

tribe when his family mentioned “Indiana gypsy” ancestry. (They are appalled, he says, that he would want to identify with “the worst family in America”; thus the pseudonym.) His album, *Comin’ Home to Indiana*, is the creative result of many years of reading and connecting the dots among chapters of Hoosier history that reflect disenfranchisement of the “Other.” Billed as roots rock, the CD’s twenty-two tracks move through many folk and world music forms, including American Indian rhythms and Celtic ballads; Caribbean ska, reggae, mento, and calypso; and American jazz, blues, traditional rock ’n’ roll, and contemporary country. The stream-of-consciousness lyrics, spo-

ken and sung by Ishi and a band of unidentified friends, weave the Tribe of Ishmael and racism, poverty, and industrialization in early Indianapolis together with Tecumseh, Abe Lincoln, Little Orphant [sic] Annie, Eugene Debs, Booth Tarkington, and a lot more.

Ishi views the Tribe of Ishmael through a wide artistic lens; Deutsch narrows the focus through scholarly vision. Both perspectives inspire continued research.

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Steel Giants

Historic Images from the Calumet Regional Archives

By Stephen G. McShane and Gary S. Wilk. Forward by Mark Reutter

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. Pp. xiv, 283. Illustrations. \$39.95.)

The story of Northwest Indiana’s transformation is fascinating. From the end of the nineteenth century through the beginning of the twentieth century, the region that Powell Moore had described as Indiana’s last frontier became one of the great centers of industrial production. This quick transformation has long given the Calumet region great symbolic value. In his 1979 book, *The Responsibility of Mind in a Civilization of Machines*, historian Perry Miller framed the paradoxes of modern development. He argued that when

previous generations realized that they were incapable of dealing with their world they could blame the gods; but, Miller continued, “whom dare we blame for Gary, Indiana” (p. 202). At the turn of the twentieth century, however, the steel cities of Northwest Indiana symbolized the nation’s great potential for industrial growth. Not only did Inland Steel and U.S. Steel build massive industrial complexes to produce steel, they also documented every step of this process with vivid photography. Here was the tabula rasa upon which was to be

written the history of American industry; both companies kept a record to ensure that future generations knew who was responsible for Gary and the other cities of the Calumet region.

In *Steel Giants*, Stephen McShane and Gary Wilk “bring the reader back to a time of incredible industrial might which defined a region and its people” through these powerful photographs (p. 14). It is a goal which they achieve admirably. The book begins with a brief introduction establishing the history of the region. The authors then use text from an Inland Steel promotional booklet, published in 1911, to set the tone for the collection. The rest of the book consists of photographs that cover the construction of mills, streets, and houses, the process of steel, and the lives of the people who produced the steel.

Taken from the company archives, the photos are both illuminating and deceptive. There was a mythology to steel production carefully crafted both in the buildings of the steel companies and their literature and photography. The photos offer a vantage point designed to inspire awe in the technological and mechanical wonder of modern steel production, while images of workers create a sense of harmony and unity. Campaigns for war bonds, visits from Hollywood stars, and company-sponsored athletics craft an image of a

happy, hardworking place. Especially telling in this regard are the images from the early 1940s which show women stepping into the roles and jobs of steel production to do their part. Strikes, conflicts, and workplace dangers have no place within these documentary images. Yet McShane and Wilk are very aware of these issues. “Keep in mind,” they warn, “that the selection of photographs was limited by the contents of the two visual collections created by Inland Steel and U.S. Steel” (p.14). The use of such collections also limits the chronology of the book. While a few photographs taken after 1970 are included in the collection, the bulk of its contents trace the high years of the steel cities from the turn of the century through the 1960s. Missing are images of deindustrialization, mechanization, and job loss. None of this, however, takes away from the visual impact of the collection. It is a wonderful array of images from a time when enormous structures that poured out steel, and the people who worked within these structures, dominated the landscape.

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