

wits and continued with almost superhuman focus and energy," even assuming the role of "acting head of state" (p. 168).

In sum, the strengths and weaknesses of these books seem complementary. Goodrich provides a well-researched and extremely well-documented account of the events surrounding Lincoln's assassination that can be criticized, at worst, as being overly conventional. On the other hand, Guttridge and Neff make

audacious claims that, if true, require a complete re-write of history, though their claims may be said to be somewhat less thoroughly documented. This reader will leave it to the specialists to adjudicate the dispute between these two very interesting books.

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Pictures of Home
A Memoir of Family and City
 By Douglas Bukowski

(Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004. Pp. 245. Illustrations. \$26.00)

One of the finest attributes of social history is its conviction that the average person's life is an authentic part of the human saga, as genuine as tales of the rich or powerful. Birth and death, childhood and work, love and heartache all mix together; the challenge for historians is to construct narratives from such fragmented sources as property records, census data, neighborhood newspapers, and oral histories.

Pictures of Home is a different type of historical resource. Photographs from family albums and bureau drawers inspire some of the author's recollections. Small photographic reproductions precede each chapter. Intermittently, the author muses about the emotions captured in these moments. But the thematic glue that

holds this book together is found in its subtitle: memoir, reflections on the everyday lives of aunts and uncles, grandparents and neighbors, parents and siblings. The "pictures" in this volume are not so much silver images recorded on paper as flashes from the author's memory.

The setting is Chicago's South Side, for the most part after World War II. The story begins in the Bridgeport neighborhood, not far from Richard J. Daley's home turf, where the author's immigrant ancestors first planted their American roots before relocating to the bungalow belt on the city's southwest side. At 54th Street and Homan Avenue, the Bukowski family joined a melting pot of nationalities (but not races) in activity spaces revolving around a memorable

grocery store, doctor's office, savings and loan, movie theater, and, most importantly for this clan, St. Gall Catholic Church. Chicagoland serves as a dynamic stage across which the family moves in the course of their daily activities. The universe beyond Gage Park is epitomized by nearby Municipal (later Midway) Airport, at the time Chicago's portal to the rest of the world. But the farthest most family members venture is to the old neighborhood to visit relatives, to Comiskey Park, to downtown for a few hours of shopping along State Street, across Madison Avenue (the city's socio-spatial dividing line) for some magical thrills at Riverview Amusement Park, or to a suburb to bury family members at Resurrection Cemetery. What readers encounter is not so much a sense of community as a memoir of place—locations where life unfolds. And although the setting may be Chicago, the broader context is any urban place where prewar ethnic Americans reinvented themselves as postwar suburbanites. The lifestyles are typically urban midwestern.

The book's five chapters unfold in roughly chronological order, but

within each unit, events occur in a stream-of-consciousness style that may annoy some readers. There is no fixed progression within each chapter. Dates jump back and forth congruent with the author's flashes of memory. An accomplished historian, Bukowski chose not to mine each episode for its historical significance—with the exception of race relations, Chicago's Gordian knot. Readers partake of everyday details in the lives of people who are neither relatives nor neighbors. Aging and death are subtexts in this odyssey. Therefore readers must be willing to appreciate the intimacies that social history celebrates, the exhilaration of a grandchild's birth or the exasperation of an elderly parent who fails to get to the bathroom in time. Whether we formally publish our family history or not, the grim and graceful "pictures" that we have all recorded are vital and genuine. Doug Bukowski has proven that point.

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