

# The Annals of Iowa

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## In This Issue

RALPH SCHARNAU, who teaches history at Northeast Iowa Community College, Peosta, describes the emergence of a working class in Dubuque between 1835 and 1855. He focuses on the workplace conditions and living standards of workers especially in lead mining (in the first decade) and later in lumbering. He also addresses the beginnings of organized labor among Dubuque printers.

CHAD W. TIMM, assistant professor of education at Grand View University in Des Moines, tells the story of the prisoner of war (POW) camps at Algona and Clarinda during World War II, focusing especially on the employment of POWs on Iowa farms and in local businesses. It is a story, Timm argues, of coming to grips with reality: POW labor enabled Iowans to meet wartime food production goals, see the true face of the enemy, and learn that even amid the terror and destruction of war, humanity prevails.

TRAVIS NYGARD reviews a new biography of Grant Wood by R. Tripp Evans.

## Front Cover

German prisoners of war from Camp Algona and Camp Clarinda and their branch camps were employed in Iowa businesses, such as canning factories, as well as on Iowa farms during World War II. For more on German and Japanese prisoners of war at Camp Algona and Camp Clarinda and the work they did on Iowa farms and in Iowa businesses, see Chad Timm's article in this issue. Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

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# From Pioneer Days to the Dawn of Industrial Relations: The Emergence of the Working Class in Dubuque, 1833–1855

RALPH SCHARNAU

DURING THE PERIOD between the Civil War and the First World War, the United States became an economic superpower. But it was the antebellum era that laid the groundwork for that development. General textbook surveys of U.S. history label the period from 1815 to 1860 as one of striking economic transformation. Evidence of the changing times came with growth in the ranks of wage earners, a rapid increase of urbanization, the rise of factory production, the spread of market activity, and advances in technology, communication, and transportation. Although the changes were far from complete, the first stage of the nation's economic revolution had clearly arrived by the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

These great economic and social transformations are often expressed in the term *industrialization*.<sup>2</sup> The forces of industrialism started in the East, then rolled westward across the Mississippi River, and by 1850 reached as far west as the Great Plains.

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1. See, for example, Alan Brinkley, *American History: A Survey* (New York, 2007), chap. 10; and Irwin Unger, *These United States: The Questions of Our Past*, vol. 1, 3rd concise ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2007), chap. 9.

2. Walter Licht, *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1995). See also Ruth L. Hoadley, *Industrial Growth of Iowa* (Iowa City, 1928).

Built on a rapidly expanding population, the new economic structure was knit together by rail and water and the beginnings of modern business management.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, the American Midwest experienced both industrial and agricultural development. The sustained and simultaneous growth of farm and factory created two contrasting and largely separate work forces. Organized labor emerged as a distinct and formidable presence in midwestern industry.<sup>4</sup>

The decade from 1845 to 1855 witnessed enormous change for the Mississippi River town of Dubuque, Iowa. The rapid settlement and economic growth of this period between the panics of 1837 and 1857 changed the face of the community from a sleepy little mining village to the premier commercial center between St. Paul and St. Louis. By 1855, the city's harbor facilities teemed with passenger and freight steamers, and the newly laid Illinois Central Railroad tracks reached Dunleith (present-day East Dubuque) on the Illinois side of the river. Small-scale manufacturing enterprises, relying mostly on human, horse, or water power, processed raw materials from forests, mines, and fields. A burgeoning labor force kept pace with the economic transformation. Independent minded and hard working, Dubuque's pre-Civil War workers provided the labor force that shaped the town's material culture and public image.<sup>5</sup>

Traditionally, histories of Mississippi River towns like Dubuque meant accounts of early pioneers, civic happenings, entrepreneurs, and business transactions.<sup>6</sup> Such towns followed similar paths of economic development based on commerce and artisan production.<sup>7</sup> A recent study explored the role of

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3. Thomas C. Cochran, *200 Years of American Business* (New York, 1977), chap. 4.

4. Daniel Nelson, *Farm and Factory: Workers in the Midwest, 1880–1990* (Bloomington, IN, 1995), vii–viii.

5. For general accounts of the city, see Franklin T. Oldt, *History of Dubuque County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1911); [Chandler C. Childs], *History of Dubuque County* (Chicago, 1880); William E. Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi, 1788–1988* (Dubuque, 1987); and Randolph W. Lyon, *Dubuque: The Encyclopedia* (Dubuque, 1991). For an overview of Dubuque labor, see Ralph Scharnau, "Workers, Unions, and Workplaces in Dubuque, 1830–1990," *Annals of Iowa* 52 (1993), 50–78.

6. See the sources cited in n. 5.

7. Edwin B. Espenshade Jr., "Urban Development at the Upper Rapids of the Mississippi" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1944); Timothy R. Mahoney,

Dubuque's early booster elite in the changing economic structure of the community during the 1850s.<sup>8</sup> Early entrepreneurs in Jacksonville, Illinois, and the Twin Cities played a similar role in developing businesses that produced commodities for trade and commerce.<sup>9</sup>

This study, by contrast, focuses on Dubuque's labor history. The years from 1845 to 1855 were prosperous times. During that decade, first mining and then lumbering supplied the foundation of the city's status as a commercial center, created personal fortunes, provided an occupation for many, and capitalized future industrial development. The emphasis here is on wage earners and their workplace conditions and living standards.

Compared to the rest of the state, Dubuque was a distinctive place in the pre-Civil War years. Iowa's oldest community differed by virtue of its hilly terrain and lead mines as well as a citizenry largely devoted to Catholicism in religion and the Democratic Party in politics. The origins of Dubuque's reputation as an industrial city with a large working-class population and sturdy unions can be traced to the era that preceded the Civil War.<sup>10</sup>

FOR A DOZEN YEARS following its founding in 1833, Dubuque bore the markings of a rough frontier mining community. The first bank was aptly named Miners Bank, and the *Miners' Express* functioned as the newspaper of record. The Panic of 1837 ushered in six years when emigration slowed, the price of lead dropped, and business generally dulled. Although the population probably reached 3,000 to 3,500 by 1845, the city itself consisted of a few dirt streets and small clusters of crudely built log and frame dwellings, stores, and shops with a smat-

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*River Towns in the Great West: The Structure of Provincial Urbanization in the American Midwest, 1820–1870* (New York, 1990).

8. Timothy R. Mahoney, "The Rise and Fall of the Booster Ethos in Dubuque, 1850–1861," *Annals of Iowa* 61 (2002), 371–419.

9. Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825–1870* (Urbana, IL, 1978); Jocelyn Wills, *Boosters, Hustlers, and Speculators: Entrepreneurial Culture and the Rise of Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1849–1883* (St. Paul, MN, 2005).

10. Scharnau, "Workers, Unions, and Workplaces."



tering of modest churches and schools. Less than 10 percent of the land in Dubuque County had been sold. Besides a large number of miners, the work force included craftsmen and laborers. Production of manufactured goods remained exclusively a home-based and small shop affair.<sup>11</sup>

From the beginning, then, the city's reputation and prosperity rested on lead mining. Officially opened to settlement by Europeans in 1833, Dubuque was named after the French Canadian lead miner Julien Dubuque.<sup>12</sup> On June 1, 1833, "several hundred miners poured into the Dubuque area." According to Tacie Campbell, curator at the Dubuque County Historical Society,

11. John B. Newhall, *A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846 or the Emigrant's Guide and State Directory*, 2nd ed. (Burlington, 1846), 72; Josiah Conzett, *Recollections of People and Events: Dubuque, Iowa, 1846-1890* (Dubuque, 1971), 274; Federal Writers' Project of WPA, "A New History of Dubuque County," *Dubuque Telegraph Herald*, 12/25/1938; Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 143, 152, 157; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 20-22, 48, 55, 70; Childs, *History of Dubuque County*, 459-73; Ralph Scharnau, "The Business and Industrial History of Dubuque, 1833-1900," in Russell W. Nash, comp., *Dubuque Beginnings* (Dubuque, 1985), 30; *Iowa News*, 6/24/1837. The *Du Buque Visitor* and the *Iowa News* preceded publication of the *Miners' Express*, which began publication on August 1, 1841. See David C. Mott, "Early Iowa Newspapers," *Annals of Iowa* 16 (1928), 177. All newspapers cited in this study were published in Dubuque. The frequency of publication varied from daily to weekly, so these designations in the newspaper mastheads have been eliminated in the citations.

12. Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, chap. 3; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 19-20, 43.

"this was the first real mining rush in the history of the United States."<sup>13</sup> Subsequently, lead drew thousands of would-be miners to the area. Getting started in lead mining required a permit or a lease, a small financial outlay, and simple tools. Many of the earliest all-male coteries of laborers worked in the area lead mines and lived in log cabins. Lucius Langworthy, a prominent mine owner, banker, and land speculator, placed the Dubuque population at 700 to 800 in 1836. In that same year, five blast furnaces smelted the lead ore.<sup>14</sup>

According to historian Tom Auge, mining and the river captured the essence of early Dubuque. Miners found lead in surface crevices that led to further deposits below ground. Eventually the area's hilly terrain became laced with surface, cave, and shaft mines. The lead was smelted into pigs or bars and then carried via steamboat to St. Louis, where it was processed for shot, pipe, and paint. Every year riverboats carried millions of pounds of lead ore that brought payments of hundreds of thousands of dollars. The city's first capitalists enriched themselves on the mineral and built mansions.<sup>15</sup>

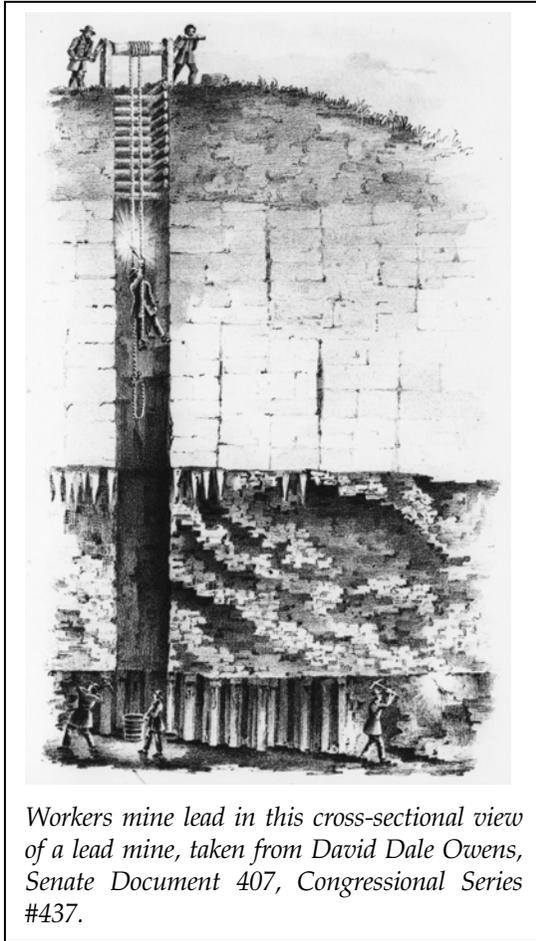
Lead mining brought fortunes to a few and employment to many. Dubuque area lead miners worked under challenging conditions. The typical miner worked 10 to 12 hours per day, six days per week, and 52 weeks per year. Injury, disease, and even death awaited some miners. The mine laborer used hand-operated devices, carts and buckets, picks, shovels, sledge hammers, and windlasses. Chipping and hauling lead ore all day made miners bone-weary. Working in cave or, more commonly, shaft mines meant using tallow candles tacked to the wall for light and en-

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13. Loren Nelson Horton, "Town Planning, Growth, and Architecture in Selected Mississippi River Towns of Iowa, 1833-1860" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1978), 47; Rich Kirchen, "This Land Is Mine Land, This Land Is Ore Land," *Telegraph Herald*, Insight Section, 2/23/1988 (Campbell quote).

14. Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 143; Lucius H. Langworthy, *Dubuque: Its History, Mines, Indian Legends, Etc.* (Dubuque, 1855), 26, 29, 46 (Langworthy's treatise is reprinted in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 8 [1910], 366-422).

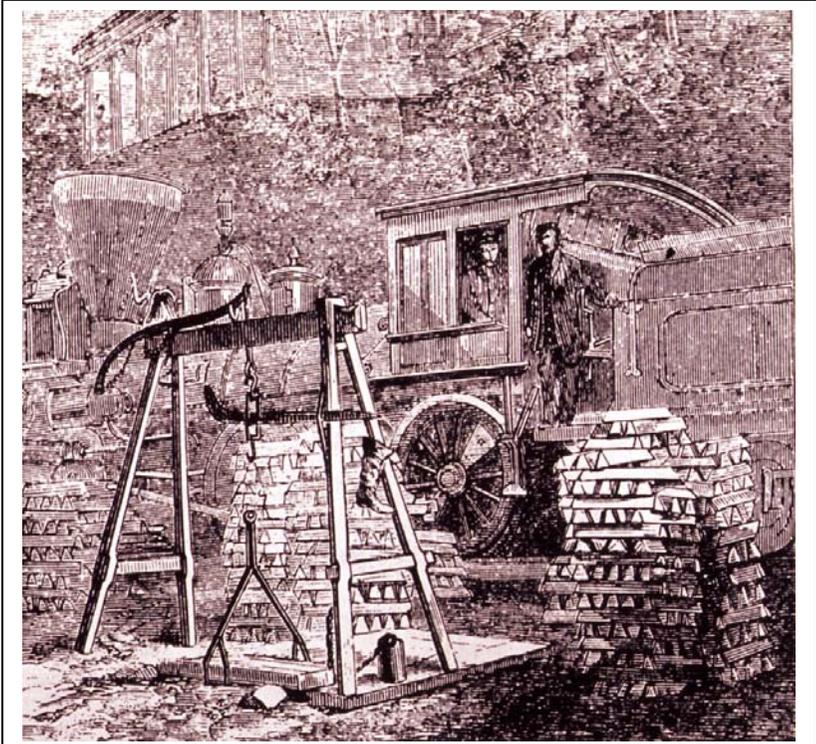
15. Thomas Auge, "Historical Survey of Dubuque Mining," n.d., typescript, Center for Dubuque History, Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa, 4-7; Kirchen, "This Land"; WPA Writers' Project, "A New History of Dubuque County," 24; Jacob Swisher, "Mining in Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 43 (1945), 310-11; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 23; Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 143; *Express and Herald*, 11/27/1855.



during the steady dripping of water on and around the miners. The work, moreover, could be extremely dangerous when flooding and cave-ins occurred. Gas and ventilation issues also posed threats. Unskilled miners' earnings averaged only about one dollar per day.<sup>16</sup>

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16. Jack Brimeyer and John McCormick, *Our Early Years* (Dubuque, 1976), 40, 43; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 22, 25; Childs, *History of Dubuque County*, 468; Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 143, 144; Richard D. Cuthbertsen, "The History of Lead Mining in the Dubuque Area" (M.A. thesis, Drake University, 1957), 39–40; Loren Farrey, *A Tour Guide to the Mines of Lafayette County, Wisconsin* (Mineral Point, WI, 2001), 48.



*Workers weigh smelted pig lead, or bars, destined for shipment to St. Louis.  
Courtesy Dubuque County Historical Society.*

After miners dug the ore, smelters converted it into a commercial asset. Output increased with the introduction of improved furnaces. Smelter workers faced hot, exhausting, and perilous working conditions. The smelting process used logs to stoke the furnaces. Releasing the lead from the ore required 621-degree heat. The smelting furnaces spewed thick smoke into the air and unleashed sulfurous gas that invaded and poisoned workers' lungs. The lead ore was smelted into 70-pound pigs that were stacked by hand on site. In 1850 each of seven lead smelting operations employed four to ten workers earning average wages of \$24 per month.<sup>17</sup>

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17. Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 143–44; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 21; Brimeyer and McCormick, *Our Early Years*, 29, 40, 42–43; U.S. Census, *Products of Industry*, 1850.

The years from 1835 to 1849 marked the golden age of lead mining in Dubuque. One commentator estimated that half of the city's townsmen engaged in mining in 1846. During peak production periods in the 1840s, the number of miners in Dubuque County and the surrounding area reached, at times, an astonishing high of 3,000 men covering an area 50 miles north and south and 20 miles east and west of Dubuque. An estimated 90 percent of the nation's lead supply and 10 percent of the world's came from the upper Mississippi River lead region.<sup>18</sup>

Beginning in 1849, the industry gradually declined as miners migrated out of the area because of depleted lead deposits and the lure of California gold. By 1855, a resident observer placed the number of Dubuque miners at "some 300." Although the quantity of lead diminished and the value fluctuated, new discoveries and occasional large profits kept the enterprise going into the post-Civil War era.<sup>19</sup>

AS LEAD MINING WANED, wood products became Dubuque's principal industry. A boom in the lumber business began in the mid-1840s. A decade later, sawmills, lumberyards, planing mills, and sash-and-door factories employed more Dubuque workers than any other industry and generated huge fortunes. Wood became the new symbol of Dubuque's prosperity. The city's Mississippi River shoreline offered physical evidence of the important role of lumber in the city's economic life.<sup>20</sup>

Dubuque's first European settlers cut local timber for cabins, fuel, and fences. Pioneer woodworkers put in long hours using a variety of hand tools: axes, saws, froes, adzes, drawknives, augers, chisels, and planes. Output in the woodworking

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18. Childs, *History of Dubuque County*, 463; William J. Petersen, "Beginnings of Dubuque: The El Dorado of Iowa," *Palimpsest* 21 (1940), 350; Conzett, *Recollections of People and Events*, 275; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 21–24; Kirchen, "This Land," 17.

19. G. R. West, *Statistics of the City of Dubuque* (Dubuque, 1856), 14; Childs, *History of Dubuque County*, 527, 528; Brimeyer and McCormick, *Our Early Years*, 45, 47; *Dubuque Tribune*, 3/30/1849, 5/18/1849, 10/16/1850; *Miners' Express*, 4/17/1849, 4/24/1849; *Dubuque Republican*, 8/21/1857; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 24–30, 84, 87; Kirchen, "This Land."

20. Scharnau, "Business and Industrial History," 31.

industry increased steadily in the pre-Civil War years. By 1855, Dubuque had already moved through three overlapping stages: sawmilling, rafting, and planing.<sup>21</sup>

The county's first sawmill was run by water power. Commencing such operations required common laborers, carpenters, and wheelwrights to construct dams, water wheels, and sawmill buildings. Production expanded when a local steam-powered sawmill was erected as early as 1837. Sawing efficiency increased with the introduction of the double-edge saw about 1850. In 1854 a shingle machine at a local sawmill cut pine, walnut, chestnut, oak, and ash at the rate of 2,000 to 3,000 pieces per hour.<sup>22</sup>

Increasing construction and fuel uses accounted for the exhaustion of local timber supplies by the late 1840s. Thereafter, lumbermen assailed the vast pine forests of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Mississippi River rafting became an economical way of moving lumber and logs from the northern pineries to river towns like Dubuque. The floating raft period encompassed the years from the 1830s to the Civil War.<sup>23</sup>

"Booming" (floating wood to mills) required a work force with considerable skills. Workers considered rafting a hard life but one filled with exciting adventures and boisterous camaraderie. The rafts measured several hundred feet in length and traveled at a rate of about two miles per hour. Equipped with low shacks and a cook's shanty, the rafts became small communities for the 20 to 25 crewmen who lived on them.<sup>24</sup>

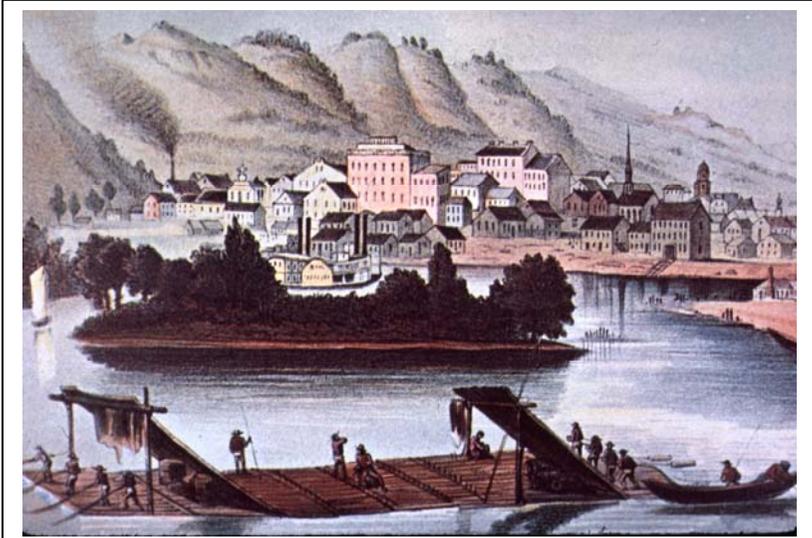
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21. Floyd B. Haworth, *The Economic Development of the Woodworking Industry in Iowa* (Iowa City, 1933), 8–9, 12–15. See also Lyda Belthuis, "The Lumber Industry in Eastern Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 46 (1948), 115, 119; George Bernhardt Hartman, "The Iowa Sawmill Industry," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 40 (1942), 58; A. A. Cooper Autobiography, 14-page typescript, Center for Dubuque History, Loras College, Dubuque, 6–7.

