we have known that black and white life in the American South was quite intertwined. Despite the terror of slavery,

Jim Crow, and segregation, there existed in paternalistic ways very personal relationships between some whites and some blacks that evolved in the personal, social, and economic spaces of the South. Those relationships were marked by the hypocritical ways the white elite internalized race and viewed the poor, especially black people. Their contradictory interactions could be seen in the lives of black domestic workers and the realities they shared with white women and children. Throughout American history, black domestics played significant roles in the lives of white people, while also remaining “invisible” as humans. The work performed by black domestics shared many commonalities, but their services take on special meaning when examined within the context of southern norms—a perspective that readers may gain from reading *The Maid Narratives: Black Domestics and the White Families in the Jim Crow South*, a well-documented and insightful book written by three researchers: a sociologist, a producer of oral history projects, and a consultant on early childhood.

In *The Maid Narratives*, Katherine van Wormer, David W. Jackson III, and Charletta Sudduth present aspects of the lives of housekeepers, caretakers, sharecroppers, and cooks who worked as domestics prior to their migration from the South. While we have many texts on this subject, including the recent highly regarded *The Warmth of Other Suns* and *The Help*, we do not have enough stories about the lives of ordinary migrants who left families, friends, and cultures behind during the first and second waves. For those with whom we have become familiar, we have learned why, how, and when they made their journey north. But through the voices of such persons as Pearline Sisk Jones, Irene Williams, Melvin Scott, and Gloria Kirkland, individuals whose narratives are included in this volume, we now know more.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one comprises background information, including history, context, and an analysis of research concerning women of the Great Migration. Part two presents the narratives of maids in their own words. Part three discusses narratives of white families that employed domestic help. Within each part, there are several chapters. Chapters 1–3 focus on methods and issues concerning the use of oral history and the reliability of memory; chapters 4 and 5 provide the maids’ perspectives on such experiences as education, religion, and social interactions; and chapters 6 and 7 portray the reflections of white women who employed black help. Taken together, these chapters provide invaluable insights into the lives of black women, including grandmothers and great-grandmothers, who have been marginalized or overlooked in the literature.

Readers will find the methodology employed by Wormer, Jackson, and Sudduth useful in understanding the presentation of the maids' narratives. They conducted 23 interviews, 17 of which are presented in this book. Most of the data came from women who migrated to Iowa. What is presented in this volume is transformative because we hear black maids putting voices to experiences, moving us from discourses concerning theories of race, class, and place to a practical understanding. Equally intriguing is how white women of today, in an age of political correctness, describe their role as former employers, seeing themselves at times as distant family members. In an objective and integrated fashion, these three scholars have communicated a grand narrative about white life and black help. Readers can form their own conclusions regarding these human relations and decide whether they tell a different story of migration from the South to the Midwest.

Scholars and critics, distrustful of oral history and memory, might question the work's reliability, interpretations, and rigor. But the methodologies and theories used in researching, framing, writing, and compiling this collection are appropriate and capture stunningly well this aspect of America's past. Policymakers and those responsible for implementing social and political policies should appreciate this volume. Students and scholars of Iowa history will find it useful for understanding black life and the struggle for humanity in the United States.

Orange City, by Doug Anderson, Tim Schlak, Greta Grond, and Sarah Kaltenbach. Images of America Series. Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2014. 127 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography. \$21.99 paperback.

Reviewer David Zwart is assistant professor of history at Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan. His research and writing have focused on Dutch American communities in the Midwest.

This thin, heavily illustrated book packs a surprisingly serious historical punch. The introduction provides an overview of the Dutch immigrant pioneers who founded Orange City in the northwest corner of Iowa. The first three chapters cover the founding years from 1869 to 1901, the early twentieth century to 1929, and the Great Depression and war years. Each of these chapters begins with a brief overview followed by a photo essay on the developments in the town during that period. Two thematic chapters follow, one on Northwestern Academy/College and the other on the Tulip Festival. Those chapters chart how those important institutions changed over time. The final chapter covers the post-World War II era to the present, particularly highlighting business developments.

