public speeches and other aspects of the public face of a campaign. They are much less likely to cover important events behind the scenes, such as political party negotiations and the candidates’ relationships with various groups. But this handsome compendium of almost two centuries of Hoosier presidential campaigns is a most interesting read.

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Shifting Sands: The Restoration of the Calumet Area
By Kenneth J. Schoon

The mid-1900s were transformative years for northwest Indiana and its dunes environs. The “Save the Dunes” organization and the Port of Indiana were created, symbolizing the forced fusion of environment and industry that has come to characterize this corner of the Crossroads of America. The region’s unique placement on Lake Michigan adjacent to the “city of broad shoulders” that is Chicago came to attract recreational tourists as well as industrious entrepreneurs, generating the forces that would sculpt this landscape for generations.

In this tense dialectic, the ecology movement was birthed, leading to such wide-ranging laws as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The delicate coexistence of environment and industry along Indiana’s 45-plus miles of Lake Michigan shoreline thus set the pattern for environmental protection across the United States, and now serves as a model of cooperation for the future.

The milestone events of this frequently overlooked yet greatly transformed corner of Indiana are given the attention they deserve in Shifting Sands: The Restoration of the Calumet Area by Kenneth Schoon, author of Calumet Beginnings (2003) and the pictorial history Dreams of Duneland (2013), among other works. From this region’s formative geology to Father Jacques Marquette’s explorations, from the exploitation of sand for the manufacture of glass to the creation of a state and national park, Schoon gives an illustrated account that serves as an accompaniment
to the compelling film documentary *Shifting Sands: On the Path to Sustainability* (2016).

Schoon’s knowledge of the region is truly encyclopedic, and that is exactly the feel of his treatment: more encyclopedic than narrative. This topical arrangement means the dramatic story of clashing cultures and the transformation of landscape and relationship is better communicated through the documentary film, which uses archival footage and personal interviews to convey the struggle and eventual resolution of industrial interests with this rare ecosystem. Schoon’s book serves best as a resource for further reading on topics raised in the film.

Unfortunately, the segmentation of the book also means many of the cooperative relationships that are a large part of this story are left untold. Some collaborative organizations get no mention at all, despite being critical pieces in the region’s transformation, and some new organizations that have a very promising future for contributing to the success of the region—such as the recently formed Calumet Collaborative—are simply off the book’s radar. More organizations than have been given credit in the book have worked diligently over the last 50 years to pull the region together in overcoming its challenges to write a different future that builds upon but is not mired in its conflicted past.

The proposed Calumet National Heritage Area (which gets a very brief mention) takes a wider view of the region as encompassing the southern reaches of Chicago and sharing a cultural and natural history across a very permeable state line. A richer history of the “restoration of the Calumet area” would include this Illinois geography as well. Of course, as a companion to a documentary film focusing on the Lake Michigan shoreline, the book’s geographical focus may be appropriate, though its subtitle makes it a bit misleading.

While the gazetteer of preserve areas that closes out the book may help draw attention to restoration areas that may otherwise remain unknown and under-appreciated, the inventory here may date the book quickly, as this list is being rapidly added to thanks to the exemplary work of organizations such as the Shirley Heinz Land Trust and the aforementioned Save the Dunes.

Still, Schoon’s book offers a fact-filled corrective to this much-neglected, often-overlooked, and unfairly maligned region in the shadow of Chicago, and it helps re-assert northwestern Indiana’s significance to the economic climate of Indiana while offering lessons for any
Midwesterners always live, it seems, in an age of lead, the con even meaner than Hesiod’s own contemporary “Iron” age, all misery and decay, casting nostalgic glances back on the cast of cast-off ages, the more precious alloys and ores—Bronze, Silver, Gold. The gist of the old metallurgy haunts the subtitle of Mark Athitakis’s fine guidebook, *The New Midwest: A Guide to Contemporary Fiction of the Great Lakes, Great Plains, and Rust Belt*: the oxidation of wistfulness, the boketto sigh of the looking back on looking back, that green breast of a new world always obviously out there, always out of reach. “You should have seen the lake in my day, now that was a great Great Lake!” But to his great credit, Athitakis in this archeological dig of the heartland’s literary bottomland neither stratifies the mildewy cultural milieu nor selects works and authors steeped in the crick-necked, over-the-shoulder gape into the golden-grassed past. I wish I could recreate here the graphic crag captured on the book’s lead-colored cover—the NEW careted in between the THE and the MIDWEST—that illustrates the illustrious work this book does, wedging apart the tattoo of charred cartography, the midden of might-have-beens, the runes of ruined ruin.

I like the heft of the book, handy and handsome, with fancy French flaps. The elegant introduction addresses, as it must, the issue of timeliness and timefulness (the components of “place” that are often overlooked) but more importantly succinctly defines the great brooding midwestern mystery of location, location. Just where is the where of the Midwest? Perhaps unique to the region is always the discussion of its regionalness. I once taught in a literature department that had eliminated the model of historical and