22. *Dubuque Observer*, 11/3/1854; Haworth, *Development of the Woodworking Industry*, 15–19, 30; Belthuis, "Lumber Industry in Eastern Iowa," 125; Hartman, "Iowa Sawmill Industry," 57, 59; Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 151.

23. William J. Petersen, "Rafting on the Mississippi: Prologue to Prosperity," *Iowa Journal of History* 58 (1960), 285, 292, 300; Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 151; Belthuis, "Lumber Industry in Eastern Iowa," 126.

24. Haworth, *Development of the Woodworking Industry*, 21; Belthuis, "Lumber Industry in Eastern Iowa," 126; Petersen, "Rafting on the Mississippi," 308–11.



Workers enter the port of Dubuque on a log raft. Courtesy Dubuque County Historical Society.

According to the 1850 census, woodworking, as a manufacturing category, accounted for a third of Dubuque County's industrial sites. The work forces varied from one to six at each of the six sawmills, five cooperages, two wagon makers, one wheelwright, and one cabinetmaker. Wage levels for these employees averaged \$25 per month.<sup>25</sup>

As large numbers of newcomers entered the city in the mid-1850s, a great demand arose for skilled construction workers. The *Miners' Express* encouraged brick makers, bricklayers, and carpenters to settle in Dubuque. City statistics count 333 new buildings erected in 1854 and 471 in 1855, with a continuing need for more building tradesmen. In addition to the construction of houses, stores, and other buildings, small shops with a few skilled workers made furniture and cooperage.<sup>26</sup>

25. U.S. Census, Iowa, Products of Industry, 1850.

26. *Miners' Express*, 8/9/1853; West, *Statistics*, 7, 8. See also G. R. West, "Commerce of Dubuque, Iowa," *Western Journal and Civilian* (1855), 140, 141; and the Dubuque City Directory, 1856.

The scale of the woodworking industry advanced significantly with the introduction of steam planing machines in 1850. The steam planing machine featured the new circular saw. Lathes and boring machines added another technological dimension to wood processing. The planing mills manufactured sash, doors, window and door frames, moldings, and interior woodwork. With their mass production of wood construction products, these planing mills became Dubuque's first real industrial plants. These factories required highly skilled work forces. Compared to other manufacturing establishments, the planing mills were large operations, each employing 15 to 35 men. Owners of sawmills in towns along the Mississippi River amassed huge fortunes.<sup>27</sup>

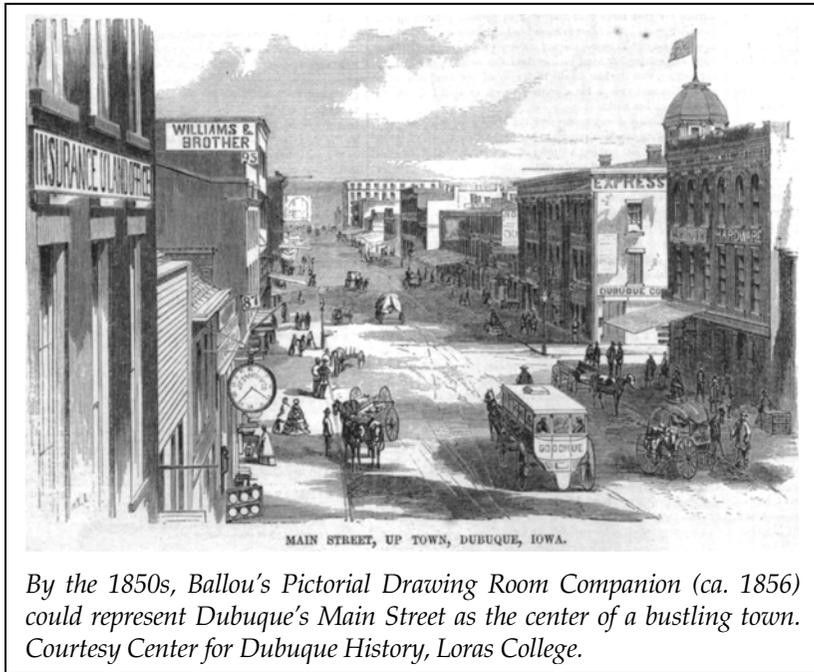
Sawmills, lumber and log rafts, artisan shops, and planing mills each represented not only the economic development of an industry but also a subdivision of labor. Machine technology began to replace the hand tools of the individual wood craftsmen. Specialization of task became the hallmark of an industry moving toward mass production. By 1855, then, Dubuque had evolved through the "cabin, cottage, shop, and factory" stages of the wood products industry.<sup>28</sup>

MINING AND LUMBERING, as the twin pillars of Dubuque's economic growth, provide a context for the physical, economic, and social transformation of the city. The years from 1845 to 1855 marked a dramatic break with the pioneer period. These years brought rapid population growth accompanied by expanded business activity, increased mechanization, and enlarged labor forces. Public expenditures and improvements on the Dubuque riverfront brought booming human and cargo traffic. The heavy flow of immigrants resulted in the designation of the city as a

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27. Haworth, *Development of the Woodworking Industry*, 41, 49; *Dubuque Tribune*, 11/13/1850, 7/25/1851; *Miners' Express*, 10/10-13/1854; *Express and Herald*, 6/27/1856; John Edward Westburg, "The Classless Society of Pioneer Iowa, 1830-1860," *North American Mentor Magazine* 25 (Summer 1987), 15-16 (Westburg's pre-Civil War sketch of the Iowa working class is a reprint of 25 articles that appeared in the *Des Moines Federationist*, a weekly labor paper, between November 16, 1939, and May 16, 1940).

28. Haworth, *Development of the Woodworking Industry*, 68.



By the 1850s, Ballou's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion (ca. 1856) could represent Dubuque's Main Street as the center of a bustling town. Courtesy Center for Dubuque History, Loras College.

"port of entry" to the United States and the stationing of immigration officials.<sup>29</sup>

Beginning in the summer of 1845, a local observer noted, immigrants became less "transient" as more and more people "identified themselves with the city and surrounding country." After reaching 3,106 inhabitants in 1850, the population doubled in just four years, and two years later, in 1856, the census nearly doubled again to 11,780. Dubuque's newspapers reported the almost "daily — yes, hourly" arrival of a "countless throng of immigrants."<sup>30</sup>

The arrival of newcomers and expansion of economic activities fueled investment in land agencies. Dubuquer Horatio W. Sanford became "Iowa's largest land speculator and one of the

29. William Roba, "Ride the River Back in Time," *Telegraph Herald*, 2/23/1988; WPA Writers' Project, "A New History of Dubuque County," foreword, 11.

30. Childs, *History of Dubuque County*, 524; John A. T. Hull, *Census of Iowa for 1880* (Des Moines, 1883), 474; Iowa Census, 1856; WPA Writers' Project, "A New History of Dubuque County," 11; N. Howe Parker, *Iowa As It Is in 1855* (Chicago, 1855), 55 (newspaper quotes).

state's first realtors and moneylenders."<sup>31</sup> The local press acclaimed the flurry of land sales.

The growth of manufacturing enterprises accompanied the real estate developments. The new establishments included steam-powered flour- and sawmills, breweries, wagon shops, iron works, furniture makers, foundries, and machine shops.<sup>32</sup>

The economic boosterism included breathlessly citing a litany of city improvements: the telegraph, gas lighting, and a macadamized Main Street as well as new brick buildings, improved railroad connections, and increased steamboat traffic. Paralleling these developments, the number of "various mechanics" jumped from roughly 1,520 in 1854 to 2,010 in 1855.<sup>33</sup> Although local production in artisan shops remained primary, the city had lost its mining camp image and become a compact urban center, a regional commercial hub, and a river and railroad trade nexus.<sup>34</sup>

DUBUQUE'S WORKING CLASS — common laborers, artisans, and servants — was the foundation for the town's new prosperity. Exuding optimism and opportunity, an 1846 emigrant guide appealed to potential newcomers by touting the Dubuque area as a well-timbered region with rich agricultural

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31. Robert P. Swierenga, *Pioneers and Profits: Land Speculation on the Iowa Frontier* (Ames, 1968), 112; Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 160–62.

32. *Miners' Express*, 12/19/1849, 8/11/1852, 4/12/1852, 7/29/1853, 5/30/1854, 10/10–13/1854; *Dubuque Tribune*, 8/31/1849, 11/13/1850, 7/25/1851; *Express and Herald*, 5/2/1855, 1/1/1856, 1/17/1856, 6/27/1856; Childs, *History of Dubuque County*, 647–67; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 85–86, 94–95; Russell Lee Johnson, "An Army for Industrialization: The Civil War and the Formation of Urban-Industrial Society in a Northern City" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1996), 70–71.

33. *Dubuque Tribune*, 10/25/1847, 5/12/1848, 8/31/1849, 11/13/1850; *Miners' Express*, 4/7/1852, 4/14/1852, 8/11/1852, 4/12/1853, 7/29/1853, 3/14/1854, 5/30/1854, 10/18/1854, 10/19/1854, 10/24/1854; *Express and Herald*, 5/2/1855, 6/2/1855, 1/1/1856, 1/17/1856; Childs, *History of Dubuque County*, 524–27, 530–31; West, "Commerce," 137–43; West, *Statistics*, 15; Johnson, "An Army for Industrialization," 71–72.

34. Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 152, 185; Brimeyer and McCormick, *Our Early Years*, 48; *Miners' Express*, 8/30/1854; James E. Jacobsen, *Dubuque, the Key City: Architectural and Historical Resources of Dubuque, Iowa, 1837–1955* (Des Moines, 2002), 19; Johnson, "An Army for Industrialization," 29, 51.

soil and plentiful lead deposits. Mechanics and laborers who settled in the town of Dubuque could expect, according to the guide, "a certainty of employment and fair wages." The wages of day laborers varied from 75 cents to a dollar per day while stonemasons and bricklayers earned from \$1.25 to \$2.00 per day. "Respectable board and lodging" costs ranged from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per week.<sup>35</sup>

The federal census of 1850 and the state census of 1856 provide a demographic profile of the city's wage earners. They were a youthful lot, mostly unmarried males in their late teens, twenties, and thirties. Migrants to Dubuque came from New England, the Middle Atlantic region, the surrounding states of Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin, and the South. In 1850 the foreign-born accounted for a majority of the local population. The bulk of the immigrants hailed from Ireland (25 percent) and Germany (18 percent). Other residents came from England, Switzerland, Prussia, Canada, France, Luxembourg, Austria, Wales, Scotland, Italy, and Scandinavia, but those with Irish and German ancestry, native and foreign-born, clearly dominated the 1850 and 1856 census rolls.<sup>36</sup>

The concentration of Irish people in the southern part of Dubuque earned that section of town the nickname "Dublin." The mostly unskilled Irish laborers came from peasant backgrounds. Many took jobs as day laborers; others secured employment as miners or in the building trades. Still others worked in transportation as teamsters, draymen, or boatmen. A few males held jobs as professionals, and most women worked as domestics. The poor laborers often lived in frame shanties.<sup>37</sup>

German immigrants resided primarily in the north end of the city — often in more substantial brick homes. Drawn largely from the ranks of land-owning farmers, craftsmen, businessmen, and professionals, the Germans usually enjoyed a more

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35. Newhall, *A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846*, 29, 61, 72.

36 U.S. Census, Iowa, 1850; Iowa Census, 1856; Brimeyer and McCormick, *Our Early Years*, 59, 61; Michael D. Gibson, "Dubuque's Ethnic Roots Run Deep," *Julien's Journal*, August 1997, 34; Jacobsen, *Dubuque, the Key City*, 22.

37. *Miners' Express*, 8/11/1852; Homer L. Calkin, "The Irish in Iowa," *Palimpsest* 45 (1964), 63–64; Gibson, "Dubuque's Ethnic Roots," 34–36; Jacobsen, *Dubuque, the Key City*, 22.

comfortable standard of living than the Irish. Still, the city had its share of unskilled male and female wage earners with German ancestry.<sup>38</sup>

The 1850 county census listed 28 persons with African American heritage; the number in 1856 was only 36. Most Dubuque blacks had migrated from the upper South. Census takers usually identified black men as laborers and black women as servants. But the 1856 census listed individual blacks employed as a painter, a cook, a teamster, a boatman, and a barber. Nearly all of Dubuque's African Americans resided inside the city limits.<sup>39</sup>

While people with German and Irish nationalities figured prominently in the labor force, on Sundays one church dominated the local scene. A large segment of the Dubuque working class embraced Roman Catholicism in religion. Most of the Irish attended Catholic masses as did many Germans. Other residents attended Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, or Unitarian churches. An African Baptist Church served the tiny African American community. There were also a few Jews.<sup>40</sup>

In politics, ethnic Germans and Irish filled the ranks of the Democratic Party. The south-end Irish and the north-end Germans provided the major voting blocs that generally kept the Democrats in power. Historian William E. Wilkie claims that the city's Democratic majority "gained strength through the years as the number of Germans in Dubuque steadily increased, mostly because of large families." Those who held elective and appointive political posts at the local level were usually German

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38. U.S. Census, Iowa, 1850; Iowa Census, 1856; Gibson, "Dubuque's Ethnic Roots," 35, 36; Jacobsen, *Dubuque, the Key City*, 22.

39. U.S. Census, Iowa, 1850; Iowa Census, 1856; Hull, *Census of Iowa for 1880*, 211; Gibson, "Dubuque's Ethnic Roots," 35.

40. U.S. Census, Iowa, Social Statistics, 1850; William J. Petersen, "Beginning of Dubuque: The Web of Life," *Palimpsest* 21 (1940), 380-81; Conzett, *Recollections of People and Events*, 18, 186; Childs, *History of Dubuque County*, 602-3; Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 152-56; Gibson, "Dubuque's Ethnic Roots," 35, 36; Oscar Fleishaker, "The Illinois-Iowa Jewish Community on the Banks of the Mississippi River" (Ph.D. diss., Yeshiva University, 1957), 8-9, 12-13, 47, 266; Christopher J. Van Speybroeck, "The Jewish Community of Dubuque, 1833-1930s," 20-page typescript, Dubuque County Historical Society, Dubuque; Michael J. Bell, "'True Israelites of America': The Story of the Jews of Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 53 (1994), 87-89.

or Irish males who came from the middle and upper ranks of society, self-employed businessmen and professionals.<sup>41</sup>

BEYOND the race, nationality, religion, and political affiliation that shaped their character, Dubuque wage earners held jobs that demanded hard work. Sometimes census takers recorded occupational designations only for the male heads of the household. When noted, the most common job category for women was servant. Others worked in such service occupations as washwoman and seamstress. Male job differentiation occurred along skill lines. Common laborers accounted for the largest single occupational category. Tradesmen included carpenters, shoemakers, blacksmiths, painters, masons, and tailors. With machine technology in its infancy, workers performed labor-intensive tasks with hand tools that required manual dexterity and, sometimes, considerable physical strength.<sup>42</sup>

Among the early trades, blacksmithing deserves special attention. Blacksmiths shod horses, forged iron, and fashioned and repaired all sorts of tools and mechanisms. They occupied a unique position as the pioneer community's most versatile and "most indispensable mechanic." The blacksmith shop, moreover, operated as a gathering place to socialize. The 1850 census listed nine blacksmith establishments, outnumbering any other enterprise and employing two to six workers each. Those who worked in blacksmithing earned average monthly wages of \$22.<sup>43</sup>

In the 1850 industrial census, blank spaces appear in the column for average number of female hands employed. The products of industry schedule in the Dubuque County census for 1850 revealed not only an all-male labor force but also the small scale of manufacturing. The schedule listed those enterprises with an annual product value of \$500 or more. The employing class, composed primarily of master craftsmen, only hired a few

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41. Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 221; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 323–37.

42. U.S. Census, Iowa, 1850; Iowa Census, 1856; Brimeyer and McCormick, *Our Early Years*, 40; Dubuque City Directory, 1856. See also, Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth Century America* (New York, 1989), 16.

43. George F. Parker, *Iowa Pioneer Foundations*, 2 vols. (Iowa City, 1940), 1:306–7; U.S. Census, Iowa, Products of Industry, 1850.

wage earners. With 46 county industries enumerated, a typical establishment averaged slightly fewer than four workers.<sup>44</sup>

Proximity to rich agricultural land made milling an important enterprise. Each of the six flour mills employed three to eight hands and paid wages averaging \$26 per month. Other establishments, all with ten or fewer employees, included leather goods (boots and shoes, harnesses and saddles), meat products, woolen textiles, and metals fabrication. Monthly wages for these jobs averaged \$24.<sup>45</sup>

ECONOMIC ADVANCES brought cheers from the local press, but workplace conditions rarely occasioned comment. Dubuque's growing ranks of wage earners faced harsh working conditions. They usually worked 12 hours per day, 6 days per week, 52 weeks per year. For most this meant manual labor at repetitive tasks. Use of hand tools and physical strength were the chief requirements of most work routines.<sup>46</sup>

Job security remained illusory for many reasons, including weather, business cycles, and new technology. Work-related accidents also played a role: fires, explosions, collisions, and broken tools caused injury and death to workers at lead mines, wood-working shops, grist mills, blacksmith shops, and railroad sites.<sup>47</sup>

Disease also took a heavy toll on Dubuque's working class. In 1850 the leading cause of death was cholera. Other dreaded diseases included smallpox, consumption, scarlet fever, and pneumonia. The 1850 mortality figures reveal that nearly half of the deaths occurred among those two years of age or younger.<sup>48</sup>

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44. U.S. Census, Iowa, Products of Industry, 1850. With nearly four workers per manufacturing establishment, Dubuque was slightly above the statewide average of just over three workers per plant. See Hoadley, *Industrial Growth of Iowa*, 7; and Westburg, "The Classless Society of Pioneer Iowa," 11.

45. U.S. Census, Iowa, Products of Industry, 1850.

46. E. H. Downey, *History of Labor Legislation in Iowa* (Iowa City, 1910), 1, 7; Brimeyer and McCormick, *Our Early Years*, 40; *Express and Herald*, 11/24/1854.

47. Parker, *Iowa Pioneer Foundations*, 2:212; Haworth, *Development of the Wood-working Industry*, 31; Brimeyer and McCormick, *Our Early Years*, 40; *Miners' Express*, 8/19/1853.

48. U.S. Census, Iowa, Mortality, 1850. See also Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 84, 85, 87, 89, 92, 96, 104; and Conzett, *Recollections of People and Events*, 197.