Readers with local knowledge will appreciate the variety of photos, from Henry Hospers to the Pizza Ranch. Multiple images capture the changing downtown business district. The captions include references to landmarks and street names to help readers orient themselves to the current town. Outsiders get an insider's view of a particular midwestern small town's material development from a village to a more diversified town. All readers will benefit from the careful selection and analysis of the photos. The captions for the 200 photos tell the story with a historical sense of the larger context of the developments in the town. These captions should serve as a model for others who use photographs in their work, from authors to historical museums to genealogists.

Gentlemen Bootleggers: The True Story of Templeton Rye, Prohibition, and a Small Town in Cahoots, by Bryce T. Bauer. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2014. 282 pp. Map, illustrations, source notes, bibliography, index. \$27.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Bill R. Douglas of Des Moines has written about World War I-era Iowa and Iowa's religious history. Full disclosure: he doesn't drink spirits, rarely drinks wine, but *is* fond of beer.

I approached *Gentlemen Bootleggers* expecting a romp about bootleggers, with the possibility of gleaning some information about Prohibition. Instead I got a fully formed social history of a small western Iowa town and its environs, from World War I to the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment – with, of course, an emphasis on alcohol and its governmentally mandated scarcity. I also learned from researching the subtitle that *cahoots* was not, as I suspected, of Punjabi origin, but Old French for “in the same hut.” That seems to have had surprising resonance in early twentieth-century Carroll County, Iowa.

Gentlemen Bootleggers is, secondarily, a tale of two Iowa Herbert Hoovers. One left the state and accumulated enough wealth to be able to drink legally in the Belgian Embassy while a cabinet member during Prohibition, ran successfully as a dry for U.S. president in 1928, and modified his position to support legal beer during his reelection campaign – his defeat should, of course, be attributed to other issues. The other Herbert Hoover stayed in Iowa as a blacksmith and invented a recipe for whiskey flavored with rye that would catch the attention of a thirsty but still discriminating public. That the latter Hoover would succeed was the result of successful branding and resourceful organizational skills. (Perhaps that description could apply to the more prominent Hoover as well.) Here Joe Irlbeck came in to provide the strategic

combination of decentralized production and centralized distribution that proved crucial in marketing an illegal product. It helped that a homogeneous German Catholic population—even including a monsignor—considered the enterprise more congenial than the federal mandate.

By *gentlemen* in the title Bauer means not a social class but the opposite of *gangster*; his contrasts to Capone in Chicago, and even the scene in Des Moines, argue for the moral superiority of rural values of solidarity. Certainly the episode of Irlbeck and his nemesis, federal revenueur B. F. Wilson, conversing on the street and agreeing to disagree with a handshake, without either relenting from their respective jobs, seems impossible to imagine in Chicago and improbable in Des Moines. The source for this encounter, an oral history tape of Joe and Laretta Irlbeck, probably deserves more skepticism than Bauer gives it. As Bauer also points out, other rural Iowa bootleggers were not so gentle or so scrupulous.

Bauer argues that the agonies of the 1920s rural depression were mitigated in Carroll County by Irlbeck's imaginative and immensely profitable bootlegging operation. One might quibble with his description of the outlier counties in Iowa that voted for Al Smith in 1928. Bauer attributes Plymouth County's vote to being adjacent to Sioux City (139). I suspect it was due more to a combination of Catholic votes and the extreme agricultural depression in Plymouth County; Bauer does later cite Ferner Nuhn's article in the *Nation* documenting the Farm Holiday uprising in Plymouth County.

The recent accusation—after the publication of the book—that the contemporary incarnation of Templeton Rye may not be based on the Prohibition-era recipe or made in Iowa after all, raises the question of what Irlbeck would have thought about that: whether hustling government regulators or providing quality product would be paramount. I suspect that he would have thought it a false choice and wanted both.

In any case, my initial expectations were correct: this is a very entertaining, as well as informative, read.

The Tastemaker: Carl Van Vechten and the Birth of Modern America, by Edward White. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014. 377 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 hardcover.

Reviewer R. Tripp Evans is professor of art history at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts. He is the author of *Grant Wood: A Life* (2010).

