

Book Reviews

Esyllt W. Jones, *“Imagining Winnipeg: History through the Photographs of L.B. Foote”* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012).

In this latest offering from the University of Manitoba Press, Esyllt Jones presents a visual compilation that illustrates the Archival photographs from the Lewis B. Foote photographic collection at the Archives of Manitoba. This work follows a similar format to previous publications released by the University of Manitoba Press, *The North End: Photographs by John Paskievich* and *All Our Changes: Images of the Sixties Generation* all of which are intended to highlight the rich and diverse visual history of Winnipeg. The quality of the book as a photographic exploration of Foote’s work certainly succeeds and exposes new audiences outside of the academic field to the rich materials of the Lewis B. Foote collection. It has reproduced the images at a higher quality than ever before and published a substantial portion of images from the Foote collection. However choices were made to keep the book in the style and format of a coffee table book. Jones has a roadblock in front of her from start to finish. The structure is set up as a coffee table book and as such her analysis is lost as the viewer makes their way through the treasure trove of images. Publishing choices that separate the analysis from the images cut the context and link to the complex history off from the images, always leaving the viewer wanting more.

As a prominent Winnipeg social historian, Jones uses her introduction to situate Foote in the greater context of a more nuanced Winnipeg history than his work has previously received. She aptly illustrates the larger than life role Foote plays in constructing the story of Winnipeg’s history in the early 20th century. However, she mentions multiple times that Foote himself and his intentions remain something of an enigma (vii). The archival collection of over 2500 images portrays the “rapid expansion of Winnipeg’s white settler colony” and Jones is able to unpack some of the consistent themes that the Foote brings his viewer into contact with. Jones most aptly sites the “protestant reforming character of Winnipeg” (xii) and Foote’s construction of “Anglo-Canadian masculinity” (xiii) as key subjects the photographer would develop over his career. Jones best illustrates Foote’s photos as the backdrop for immigrant, labour and working class history in Winnipeg.

Jones’ discussion of iconic photographs and public commemoration give a deeper methodological lens with which to view Foote’s work. There can be no doubt that Foote’s photographs of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike have reached iconic status in the city of Winnipeg but also the study of labour relations in Canada. His work tackles not only the 1919 demonstrations but also the