While noting the reality of poverty, early Iowa observer and writer George F. Parker characterized paupers as weak and lazy people with “bad habits and low morals,” making them prone to criminality. Parker did, however, recognize “a duty to keep the needy from starvation.” The Iowa Code of 1851 compelled the support of paupers by kin or admittance to a poor house, where their labor would go to the highest bidder. The Code of 1851 meant that poor relief was minimal or nonexistent and reflected the fact that “wage-earners and propertyless persons as a class had little or no influence in the creation, interpretation, and administration of this code.” Yet a Dubuque County history noted the operation of “several strong organizations for poor relief.” The *Express and Herald* pointedly called for humane help during the winter months when the number of cold and hungry families increased.<sup>49</sup>

The *Express and Herald* also understood the plight of Dubuque wage earners who received low wages, lived in crowded, poor housing, and struggled to feed and clothe their families. Most workers found themselves living at a subsistence level. Compensation rates reflected skill and gender differences. According to 1850 county statistics, a male day laborer averaged \$1.00 per day in wages while a carpenter earned \$1.50. Weekly boarding rates for laboring men amounted to \$1.75. A female domestic received weekly pay with board of \$1.50.<sup>50</sup>

Adding to the woes of workers, the national consumer price index rose ten points between 1850 and 1855.<sup>51</sup> Yet, according to the *Express and Herald*, the 1855 compensation rates for mechanics and laborers remained at roughly the same levels as they had been in 1850.<sup>52</sup> Alarmed at low wages and rising expenses, the *Express and Herald* headlined its November 24, 1854, editorial

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49. Parker, *Iowa Pioneer Foundations*, 2:268–73; Westburg, “The Classless Society,” 19; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 114; *Express and Herald*, 11/29/1855.

50. U.S. Census, Iowa, Social Statistics, 1850.

51. John J. McCusker, *How Much Is That in Real Money? A Historical Price Index for Use as a Deflator of Money Values in the Economy of the United States* (Worcester, MA, 1992), 328 (reprinted from *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 101 [1991]).

52. *Express and Herald*, 2/24/1855. Local booster G. R. West agreed with the paper on common laborers’ pay, but estimated wage rates for mechanics at a much higher level, \$2.00 to \$3.00 per day. See West, *Statistics*, 14.

"It Costs Too Much to Live Here." Characterizing bread and meat costs as "too high," the paper claimed that rent was "nearly double what it ought to be." Three months later the paper editorialized that "wages are not high in proportion to what mechanics and laborers have to pay for house rent and the necessities of life."<sup>53</sup>

Dubuque historian William E. Wilkie noted that downtown Dubuque was characterized by a "great assortment of residence hotels and boarding houses, mostly full of unmarried men." He went on to cite "110 single men" living in a single block. According to the *Express and Herald*, wage earners coped by crowding "two or more families . . . into a space not half large enough for one."<sup>54</sup> The working class also bore the heaviest tax burden. While real estate owners paid taxes on "undervalued" property, workers who rented or boarded paid personal property taxes at "full value."<sup>55</sup>

DUBUQUE WORKERS, then, faced low wages and high living costs. While Dubuque's wage earners shared common economic and social interests, they seldom saw themselves as occupying a different social status from their employers. Yet the forces of industrialization brought more and more property-owning employers who operated as capitalists and investors who shaped economic development and determined wage rates. The results, in Dubuque and elsewhere, were an economic system and social priorities set by those with accumulated wealth, leaving workers with the ballot and unions as ways to assert their rights.<sup>56</sup>

Across the country during this period, employers generally regarded labor merely as a commodity and often treated their employees with indifference or disdain. Workers might experience discrimination, abuse, or neglect at the hands of employers who exploited them by demanding long hours in poor working

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53. *Express and Herald*, 11/24/1854, 2/24/1855.

54. Wilkie, *Dubuque on the Mississippi*, 185; *Express and Herald*, 2/24/1855.

55. *Express and Herald*, 2/27/1855.

56. See David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market during the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1993), introduction.

conditions for low pay.<sup>57</sup> But wage earners began to insist on the dignity, autonomy, and ownership of their labor, not as an exploitable commodity controlled and owned by employers. Slowly, a class consciousness appeared, in the words of historian Sean Wilentz, “as the articulated resistance of wage workers . . . to capitalist wage-labor relations.”<sup>58</sup>

Historian Walter Licht reminds us that “activist craftsmen formed a distinct segment within working-class communities” and provided “leadership, ideas, and rhetoric for organized labor protest.”<sup>59</sup> In Dubuque some of the city’s workers in the mechanical trades turned to defending themselves in a class-based association that expressed their solidarity and initiative. The earliest evidence of a workers’ organization comes from 1841 with the founding of the Mechanics’ Institute.

The institute’s stated purposes included creating “a more social and friendly intercourse among the Mechanics of this place . . . to protect their rights and interests” and increasing “our stock of information by debating questions, and having lectures delivered before the Institute.” The institute also intended to furnish workers with a suitable library and “to do away with jealousy and party strife, and be united and true to ourselves.” In a display of class hostility, the statement of principles castigated “the greater part [of] the trader and the speculator” element as parasitic and “worse than useless in society.” Dubuque’s mechanics “ought . . . to be proud when we find that we are one of the producing class” and realize that “we are, or ought to be, well informed and independent.” Finally, the “society” of mechanics would provide a vehicle to “redress our wrongs as well as maintain our rights.”<sup>60</sup>

Across the nation, Mechanics’ Institutes became prominent in the first half of the nineteenth century. Their emergence reflected the spread of democracy and education among workers.

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57. Westburg, “The Classless Society,” 35.

58. Sean Wilentz, “Against Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement, 1790–1920,” *International Labor and Working Class History* 26 (Fall 1984), 6. See also Westburg, “The Classless Society,” 18, 28, 29; and Scharnau, “Workers, Unions, and Workplaces.”

59. Licht, *Industrializing America*, 71.

60. *Miners’ Express*, 10/23/1841; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 72.

The history of Dubuque's institute remains something of a mystery, but it appears that educating its members on issues such as labor relations and slavery became an important focus. One authority holds that Mechanics' Institutes, like the one at Dubuque, declined because of the rise of the cheap press and the growing importance of schools as vehicles for informing wage earners.<sup>61</sup>

Thirteen years after the formation of the Mechanics' Institute, the first bona fide trade union in Dubuque and probably in the state made its appearance. Officially organized on November 4, 1854, the Typographical Union represented "a large majority of the craft." The Typographical Union had become one of the first trade unions organized on a national basis in 1852. The local printers, seeking to protect themselves and their employers from those who fraudulently claimed to be journeymen, issued certificates to qualified traveling journeymen. A more important motivation was to establish "a scale of prices regulating the price of labor." Finally, the local established a registry of strikebreakers, a strike fund, and transfer rights. A committee appointed to contact employers reported that "all" of the "Editors and Proprietors of the city" accepted the wages list.<sup>62</sup>

The local leadership of Andrew Keesecker no doubt helped to account for the initial success of the union. Contemporaries described Keesecker as a strong-minded, reliable, and hard-working man with remarkable knowledge, a retentive memory, and analytical skill. An early resident of the city and a well-known printer and editorialist, he served as president of the new journeymen printers' organization. Keesecker's long career as an expert printer (he arrived as a pioneer settler in 1833), paralleled the city's early journalistic history.<sup>63</sup>

According to a county history, Keesecker "set the first type in the territory [and] he continued to set type in Dubuque until

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61. Clarence Ray Aurner, "Mechanics' Institutions," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 19 (1921), 389, 411, 412-13; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 81.

62. *Express and Herald*, 11/6/1854; *Northwest*, 9/24/1857; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 104-5; Philip Taft, *Organized Labor in American History* (New York, 1964), 35-36.

63. Eliphalet Price, "Dubuque in Early Times," *Dubuque Herald*, 7/13/1865; *Dubuque Herald*, 4/26/1870, 4/27/1870; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 105. A Dubuque early settlers list, dated August 6, 1864, is in Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

his death in 1870." He assisted the editor and wrote articles for Iowa's first newspaper, the *Du Buque Visitor*, which initially appeared on May 11, 1836. Keesecker also served as coproprietor of the *Miners' Express* from its inaugural issue in 1841 until he sold his share of the operation in 1845. He returned to the newspaper as coproprietor in 1848 and once again sold his interest in 1851. Keesecker then resumed his work as the city's foremost printer and renewed his connection with the *Miners' Express* in 1853. Following his leadership in founding the Typographical Union, he continued to operate as the union's chief spokesman. Until his death in 1870, Keesecker commanded admiration from his coworkers and respect from the community.<sup>64</sup>

THE FORMATION of the Dubuque Typographical Union represented a new level of workers' organization that emerged against a backdrop of soaring population growth and profound economic change. The period from 1845 to 1855 marked the first stage of the transition from the old pioneer period to the new industrial era. Changes in commerce and manufacturing began to reshape Dubuque's economic landscape. Lead mining and wood products anchored an expanding array of small-scale manufacturing enterprises that included pork packing, brewing, and the production of soap, candles, wagons, and furniture. Pushed by the introduction of new technology, improved transportation, and a rapidly expanding labor force, production soared. Press reports enumerated a pattern of material progress.<sup>65</sup>

Yet the mounting prosperity of Dubuque's economy masked the hardships faced by the working class. Sunrise-to-sunset workdays remained the norm for most jobs. General working conditions remained harsh. Factory production, coming first in the sash-and-door mills, introduced a regimen with closer supervision and a more intense pace of work. Increased work-

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64. Oldt, *History of Dubuque County*, 52, 70, 76, 82, 92, 99; *Miners' Express*, 10/17/1848, 3/5/1851, 4/9/1851, 4/16/1851; *Dubuque Herald*, 4/26/1870, 4/27/1870, 5/9/1886.

65. *Miners' Express*, 10/12/1854; West, *Statistics*, 7; Childs, *History of Dubuque County*, 647-67. A dramatic surge in city improvements occurred between the annual inventory listed in the *Miners' Express* of 12/19/1849 and the *Express and Herald* of 1/1/1856.

place mechanization in the form of new saws, beltings, gears, turning shafts, and unguarded machines brought the potential for a higher incidence of accidents and injuries.<sup>66</sup>

A comparison of the wage levels in the mid-1840s and mid-1850s reveals stagnation. The annual wages of workers averaged about \$300, essentially unchanged for the decade. Most workers paid high rents for crowded boardinghouses and tenements. They lived a meager existence, only able to maintain a mere subsistence standard of living. Entrepreneurs, on the other hand, enjoyed high profits and luxurious lifestyles. Even during the pioneer period of supposed egalitarian individualism, "class difference, however unconscious, was always apparent." As social and economic life became more and more hierarchical in the 1850s, class lines hardened.<sup>67</sup>

Faced with low wages and poor working conditions, a portion of the city's skilled workmen moved beyond the fraternal-oriented Mechanics' Institute and embraced a new kind of solidarity. The journeymen printers organized the Typographical Union and demanded job control in terms of both craft certification and wage levels. These workers thus forged a new labor structure based on workplace issues and subsequently turned to political action, hallmarks of modern trade unionism. In a larger sense, too, the printers drew a clearer distinction between themselves as producers and their employers. But these artisans, like those in other parts of the country, lacked a vision of an inclusive labor movement. They sought to protect the rights and interests of only their members. Trade unions in Dubuque and elsewhere in antebellum America generally excluded women, African Americans, and the unskilled.<sup>68</sup>

The period from 1845 to 1855, then, brought economic advances, technological innovation, an early form of industrial

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66. Johnson, "An Army for Industrialization," 3–4. See also Westburg, "The Classless Society," 18, 27, 28, 29.

67. Parker, *Iowa Pioneer Foundations*, 2:305 (quote); Johnson, "An Army for Industrialization," 10; Westburg, "The Classless Society," 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 35.

68. Scharnau, "Workers, Unions, and Workplaces," 56–57. For a close examination of Dubuque labor history in the late nineteenth century, see Ralph Scharnau, "Workers and Politics: The Knights of Labor in Dubuque, Iowa, 1885–1890," *Annals of Iowa* 48 (1987), 353–77.

capitalism, and the origins of modern worker-employer relations in Dubuque. Although small-scale industries dominated the city's economy, the number and employee-size of these ventures increased. A fledgling labor movement also made its appearance. The earliest outlines of Dubuque's reputation had emerged by the mid-1850s. Unlike much of the rest of Iowa, Dubuque developed a character forged by its expanding industrialism, its comparatively large working class, and its early experience with trade unionism.<sup>69</sup>

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69. Scharnau, "Workers, Unions, and Workplaces."

# Working with the Enemy: Axis Prisoners of War in Iowa during World War II

CHAD W. TIMM

IN A RELATIVELY UNKNOWN and underpublicized military operation, German, Italian, and Japanese soldiers came to the United States during the Second World War. Without the help of these Axis prisoners of war (POWs), American farmers and manufacturers might not have met the growing wartime demand for food and supplies. The initial widespread capture of German and Italian soldiers came as a result of the Allies' successful 1942 North Africa campaign against Adolf Hitler's *Afrika Korps*.<sup>1</sup> The British, not able to accommodate the increasing number of POWs on their soil, called upon the United States to aid in POW internment.

Thus, in late 1942 and early 1943 the U.S. government constructed dozens of camps in isolated areas of the South and Southwest. Between April and August 1943, prisoners of war totals in the United States grew from less than 5,000 to more than 130,000. As the number of Axis POWs in the United States increased, the federal government established camps beyond the South and Southwest. The U.S. Army supervised the construction and operation of these facilities. By the end of World War II, the United States interned nearly 400,000 Axis prisoners of war in more than 400 camps across the country.

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1. The eventual Allied victories in the Pacific Theater in 1944 led to the first significant captures of Japanese soldiers. See Arnold Krammer, "Japanese Prisoners of War in America," *Pacific Historical Review* 52 (1983), 67–91.

Two of these POW camps were in Iowa: one near the Kosuth County town of Algona and the other near the Page County town of Clarinda. These POW camps placed the citizens of the nearby communities in an uneasy position. Faced with an acute shortage of laborers, Iowans had to turn to the enemy for help. Enemy POWs eventually became an integral component of the American domestic war effort.<sup>2</sup>

By mid-1943, with increasing numbers of American men serving overseas, some areas of the United States experienced severe civilian labor shortages. According to historian Stephanie Carpenter, "Between April 1940 and July 1942 more than 2 million men left the farm, and by the end of the war, the agricultural population had decreased by six million. As a result, the nation's farmers called for federal measures to provide labor and assistance for the production of their crops." In 1943 the federal government responded by creating the Women's Land Army to help address the issue of farm labor, but midwestern "farmers discouraged the use of women to assist in the region's fields, citing their inability to operate heavy farm equipment."<sup>3</sup>

Many American farmers turned instead to enemy prisoners of war. Sanctioned by the 1929 Geneva Prisoner of War Convention, prisoners of specified ranks also ameliorated labor shortages in lumbering, mining, construction, food processing, and other non-governmental work not directly related to the war effort.<sup>4</sup> As stories of successful POW employment spread throughout the United States, smaller work camps were constructed in locations where workers were most needed.

Iowans, who farmed some of the richest, most fertile soil in the world, struggled to meet the War Food Administration's increasing agricultural goals as the draft deprived the state of vital farm laborers. As Lisa Ossian chronicles, "By 1943, Iowa employed 70,000 fewer farm workers than before the war, and

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2. George Lewis and John Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization by the United States Army, 1776-1945* (Washington, DC, 1955), 90; Terry Paul Wilson, "The Afrika Korps in Oklahoma: Fort Reno's Prisoner of War Compound," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 52 (1974), 362.

3. Stephanie Carpenter, "At the Agricultural Front: The Women's Land Army during World War II" (Ph.D. diss., Iowa State University, 1997), 87, 297.

4. Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 90.

its farm machinery was aging, becoming more and more difficult to repair. The situation grew increasingly desperate. Farmers at first turned to townspeople, foreign labor, and teenagers, as well as their own families." Ossian depicts Iowa farmers, who dedicated themselves to the Food for Freedom program, as "soldiers of the soil."<sup>5</sup> Ironically, some of those "soldiers of the soil" were actually enemy prisoners of war.

Amid reports of Iowans being captured, wounded, and killed in the European and Pacific theaters, Iowans at home chose to accept the help of POW labor in order to meet their agricultural goals and aid the war effort. For many community members, acceptance did not mean an unquestioning fondness or affection for the prisoners, but rather an understanding that acceptance meant helping the United States win the war. For some Iowans, however, acceptance meant realizing the ambiguity of the term *enemy* as they developed friendships with POWs that would sometimes last for decades after the war's end. Although not always economically profitable, POW labor allowed local canneries, hemp plants, nurseries, and area farmers to meet their wartime production goals. Thus, the story of employing enemy prisoners in Iowa during World War II is a story of coming to grips with reality: POW labor enabled Iowa farmers to meet wartime goals, see the true face of the enemy, and learn that even amid the terror and destruction of war, humanity prevails.

BY THE END OF 1942, Iowa began to suffer from a labor shortage as many of the state's workers had joined the armed services. In February 1942, for example, Clarinda's local National Guard unit, an anti-tank unit of the 168th Infantry Regiment, received its mobilization orders, depleting Page County of 2,000 potential laborers.<sup>6</sup> With thousands of hungry soldiers being shipped overseas daily, key agricultural states like Iowa increased food production in order to feed them.

In March 1942 Algona's local newspaper encouraged Kosuth County farmers to raise more sugar beets in order to keep the state's two sugar beet plants at full operation. Fear of an in-

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5. Lisa Ossian, *The Home Fronts of Iowa, 1939–1945* (Columbia, MO, 2009), 29.

6. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 6/25/1942, 4/23/1942, 11/19/1942.

adequate labor supply caused local farmers to hesitate. They had also been asked to boost hog and egg production and to increase the acreage devoted to soybean and flax crops. In north central Iowa, U.S. Employment Service representative John Gish noted the probable farm labor emergency for the coming season and called on everyone to help.<sup>7</sup>

Concern among farmers continued to grow. By August 1942, the local newspaper noted that the 4,245 farm families in Kossuth County found the job of increasing production difficult due to a dwindling pool of labor, higher farm wages, and the limited availability of machinery and supplies. Conscription and high wages paid by government industries drained the farms of their manpower. The local newspaper remarked, "It begins to look like the army boys may have to fight on empty stomachs."<sup>8</sup>

In the fall of 1943, with the harvest season ahead, the farm labor problem in Page County became acute. The Farm Extension Office reported that labor demands exceeded the supply of available workers. In September 1943, 76 percent of Page County farmers reported that they would need help at corn-shucking time, although the largest demand was for year-round help. Without outside labor, Page County farmers turned to each other for harvest help. One such dairy farmer near Clarinda called on five farmers whose ages ranged from 43 to 83 to help shuck 14 acres of corn.<sup>9</sup> A few farmers and farm organizations had harvest demands that neighbors could not accommodate, however, and were forced to turn to an unlikely source for help.

In 1943, the DeKalb Agricultural Association of Shenandoah, producers of hybrid seed corn, anticipating an inadequate supply of laborers for summer detasseling work, contacted county Extension agents in Page and Fremont counties, hoping to locate about 500 detasselers. The prospect of finding so many summer workers to detassel looked bleak. The Page County Extension Office certified the need for an alternate labor source.<sup>10</sup>

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7. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 3/24/1942, 4/14/1942.

8. *Ibid.*, 7/28/1942, 10/13/1942.

9. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 9/30/1943, 10/25/1943, 11/25/1943.

10. Page County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1943, 7. This and all of the annual narrative reports compiled by county Extension agents cited hereafter are found in Special Collections, Iowa State University Library, Ames.

Given that POW labor from camps as close as Nebraska and Missouri had been used extensively for nearly a year, seeking out POW labor made sense. Thus, DeKalb contracted with the U.S. Army to establish a temporary side camp, under the administration of a larger main camp in Missouri, to house POWs at the old Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp near Shenandoah. During July and August 1943, Camp Weingarten, Missouri, sent approximately 300 Italian POWs to Shenandoah.<sup>11</sup> Those POWs handled most of DeKalb's detasseling work, which freed local laborers for employment by other hybrid seed producers in the area.<sup>12</sup>

In 1943 Italian POWs were also employed on the Adams Ranch near Odebolt in Sac County. Comprising 6,400 acres, the Adams Ranch, the largest farm in the state, had 2,800 acres of corn, 270 acres of flax, 685 acres of oats, 1,065 acres in tame hay, 1,040 acres of red clover, and 10 acres of potatoes, with the remaining acres in pasture. After several attempts to secure labor from a local conscientious objector camp had failed, the Italian POWs were brought in to shock and thresh 2,100 acres of grain that otherwise would have rotted in the fields. Another 200 Italian prisoners of war worked for two months in a hemp plant near Eldora, Iowa, in late 1943.<sup>13</sup> Although these POWs imported from neighboring states alleviated a few specific labor problems, the farm labor emergency in Iowa was just beginning.