Nickolas Muray's 1925 photograph of the writer and artist Carl Van Vechten neatly captures his subject's charismatic complexity. Dressed

as a dandy yet glowering with studied intensity, Van Vechten appears to pull a cane from the hat in his hand—a gesture that is part sexual innuendo, part magic trick. Edward White’s masterful new biography of Van Vechten, *The Tastemaker*, provides a similarly revealing portrait of this native Iowan who became one of the most important cultural arbiters of the Jazz Age. Van Vechten’s taboo-shattering persona and work distinguished him even among his rather dazzling generation, yet today he is less well known than many of the figures about whom he wrote. In White’s beautifully crafted biography, he reemerges to provoke and charm us anew.

Born into a prosperous Cedar Rapids family in 1880, Van Vechten learned early on to believe in his own exceptional gifts and to appreciate the thrill of shocking his peers. Like fellow midwesterners Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis, Van Vechten later lampooned his region as a place of stifling repression and small-mindedness. (Cedar Rapids became the backwater Maple Valley in his 1924 novel, *The Tattooed Countess*.) Van Vechten later advised a young William Shirer that he needed to “get the hell out of Cedar Rapids” (158).

Upon graduation from the University of Chicago in 1903, Van Vechten entered journalism, eventually landing at the *New York Times* as the music and modern dance critic. Although his enthusiasm sometimes outstripped his expertise, he tirelessly educated his readers about the exciting new forms he encountered; as he once quipped, “Americans are inclined to look everywhere but under their noses for art” (132). By the mid-1910s, Van Vechten had become an intimate of the avant garde himself, traveling in circles that included Mabel Dodge, the Fitzgeralds, and Gertrude Stein (he later became Stein’s literary executor). Married to the long-suffering actress Fania Marinoff, Van Vechten maintained a frenetic schedule of travel, drinking, and extramarital affairs, while managing to write seven successful (if now mostly forgotten) novels.

Above all, it was Van Vechten’s role as a “bullhorn for the Harlem Renaissance” (4) that most clearly defined him as a writer. Introduced to Harlem circles by the author Walter White, Van Vechten was one of the first establishment critics to promote the Blues as an important form of American music, and also to advance the careers of black writers and entertainers—among them James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Paul Robeson. At the heart of Van Vechten’s celebration of Harlem was the “unwieldy idea,” as White explains, that “blackness contain[ed] the essence of modern art” (107).

Given his self-image as an insider, Van Vechten believed that his 1926 novel about Harlem, bearing the intentionally outrageous title *Nigger*

Heaven, would be widely celebrated there as the first serious examination of a place he genuinely admired. It was not. Although the book was a financial success, the insult of its title—slang for a segregated theater balcony—severed many of Van Vechten's connections to Harlem and, in certain respects, to posterity.

Van Vechten would reinvent himself in the 1930s as a celebrity photographer, capturing some of the twentieth century's most iconic portraits of figures from Henri Matisse to Eartha Kitt. Connected to this documentary passion (Van Vechten neither charged for his portraits nor sold them), was his last great obsession: the creation of two major archives devoted to American music, writing, and theater for Yale and Fisk universities. Chief among his archival subjects was, naturally, himself. White deserves high praise for so thoroughly mining this mountain of material.

Whereas Bruce Kellner's 1968 biography of Van Vechten benefited from their friendship, White's emotional and temporal distance from his subject lends his project greater objectivity as well as access to more recent scholarship. His nuanced treatment of the Harlem Renaissance's multilayered racial politics, and of the Byzantine rules that once structured the lives of gay men, demonstrate his impressive command of contemporary identity politics and post-Stonewall criticism. White writes thoughtfully about what it meant for Van Vechten to negotiate his many conflicting worlds, and he is particularly deft at handling his subject's own contradictory character.

While never apologizing for Van Vechten's racial paternalism or irresponsible behavior, White makes a persuasive case for his lasting contributions to American modernism and genuine sense of conviction. Steering clear of both exposé and hagiography, he provides a portrait that—like Muray's 1925 photograph—demonstrates both Van Vechten's seriousness of purpose and his devilish sleight of hand.

Hoover's FBI and the Fourth Estate: The Campaign to Control the Press and the Bureau's Image, by Matthew Cecil. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014. x, 355 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Frank Durham is associate professor in the University of Iowa's School of Journalism and Mass Communication. His research and writing have focused on critical analyses of media framing processes.

