

sideration of American utopianism at its enigmatic word.

On some level, the persuasiveness of Storey's argument depends on his scrupulously close reading: his eye catches everything, down to the mechanical gait of a plow horse laboring under the combined metaphorical weight of both garden-variety pastoralism and incipient industrial capitalism. But the book also functions as well as it does because of Storey's innovative and unexpected take on the subject of American modernity, an approach that simultaneously challenges and corroborates much of what we already claim to know. On one hand, it is hardly obvious that novels about late nineteenth-century rural and small-town life would prove to be "a vital entry point to the themes, concerns, currents, and transformations of urban modernity," as Storey persuasively demonstrates (p. 170). But then again, how could any artifact from the Gilded Age have remained innocent of modernity? The answer is that none did, and *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities* demonstrates this beautifully.

Readers with a particular interest in Indiana history will appreciate Storey's thoughtful engagement with a number of Hoosier authors, including Edward Eggleston, Booth Tarkington, and Maurice Thompson, all of whom receive far less attention from serious critics than they deserve. But even readers who come to his book with a specific agenda will admire the sheer number of American authors Storey is able to draw together by way of his adroit analysis. In sum, *Rural Fictions, Urban Realities* is a smart book, and one that is argued with an uncommon degree of care and sensitivity—a decidedly modern reconsideration of a misunderstood body of literature that has remained at the periphery of debates about American modernity.

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Ida McKinley: The Turn-of-the-Century First Lady through War, Assassination, and Secret Disability

By Carl Sferrazza Anthony

(Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2013. Pp. 358. Notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00.)

Comparative analyses of First Ladies routinely dismiss the influence of Ida Saxton McKinley (1847-1907), portraying her as inconsequential during

her husband William McKinley's tenure as president from 1897 until his assassination in 1901. While mystery shrouded her medical condition, the

public seemed to accept an invalid as First Lady. In producing the first full-length biography of Ida McKinley, Carl Sferrazza Anthony provides insight to this puzzling response in a riveting account of a Victorian love affair, tragedy and scandals, medical misunderstandings, and presidential politics. Above all, Anthony depicts Ida McKinley as a well-educated woman instilled with progressive views on gender and race. Influenced by her work in banking and travel abroad, Ida McKinley exhibited passion for the rights of working women, access to higher education, and woman suffrage. Her intelligence and strong independence matched the ambitions of William McKinley, and a strong mutual dependency forged by marriage defined their political life.

As Anthony points out, both Ida and William McKinley were at first fully synchronized in their motives and ambitions with a mutual understanding of the importance of image in politics. As tragedies and scandal took their toll on Ida's mental and physical stamina, however, her enthusiasm for public life waned. William's ambition ultimately superseded his wife's, with dire consequences for how he managed her epilepsy. On the one hand, his devotion to his wife was deemed virtuous, if staged at times; yet, by giving her a steady stream of bromides, in part to conceal the true nature of her illness, he inadvertently harmed her.

Piecing together Ida McKinley's long-term symptoms and treatments, Anthony weaves a story within the

biography about nineteenth-century misunderstandings and prejudices related to mental illnesses. Anthony suggests that the treatments for her partial paralysis and mild epilepsy help to explain the personality changes and the escalation of her physical and mental impairment. Much of this treatment was solicited and administered in secrecy, in fear of public revelation of a diagnosis of epilepsy which carried an immoral connotation. President McKinley desperately tried to contain the effect of his wife's illness on his political career. The image of Victorian martyr often worked to his favor, yet at other times he went to great lengths to create the appearance of his wife as a more active First Lady.

In spite of her epilepsy, Ida McKinley, as Anthony shows, displayed ambition and a keen understanding of politics. She read and listened to all of her husband's speeches; centered herself prominently at official functions; influenced appointments and patronage; and used her love of knitting to bestow charitable aid. While surrogate hostesses, including nieces, filled in during her absences, the office of First Lady was adapted to accommodate Ida's disability. On multiple occasions, her business sense provided valuable insight, even sparing her husband from the fallout of potential scandal. She also traveled with her husband, campaigned, and advocated for both suffrage and equal access to education for all. As First Lady, Ida McKinley also in-

vited singers and actors to the White House, raising the legitimacy of the performing professions.

Anthony summons a wide variety of historical evidence to demonstrate the political influence of Ida McKinley's ambitions and ideas. Her epilepsy egregiously mistreated, she became a victim of that same ambition, as both she and her husband attempted to manipulate public opin-

ion. Appropriately, Anthony raises even more questions about the true Ida McKinley, but his work assures that she can no longer be dismissed as inconsequential.

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Steel Barrio: The Great Mexican Migration to South Chicago, 1915-1940

By Michael Innis-Jiménez

(New York: NYU Press, 2013. Pp. 248. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$79.00; paperbound, \$27.00.)

Histories of Mexican migrants to the United States have proliferated since the 1970s, but only in the last decade have we seen any that dealt with the Chicago area. Michael Innis-Jiménez's *Steel Barrio* is only the third such monograph published on this topic. Such paucity is lamentable—as early as 1930 almost 30,000 persons of Mexican origin lived in the greater Chicago area, including its industrial suburbs in Indiana. Those interested in Chicago's Mexican community have had to rely on journal articles, dissertations, theses, or monographs from other disciplines.

Steel Barrio focuses on the early formation of Chicago's Mexican immigrant community with an emphasis on South Chicago, an area that housed thousands of industrial workers occupied mainly in steel pro-

duction. Mexican workers shared the district with eastern and southern European immigrant workers who had arrived at least a decade earlier and did not welcome them. A racial pecking order emerged, placing Mexicans with African Americans at the bottom. The author posits that in order to survive their hostile reception, South Chicago's Mexicans resorted to a system of survival with interlocking institutions and cultural modes which "included actions that they might not have consciously considered acts of resistance" (p. 113). Perhaps his most interesting assertion is that cultural survival efforts from the 1920s immigrant generation were passed on to the second generation in the 1930s, thereby assuring that assimilation did not occur.