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11. The status of Italian POWs changed in September 1943, when Italy declared war on Germany, its former ally, and the United States found itself in possession of 50,000 Italian prisoners of war. To remedy this situation, Italian POWs who agreed to pledge allegiance to the Allies were placed in Italian Service Units, where they were given more freedom and allowed to perform jobs that were prohibited to German and Japanese prisoners. See Louis Keefer, "Enemies Turned Allies: Italian POWs in Ohio," *Timeline* 50 (March–April 1993), 47–55.

12. Page County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1943, 7; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 8/9/1943.

13. Page County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1943, 3–7; Sac County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1943, 9; *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 7/29/1943; *Eldora Ledger Herald*, 12/6/1945. Hemp plants in Iowa processed hemp to be made into rope. Rope shortages for merchants and the U.S. Navy had become an acute problem. Before Pearl Harbor, 98 percent of America's hemp was imported from the Philippines, which had come under Japanese control. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 11/24/1942, 1/7/1943.

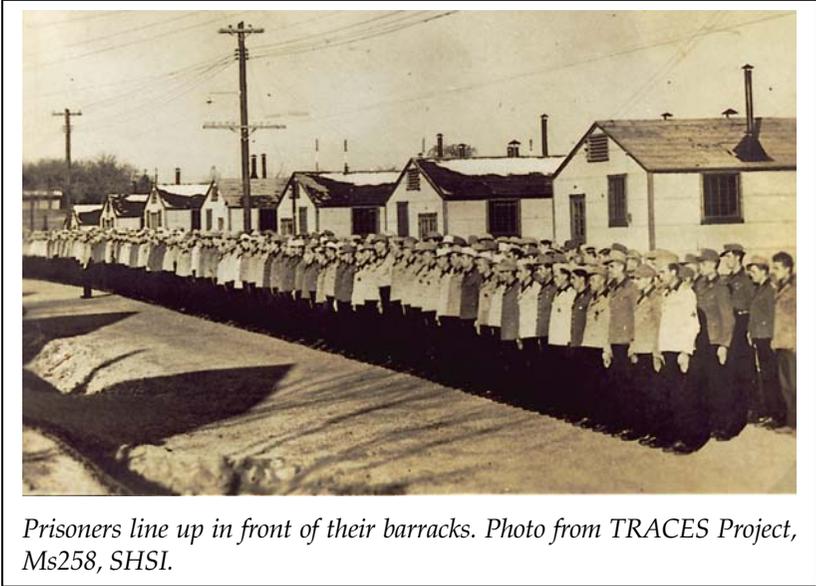


*Workers prepare buildings at Camp Clarinda. Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City (SHSI).*

CAMPS FOR AXIS PRISONERS OF WAR came to Iowa as a result of the efforts of local Chamber of Commerce officials, such as Hans Morgan of Clarinda and C. A. Phillips of Algona, who believed that the construction of a camp would stimulate the local economy and possibly provide a source for agricultural labor.<sup>14</sup> On July 22, 1943, government representatives arrived in Algona to inspect potential sites for a prisoner-of-war camp; within a month the Seventh Service Command, responsible for POW operations in the Midwest, authorized the construction of such a camp. Citizens of Clarinda, Iowa, received notice a few days later that a similar camp would be built near their town. Senator Guy M. Gillette announced that the Army Corps of Engineers, operating out of Omaha, Nebraska, anticipated completing the camps within two to six months.<sup>15</sup> Sud-

14. Chamber of Commerce officials probably lobbied Iowa Senator Guy M. Gillette, who chaired the relevant subcommittee of the Senate Agricultural Committee. Such lobbying cannot be documented but is what generally took place nationally. See Joseph T. Butler Jr., "Prisoner of War Labor in the Sugar Cane Fields of Lafourche Parish, Louisiana: 1943-1944," *Louisiana History* 14 (1973), 283-96.

15. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 7/22/1943, 8/19/1943; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 8/23/1943.



denly, a war occurring thousands of miles across the world was coming directly into the heartland.

The camps at Algona and Clarinda were identical, as the Army Corps of Engineers required new camps to be built in accordance with a standard design plan. Once completed, each had the potential to nearly double the local populations. Architectural designs permitted 3,000 POWs and 500 American soldiers to live in approximately 186 buildings at each camp. The buildings were set on concrete foundations and composed of wood frames covered by composition siding and roofing, with interior walls made of plasterboard. Each camp consisted of four compounds, three for prisoners and the fourth for the American garrison. Barbed-wire fence with towers manned by machine-gunners at each corner separated the three prisoner compounds with 20 frame barracks each housing 50 men. Once completed, both camps included a post theater, church, fire station, icehouse, machine shop, barn, hospital, electric distribution system, and water and sewage facilities.<sup>16</sup>

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16. *Kossuth County Advance*, 9/21/1943; *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 1/18/1944; *Des Moines Register*, 1/26/1944.

With little warning, the first POWs arrived by train at Camp Algona and Camp Clarinda in late January 1944. The first Germans to arrive were members of Hitler's vaunted *Afrika Korps*. To a reporter from the *Des Moines Register*, they appeared good-looking, well fed, happy, friendly, energetic, and typically between 21 and 25 years old.<sup>17</sup>

The establishment of POW camps in Iowa had occurred quickly. By October 1944 each camp housed nearly 2,500 prisoners.<sup>18</sup> POWs had to learn quickly to reorder their lives, a process that depended heavily on their daily routines in the camps.

AT BOTH CAMP ALGONA AND CAMP CLARINDA, treatment of POWs adhered strictly to the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention.<sup>19</sup> The United States had signed the treaty in 1929, and the Senate ratified it in 1932. As a signatory, the United States undertook the responsibility to treat POWs according to the convention's bylaws. Once POWs arrived at their assigned camp, they were fingerprinted, photographed, and checked for typhus-carrying lice — a process that could take from a few days to several weeks, depending on the number of prisoners arriving at any given time. Once processing was complete, prisoners settled into typical daily routines.<sup>20</sup>

POW camps across the country followed similar daily schedules. Prisoners awoke to the sound of reveille at 5:30 a.m., and they had their beds made and breakfast eaten by 6:30 a.m. Then they marched from the mess hall back to their barracks, where they showered and cleaned up in preparation for the day's work projects. The Geneva Convention required all prisoners below the rank of sergeant to work either inside or outside the camp when ordered to do so, while non-commissioned officers and officers could request work. Thus, in January 1943

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17. *Des Moines Register*, 1/22/1944.

18. *Des Moines Register*, 3/30/1944; Office of the Provost Marshal General, "Weekly Report on Prisoners of War, as of 23 October 1944," World War Two file, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

19. For a detailed description of the Geneva Convention, see Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 66.

20. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 9/21/1944; *Des Moines Register*, 10/1/1945, 10/2/1945; Arnold Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America* (New York, 1979), 46.

the government established a national work program, which divided POW labor into two classes. Class I included labor required to maintain prison camps; Class II encompassed all other types of labor not directly connected with military operations.<sup>21</sup> POW labor projects took place outside as well as inside the camp. POWs contracted by civilians for labor were loaded onto trucks by 7:30 a.m. and taken to the work site. Lunch was provided to the prisoners at noon; after three more hours of work, the POWs were loaded on the trucks for transfer back to camp. Once they returned to camp, they ate dinner between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., after which they had the remainder of the evening as free time.<sup>22</sup>

Routine and monotony could challenge the camp's safe and secure environment. Recreational activities helped to pass the time and combat boredom. Sports were generally the most important pastime. Other activities included choral groups and theater. Prisoners also became involved in religious activities, as most of the German prisoners were Roman Catholic or Lutheran. Arts and crafts also played a key role in the daily life of German prisoners and gave the POWs a chance to express themselves. At Camp Algona, for example, German POW Edward Kaib and five of his cohorts created a notable example of prisoner wood-working. In November 1945 the Christmas season brought the unveiling of a POW-made nativity scene at the camp. Over the course of the year the prisoners carved and built the nativity scene with more than 60 half-life-size wooden figures. It remains on display at the Kossuth County Fairgrounds.<sup>23</sup>

Prisoners could also purchase items from the Post Exchange, using canteen coupons they earned. In 1944, based roughly on the \$21 per month earned by a private in the U.S. Army, POWs

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21. Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 76–78, 362; Edward J. Pluth, "Prisoner of War Employment in Minnesota during World War II," *Minnesota History* 44 (1975), 302; Arthur Lobdell, "Report from A. T. Lobdell to Governor Dwight Griswold, 9 January 1947," Algona POW Camp vertical file, Algona Public Library, Algona.

22. Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*, 48; Major General Arthur L. Lerch, "The Army Reports on Prisoners of War," *American Mercury*, May 1945, 541–42.

23. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 11/29/1945; George H. Lobdell, "A Tale of Two Christmases at the Algona Prisoner-of-War Camp," *Palimpsest* 73 (1992), 170–88, to which are appended color photographs by Chuck Greiner of the nativity scene.



*Recreational activities, especially sports, were an important means of combating boredom in the POW camps, thus contributing to a safe and secure environment. Photo from TRACES Project, Ms258, SHSI.*

were paid 80 cents per day for work outside of the camp; those who worked within the camp made 10 cents per day. Prisoners had the choice of placing the money earned in a trust fund account to be redeemed upon repatriation or receiving wages in the form of canteen coupons redeemable at the PX. One Camp Algona officer stated, "They aren't interested in saving the money they earn. It doesn't mean anything to them as prisoners. They like real things that they can see and feel and use."<sup>24</sup>

Items available at the prisoner canteens included money belts, razors, toilet articles, combs, brushes, tobacco, candy, soft drinks, classic literature, and radios. Name-brand cigarette makers discouraged the selling of their cigarettes to POWs, so the prisoners resorted to rolling their own. Prisoner canteens also provided beer for the POWs, who could buy two pints of beer per day after they returned to the compound for the night. This beer contained 3.2 percent alcohol, the standard for Iowa.

24. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 10/10/1944.

The POWs considered this beer “too soft” because they were accustomed to 8–14 percent alcohol in Germany. This did not discourage the drinking of beer, but German POWs often resorted to the fermentation of raisins, grapes, peaches, and other fruit in homemade stills.<sup>25</sup>

The army used the profits from camp canteens to purchase inventory, to improve the prisoners’ quarters, or for entertainment, such as games, athletic equipment, or wood for woodworking and musical instruments. The canteen at Camp Algona, for example, raised enough money to purchase a second-hand piano and enough instruments for a 15-piece orchestra.<sup>26</sup>

The U.S. Army hoped that treating German POWs fairly would inspire more Germans to surrender and would avoid giving the Germans an excuse to mistreat American POWs being held in Europe. Captain Clyde Herring, a former POW himself, reported that German-speaking American soldiers overheard German civilians talking about the fair treatment their relatives were receiving in the United States. German soldiers, hearing of the treatment their comrades received in American as opposed to Soviet camps, were more likely to surrender to American troops.<sup>27</sup> News regarding German surrenders in Europe had a tremendous effect on the citizens of Clarinda and their acceptance of its German inhabitants, as a number of Page County soldiers had become occupants of European prison camps.

Despite the startling speed with which enemy soldiers appeared in Iowa, camp officials in Iowa deliberately and successfully created a relationship between the prisoners and their captors that fostered a safe and productive environment. The host communities made a similar effort, thereby establishing a stable framework for the launch of a successful POW labor program.

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25. *Des Moines Register*, 3/30/1944, 4/23/1944, 10/2/1944, 10/8/1944; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 3/30/1944; Corinne and Wilbur Goecker, interview with author, Clarinda, Iowa, 3/21/2000. Corinne (Noland) Goecker was the private secretary for Camp Clarinda’s commanders, Lobdell and Ball, prior to her marriage in late 1944.

26. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 10/10/1944; *Kossuth County Advance*, 11/23/1944.

27. Wilson, “The Afrika Korps in Oklahoma,” 367; *Shenandoah Evening Sentinel*, 6/26/1945.

THE FUTURE of Iowa's agricultural contribution to the war effort depended on the availability and acquisition of a reliable local supply of labor. Large farm operations and businesses like DeKalb and the Adams Ranch required large numbers of workers. These large operations had experience finding alternative supplies of farm workers, including immigrants from Mexico. Farmers with average-size operations, however, struggled to find alternatives. Although enemy POWs appeared to be good candidates to relieve the farm labor shortage, bureaucratic guidelines initially made their use difficult.

In February 1944, soon after the opening of the Algona and Clarinda encampments, camp officials made announcements regarding prisoner-of-war employment. Meanwhile, the War Manpower Commission declared that POWs could be employed only through the local U.S. Employment Service Office. Therefore, employers had to place a legitimate order for the workers needed with their local employment office to ensure that local labor was not available. Farmers' requests for agricultural laborers were then passed on to the local Extension office, or in some cases to local emergency labor associations. If either office determined that local labor could not fulfill the labor need, a certificate of need for POW employment was issued.<sup>28</sup>

Employing POW workers required that no local labor existed, and payment needed to be comparable to that of the going rate for local labor, generally 50 to 60 cents per hour for POWs employed in agricultural labor and about 8 cents more for nursery work. The farmers paid the federal government for the use of their labor, and the government in turn paid the prisoners. In short, farmers had to contact the county Extension office, which contacted the War Manpower Commission, which in turn contacted the camp commander, who then approved the labor request. Farmers eagerly anticipating shipments of German POWs quickly became discouraged.<sup>29</sup>

The complicated procurement procedures forced the War Department to institute an easier method to obtain POW labor.

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28. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 2/22/1944.

29. *Ibid.*

In March 1944 the War Department allowed the Agricultural Extension Service to act as the official arbiter between farmers and POW camp authorities. By purchasing “man-days” ahead of time, the Extension Service established a reservoir of labor available to local farmers upon demand. When in need of agricultural labor, the farmer now only needed to apply to the Agricultural Emergency Labor Association, sign regulation agreements, travel to the camp to pick up the POWs, and pay the government later. As farmers and camp officials alike became more familiar with the process, farmers would call the camp a day in advance announcing their labor needs for the following day. To quell objections from local labor leaders, regulations required documentation (such as an advertisement placed in a local paper requesting help) that no local labor was available.<sup>30</sup>

During the 1944 season, POW labor performed many farm tasks throughout Iowa and proved to be invaluable, because the War Food Administration had set high food production goals for that year.<sup>31</sup> Kossuth County farmers used German POWs for general farm labor, such as tractor driving, guiding teams of horses, hauling, silo filling, harvesting seed corn, and working in potato fields, in addition to nursery work. Near Algona, farmers used POW labor for haying, harvesting, corn detasseling, and silo filling. In August 1944, 174 German POWs were employed to pull weeds near Humboldt. German POWs generally worked for farmers in groups of five to ten, while the Sherman Nursery near Charles City employed 50 German prisoners daily.<sup>32</sup>

Contract work in Page County included clearing roots and stumps from hedgerows, tile ditch digging, laying out of tile ditch surveys, hauling manure, fence building, and tree plant-

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30. Wilson, “The Afrika Korps in Oklahoma” 363–64; Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*, 89; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 2/2/1944, 3/13/1944, 3/6/1944, 3/10/1944, 4/20/1944, 6/1/1944, 7/3/1944; Page County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1944, 7.

31. The Kossuth County Extension Office set goals of 239,000 acres of corn, 78,000 acres of soybeans, 11,000 acres of flax, and 120,300 acres of oats. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 12/9/1943.

32. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 9/12/1944, 9/24/1944; *Kossuth County Advance*, 11/2/1944; Provost Marshal General’s Inspection Report, G, 9/7–9/1944, copies provided to author by George Lobdell, Lt. Col. Arthur Lobdell’s nephew; Humboldt County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1944, 12.

ing. Prisoners also labored in hay harvest, corn detasseling, and other miscellaneous farm jobs. In May 1944 Fremont County growers, just west of Page County, used POWs to help harvest more than 400 acres of asparagus. Fremont County farmers also used POW labor to assist in pea and sweet corn harvests, in addition to corn detasseling. Harley Walker, the Fremont County Extension Service agent, said that these men were “mostly young, sturdy fellows who worked best if supervised by one foreman from their group.”<sup>33</sup>

To supply POW labor to locations that most needed the workers sometimes required the establishment of temporary branch camps. In February 1944 the War Department adopted a “calculated risk” policy that permitted the movement of POWs from large base camps to smaller, less secure branch camps.<sup>34</sup> Branch camps under Camp Clarinda’s administration operated in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska during 1944. In Hannibal, Missouri, 200 prisoners sorted used army boots for distribution to liberated countries; 125 dehydrated alfalfa in Liberty, Missouri; 200 constructed a veterans hospital in Wadsworth, Kansas; 20 canned corn in Wapello, Iowa; and 80 did construction work in Audubon, Iowa. Branch or satellite camps also functioned effectively in Orrick and Independence, Missouri; Clinton, Iowa; and West Point, Nebraska.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout 1944 and 1945 Camp Algona administered 34 branch camps in Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Iowa.<sup>36</sup> The number of branch camps operating at any one time in Iowa ranged from 2 in September 1944 to 11 by mid-1945. Although branch camps generally employed German prisoners in rela-

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33. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 5/4/1944, 7/3/1944; Page County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1944, 2; Fremont County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1944, 15 (quote).

34. The term “calculated risk” refers to a change in policy that was the result of less concern about escape attempts and a desire to expedite the work program. See Merrill R. Pritchett and William Shea, “Afrika Korps in Arkansas, 1943–1946,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 37 (1978), 32.

35. *Des Moines Register*, 10/8/1944; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 6/19/1944, 11/13/1944.

36. Post Engineer’s Office, Prisoner of War Camp, Algona, Iowa, “Branch Camps: Operations and Activities Map,” November 1945. Map provided to author by George Lobdell, Lt. Col. Arthur Lobdell’s nephew.

tively small numbers, ranging from 49 to more than 200, establishing branch camps allowed valuable labor to be used where it was needed the most.

Despite some difficulties, the Iowa POW labor program in 1944 was a success. Early in the season, procurement proved difficult because of the complicated procedures, and, because there were few operating branch camps, only farmers within a radius of 15 to 30 miles of the camp could benefit from the labor. By late season, however, procurement procedures had been simplified and more than a dozen branch camps created. As a result, in the months of June, July, and August 1944, 963 farm labor placements were made in Page County, accounting for 12,491 man-days of prisoner labor used by 60 farmer-employers. In Kossuth County, more than 100 farmers used German POWs during the 1944 season. The local numbers would gradually increase with the creation of additional branch camps and familiarity with the procurement process.

Because the employment of German prisoners during the 1944 season proved successful, POW labor was used again when needed during the 1945 season. In January 1945, 900 acres of hemp remained unharvested near Eldora. The local hemp plant contracted POW labor through the spring, and German POWs could be seen loading and unloading hemp in knee-deep snow. In March the *Algona Upper Des Moines* reported that farmers had not met the Agricultural Adjustment Administration's flax goal for Kossuth County. In some areas the lack of labor had led to serious delays in the harvest the previous year, so flax producers were hesitant to plant the necessary acreage in the spring. Farmers employed POW labor to help ease this predicament.<sup>37</sup>

The spring of 1945 witnessed POW workers hauling manure, tiling, and making hay. Kossuth County's Farm Bureau again entered into a contract as employer in order to establish a labor pool for local farmers, eliminating some of the bureaucratic hurdles in the procurement process. Kossuth County farmers also continued to use POW labor in the sugar beet harvest during the 1945 season. L. A. Nitz, for example, drove to Algona each morning to retrieve 26 German POWs to assist

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37. *Eldora Ledger Herald*, 1/25/1945; *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 3/22/1945.