Matthew Cecil's meticulously researched and thoroughly engaging history of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI and its public relations-driven, myth-making machine should appeal to lay readers while making significant contributions to the scholarship on the topic. In approaching this sub-

ject, it would be easy to confuse an institutional history of the Federal Bureau of Investigation with a biography of the bureau's dominant figure, J. Edgar Hoover. Cecil does not, staking his claim, instead, to a key, if underlying, aspect of the bureau's history by researching its mastery of propaganda in the service of its own institution building.

The narrative begins with Hoover's role in directing the Palmer raids in 1920 four years before he was appointed by President Coolidge's attorney general, Harlan Fiske Stone, to head the new "Bureau of Investigation." But it is in Cecil's focus on the cultural meaning of media produced by the bureau's frequent manipulation of the press—and the press's role in that dynamic—that he breaks new ground.

His focus on the media's internal processes in this historical case characterizes this book as an "Iowa" project. Cecil, who earned a doctorate from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Iowa, wrote his dissertation on the same topic there. (I had no interaction with him as a student.) The cultural studies approach that Cecil presents so adroitly contributes to the reader's broader understanding of the media's role as a site of powerful contests over political meaning. In its propaganda program, the bureau employed various media, including its own books, a comic strip, and, later, a popular television program. Throughout Hoover's career, the bureau also maintained a sophisticated media relations program that placed articles framing the FBI in its own terms in national conservative publications while undermining liberal outlets.

Although Cecil describes critics of the bureau's constant self-promotion, he is clear that the construction of the agency's foundational mythos owed to the complicity of journalists as well. Early on, *Washington Star* reporter and editor Neil "Rex" Collier and author Courtney Ryley Cooper teamed to construct the narrative of the FBI that would frame the agency for decades. Cecil explains, "The Collier-Cooper narrative was fully formed by late 1935: Dispassionate clinical science, not politics, corruption, or cronyism, lay at the heart of the FBI, which was led by the careful and steady Hoover. The FBI was responsible to local law enforcement and essential to the safety of all Americans" (67). He continues, "The message reflected a careful, strategic response to public concerns about centralized police power and emphasized a heroic Hoover wielding the impartial and clinical magic of science to solve unsolvable crimes" (67).

By situating the historical narrative in this context, Cecil shows how the FBI's reliance on the power of "science" reflected modernist culture following the Great War. Specifically, he makes it possible for readers to understand Hoover's use of propaganda within the cultural context

that included other pre-eminent figures such as Walter Lippmann, who wrote in favor of a science-based journalism and against the adaptation of wartime propaganda techniques for private (and, worse, *public*) purposes, and Edward Bernays, who is widely regarded as the “father of public relations.”

Within this broader theme, Cecil’s scholarship offers satisfying moments of completion. Whereas other accounts of public relations are often satisfied with the notion that Bernays actually *was* the founder of modern public relations, rather than its (and his own) greatest promoter, Cecil refers to recent research by Karen Miller Russell and Carl O. Bishop charting the origins of the field back to Ivy Lee’s career in press agency in the second half of the nineteenth century. Perhaps this is a small detail, but it explains why Hoover’s public relations effort was able to leap into action at a professional level from the start.

In the present day, when Edward Snowden’s journalistic salvo has exposed the National Security Agency for peering over every digital shoulder, *Hoover’s FBI* offers key insights into the origins of the still contentious boundaries between the members of the Fourth Estate and the modern police state that Hoover began to build 90 years ago.

For Matthew Cecil’s account of the *Des Moines Register’s* role in this story, see his article, “‘Whoa, Edgar’: The *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune*, Cowles Publications, and J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI,” in the *Annals of Iowa* 71 (Spring 2012), 111–36. — *Editor*

The Nature of Childhood: An Environmental History of Growing Up in America since 1865, by Pamela Riney-Kehrberg. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014. xiv, 283 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Paula Petrik is professor of history at George Mason University. She is the coeditor of *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850–1950* (1992).

