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## BOOK NOTES

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*Prelude*. By M. Linda Olsen. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014, 194 pages, paper \$7.99.)

Many historians have addressed the tumultuous events of the 1850s that contributed to the secession crisis and Civil War. M. Linda Olsen's *Prelude*, however, approaches the subject from a more personal level. Told through the perspective of Sarah Logan, the novel tells the story of the Logan family's move from Boston to Kansas Territory in 1854–1855 due to its members' pro-abolitionist sentiments. Utilizing the Douglas County Historical Society and the Watkins Museum of History in Lawrence, Kansas, Olsen paints a vivid, but historically accurate, account of the events in Kansas Territory. A fun and easy read for adults, *Prelude* is quite accessible for school-age children and would serve as an excellent introduction to an important period in both Kansas and American history.

*Moon Stain*. By Ronda Miller. (Emporia, KS: Meadowlark, 2015, 90 pages, paper \$12.00.)

Adorned with a cover image of a dark, blood-red moon, Ronda Miller's book of poems presents a tour of deep and expansive emotions. With the general theme of the blood moon apparent throughout the collection, Miller's poems are grounded in prairie roots and raw feelings. Many poems explore snapshots of everyday life; others pointedly convey images of grief, contentment, and love. Miller peppers her book with descriptions of life in the rural Midwest, stories of long-cherished memories, and tales of love and loss. Her poems communicate widely shared sentiments in a vivid, original, and passionate style. Her words represent a cathartic exercise in confession in this mostly narrative approach. In five sections, "Blood Moon," "New Moon," "Moon Shadows," "Moonbeams," and "Full Moon," Miller offers a sharp, edgy body of work that is sure to leave her audience engaged and longing for more.

*Images of America: Route 66 in Kansas*. By Joe Sonderman and Cheryl Eichar Jett. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2016, 228 pages, paper \$21.99.)

Although only 13.2 of the nearly 2,500 miles of the old, legendary highway, Route 66, passed through Kansas, the Kansas portion, according to authors Joe Sonderman and Cheryl Eichar Jett, "packs in as much history and adventure per mile as in any other state" (p. 7), and they set out to prove it with the publication of over two hundred wonderfully reproduced photographs and maps from southeast Kansas as well as a few from Missouri and Oklahoma. A short introduction places the region and the highway in a larger context, but the bulk of the volume, as per the standard Images of America format, is composed of photographs and captions arranged in five chapters—"State-Line," "Galena," "Riverton," "The Military Road," and "Baxter Springs"—covering highway-related honky-tonks, service stations, eateries, and tourist attractions. Even more of the illustrations, however, reflect on the people and communities along the route, both before and during the highway's active years.

*In Cold Storage: Sex and Murder on the Plains*. By James W. Hewitt. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015, xvi + 134 pages, paper \$16.95.)

Even most historians, I suspect, love a good murder mystery, and when that mystery is also local history, even better. James W. Hewitt, an attorney, president of the Friends of the Center for Great Plains Studies, and an adjunct professor of history, captures such a story in *In Cold Storage*, a tale of "sex and murder" in southwest Nebraska in 1973. The book contains no notes or list of sources used, but it is reportedly based on previously sealed court records; newspaper accounts of the murder and trial; and numerous interviews, including, most notably, one with the confessed murderer, Harold Nokes. Mysteriously, the story Nokes told the author in 2007 at the Nebraska State Penitentiary was quite "different in almost every aspect from his 1974 confession," and Hewitt set out to "search for" and tell "the real truth" (p. x, 105).

*The Rise of Women Farmers and Sustainable Agriculture*. By Carolyn E. Sachs, Mary E. Barbercheck, Kathryn Brasier, Nancy Ellen Kiernan, and Anna Rachel Terman. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016, xv +196 pages, paper \$29.95.)

The farmer's wife is a familiar presence in accounts of agricultural life. Never mind that many of these women themselves have long been intimately engaged in the process of cultivating a livelihood from the land. *The Rise of Women Farmers and Sustainable Agriculture* documents a shift that is occurring as women involved in agriculture increasingly begin to see themselves—and demand that others do so as well—as farmers. This book charts the concomitant rise of feminist agrifood systems in some parts of the United States that strive to be environmentally sound, socially just, and transformative for rural gender relations.

*Manifest West: Serenity and Severity*. Edited by Caleb Seeling. (Gunnison, CO: Western Press Books, 2016, 130 pages, paper \$16.95, e-book \$13.95.)

In the latest volume of the Manifest West Series, twenty-nine writers explore the classic western dichotomy of serenity—beautiful growth and renewal—and severity—destruction and chaos. Organized into three sections, "Nature's Duplicitous Embrace," "The Storm of Civilization," and "Growth and Resurgence," the anthology includes short fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. Gail Denham's "All Night Vigil ... Waiting for the Fire," for example, captures a mother's anxiety after being evacuated as a wildfire approaches her family's home: "My mind sorted: some family photos / and important papers gathered, but my doll collection and Vic's / artwork left behind. Dog cages stood ready. What did we forget?" (p. 5). Patricia Frolander's "Bequest" describes the bounty the West can provide as she remembers her grandmother and how "on humid afternoons she canned beans, tomatoes, peas, or pickles/beads of perspiration on her brow. / The stove never seemed to cool before another meal began" (p. 95). The collection offers insight into how intertwined people's lives are with the environments in which they live.