*POWs at branch camps worked at a variety of tasks, including logging and brush clearing. Photo from TRACES Project, Ms258, SHSI.*

with his sugar beet crop. In September 1945 the *Fort Dodge Messenger* reported that German POWs from Camp Algona were engaged in clearing trees and brush from roadsides where roadwork was being conducted.<sup>38</sup> The more efficient procurement process also encouraged the establishment of additional branch camps throughout Iowa in 1945 to alleviate labor shortages.<sup>39</sup>

Given the high rate of turnover between camps, the number of prisoners at Camp Algona varied. In 28 months, Camp Algona and its branch camps housed 10,000 Germans, averaging 3,261 per month. During that time, German POWs were employed in logging (15 percent), agriculture (20 percent), factory work (35 percent), and government work at Sioux Falls Air Base, Missouri River, and other camps (30 percent). From June 1944 to February 1945, main and branch camp prisoners of war completed 105,000 man-days of labor, and Camp Algona re-

38. Kossuth County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1945, 6; *Fort Dodge Messenger*, 7/21/1945; *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 10/25/1945.

39. "Branch Camps: Operations and Activities Map."

ceived \$504,000 in compensation. The POWs received a total of \$680,000 in work coupons for their work. The amount paid to the federal government for their labor was considerable. According to Camp Algona's commanding officer, Lt. Col. Arthur Lobdell, "The value of the labor to the men hiring them was \$3,506,000, made up of \$2,406,000 from private employers and \$1,100,000 from the government." Lobdell estimated that the wholesale value of the food and other products "handled" that otherwise would not have been was \$101,000,000. Summarizing the success of Camp Algona's labor program, Lobdell claimed, "The work done by these prisoners increases production and helps shorten the war."<sup>40</sup>

Farmers reported their satisfaction with the quality of labor they received from German prisoners, and generally believed that the POWs could turn out a good day's work. According to Lobdell, "Most of the Germans preferred hard, routine manual labor 10 to 12 hours a day. In many places we worked around the clock, two shifts 12 hours each." Prisoners performed best on jobs that required "a minimum of training and skills." One farmer who neglected to instruct the POWs found them pulling soybeans instead of weeds because they did not know the difference.<sup>41</sup>

At first, regulations required fairly tight security. Groups of ten or more prisoners could be divided only if they were kept within a three-mile radius of each other and could be seen by a guard every hour. Farmers had to provide transportation for the guard, enabling him to check on the POWs. Such rules were eventually relaxed as a consistent routine developed among the camp, the prisoners, and the farmer-employers. Dorothy Johnson, who farmed 1,215 acres of land with her husband about three miles northeast of Clarinda, stated that after a relatively short period of time the guard drove his own jeep, checking on the POWs only periodically. Eventually the prisoners who worked on local farms were viewed more as common laborers

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40. Lobdell, "Report to Governor Griswold"; *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 5/3/1945.

41. Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 128; "A Collection of Memories of the Algona Prisoner of War Camp, 1943-1946," December 1994, vertical file, Algona Public Library; Lobdell, "Report to Governor Griswold"; *Des Moines Register*, 10/8/1944.

than as prisoners of war. Dick Norton, whose father employed German POWs on his farm, noted, "My father had hired a group of them to pull the cockleburs in the bean fields. The guard, I discovered when I took some cold soft drinks out to them, was asleep between the bean rows."<sup>42</sup>

Once the "calculated risk" policy was adopted in February 1944, local farmers picked up the German laborers at the camp without guards, and upon arrival the prisoners often drove the farmer's vehicle to specific work locations. Vera Wellhausen, who farmed with her husband about eight miles southwest of Clarinda, commented that the POWs rarely caused problems. If the German prisoners ever complained, they were told that they could always be sent back to camp, a suggestion the prisoners invariably declined. Vera Wellhausen recalled her husband saying, "They were mostly good workers"; he considered one in particular the best laborer he had ever employed.<sup>43</sup>

At times, the relationships that developed between farmers and their captive laborers made it difficult to tell that they were enemies. A Page County farmer remembers an occasion when the German prisoners employed on her farm returned from the fields with reports about all the rabbits and pheasant they had seen. Her husband told the German soldiers to use the old shotgun he kept in his truck the next time they saw game. When the POWs did hunt, the American guard knew it and allowed it.<sup>44</sup>

Like American labor, some German prisoner-of-war workers performed well and some did not, depending upon experience. Mike Loss of Algona, who farmed on a large scale, observed that, although his last group lacked experience, many of them were among his best workers. According to Loss, some of the Germans he hired had no money to buy tobacco when they first came to work for him so he bought them each a corncob pipe and a pouch of tobacco. Walt Bosworth, also of Algona, used some POWs for silo filling and said they were "good workers and had no problems with them." Algonan Jim Fitzpatrick, a

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42. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 7/3/1944; *Des Moines Register*, 10/8/1944; Dorothy Johnson, interview with author, Clarinda, Iowa, 3/21/2000; *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 5/3/1945.

43. Vera Wellhausen, interview with author, Clarinda, Iowa, 3/21/2000.

44. Dorothy Johnson interview.

camp guard who went out on many work details, commented, "The prisoners were easy to handle and caused us no trouble. They were happy to be here as they were treated well and had good living conditions and good food."<sup>45</sup>

Sometimes farmers came to personally depend on the German POWs who worked for them. Dorothy Johnson recalls an occasion when her husband was forced to leave home and tend to a sick relative. Rather than fear for the welfare of his farm, he said, "Bruno [a German POW who spent the better part of a year working for the Johnsons] will know what to do."<sup>46</sup>

Prisoners played with farmers' children, brought them food and candy, and told stories of their own children back home. On one occasion, when a few Germans were brought to Constance Jergenson's farm to clean up her garden, she was terrified to discover her three-year-old daughter in the midst of them. According to Jergenson, "They were boyish looking young men laughing and chattering in German and seemed delighted to be near a small child. Becky was in glory with the attention. When I ran to get her I realized they were harmless."<sup>47</sup>

German laborers even ate at the same table as the farmers' families did and became quite fond of American farm cooking — so fond in some cases that they began telling the guards which farmers they wished to work for. Gerald Haas, 12 years old when his parents employed POWs near Algona, recalled, "Farm labor was short during this period. My family hired some prisoners to pull and cut weeds on our land. They had a guard with them, but mostly he sat on the end of the field waiting for them to finish the job. My mom always cooked and fed them their noon meal and as a result they worked very well for us."<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, one Page County farmer lost the right to contract POW

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45. "A Collection of Memories of the Algona POW Camp"; Lobdell, "Report to Governor Griswold"; *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 10/10/1944; *Des Moines Register*, 10/8/1944.

46. Dorothy Johnson interview.

47. "A Collection of Memories of the Algona POW Camp."

48. *Ibid.*

labor after he took two German prisoners to lunch in a restaurant on the square in Clarinda, a violation of camp regulations.<sup>49</sup>

Farmers commonly employed the same German prisoners repeatedly, and some developed lasting relationships with them. Jean Balgeman Shey remarked, "Five prisoners worked for my father during the summer. They enjoyed coming to my parents' farm and to eat my mother's big meals at noon." Balgeman's father became close to two of the Germans, and kept in touch with them after they returned to Germany. When one of the German POWs, Wilhelm Schittges, was repatriated in 1946, Balgeman's father pulled him aside and told him to write whenever he was hungry back in Germany. The Balgemans ended up sending the Schittges ten packages, and years later, when Jean traveled to Germany to visit the Schittges in 1988, Wilhelm told her that the packages "saved their lives."<sup>50</sup>

In September 1945 a reporter for the *Algona Upper Des Moines* interviewed a camp guard who spoke about the POWs' opinions of America. He commented, "One [prisoner], who could speak English fluently, still can't believe there can be so rich and wonderful a country as America. This former Nazi is trying his best to stay here, and says he never wants to return to the Reich." Lieutenant J. Beorlage, commander of the Toledo branch camp, noted, "German POWs have little desire to escape and lend themselves well to discipline."<sup>51</sup> The development of positive relationships contributed to the success of the labor program.

Not all employers readily accepted the German prisoners, however. A few Iowans were either not happy with the quality of labor or could not see beyond one glaring fact: these men were the enemy. Herman Strathe, of Hubbard in Hardin County, employed 20 Germans to detassel seed corn. After using them for only two days, he cancelled the contract because he said the men were not thorough enough. Wayland Hopley, president of the Iowa Beef Producers Association, contacted the War Department with his concerns. Hopley had recently attempted to use

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49. Corinne and Wilbur Goecker, interview with author, 3/21/2000; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 4/30/1945.

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 9/20/1945; *Toledo Chronicle*, 8/30/1945.

ten German POWs from Camp Clarinda on his Atlantic farm. He found the prisoners “surly, fostering their Nazi philosophy and uncooperative.” Hopley, who had just lost his son in the European Theater, sent them back to the camp, even though he needed the help. To him, the attitude of the German POWs meant that they had learned nothing and that American soldiers such as his son had died in vain.<sup>52</sup>

Reactions such as these were uncommon, yet they represent the understandable anti-German sentiment many Americans felt. Those feelings could be fed by servicemen writing from abroad. Lieutenant Ted Chrichilles, an Algona native serving in France, wrote an article for the *Algona Upper Des Moines* in which he criticized recent reports of German prisoners swimming in Algona’s \$30,000 pool. According to Lt. Chrichilles, “To me it doesn’t make sense — i.e. a Nazi kills 20 of our boys and then gives up and goes to the United States to be treated like some American fighting man with a few privileges taken away.”<sup>53</sup>

Despite scattered opposition, Major General C. H. Danielson, Commanding General of the Seventh Service Command, deemed the farm labor program at Camp Clarinda a success. POW labor problems, he concluded, were “infinitesimal compared to the amount of work obtained.”<sup>54</sup> The successful labor programs at Camp Clarinda and Camp Algona reflected a national trend in POW employment. David Fiedler, in *The Enemy among Us*, details the generally positive experience of POWs and ordinary citizens in Missouri. According to Fiedler, “The men who lived in the American camps were humanely treated, and the experience was usually far more pleasant than they expected.” This is particularly apparent in the stories of enemy prisoners who received warm welcomes when they returned to Missouri years after their repatriation. One former POW stated upon his return, “Even though we don’t have any relatives in the States, we feel very much at home here.”<sup>55</sup>

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52. Hardin County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1945, 6–8; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 10/19/1944; *Shenandoah Evening Sentinel*, 9/29/1944.

53. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 8/15/1944.

54. *Shenandoah Evening Sentinel*, 9/29/1944; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 10/19/1944.

55. David Fiedler, *The Enemy among Us: POWs in Missouri during World War II* (St. Louis, 2003), 410.

Through the analysis of vivid primary documents, Michael Luick-Thrams depicts the growth and transformation of German soldiers in two German POW newspapers published at Camp Algona. Luick-Thrams offers a captivating look into the daily lives of German POWs, from art and poetry to sports and literature, through the words of the camp newspapers (particularly the 1944 pro-Nazi paper *Drahtpost*, and then, later, in 1945, the anti-Nazi paper *Lagerzeitung*) which the American authorities encouraged each camp to maintain. According to Luick-Thrams, enemy prisoners of war “underwent pivotal changes as individuals and as a group — thus fundamentally influencing post-war German values and institutions.”<sup>56</sup>

Although Camp Algona’s 1945 farm labor program ended with a successful farming season, new information regarding Camp Clarinda’s prisoners threatened the success of its farm labor program for the 1945 season. All the hard work that the camp and local community had invested in overcoming the early obstacles to POW employment was jeopardized in January 1945 when news arrived that Japanese soldiers would replace Camp Clarinda’s German occupants.

MORE THAN 375,000 Axis prisoners of war lived in captivity in the United States during World War II, but fewer than 6,000 were Japanese. Because of the relatively small number of Japanese soldiers captured alive in the Pacific Theater, only two camps housed Japanese soldiers in the United States: Camp McCoy in Wisconsin and Camp Clarinda in Iowa. Although Camp Clarinda had successfully housed German prisoners, the internment of Japanese POWs posed problems. Early in World War II the Japanese captured approximately 25,000 American soldiers. Within four years, 10,000 had died or been killed. Many of the deaths were attributed to “premeditated, vicious, and inhuman acts” by Japanese soldiers.<sup>57</sup> Thus, when Japanese prisoners replaced German POWs, who had been generally ac-

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56. Michael Luick-Thrams, *Camp Papers: Lagerzeitungen, the German POW Newspapers at Camp Algona, Iowa, 1944–1946* (n.p., 2003), i.

57. Krammer, “Japanese Prisoners of War,” 67–70; Robert LaForte, Ronald Mar-ello, and Richard Himmel, eds., *With Only the Will To Live: Accounts of Americans in Japanese Prison Camps, 1941–1945* (Wilmington, DE, 1994), xxix–79.

cepted by Iowans, it is no surprise that they were not received warmly.

German prisoners lived in Camp Clarinda from January 1944 until January 1945, when the citizens of Clarinda were notified that Japanese prisoners would replace Camp Clarinda's German occupants. The Japanese POWs arrived in an environment already hostile to those of Japanese descent. In April 1942, according to the *Algona Upper Des Moines*, several young Japanese American men in Shenandoah — recent graduates of Iowa State College, one of whom had bought a bond "to help his country" — had been attacked and run out of town by a "mob who demanded they be sent to a concentration camp." Community sentiment, stoked by media propaganda regarding the cruelty of Japanese soldiers, forced camp officials to declare that the first 250 Japanese prisoners would not be used for labor outside the camp.<sup>58</sup>

Late in January 1945, less than a week after truckloads of Germans had left Camp Clarinda for Camp Algona, the first Japanese prisoners of war arrived. Most of the Japanese appeared to be between 20 and 45 years old, one-third of whom were "gunzoku," or civilians attached to and under the rules and regulations of the army. Camp commander Lieutenant Colonel George Ball's hatred of the Japanese was obvious when he stated, "They were a sorry lot when they arrived. Some were recovering from wounds. Some were carrying shrapnel. They'd just come from a long duty in the field and they were dirty and wild as animals. We pounded the rudiments of sanitation into their heads, after a little effort, and broke up some of their child-like habits."<sup>59</sup>

Lt. Col. Ball's racist view of the Japanese influenced his administration of the camp. Inside the camp Japanese prisoners were not allowed the same privileges that the Germans had been granted. Each Japanese prisoner received the mandatory

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58. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 4/14/1942.

59. *Des Moines Register*, 4/8/1945, 9/23/1945. The *Des Moines Register's* "Old-time photo of the day" on July 22, 2010, was a photo of Japanese POWs in their barracks at Camp Clarinda. See [www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20100722/NEWS13/307220005/1001/NEWS/Old-time-photo-of-the-day-Japanese-POWs-in-Clarinda](http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20100722/NEWS13/307220005/1001/NEWS/Old-time-photo-of-the-day-Japanese-POWs-in-Clarinda).

payment of ten cents per day for work inside the camp, but only 20 to 30 additional cents per day was allowed for certain types of work. Because the Japanese government had signed but not ratified the Geneva Treaty, the U.S. government chose not to pay the Japanese the 80 cents per day that German POWs had received for work outside the camp. Ball commented, "With Japanese, non-signers of the pact, we comply with the rules, alright, and then make them apply to the lower standard of living the Japanese have known."<sup>60</sup>

Ball wasted no time establishing his authority over the Japanese POWs. "If they break any rules," he told a reporter, "they go to the brig. There's no trial. Standard punishment is thirty days in the can, fourteen of them on bread and water; we don't get any repeat offenders."<sup>61</sup> Yet, even though the American garrison stationed at Camp Clarinda included veterans of South Pacific combat who harbored contempt for the Japanese prisoners, Ball did not allow any physical punishment even when the Japanese stepped out of line. Officials feared that, despite the Japanese refusal to ratify the Geneva Convention, violation of the treaty could prompt Japanese retaliation against American POWs. Although Ball's policies remained within the bounds of the Geneva Convention, the dispensing of discipline reflected his prejudice and occurred swiftly and sometimes harshly.

One such incident took place early in the Japanese internment. The Japanese arrived on a particularly cold winter day, with plenty of ice and snow on the ground, and they were ordered to go out and shovel. When the Japanese refused to work in the cold weather, Lt. Col. Ball quickly took action. He "sent back word to the effect that no work meant no food. Still they refused. So we got out the military police, clubs and tear gas and marched inside to clean out every ounce of food and every piece of cooking equipment. As we went in they tore out of the barracks like so many monkeys. Some were only half-dressed, but we made them stand out in the cold while we counted them off. They shivered like rats, but they wouldn't work. Next morn-

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60. Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoners of War Utilization*, 75n; *Des Moines Register*, 4/8/1945, 9/23/1945.

61. *Des Moines Register*, 4/8/1945, 9/23/1945, 12/8/1945.

ing, after no food at all for twenty-four hours, they sent up word they were ready to go back to work, if we'd feed them first." The Japanese did not receive food until later that night — after they had finished their work.<sup>62</sup>

The American garrison encountered few other difficulties with their captives, and camp life for the Japanese came to closely resemble that of the Germans. As of April 19, 1945, approximately 500 Japanese POWs lived in Camp Clarinda along with nearly 200 Germans, members of a specialist detail composed of carpenters, cooks, waiters, and electricians, who were housed in a separate compound. No Japanese officers lived among the prisoners at Camp Clarinda; all Japanese officers resided at Camp McCoy. The Japanese at first expected horrible treatment or death, and they seemed mystified and even happy with their situation.<sup>63</sup>

Even so, deeply ingrained prejudices and preconceptions guided the treatment of the Japanese POWs. According to Lt. Col. Ball, "Because the Jap is a notorious bargainer we use a policy of not giving a damn what he wants. The answer is always no to every request. Then if we think some changes should be made, we make them later, voluntarily." Racist stereotypes would also affect the people of Clarinda; articles littered local newspapers depicting Japanese soldiers as tricky, torturous, and liking to kill their victims slowly. Racist stereotypes and administrative hesitance to employ Japanese POWs seriously threatened the success of the camp's labor program.

The spring 1945 farming season arrived with southwest Iowa in need of even more farm laborers than during the previous season. The Page County Extension Office estimated that 75 percent of local farmers would not be able to find needed help. Extension agent Merrill Langfitt remarked, "The only possible way we know for supplying adequate labor for your farming needs is to help make prison labor available for you."<sup>64</sup> With all but 200 German POWs sent to Camp Algona and administrators

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62. *Ibid.*, 8 April 1945.

63. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 12/13/1943, 4/9/1945; *Des Moines Register*, 4/8/1945.

64. *Shenandoah Evening Sentinel*, 2/23/1945, 3/7/1945, 5/8/1945.

reluctant to employ Japanese prisoners outside the compound, it appeared unlikely that those labor needs could be met.

For Page and Fremont counties to have successful farm seasons they needed agricultural workers. Camp Clarinda had a sufficient supply of Japanese prisoners, but farmers demonstrated no interest in using them. The reluctance to employ Japanese prisoners, attributable mainly to misconceptions and racist stereotypes, prevented Japanese labor from being used to its fullest. To overcome this reluctance General Wilhelm D. Styery, commander of the U.S. Army in the Western Pacific, declared, "We must overcome the psychology that you cannot do this or that. I want to see these prisoners work like piss ants! If they do not work, put them on bread and water!"<sup>65</sup> Lt. Col. Ball took this announcement seriously, so the Japanese POWs at Camp Clarinda were soon contracted for outside work, labor that proved extremely valuable.

Japanese POWs toiled in nurseries and on farms, mostly in groups, as their output lagged if separated. The Japanese POWs who were sent out in work details were always accompanied by an American guard and a "war-dog." In the spring of 1944, in response to general concerns regarding POW labor, the War Department and the War Manpower Commission established a system of incentive pay, in part because of concerns that POW labor was less efficient than free labor in certain situations and because employers did not like to pay on a man-day or man-hour basis. As a result, Japanese prisoners were compensated according to the number of "units completed," such as bushels of corn shucked, up to a maximum of \$1.20 per day. Because the POWs would be paid according to the amount of work done, and not simply for the hours worked, this system rewarded hard workers and punished slow workers. On some occasions Clarinda's camp officials implemented a task system, whereby each POW or detail had a specific amount of work to complete within a certain period of time. In such instances camp officials chose the amount of work to be completed in such a way that, if accomplished, each POW received the 80 cents per day guaranteed by the Geneva Convention.