Like many who live in the suburbs of a large metro area, I live in what the developer calls a “starter home,” a house with a detached garage and alley. It is the developer’s idea of a 1950s dwelling embodying all the decade’s myths and stereotypes. Located across the street from an elementary school and a block from a public swimming pool, our house sits in the middle of a young neighborhood. In fact, at one point 28 children under 10 years old lived on our block. One might guess that children would be everywhere—riding their bikes and scooters, drawing

chalk figures in the alley, walking to and from school, stealing apples, and so forth. In fact, I rarely see any children at all. When I do see children, an adult is not far away. Where have all the children gone? What has happened to children on their own playing outside? These questions (or ones like them) underpin Pamela Riney-Kehrberg's exploration of the transformation of "outdoor children" into "indoor children."

She begins by exploring children's lives on the Great Plains and the parkland of the Midwest in the nineteenth century. Because most of the nation's population lived on farms, children grew up with nature, so there was no need to provide a "nature experience" for them. As the country urbanized, children still found the outdoors beguiling and converted the city's landscape into their playing fields, ignoring playgrounds designed and supervised by adults. After the turn of the century, parents increasingly began to worry about their offspring's estrangement from the natural world. As a result, adults founded summer camps, created organizations (Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, to name two) and implemented nature education curricula and school field trips to furnish children with a "nature experience." At mid-century, Riney-Kehrberg contends, there was a real tension between children's preference for indoor activities (TV and board games) and parents' efforts to get them outside. Still, there were children, as the author argues from her own history, who found interesting ways to use the built environment, including irrigation canals and empty lots. Despite adults' best efforts, however, "the day of the free-roaming child, exploring urban, suburban or wild space seemed to be over" (9). Children found shopping malls and television more enticing than landscape and wildlife. More important, parents became more fearful of the dangers harbored by the world outside. Children, in short, were no longer safe outdoors.

Although children's voices are difficult to find in the historical record, Riney-Kehrberg does a masterful job of ferreting out children's perspectives from manuscript sources, newspapers, periodicals, films, and published reminiscences. She is at her best when she is letting her subjects tell their stories. Her narrative revels in children's tales of bouncing off a bloated horse carcass, swimming in sewage, racing up and down elevators, or overcoming biking disasters in the northern woods. There are, however, fewer references to children's indoor activities or preferences. What television programs did they prefer? *Howdy Dowdy*? *Lone Ranger*? Did their penchant for malls have anything to do with tweens' boy/girl relationships? The author might have explored more fully what enticements lured children indoors and why those attractions were so appealing. She is also less convincing when she concentrates on adult paranoia regarding children. One of the themes in the United States in

the post-World War II era was fear: fear of the atom bomb, fear of Communism, fear of radiation, fear of irradiated milk, fear of fluoride, fear *ad infinitum*. Although Riney-Kehrberg does suggest that the public emphasis on missing children ratcheted up parental fears, she might have investigated how parental fear for their children's safety outside fit into society's general anxiety. Despite these criticisms, *The Nature of Childhood* is a solid addition to the history of childhood; it offers a provocative argument and raises interesting questions that invite historians' further consideration.

So Far, So Good, by Ralph Salisbury. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. 274 pp. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer Thomas K. Dean is senior presidential writer/editor at the University of Iowa. His extensive writings about the importance of place include *Under a Midland Sky* (2008).

Ralph Salisbury, noted poet and fiction writer, presents here a life-spanning memoir from his Great Depression boyhood growing up on an Iowa farm to his recent days in retirement from teaching at the University of Oregon. Born of a half-Cherokee father and an Irish American mother, Salisbury's work often emphasizes his Native American background. Self-identity in a world of prejudice plays a major role in the book, but, as in much of his writing, Salisbury emphasizes the "tribe of the world." As he states, "I am a Cherokee-Shawnee-English-Irish person, not part this part that but all everything, whatever it is" (242).

Salisbury's memoir, which won the River Teeth Literary Nonfiction Prize, is chronological in only a general sense. The broad strokes of the book's organization move from his birth to the present, but the writing is often associative. Stories and memories spin out from each other and spiral back, creating more of an impressionistic exploration of his experience and identity as opposed to a linear chronicle. Generally, scholars of Iowa history and culture will be most interested in approximately the first half of the book until Salisbury joins the service (underage) at age 17, as well as a later portion dealing with a brief teaching stint at Drake University in Des Moines. Even so, the entire book should be read to capture all Iowa references as well as to understand Iowa influences on the author's later life.

The book is not a farm chronicle per se, but Iowa historians will most likely find interest in specific descriptions of changes in farm life and technology from the early to the mid-twentieth century, especially from the perspective of a poor farming family. Even more compelling, though, is Salisbury's perspective on the role of violence in his life and,

by extension, human life in general. Salisbury explores the violence perpetrated on the family by an abusive father (whom he also admires in many ways, including for his musical talent) but broadens his scope to the violence-fraught world at large. Growing up on a farm, Salisbury was often exposed to the castration and slaughter of animals. But he also senses the violence of, for example, removing kernels from corncobs by rubbing a striker ear against another ear, and then compares that "divide and conquer" technique to dividing Native peoples against themselves in the name of Manifest Destiny and the subsequent "seizure of homelands" and "genocide" (14), leading inevitably to the ultimate violence of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in World War II.

Some may find Salisbury's memoir overly diffuse, and traditional historical scholars may find his at-times unusual linguistic constructions jarring or somewhat less than transparent, but consider that the book covers the 70-plus-year life span of a poet. Still, common themes can be traced throughout the stories and detours, most notably the struggle between Salisbury's growing Native sensibilities and how those values conflict with modern violence, particularly war. As he says, "Within myself two worlds had collided, the Indian world of hunting and planting and harvesting, in harmony with nature, and the white world of greedily ravaging nature and pirating weaker countries' goods by means of scientific war" (174).

Announcements

THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA (SHSI) announces a grant program for the 2015/2016 academic year. SHSI will award up to ten stipends of \$1,000 each to support original research and interpretive writing related to the history of Iowa or Iowa and the Midwest. Preference will be given to applicants proposing to pursue previously neglected topics or new approaches to or new interpretations of previously treated topics. SHSI invites applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including academic and public historians, graduate students, and independent researchers and writers. Applications will be judged on the basis of their potential for producing work appropriate for publication in *The Annals of Iowa*. Grant recipients will be expected to produce an annotated manuscript targeted for *The Annals of Iowa*, SHSI's scholarly journal.

Applications for the 2015/2016 awards must be postmarked by April 15, 2015. Download application guidelines from our website (www.iowahistory.org/publications/the-annals-of-iowa/research-grants-for-authors.html) or request guidelines or further information from:

Research Grants

State Historical Society of Iowa

402 Iowa Avenue

Iowa City IA 52240-1806

Phone: 319-335-3931

e-mail: marvin-bergman@uiowa.edu

COWLES LIBRARY, DRAKE UNIVERSITY, announces IOWA BIB, an online bibliography of Iowa history and culture, covering the years 1987-1997. Eventually, the database will cover 1953-2013 and beyond. Hosted by Cowles Library, Drake University, IOWA BIB can be accessed at <https://library.drake.edu/iowa-history-and-culture/>. The bibliography is organized into

subject areas, searchable by author, title, and keyword, and contains books, periodical articles, and specialized materials. Included are local history magazines, house organs, dissertations, theses, and town, centennial, church, and business histories. The broad subject areas allow for browsing as well as content-specific search capabilities.

When completed, IOWA BIB will greatly enhance Iowa studies research by simplifying search strategies and be of benefit to all types of public and special libraries, K-12 schools, the academic and business communities, government institutions, and the general public all over the world, but especially for Iowans.

For further information, contact Pat Dawson at dawson1383@gmail.com or Claudia Frazer at claudia.frazer@drake.edu. This pilot project is funded by the State Historical Society of Iowa, Inc.

THE IOWA HISTORY Center at Simpson College is pleased to congratulate Hope Mitchell as the 2014 recipient of its prize for the outstanding master's thesis in Iowa history. Mitchell's thesis, "Sacrificing Our Daughters: Changing Perceptions of Prostitution in Iowa, 1880-1915," was completed at Iowa State University.

The Center now seeks nominations for the outstanding master's thesis in Iowa history for 2015. Selection will be based on contribution to the knowledge of Iowa history; originality of the subject matter or methodology; use of sources; and written expression. Nominees must have completed their master's degree between July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015.