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65. Quoted in Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 253–54.

Because negative stereotypes concerning the Japanese prisoners' competence led Clarinda's camp officials to believe that they would be of little value picking corn, a group contracted by a local farmer, Elmer Hodson of Tarkio Township, set out to work on the task system with output expected to be less than that of German labor.<sup>66</sup> On most occasions, German prisoners acted as foremen on Japanese work patrols, but on March 29, 1945, a Japanese leader with little or no experience picking corn took charge of the group employed on Hodson's farm. The Japanese laborers worked at a rapid pace that the American guards assumed would quickly wear out the prisoners. After the eight-hour day had ended, however, the POWs were still going strong. A dozen Japanese POWs shucked 600–700 bushels the first day, averaging 52–53 bushels per man. According to Lt. Col. Ball, referring to the work done on the Hodson farm, "The first time we used the task rate we took a dozen of these monkeys over to a farmer to help him shuck corn. We had it figured out they could get no more than fifty or sixty cents of corn husked in their eight hours. But, can you imagine it, the men averaged between fifty-two and fifty-three bushels of corn that day. They finished up the day with more than a dollar apiece. We had to make some changes after that."<sup>67</sup>

Following the work at the Hodson farm, in the fall of 1945, 40 Japanese prisoners were sent to a farm in Ringgold County to pick corn. On that occasion, the Japanese received 10 cents per bushel, so they could not earn as much for a day's work. During the summer detasseling season, the Berry Seed Company in Clarinda employed 1,091 man-days of Japanese labor. Upon discovering that many Japanese soldiers had been former rice farmers, Lt. Col. Ball remarked, "They're good at anything to do with agriculture. They're built so close to the ground they can get down easier."<sup>68</sup>

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66. *Ibid.*, 120–21; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 3/29/1945, 4/9/1945, 5/7/1945.

67. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 3/29/1945; *Des Moines Register*, 4/8/1945 (Ball quote). Although the news article makes no mention of it, given the date of this event, the corn must have been left standing over the winter.

68. Page County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1945, 9; *Des Moines Register*, 9/23/1945 (quote); Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 148–49.

Having developed a reputation as experts in horticulture, the Japanese were soon contracted to help ease a labor shortage in Shenandoah's busy nurseries. Early in March 1945 one unit of 25 Japanese prisoners worked in the Shenandoah nurseries, assigned to apple tree slip planting. Tying burlap around their knees, they quickly went to work. The nursery operators reported that the Japanese prisoners did more and better work than the former German prisoners. Nursery operators, "well pleased" with the "good job" performed by the Japanese, employed 9,609 man-days of Japanese labor from May to August 1945 after employing 6,750 man-days of German labor the previous year.<sup>69</sup> Successful employment of Japanese prisoners allowed nursery operators to meet consumer demand and helped to encourage the employment of Japanese POWs in other work outside the camp.

GERMAN AND JAPANESE POWs were employed in Page County for 24,623 man-days through the labor office in 1945. Figuring an average of eight hours per day at 50 cents per hour, the total amount paid by employers for POW labor from May to August 1945 was \$98,492.<sup>70</sup>

Fremont County benefited from German and Japanese POW labor as well. During the 1945 season, the Page County Farm Labor office placed 609 workers with 184 farmers, while Fremont County placed 7,407 workers with 320 farmers, for a total cost of \$70,184.<sup>71</sup> Between March 22 and November 30, 1945, 121,667 man-hours of POW labor were used in Fremont County to harvest peas, put up hay, cut weeds out of corn, haul manure, feed cattle, build fence, and cut 199,767 pounds of asparagus. Harley Walker commented that the "amount of POW help would be equivalent to every farmer in Fremont County

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69. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 4/9/1945; *Des Moines Register*, 4/8/1945; Page County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1945, 8.

70. Page County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1945, 8-9.

71. Fremont County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1945, 2-13. That a larger number of workers were placed in Fremont County but cost less may be explained by the facts that prisoners placed on more than one occasion were counted multiple times and that 90 percent of those employed in Fremont County labored as short-term help in harvesting truck crops.

using one POW for a period of about ten days." Branch camps had made POW labor more accessible, increasing the number of farmers able to use it. The *Herald Journal* reported that in Page and Fremont counties "prisoner labor was a lifesaver for farmers this past season. Many farms would not have been run without their help."<sup>72</sup>

The end of the war in Europe in May 1945, followed by victory in the Pacific in August, necessitated the process of prisoner repatriation. In August 1945 local newspapers announced that the Japanese POWs were being shipped to the San Joachin Valley in California to help raise vegetables. The Japanese lived in holding camps in California while awaiting their shipment home. By October 1945, Camp Clarinda lost its remaining German POW population. It finally closed on December 1, 1945.<sup>73</sup> Lt. Col. Ball left Clarinda to command a camp near Atlanta, Nebraska, and the War Department declared Camp Clarinda surplus, auctioning it off piece by piece. On August 9, 1945, the last of the local soldiers returned home from POW camps in Europe.<sup>74</sup>

Lt. Col. Lobdell was confident that the 10,000 POWs who passed through Algona and its branch camps left Algona in better physical condition than when they arrived. Mentally, only the hard-core Nazis, making up less than 10 percent of the POW population, remained unchanged. Lobdell believed that many of the Germans returned home with the ability to actively participate in the creation of a democratic government.<sup>75</sup>

Eventually, in late 1945, Algona's branch camps began to close, the last being Onawa in November. Camp Algona's German prisoners began leaving in early October, when nearly 1,000 prisoners traveled to Greeley, Colorado, to fill labor needs in the beet fields. In November an additional 2,000 German POWs left Algona headed for the East Coast, from where they would then be sent to France. Finally, on January 22, 1946, 600 more POWs left for Fort Cook, Nebraska, where they were pre-

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72. *Ibid.*; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 9/3/1945.

73. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 8/16/1945, 10/4/1945; *Shenandoah Evening Sentinel*, 5/9/1945.

74. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 8/9/1945, 10/4/1945, 10/18/1945, 10/22/1945.

75. Lobdell, "Report to Governor Griswold."

pared for shipment to Europe. One hundred prisoners remained at the camp until its official closing in February 1946, nine months after the war in Europe had ended. Camp Algona was then declared surplus and most was sold off piecemeal. According to historian George Lobdell, nephew of Lt. Col. Arthur Lobdell, "As he drove south out of town, the Colonel could quietly reflect on a job well done during his quite different career as a prisoner of war camp commander."<sup>76</sup>

One German POW at Camp Algona later recalled that as the POWs were driven out of the camp, "the cars stopped on the way out of the small town. People waved their hands. There was standing the farmer, where I have worked. He was standing motionless. Then he [took] off his great hat and hold it in front of his left breast. Many years later I realized [what an] honor this man did to us. God bless the good man."<sup>77</sup> A final statement prepared by the German POWs in Algona reflecting their views on the end of the war read as follows:

We Germans may be glad for two reasons, first the frightful massacre of the last decade has come to an end and the world is moving again. . . . Second, the United States will get a fabulous prosperity in the next few years and therefore, will be able to economically support the destroyed Europe. . . . Germany has lost the war, but it had to lose it to clear the way to closed resources of the German spirit and German inwardness. If this will give the German people a respect of others' rights we shall be able to establish a German kind of democracy, but the way there is stony and long.<sup>78</sup>

By 1945, Iowans had realized that the economic value of the POWs overcame any real objection to them. In Algona alone, the camp spent an estimated \$4,000 per month on mess-hall supplies, most of which were purchased locally. Employment of POW labor in nursery and farm work added to their economic value. Edward J. Pluth, in his analysis of the significance of the POW labor program in Minnesota, asserted, "It was not the in-

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76. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 10/4/1945, 11/22/1945, 1/22/1946; George H. Lobdell, *The Golden Rule Challenge: Command of World War II German POW Camps in the Upper Mid-West* (Seattle, WA, 2004), 315.

77. Joseph Goetz to Mrs. Ankeny, 3/15/1981, in *Palimpsest* production files, March/April 1984, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

78. Quoted in Lobdell, "Report to Governor Griswold."

tent of the program that employers profit by using prisoners rather than other labor. But in the absence of other workers, the prisoners helped prevent economically damaging timber and crop losses." The evidence indicates that this was certainly true in Iowa. According to Seth Paltzer, "The economic contribution of the prisoners was substantial. . . . At war's end, Lieutenant Colonel Lobdell released a statement that totaled the prisoners' economic contributions at \$3,506,000 (equivalent to \$54.14 million today)."<sup>79</sup>

Prisoner-of-war labor may not have always been economically profitable, nor was it always as efficient as civilian labor. Iowa farmers were required to provide transportation in a time when gasoline was rationed, and sometimes the POWs proved less efficient than civilian labor on tasks, such as detasseling corn, that required training. Nevertheless, POW labor prevented crop loss and helped farmers meet increased production demands made by the War Food Administration. Despite sporadic use in corn detasseling, the Page County Emergency Farm Labor Office stated that POWs detasseling five acres produced 50,000 bushels of corn. Page County Extension agent Merrill Langfitt, assessing the success of the POW labor program, commented that the prisoner of war "assistance and cooperation greatly assisted in solving the major labor problems in the county."<sup>80</sup>

In time, Iowa communities accepted the camps and their role in waging the war. Not everyone approved of the camps or developed a personal relationship with their inhabitants. When news spread that a camp would come to Algona, many doubted that it would be an asset to the community. Most of the community's inhabitants, however, eventually realized that the camp's existence was necessary for the war effort. Citizens of Algona were pleased to see that these "victims" of a "Hitlerized youth" were going to indirectly aid in the American war effort. Jean Leaneagh Fausnaugh of Algona expressed a typical and crucial observation when she explained, "I remember watching

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79. Pluth, "Prisoner of War Employment in Minnesota," 301–2; Seth Paltzer, "Camp Algona: A German Prisoner of War Facility in the American Midwest," *On Point: Journal of Army History* 16 (Summer 2010), 34–41.

80. *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 7/6/1944; Page County Extension Office, *Annual Narrative Reports*, 1944, 8; *Des Moines Register*, 11/10/1945.

the long train arrive, and looking hard at the windows, looking for a monster. I looked right in the eyes of one of them — and to my surprise the POW looked like everyone else — one of us.”<sup>81</sup>

Local farmers sent care packages to their German laborers well after they had been repatriated. One farmer sent a loan of \$500 to a former German POW who had worked on his farm, no questions asked. The farmer eventually received repayment. Some local farmers even received visits from their old laborers years later, and naturally the Germans stayed in their homes. Remembering the German prisoners who worked on her farm, Dorothy Johnson said, “We really got acquainted with them. If my son was over there, I hoped someone would treat him as well. When the Germans left they drove them around the square, we all waved and some of us cried.”<sup>82</sup>

The Japanese at Camp Clarinda, in spite of feeling the brunt of racism, were treated according to the Geneva Convention and also helped the surrounding community meet war production goals. The greatest effect captivity had on the Japanese POWs, according to Arnold Krammer, was their exposure to democracy which, no doubt, affected some of them for the rest of their lives.<sup>83</sup>

From the construction of the camps in 1943 to their closing in 1946, camp officials carried out a conscious and determined effort to engineer a positive relationship between the camps and the local communities. Establishing POW camps in Iowa proved beneficial both for the government and for Iowans. Iowa was a safe and secure environment for POW internment, and the camps became assets to the local communities. Demonstrating their willingness to employ enemy workers, Iowans helped the camps operate successful labor programs that ensured that crops did not rot in the fields, that farmers met wartime production goals, and that American soldiers were fed overseas. An unsuccessful labor program would have been financially devastating for local nurseries, canneries, and hemp plants. Instead, the camps

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81. *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 10/14/1943, 6/6/1944, 6/27/1944; “A Collection of Memories of the Algona POW Camp.”

82. “A Collection of Memories of the Algona POW Camp”; Dorothy Johnson interview.

83. Krammer, “Japanese POWs in America,” 89–90.

brought substantial military payrolls that stimulated the local economies and provided essential workers.

Confronted with the enemy, Iowans realized that the prisoners were indeed human. Accepting the POWs fulfilled Iowans' sense of duty and helped the United States win the war. Iowans also hoped that their fair treatment of enemy POWs would encourage similar treatment of their loved ones in enemy POW camps overseas. Interactions with some of these enemies not only helped to solve the critical shortage of labor, but also in a relatively brief period sometimes developed into relationships that would last a lifetime.

## Book Reviews and Notices

*Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939*, by James Belich. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. xii, 573 pp. Maps, tables, notes, index. \$50.00 cloth.

Reviewer Rebekah M. K. Mergenthal is assistant professor of history at Pacific Lutheran University. Her research and writing have focused on the settlement of the lower Missouri River Valley.

James Belich's *Replenishing the Earth* is a fascinating and accessible volume that explores the story of the "Anglophone settler explosion" (21) during the long nineteenth century. To illuminate the scope and importance of this process, Belich compares and contrasts settlements in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. This is a rich and complicated story, and Belich's engaging writing style draws readers in. His prose conveys both his enthusiasm for his research and the stakes of his claims. Belich wants nothing less than to explain how Great Britain and its "newlands" (86) came to dominate the world culturally, economically, and politically during the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. His answers are compelling and offer much for other historians to engage.

Belich draws on and engages a vast array of literature and covers a lot of geographic ground without sacrificing clarity, partly because the book is so well organized. The first section establishes Belich's general themes to explain the development and rise of the Anglophone world. These include the mass transfer of people, information, and goods, as well as the ideology of "settlerism" (153). Subsequent chapters test Belich's explanations in a range of places, moving from London to New York, Chicago to Melbourne, with attention to how the hinterlands of these cities expanded and shifted over time. Belich compares histories of resource extraction and teases out how cultural ties flourished even as political ones were weakened or severed in the Anglo world. The range of topics covered and juxtaposed is one of the strengths of the volume.

This book also provides broader context for those interested in specific parts of the expansion Belich investigates. For those most familiar with the story of American westward expansion, for example, Belich emphasizes the important parallels to its "twin" (79), the British

West. By juxtaposing the expected and less expected, Belich offers his readers fruitful comparisons and an important argument about the broader processes that linked a range of geographic places during this period. In this way, he disputes claims to American exceptionalism. Belich wants to correct a tendency that has led “American westward migration” to be “seldom seen in the context of other great migrations — pan-Anglo, pan-European, or global” (131). In Belich’s view, that isolated view is not only incorrect but also has resulted in a misleading understanding of the American past.

*Replenishing the Earth* is particularly intriguing when it explores patterns of expansion. Belich asserts the importance of “a series of regional booms and busts, followed by an ‘export rescue’ in which shattered settler economies were saved by long-range exports to their oldlands” (86). This process of recovery, according to Belich, reconnected the “oldlands” and the new through long-range exporting that resulted in what he calls “recolonization” (221). Belich previously explored the idea of recolonization for New Zealand but now expands it into a broader geographic context. Recolonization is crucial to Belich’s overall argument about the rise and spread of an Anglo-prone world because it enables him to trace connections that constituted and reconstituted that world, and thus fostered its spread. The positive spin Belich puts on this stage of development does not entirely fit with the views of Patricia Nelson Limerick and other western historians who emphasize the eastern United States’ exploitation of the West and its resources. However, Belich does not shy away from interpretive differences in any of the specific stories he tells.

Those most interested in the history of expansion to the midwestern region of the United States might be disappointed in the relative brevity of Belich’s chapter “The Great Midwest.” However, even if he does not explore as many details as he could, *Replenishing the Earth* provides a rich context that allows a deeper understanding of local developments. For readers specifically focused on the history of Iowa, it is worth noting that Belich categorizes Iowa at times with the Old Northwest and at others with the Midwest, so it shows up in more sections than some of its neighboring states. This vagueness also points to a limitation of Belich’s sweeping approach. Where he excels at extracting patterns, the story of *Replenishing the Earth* needs to be compared with histories that can supplement its bird’s-eye view. The book raises questions about motivation that would best be answered by stories more closely attuned to the on-the-ground details of the places people left and the places they went to in the great migration that Belich recounts.

Moreover, while Belich is clearly aware of the exploitive side of Anglo expansion, those seeking a full consideration of displacement of and resistance by indigenous peoples would need to look elsewhere. Overall, however, *Replenishing the Earth* is a rewarding book that enables readers to re-situate and reconsider stories of settlement and expansion that they might think they already know well.

*Wandering Souls: Protestant Migrations in America, 1630–1865*, by S. Scott Rohrer. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. x, 312 pp. Illustrations, tables, maps, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Linda K. Pritchard is Department Head, Women's and Gender Studies, and a professor of history at Eastern Michigan University. Her publications include "A Comparative Approach to Western Religious History: Texas as a Case Study, 1845–1890" in the *Western Historical Quarterly* (1988).

Scott Rohrer's thesis in *Wandering Souls* — "[Protestant] religion's role in migration and the settlement process was far more important than has been recognized" (247) — counters what he believes is a distortion of America's internal migration story. For a large variety of Protestant groups, religious migrations differed fundamentally from secular ones. Rather than a setting for disparate individuals to meld into Frederick Jackson Turner's "new American," the frontier, Rohrer argues, provided space for religious peoples to reinspire, reestablish, and reinvent their own religious traditions. The migrations of such groups did not threaten their "Christian Community"; instead, they were generally successful attempts to strengthen ties of shared religious values.

Rohrer selects various well-known and obscure migrations from 1630 to the end of the Civil War to demonstrate the power of religion to shape migration in North America. The book begins with an account of the "first frontier" migration in the form of Thomas Hooker's departure from Massachusetts Bay Colony to the Connecticut Valley in 1636. Rohrer organizes his account of subsequent Protestant migrations into two broad categories. The first includes religiously minded people who moved to find spiritual and economic fulfillment. The "sojourners" he documents in this category include Devereux Jarratt and the Anglicans moving from tidewater to upcountry Virginia in 1752; two groups of Scots-Irish Presbyterians in the mid-eighteenth century, one moving from Boston to Maine and another within Virginia; the Moravian migration into North Carolina from eastern Pennsylvania in 1765; and, finally, Methodists from Virginia into the Ohio Country after the Revolution. Rohrer's second category of Protestant

migrations was churches or congregations migrating to escape persecution, establish "utopia," or mitigate internal dissent. Here he details the "dissenter" Seventh Day Baptists who moved from Shrewsbury, New Jersey, to western Virginia in 1789; the Inspirationists coming from Ebenezer, New York, to found colonies in Amana, Iowa, in 1855; and the quintessential "American Exodus" of Mormons from upstate New York through Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois and finally to Utah's Great Salt Lake Basin in the 1830s and '40s.

The author elegantly and expansively tells the story of each migration. Rohrer writes a nuanced account, based on secondary sources, of religious and economic factors leading to migration. Readers will find a richly contextualized account of group migrations, including brief histories of each migrant group's religious traditions. For example, his description of Amana's Society of True Inspiration includes an account of Pietist origins in Germany and Switzerland, followed by a description of the four villages first established in 1842 in Ebenezer, New York, five miles from Buffalo. By 1855, their leader, Christian Metz, was convinced that "Ebenezer's rampant materialism risked all that society achieved by leaving Germany" (94). Through Metz, God revealed that illness in the villages was punishment for lack of religious commitment and that village children spending too much time in Buffalo were signs of secular temptations. Barely 13 years after founding Ebenezer, Metz organized a move away from the immediate distractions of a modernizing society to an isolated spot on the Iowa frontier. Between 1855 and 1865, more than 1,100 Inspirationists founded the communal Amana settlements.

While the focus on the role of religion in migration might be a corrective for some, Rohrer overstates the case for historical neglect of the role of Protestantism in migration. The well-known migrations highlighted in his book have self-evident religious motives. This is especially true for the second category, utopian groups and those suffering persecution. No account of the Mormons, religious dissenters starting with the Puritans, or Pietists would dare neglect the religious dimension, although historians might quibble about the balance of religious and secular motives or even the inclusion of Mormonism as a nineteenth-century Protestant group. Even the "pilgrims" of the author's first category, those who moved on their own initiative for spiritual and economic fulfillment, have well-documented Protestant origins. For example, the Second Great Awakening is a well-known consequence of the Protestant migrations into New York's Burned Over District and the Ohio Valley. And arguments for mid-nineteenth-century "democratization" in political and religious circles often begin with the "dis-

senter" tradition of migration in American Protestantism. It would have been more convincing for his argument to document American internal migrations where historians have missed latent or overt religious motives.

Even so, this volume provides ample evidence for a closer look at the role of religion, dissenter or otherwise, in more recent migrations as well as in Roman Catholic, Jewish, Islamic, and even so-called secular migrations. Rohrer is correct to imply that religion is not uniformly valued as an independent or even dependent variable of behavior in migration or in other historical phenomena. *Wandering Souls* reminds historians to look at religion with the same critical eye as they do at class, ethnicity, and gender.

*A Most Magnificent Machine: America Adopts the Railroad, 1825–1862*, by Craig Miner. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010. xvi, 325 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Scott E. Randolph is assistant professor of history at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia. His Ph.D. dissertation (Purdue University, 2009) was "Playing by the Rules: Markets, Manipulation, and the Meaning of Exchange in the American Railway Industry, 1900–1918."

In *A Most Magnificent Machine*, Craig Miner illustrates with vivid detail the shock, wonder, delight, and dismay that attended the early decades of the railroad revolution in antebellum America. That exercise alone is a useful tonic for our jaded, modern eyes. In the twenty-first century, groundbreaking transformation has been normalized and has become routine, almost boring, and certainly expected. Even the internet seems less significant when viewed against the longer history of electronic communication from the telegraph onward. Yet, for those who witnessed them, the railroad and the steam engine seemed to herald an age without limits, freeing humanity from the restrictions and limitations of muscle and sinew. The railroad became the physical and metaphysical incarnation of progress and transformation, and Americans could not stop themselves from talking about it morning, afternoon, and night. Miner takes us into that experience, as Americans struggled to comprehend both the vehicle and the pace of change. The world as they knew it was changing in ways no previous experience had prepared them for.

Miner's story, based on newspaper and booster pamphlets, is that of the literate and politically engaged; it favors the voices of the towns over the countryside, and reflects, as one would expect, a faith in progress. The narrative moves in a loosely chronological fashion, opening

with the story of how eastern cities, such as Baltimore, not blessed with New York's water level route to the west, sought access to the economic promise of their hinterlands. It concludes with the vociferous debates over the route and purposes of the transcontinental railroad. Along the way Miner discusses how the railroad upended traditional banking and credit practices and reinvigorated debates over the proper role of the states in the economy; how Americans reacted to the standardization of time and movement that the railroad wrought; and how they made sense of the human carnage that resulted from fast trains, loose rules, and flimsy construction.

This is a book that the casual reader will enjoy, but it provides little that is new for scholars of transportation, political economy, or the antebellum United States. Readers of this journal will find but one solitary reference to the state of Iowa, and, indeed, the soul of the book lies east of the Mississippi River and, for that matter, within those states whose borders meet the Atlantic Ocean. Yet the hopes and fears of the citizens of those regions regarding the promise and peril of the railroad would be familiar to Iowa's early settlers, especially after the end of the Civil War. Miner does argue that railroad development within the Old Northwest and across the Mississippi River had its own internal, regional developmental logic, of which connection to eastern markets was not always paramount. Readers familiar with John Larson's *Bonds of Enterprise: John Murray Forbes and Western Development in America's Railway Age* (1984, 2001) will find ample eastern precedents for the excitements and discontents he discusses. On a national scale, the book echoes and complements work done more than 30 years ago by Wolfgang Schivelbusch in *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization and Perception of Space and Time* (1979) and 25 years ago by James A. Ward in *Railroads and the Character of America, 1820–1887* (1986). So, by and large, Miner's contribution to the literature is in his methodology.

Miner's research is staggering in its depth, although not its breadth, and therein readers will find the book's significance as a monograph and a cautionary tale about the embarrassment of riches. The volume of Miner's research is almost beyond comprehension. By his own account, he surveyed 185 newspapers and 3,000 pamphlets covering the years in question, reading in the process some 400,000 distinct articles on railroads. This remarkable feat was possible only with the recent completion of several digitization projects, especially those covering nineteenth-century newspapers. Miner's effort makes plain the volume of print material now readily available to researchers. However, at times it reads like a series of note cards, with example after example

provided for each point of argument. In short, the evidence often overwhelms the reader.

This complaint aside, *A Most Magnificent Machine* is a useful addition to the literature on both antebellum American social history and the transportation revolution. Miner does not break new ground, but his book reinforces the scholarship of others who have examined hundreds of subjects running from economic modernization in the Old South to Americans' morbid fascination with and fear of railroad accidents. Teachers and professors will no doubt find it an excellent resource for stories and pithy quotations, and casual readers interested in railroads will enjoy the lush retelling of the early years of the industry's development.

*The Nauvoo Legion in Illinois: A History of the Mormon Militia, 1841–1846*, by Richard E. Bennett, Susan Easton Black, and Donald Q. Cannon. Norman, OK: Arthur Clark Co., 2010. 436 pp. Illustrations, tables, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer A. R. Blair is professor emeritus of history at Graceland University. He has held various offices in the John Whitmer Historical Association and the Mormon History Association.

One of the most controversial actions by the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith was his establishment of the Nauvoo Legion. By 1844, it was the largest volunteer militia in Illinois and greatly feared by non-Mormons. Some historians have seen it as an example of Smith's megalomania, part of a plan for a "Kingdom of God" on earth, or as an example of a Mormon tendency toward domination. The authors of *The Nauvoo Legion in Illinois* argue that it was a typical militia of the time, legal under the Illinois system, non-aggressive, and established by Smith as a defense.

The Latter-day Saints evolved from being adverse to the use of force, to carrying arms in 1834 for reclaiming "stolen" property, and, for some, in 1838, using force to "despoil" non-Mormons in Far West, Missouri. The authors contend that Smith rejected the violence and secrecy of those "Danite" vigilantes in favor of a legal, strong military force to protect his people.

It is a well-presented thesis but difficult at times to maintain, partly because of Smith's rhetoric, which alternated between admonitions to his followers to forgive their enemies and invectives such as "Damn them as traitors!" directed against government officials who had not aided them. Even more chilling was his vow to exercise his power if need be. The authors do not adequately deal with Smith's wavering stance in Illinois politics, or how Smith's interpretation of

the Nauvoo Charter (as giving the city the same powers as the state) created opposition. Some questionable interpretations in the book include why Smith chose "Lieutenant General" for his militia title and the role dissenters played in his death.

Whether Smith ultimately would have used force is impossible to ascertain. The authors present him as genuinely seeking peace but recognize him as volatile. They grapple with complications and tensions inherent in the Nauvoo period and note the responsibility of Smith, Mormons, and "gentiles" for the tragedy.

Most of the book is devoted to the development, organization, and character of the Nauvoo Legion. It is the most thorough account available, gives many details, and displays meticulous scholarship. The authors weigh conflicting primary references and historians' differing interpretations. They admit their inability to determine some facts but make plausible explanations. For example, estimates of the number of members in the Legion have ranged up to 20,000, with a traditional figure of 5,000. The authors conclude that the number probably never reached 3,000, a reasonable estimate given Nauvoo's population of about 11,000.

An interesting fact is that there were members in the Nauvoo Legion from Iowa, mostly Mormons who had settled there. Iowan General Swazey attended Legion parades and observed "evolutions" during sham battles. The first chapter helpfully details the status of federal and state military systems of the time. Other chapters cover the Legion's organization and its partial demise. The appendixes and tables are useful, especially the chronology and listing of members.

*Border War: Fighting over Slavery before the Civil War*, by Stanley Harrold. Civil War America Series. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. xvi, 292 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth.

Reviewer Rebekah M. K. Mergenthal is assistant professor of history at Pacific Lutheran University. Her Ph.D. dissertation (University of Chicago, 2008) was "Border Lines: The People of the Lower Missouri River Valley and the Expansion of the United States, 1803–1855."

Stanley Harrold's *Border War: Fighting over Slavery before the Civil War* is a solid, detailed narrative of the violent conflict that developed along the border between the North and South in the decades before the Civil War. Drawing extensively on other historians' work, most prominently that of William Freehling, and his own archival research, Harrold considers contestations along the full extent of this border. This

border conflict, according to Harrold, needs to be perceived in its entirety in order to understand how exactly sectional controversy led to the Civil War. Moreover, Harrold contends that specific attention to the sporadic violent clashes along this border will also help us better understand the Civil War's development and outcome. In particular he determines that many of the Southern border states did not secede because their experience with the preceding violence of the "border war" had convinced their leaders that Federal protection was the best way to preserve and extend slavery.

As his title suggests, Harrold strongly emphasizes the violent aspect of the clashes that sporadically but increasingly erupted along the border between the lower North and the upper South. Harrold indicates that border violence began after 1780, increased with the 1808 ban on the importation of slaves, and became "endemic" (95) in the 1830s and 1840s. Such conflicts peaked in the 1850s with Bleeding Kansas and John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry. Harrold argues that the border location of both of these well-known events was not happenstance but shows that they must be understood as outgrowths of the violent confrontations that came before.

Thus, *Border War* includes many specific examples of the events that together created this war before the Civil War. Its chapters are arranged chronologically with some overlap to account for the thematic organization of each chapter. For example, the second chapter focuses on the antislavery threat in the upper South during the 1830s and 1840s; chapter three shifts the focus to "Southern aggression in the Lower North" (53) in the same period. Throughout the book, Harrold tells stories of slaves procuring weapons for their escape attempts and resorting to murder when necessary. He also details masters' aggression as they sought to recover their property. Indeed, one of the strengths of *Border War* is its placement of African Americans' own actions to seize freedom at the center of this story of border contestation.

*Border War* does not depict a middle ground of peaceful coexistence or negotiated balance. Instead, Harrold's border is one where "physical proximity of the Lower North and Border South . . . led to physical clashes and the expectations they would spread" (15). This borderland story is one that Harrold could have fruitfully compared to other borderland regions to better understand its trajectory. Harrold is well versed in the literature of pre-Civil War politics and slavery. However, his volume would have been greatly enhanced by considering the growing literature on borders and borderlands. Instead, he merely asserts without citation that borderlands "are most volatile when residents on each side of the border may easily pass to the other" (2). This

contention appears to be true of that between the lower North and Border South before the Civil War, but some attention to comparisons and contrasts to this claim would bring important depth to Harrold's analysis and help his story resonate more broadly.

Harrold maintains that his most important contribution is to see the border war in its "entirety" (2). Overall, he succeeds in this goal of capaciousness, although it is not always clear that the events described cohere into a war. There are also gaps in his coverage. For example, in the preface he notes that Iowa was included in the Lower North states (after statehood in 1846), yet Iowa does not merit an entry in the book's index. This would mostly be a concern to those particularly interested in the Iowa story, and obviously no one volume can cover every place equally. Yet bringing Iowa more specifically into the story would have been a way for Harrold to have more fully considered eastern and western variations along the border between the North and the South.

*Fugitive Justice: Runaways, Rescuers, and Slavery on Trial*, by Steven Lubet. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010. 367 pp. Notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer H. Robert Baker is assistant professor of history at Georgia State University. He is the author of *The Rescue of Joshua Glover: A Fugitive Slave, the Constitution, and the Coming of the Civil War* (2006).

Steven Lubet's *Fugitive Justice* provides a well-paced narrative of the 1850s courtroom trials in which rescuers and runaways were prosecuted by the federal government. Lubet argues provocatively that the nature of these trials shifted over time, with lawyers becoming increasingly more willing to argue against the legitimacy of the Fugitive Slave Act and of slavery itself. The "higher law" argument went "from an abstract inspiration to an unapologetic legal defense" (8).

Lubet begins by offering the reader background on the subject of slavery and the Constitution. The most contentious issue at the Constitutional Convention was the compromise over slave representation embodied in the three-fifths clause; the Missouri crisis of 1819–1821 shifted the debate to the question of how to regulate the extension of slavery into the territories. That issue proved vexatious over time, particularly after the admission of Texas and victory in the Mexican-American War added significant slave territory to the Union.

Fugitive slaves also became an issue. A federal fugitive slave law had been on the books since 1793, but the bulk of slave rendition was done either privately or through state courts and as such depended

on cooperative state laws. After the 1820s, free states added copious protections for free blacks, making rendition more cumbersome for slaveholders. Compliance with these “personal liberty laws” was not optional, and flouting them carried stiff penalties. In 1842, in *Prigg v. Pennsylvania*, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the personal liberty laws unconstitutional. The ruling proved a double-edged victory for slaveholders. No longer threatened by punitive state laws, neither could they count on state officers for assistance. Calls for a new fugitive slave law rang from the South, and a new statute offering broad powers was worked into the Compromise of 1850.

The heart of this book recounts several important trials that took place under the new Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Lubet begins with the trials for treason in Christiana, Pennsylvania, brought against those who arrayed against enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. He follows with descriptions of legal proceedings in Boston and Syracuse in 1850–1851. Thereafter tempers cooled and rescues abated until 1854, after passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened “free territory” to potential slave settlement. Northerners reacted fiercely, forming a viable third party out of anti-Nebraska rage. In Boston, the rendition of Anthony Burns led to a botched rescue attempt that left one peace officer dead. In 1858–1859 the rescue of a fugitive from a party of slavecatchers in Ohio (the Oberlin-Wellington rescue) led to a famous set of prosecutions on the eve of the Civil War that ultimately resulted in the release of the rescuers. As one contemporary proslavery newspaper put it, “at last the Higher Law was triumphant” (314).

Lubet proves no mean storyteller. He paces the courtroom drama well and gives memorable accounts of the characters. Most impressively, he brings to life the more pedestrian elements of courtroom procedure that often prove so crucial. In the 1854 Boston hearing concerning the fugitive Anthony Burns, for instance, Commissioner Loring allowed a witness to relate a conversation with the fugitive despite a statutory bar on admitting the fugitive’s testimony. The moment prompted the antislavery lawyer Richard Henry Dana (not at that point representing Burns) to step forward and ask the court for a continuance and to consider appointing him counsel. The operation of the Fugitive Slave Act put the spotlight on procedural fairness.

Lubet’s thesis — the notion that the “higher law” defense matured and eventually won the day — may be overdrawn. He makes too much of the fact that no higher law defense was trotted out during the Christiana treason trial of Caster Hanway. As Lubet himself acknowledges, “higher law” arguments had been rehearsed in runaway cases for decades. And such arguments played alongside prosaic defenses (such as

the person at the bar is not the fugitive you seek) and assaults on the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Act. Lubet's analytical structure — focusing on a few principal cases rather than exhaustively researching them all — renders him incapable of providing a definitive analysis of how legal defenses were deployed and why.

Pointing out this book's limits should not blind us to its strengths. Lubet's engaging narrative brings us into the courtrooms of the 1850s, allowing us a glimpse of fundamental notions of procedural due process and how antebellum Americans wrangled with the constitutional duty to return runaways to slavery. He brings details to life that have often been ignored in scholarly treatments of the Fugitive Slave Act. That is itself an important contribution.

*We Saw the Elephant: Overland Diaries from the Lander Trail*, by Peter T. Harstad. Lakeville, MN: Jackpine Press, 2010. xii, 219 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendix, index. \$20.00 paper.

Reviewer J. Thomas Murphy is professor of history at Bemidji State University. His Ph.D. dissertation (University of Illinois, 1993) was "Pistols Legacy: Sutlers, Post Traders, and the American Army, 1820–1895."

On July 13, 1859, an Oregon-bound wagon train from Brooklyn, Iowa, traversed the Sweetwater River. "Here we expected to cross the river," Charles J. Cummings recorded in his diary, "but we found there was a new Military Rode been opened, called Lander's Rout [*sic*], which saved 60 miles before striking the other rode at Fort Hall, a distance of 260 miles. We thought it best to take it" (41). Assigned by the Department of the Interior to build a wagon road, Frederick W. Lander had completed his project in 1858 and anticipated the initial travelers. "You must remember that this new road has been recently graded," he noted in his emigrant guide, "and is not yet trodden down" (18). But overlanders would avoid the desert and pay no tolls, face "fewer hard pulls and descents," and have access to grass, water, and wood (18).

Cummings was among 13,000 migrants who used the cut-off that first year, and his journal is among 45 collected by Peter T. Harstad to commemorate the Lander Trail's history from 1859 through 1864. Each diary provides insight into trail life, a description of the landscape, and a record of events — whether daily mileage or an Indian scare. The book includes drawings by Karyn E. Lukasek and two essays: Harstad's "The Lander Trail," reprinted from *Idaho Yesterdays* (1968), and Mont E. Faulkner's "Emigrant-Indian Confrontation in Southeastern Idaho, 1841–1863," from *Rendezvous: Idaho State University Journal of Arts and Letters* (1967). Trail buffs will welcome this study.

*War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army*, by Mark van de Logt. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. xvii, 350 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Thomas A. Britten is associate professor of history at the University of Texas at Brownsville. He is the author of *Black Warriors: A History of the Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts* (1999) and *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home* (1997).

*War Party in Blue* is a welcome addition to the growing body of scholarship that examines the role and contributions of Native Americans as soldiers and scouts in the U.S. Army. The book details the history of the famed "Pawnee Battalion," a force of Indian scouts that rendered invaluable service as scouts, trackers, and soldiers in several battles fought across the central and northern plains between 1864 and 1877. Based on military and archival sources, the book provides a balanced narrative of the Pawnee scouts from their perspective.

Like Indian soldiers who have served at other times in American history, the Pawnee scouts enlisted for a variety of reasons. First, the Pawnees respected martial values and observed a wide range of rituals and customs related to warfare. Service as scouts was consistent with these values, and the fact that the U.S. military was engaged against traditional Pawnee enemies — the Sioux and Cheyennes — made enlistment as scouts extremely attractive. By serving as scouts, the Pawnees were, in effect, protecting their lands against enemy attack and taking advantage of opportunities to get revenge on their Indian adversaries. Military service also offered men avenues to gain social status among their people, not to mention a steady paycheck and access to food, supplies, and military hardware. Some government and military officials speculated that enlistment would have a "civilizing" effect on Indians and promote assimilation, but military service also reinforced traditional Indian cultures and rituals. Thus, even though they enlisted as soldiers in the army, the Pawnee scouts remained a "war party in blue."

The two most famous officers associated with the Pawnees were the North brothers — Frank and Luther. Tough, daring, and well versed in the Pawnee language and culture, the North brothers often received credit for organizing and dispensing discipline among the unruly and boisterous scouts. To some extent, Van de Logt challenges this assessment, arguing that while the Pawnees respected the two men, the Indians were hardly dominated by them and on occasion disobeyed orders. Outsiders may have perceived Pawnee military prowess as undisciplined, but the North brothers recognized that Pawnee scouts employed time-honored tactics and often permitted

them considerable autonomy in battle. Frank and Luther North were important liaisons between the Pawnees and the U.S. Army, and the Pawnees obeyed them so long as their orders were consistent with Pawnee interests.

The Pawnee scouts served at the height of the Plains Indian Wars. During the Powder River Campaign of 1865, the scouts saw action against Arapahos, captured hundreds of horses, and saved the lives of American soldiers who had gotten lost on the northern plains. In 1867–1868, Pawnee scouts guarded railroad workers surveying and laying track for the Union Pacific. In spite of opposition from the Quaker administrators on their reservation, the Pawnee scouts saw action in the Red River War (1874) and in the second Powder River campaign in 1876–1877.

Although a few Pawnees continued to find employment as scouts in the late 1870s and 1880s, the Powder River campaign was the last time they operated together in an all-Indian unit. A few joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show or other business pursuits, while the remainder settled down and adjusted to life in Indian Territory. Despite their honorable service, the Pawnees did not escape reservation allotment and the federal government's assimilationist agenda. Nevertheless, the Pawnees continue to celebrate the heroic example of the scouts, who remain a source of pride and inspiration to the present.