The winner will be announced in the fall of 2015 and will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and an award plaque. Three copies of the thesis and a brief letter of nomination from the thesis advisor, which includes contact information for the nominee, should be submitted to Bill Friedrichs, Director, Iowa History Center, Simpson College, 701 North C Street, Indianola, IA 50125. Application deadline is June 30, 2015.

For further information, contact Linda Sinclair, 515-961-1528 or linda.sinclair@simpson.edu.

THE BUTLER CENTER FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES, a department of the Central Arkansas Library System, recently announced the digitization of two collections of Iowa-related Civil War letters. The John Myers Civil War Letters contains 27 letters by or related to John Myers while he was serving in the 28th Iowa Infantry. Myers, a resident of Toledo, enlisted in the unit on August 16, 1862. He died of disease at Helena, Arkansas, on August 14, 1863. The Henry Phillips Civil War Letters contains 32 letters, written primarily by Henry T. Phillips to his family in Unionville during the months he served with the 47th Iowa Infantry. Phillips joined the regiment on May 6, 1864, and mustered out on September 28, 1864, when his term of service expired. The digitized letters, along with other items, are available at the Butler Center's Civil War website: www.butlercenter.org/civilwararkansas.

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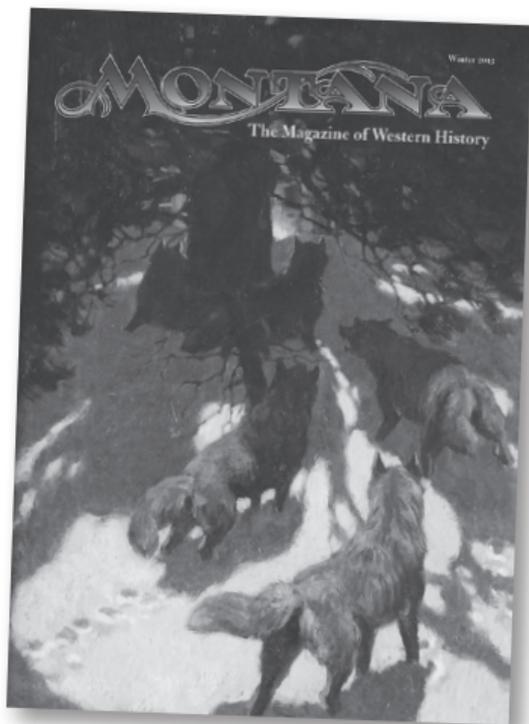
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Contributors

DURWOOD BALL is associate professor of history and editor of the *New Mexico Historical Review* at the University of New Mexico (UNM). He is writing a biography of Edwin Vose Sumner. He thanks the UNM Center for Regional Studies for funding the map published in this article.

PAUL MOKRZYCKI is a doctoral candidate in the history department at the University of Iowa. His dissertation explores the missing children scare and the politics of child safety in the late twentieth-century United States. Mokrzycki's essay on the Atlanta youth slayings will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Southern Cultures*. He is also the founding editor of the *Middle West Review*, an interdisciplinary journal focusing on the American Midwest.

STACY PRATT MCDERMOTT is assistant director and associate editor for the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, where she has worked since 1996. She earned her Ph.D. in American history from the University of Illinois and is the author of two books and numerous articles on legal history, Abraham Lincoln, and the history of race. Her latest book, a biography of Mary Lincoln, will be published in January 2015 by Routledge.

The State Historical Society of Iowa

The Annals of Iowa is published quarterly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Historical Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs of the State of Iowa. The society operates from two centers, Des Moines and Iowa City. A museum, research library, state archives, special collections, community programming, historic preservation, and membership programs are located at 600 East Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50319, phone 515-281-5111. Publications, a research library, and special collections are located at 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240, phone 319-335-3916. The society also operates several historic sites across the state.

Subscriptions

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The *Annals* is available on microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

Submissions

The Annals of Iowa invites the submission of articles on Iowa history and on subjects concerning the nation and the Midwest with an Iowa focus. State, local, and regional studies of political, economic, social, cultural, intellectual, institutional, ethnic, religious, material culture, archeological, and architectural history are welcome. The *Annals* also reviews significant books on related topics. A detailed set of editorial guidelines is available on request. All correspondence concerning editorial matters should be addressed to:

Marvin Bergman, editor
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