*Frontier Feminist: Clarina Howard Nichols and the Politics of Motherhood*, by Marilyn S. Blackwell and Kristen T. Oertel. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010. xi, 344 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Joanne Passet is professor of history at Indiana University East. She is the author of *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality, 1853–1910* (2003) and *Sex Variant Woman: The Life of Jeannette Howard Foster* (2008).

Well known in suffrage and reform circles during her lifetime, Clarina Howard Nichols (1810–1885) remained overlooked and underexplored for more than a century until the publication of Diane Eickhoff's *Revolutionary Heart: The Life of Clarina Nichols and the Pioneering Crusade for Women's Rights* (2006) and now *Frontier Feminist*. The long silence about Nichols's role in the nineteenth-century movement for women's rights resulted, in part, because of her residence on the geographical periphery of the East Coast-dominated suffrage movement, and also because her rhetoric lacked sensational appeal and was overshadowed by such colorful activists as the free lovers Mary Gove Nichols and Victoria C. Woodhull. Indeed, when I was a doctoral student just beginning my

study of the nineteenth-century women's rights movement, I gravitated to more overtly dynamic women in the movement and dismissed Clarina Nichols as bland, ordinary, and even colorless. When placed in the context of the times in which she lived, however, her life is anything but that. Blackwell and Oertel's carefully crafted and well-researched biography offers numerous insights into the politics of women's rights activism in the nation's heartland and into the complex factors shaping and circumscribing the strategies nineteenth-century female reformers employed.

Born in Vermont in 1810, Clarina Howard's privileged childhood and educational opportunities prepared her to become a teacher, lecturer, and journalist. The author's thoughtful consideration of her disappointing marriage in 1830 to Justin Carpenter confirms that it became the crucible from which her commitment to married women's property rights emerged. Unable to reconcile her visions of marriage as a form of spiritual companionship with her husband's shiftlessness and inability to provide for their family, she returned to her parents' home in 1839 with three children in tow. Despite the negative stigma associated with marital failure, the young mother petitioned for divorce and attempted to redeem her reputation by immersing herself in benevolent work and moral reform. In 1843, one month after her divorce became final, she married George Washington Nichols, a father figure 25 years her senior who was editor and publisher of the *Wyndham County Democrat*. His evident respect for his wife's intellect, combined with his illness, created opportunities for Clarina Nichols to use the paper as a platform for claiming her voice. Grounding her moral authority in what the authors of this book have termed "the politics of motherhood" (3), she rendered articulate and well-modulated views on the causes of antislavery, temperance, Free Soil, and woman suffrage that soon earned her national recognition.

Clarina Nichols's idealism and optimism, combined with her family's support of the Free Soil movement, led them to migrate to Kansas in 1854 as part of the Free State movement. George Nichols's death the following year slowed but did not deter her efforts to ensure that Kansas would enter the Union as a free state, one in which women possessed equal rights. Throughout the campaign for a free Kansas, Nichols strived to keep her personal and professional life separate, but the two merged when she befriended Lydia Peck, a fugitive wife seeking custody of her children. That incident, Blackwell and Oertel convincingly contend, jettisoned Nichols "from benevolent reformer to fearless political activist" (201). Her subsequent lobbying, involvement in the Kansas Suffrage Association, and lecturing on behalf of the Republican

Party resulted in the passage of a limited school suffrage bill in 1861, the year Kansas achieved statehood. Pragmatically anchoring her activism to motherhood, Nichols knew she would be more effective in reaching politicians if she appeared to be morally upright and genteel (she knitted her way through many contentious legislative sessions and employed flattering rhetoric when speaking to male-dominated audiences). Moving her son to California in 1871, Clarina Nichols remained intellectually engaged in the work of social reform until her death in 1885, publishing essays in which she subtly shifted from a mother's rights defense to one emphasizing women's equal citizenship in marriage.

Although not a trailblazer in the traditional sense (she was not the first to lecture publicly, nor did she utter the boldest statements), Clarina Nichols clearly played an important role in building a collective women's rights consciousness in Kansas and other states where her ideas circulated. Blackwell and Oertel are to be commended for their efforts to decode her carefully constructed life, and for shedding further light on the complexity and contradictions of the nineteenth-century movement for women's rights. Scholars of Iowa women's history, along with other readers, will find this portrayal of Nichols's path to political engagement of interest as a model for investigating the personal and public lives of Iowa activists.

*The Methodist Experience in America: A History*, volume 1, by Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt. Nashvile: Abingdon Press, 2010. xx, 699 pages. Notes, index. \$50.00 paper.

Reviewer Bill R. Douglas lives and works in Des Moines. He has written articles for the *Annals of Iowa*, *Minnesota History*, and *Quaker History*.

When the author of Ecclesiastes wrote that of the making of books, there is no end, she or he probably had in mind books on American Methodism. Every anniversary, schism, or reunion brings another spate, as is the way of denominational histories. Denominational histories are out of fashion, deservedly so, as social history, "lived religion," and more topical subjects seem more compelling, and denominational histories have usually suffered from lack of context — the extreme example being William Harsha's *Story of Iowa*, which despite its title is about Presbyterians in Iowa (although he was ecumenical enough to include United Presbyterians).

Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt laudably build on social history and are always aware of the larger American and ecumenical contexts.

This volume — volume 1 — arrives ten years after volume 2 (a collection of sources), probably some kind of record and an indication of the vagaries of bureaucracies. Volume 2 is outside the purview of this review, except to say that photos of the first lay delegates admitted to the Methodist Episcopal (North) convention include Iowan James Harlan, whose day job was as a U.S. Senator.

*The Methodist Experience* is meant as a textbook for United Methodist seminarians. In terms of accessibility, it only partially succeeds. This is due less to the efforts of the authors than to the nature of institutional histories — and institutions. The tension between institutions and movements accounts for both the problems and the virtues of this book, and this tension plays out differently in different centuries.

If I were teaching this seminary course — and if my students had unlimited book budgets — I would substitute one of the social histories found in footnotes 2 and 3, page 577 — books by Heyrman, Andrews, and Wiggins — on eighteenth-century Methodism. Early Methodism was more movement than institution, and social histories are compelling in a way that institutional histories, including this one, do not seem to be able to be, as they must navigate the first contradictory flag plantings of authority while social histories map changed lives.

The nineteenth century, when virile institutions and rampant movements warily sensed parity, makes for the most compelling reading. Methodists made astonishing progress institutionally, but democratic, abolitionist, and holiness movements kept Methodist institutions off balance. For the nineteenth century, the authors are tracking three African American denominations, two German American, a Northern and Southern, as well as a Methodist Protestant and other Wesleyan spinoffs. They manage to keep all those plates spinning for the 1800s, but lose track in the twentieth century. But the tale is of institutionalization: “Methodism had become an institution-creating church” (135).

By the twentieth century, although movements (fundamentalism, the Social Gospel, civil rights) continued to surface, American Methodism had become so thoroughly institutionalized that the text is preoccupied with an increasingly unwieldy church bureaucracy. As the authors document, the 1937 merger of the Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South, and Methodist Protestant churches and the 1968 merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches are complicated — it takes months after merger to unravel who fits where in the new organizational charts.

The authors are excellent at tracing the importance of race. The price of North-South merger was the creation of a non-geographical “General Conference” that segregated African American congregations

in the new structure. The authors mention Iowa's role as the first predominantly white conference to have an African American bishop.

Iowans John Mott, Annie Wittenmyer, Church of the Nazarene founder Phineas Bresee, Goodwill founder Edgar J. Helms, and long-time national secretary of the Methodist Federation for Social Service Winifred Chappell all make cameo appearances. Cedar Falls is listed as the home of the Evangelical Association's Western Old People's Home. But if space given is an indication, Iowa Methodism's contributions are primarily architectural. Louis Sullivan's design of St. Paul's in Cedar Rapids is admired, but the authors go on for almost a page about Charles City's Trinity United Methodist Church and its architect, Edward Sovik.

A pro-institutional bias can be discerned. Methodist Federation for Social Service radicals who stayed within the Methodist church's parameters are treated more kindly than late twentieth-century conservative critics who flirted with schism. James Kelley, leader of the nineteenth-century Republican Methodists, who challenged the episcopacy on democratic grounds, is dismissed without citing evidence of megalomaniacal intent.

For a book of this import, a bibliography would have been helpful (although a skeleton of one is in the abbreviations). The index, while extensive, is inadequate. Theologian Stanley Hauerwas (529), ethicist John Swomley (500), world religions scholar Diana Eck (540), and the aforementioned Phineas Bresee (320) are mentioned in the text but not in the index, and I suspect my list is incomplete.

Perhaps if the author of *Ecclesiastes* surveyed the American religious scene, the lament would be, of the making of institutions, there is no end. In their monumental attempt to write a denominational history that incorporates social history, Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt have illuminated the potential and the pitfalls of such a project for future historians. Institutions and movements cannot exist without each other, but the landscape is often too small for the both of them.

*Wisconsin's Own: Twenty Remarkable Homes*, by M. Caren Connolly and Louis Wasserman, photography by Zane Williams. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2010. xv, 304 pp. Color photographs, drawings, maps, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.

Reviewer Daniel Naegle is associate professor of architecture at Iowa State University. He specializes in midwestern architecture and photography.

*Wisconsin's Own* has the weight, feel, smell, and full-color cover of a coffee-table book, but it is much more. Beginning with an 1854 octagon

house and ending in 1939 with Frank Lloyd Wright's Wingspread and then the Art Moderne Brooks Stevens House, the authors describe in elegant prose 20 Wisconsin residences — both as buildings and as outward signs of the owner's place in society. Verbal *and* visual, *Wisconsin's Own* is erudite but easily read, impeccable in its selection, thorough and thoughtful in its narratives, sumptuous in its presentation. Its descriptions include hand-drawn plans and elevations, contemporary color photographs, vintage images of houses and owners, and intriguing sidebar details, such as an 1878 sketch of the Octagon House and a photograph of Brooks Stevens's 1958 Wienermobile, that offer insight into a contemporary world far larger than that of the single house.

*Wisconsin's Own* details the society that built the "twenty remarkable houses." It explains the houses' urban context, the materials and methods with which each was made, and beliefs and values made manifest in each building. An 85-year history of the way we have lived in the Midwest, it is illustrious and alive and encourages as it facilitates the "seeing" of much that is no longer visible. A valuable contribution to any history of the Midwest and the United States, it provokes thoughts on time, legacy, social convention, and movements and on the materiality, the house building, that seems to contain all of these.

*Asylum: Inside the Closed World of State Mental Hospitals*, photographs by Christopher Payne, with an essay by Oliver Sacks. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009. Illustrations. 210 pp. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Jane Simonsen is associate professor of history and women's and gender studies at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. She is the author of "This Large Household': Architecture and Civic Identity at the Iowa Hospital for the Insane at Mount Pleasant," in the *Annals of Iowa* (2010).

Christopher Payne's photographs of interiors and exteriors of state institutions for the mentally ill add new perspectives to asylum scholarship by presenting the hospitals not as they were, but as most of them are: public experiments gone to ruin. Juxtaposing images of the buildings' colossal exteriors with images of interior halls dripping with peeled paint, bathrooms gone to seed, and suitcases awaiting lost owners, Payne presents a visual argument that deinstitutionalization resulted in the loss of a poignant yet necessary form of community.

Neurologist Oliver Sacks's opening essay briefly traces the advent of state asylums as "protective structures" that, in spite of the inadequacies and mismanagement that plagued them, often gave form and structure to their inhabitants' lives (2). As mental illness was increas-

ingly managed by drug therapies from the 1960s through the 1980s, the enormous structures and infrastructures, partially maintained by patient labor, were closed. Payne's own short essay sketches a history of asylum architecture, focusing on Thomas Story Kirkbride, whose architectural theories of the "moral cure" influenced most state institutions built between 1860 and 1900, including Iowa's at Mount Pleasant.

Photographs are grouped into several discernable themes. Building exteriors represent the public face of asylums most familiar to scholars and citizens of communities where asylums are located, even as their details newly impress viewers with their beauty and scale. Interior shots show ward hallways, barred windows, and tubs for water cures. Other images illuminate lesser-known spaces: shoe shops, hair salons, farm buildings, sewing rooms, diners, TV studios, and print shops where patients worked and socialized. Water towers and reservoirs, boiler rooms and bowling alleys, theaters and grandstands, doctors' villages and graveyards testify to the importance of asylums not just as buildings, but as material remnants of an experiment in communal living on a grand scale. Kitchen equipment, toothbrushes, and plastic curlers still at the ready suggest an abrupt end to a well-developed way of life. Material culture lovers will linger over the light fixtures, furniture, and mid-century food packages still trapped in sealed rooms. Payne's final theme is death. Most arresting is a photo of unclaimed ashes of residents, carefully labeled and lined up like soup cans on pantry shelves. This absurd mausoleum brings Payne's central point into focus by exposing the tragedy of the buildings' scale: the asylums were conceived as a humane experiment too lavish and extensive to be sustained or reclaimed.

Payne's photographs are a useful corollary to historical studies of mental illness, which regard architecture as a primary lens through which to understand the asylum movement. Facades were a popular nineteenth-century photographic subject; along with architectural plans, such photographs have helped historians assess the methods of practitioners of the moral cure. Payne's photographs refocus our vision on the infrastructure and interiors that were often hidden from public view and reinforce the importance of architecture for studying patients' engagements with asylum spaces. Perhaps more importantly, however, the collection shows that asylum studies belong not only to medical history, but also to community studies, labor history, and material culture studies.

The book will appeal to historians or scholars of material culture as well as to medical personnel, photography lovers, and citizens familiar with the lore and lure of asylums. Each of these will no doubt

find different stories in the images. Photographs of extant Iowa institutions at Clarinda and Independence invite Iowa residents to reassess their understanding of the hulking structures, and provide tempting invitations to revisit the structures not just as enigmatic ruins, but also as crucial to understanding the economic, architectural, and labor histories of these communities as well as communities in their own right.

*The Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway: A Photographic History*, by Don L. Hofsommer. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009. ix, 296 pp. Photographs, maps. \$79.95 cloth, \$49.95 paper.

Reviewer Jamie Beranek is a researcher and a volunteer in special collections at the State Historical Society of Iowa. He lives in Cedar Rapids.

When I started Don L. Hofsommer's *The Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway: A Photographic History*, I decided to put a Post-it note alongside each photograph that I especially liked. Four readings and two pads of Post-its later, the margins of my review copy looked like a forest of yellow. The photos in this book are that good.

Hofsommer is a prolific writer on railroads, especially those of the upper Midwest. The Minneapolis & St. Louis (M&StL) — “my” railroad, as Hofsommer calls it by dint of having grown up in various Iowa towns along its lines — is clearly his favorite. This book could be considered a pictorial companion to his exhaustive history of the M&StL, *The Tootin' Louie* (2005). In fact, though, it can stand on its own.

The M&StL was conceived in 1870 by Minneapolis businessmen who wanted rail connections to the outside besides those offered by the Chicago- and Milwaukee-oriented railroads then existing. Its purpose was to transport wheat and coal to Minneapolis and to carry out flour and lumber. At its peak, the railroad had 1,600 miles of track reaching from Minneapolis to central South Dakota, southern and central Iowa, Peoria in Illinois, and, by various connections, St. Louis. Always plagued by short hauls and competition from much larger railroads, the M&StL's history was marked by two receiverships, periods of modest prosperity, genteel poverty, and a post-World War II renaissance before finally being undone by the truck and the automobile. It was merged into the Chicago & North Western Railroad in 1960; much of its mileage has since been abandoned.

The book is divided into six chapters, each corresponding to particular periods in the railroad's history and each prefaced by a brief summary of the years in question. Here, as in *The Tootin' Louie*, Hofsommer infuses life into each period by discussing not only the financial and managerial history of the railroad but the nitty-gritty of its

operations — passenger train schedules and equipment, freight operations, and locomotive assignments, for example.

Then come the photographs, showing trains, structures, and employees not in isolation but in their working environments going about the business of moving people and goods. Many are rich in atmosphere and detail. A few favorites: a passenger train conductor and brakeman, dignified in appearance and haughty in demeanor in their three-piece uniforms and requisite hats, standing with four dapper men on the platform at Hanska, Minnesota (68); a spectacularly detailed 1916 view of the spacious office at the Madison, Minnesota, depot, showing the agent, telegrapher, and depot helper amid the tools and furniture of their trade (62); and, my favorite, a turn-of-the-century exterior photo of the two-story depot in Madison, Minnesota. The portly agent sporting an impressive handlebar mustache is standing on the platform clad in suspenders but wearing his agent's cap; to his left are four track laborers on a hand-powered section car; behind are two other men, possibly local depot loafers; and at the baggage room end of the depot, three little boys, all barefoot, take in the scene. What catches one's eye, though, on closer examination, is the decorative curtain hanging in one of the upstairs windows, a reminder that the building was not only the agent's workplace but his — and his family's — home as well (16–17).

There are many more. Besides the often atmospheric subject matter, Hofsommer has chosen the unexpected viewpoint — the bird's-eye aerial, the candid, the close-up — and varied the layout, from multiple photos per page to stand-out two-page reproductions such as the Madison depot exterior mentioned above.

If I have a criticism, it is one I raised in my earlier review of *The Tootin' Louie* — namely, the lack of a single, detailed map of the M&StL at its peak. Throughout the book, Hofsommer recounts the construction and slow abandonment of the railroad's component lines. The town names come fast and furious; without a map this history is very hard to follow. The kind of map that is needed — one that shows all the towns on each line — is actually partially reproduced on the book's back cover. Unfortunately, it is there only as a design element and is of no help in plotting locations.

Otherwise, the book is a treasure for anyone — you don't have to be a fan of the M&StL — who relishes good photographs and the drama and atmosphere of midwestern railroading.

*Hoboes: Bindlestiffs, Fruit Tramps, and the Harvesting of the West*, by Mark Wyman. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010. xii, 338 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$28.00 cloth; \$16.00 paper; \$14.99 e-book.

Reviewer Lynne M. Adrian is chair of the Department of American Studies at the University of Alabama. Her research and writing have focused on American hobo subculture in the early twentieth century.

Mark Wyman's excellent book places the history of migratory labor into the context of the development of the West as a region. Most of the previous scholarship on hoboes has placed them in a national context, either as political citizens, unskilled workers in all types of labor, or "others" in the American public imagination. All of the previous works have contributed to understanding the role that the temporary hobo workforce played in American history, but the regional perspective provides an added dimension.

Wyman begins with the development of the railroad system as the lynchpin of western expansion. This is now a well-known aspect of western history, but he closely tracks how the expansion of railroad lines led to the development of new cash crops across the West and to the spread of mono-crop agriculture, as industrial farming quickly supplanted family farms by the early twentieth century in many areas. Wyman traces this phenomenon through waves of settlement and a variety of different crops, including hard wheat, fruit, hops, timber, cotton, sugar beets, nuts, and vegetables. This railroad-based system of labor began to change with the political upheaval of the Mexican Revolution and World War I, which together drastically changed labor availability, migration patterns, and political definitions of Americanism. By 1920, automobile transiency had largely replaced labor traveling by railroad. The presence of large numbers of laborers when and where they were temporarily needed was a key to western development. As Wyman accurately notes in his introduction, "A contemporary western investigator summed up the new situation bluntly: there was an 'immense reserve labor force because there must be'" (6). In the process, hobo labor shaped the West; understanding its importance is fundamental for anyone studying regional, state, or local history.

Wyman's focus on the West as a region provides a change in historical perspective. Much of the previous literature, which looked at transient labor on a national scale, has unintentionally reinforced an ethnic division in the labor force. Most hoboes traveling a large, often nationwide, circuit were either American-born whites or northern Europeans who needed fluency in English to navigate railroads, look for work, or seek handouts. In that focus, most of the more regional transient labor groups have disappeared from historical view. Wyman restores the

Pacific Coast Indian tribes' members to the hops fields, the German-Russians to sugar beet production, Mexican families to cotton farming, and Chinese and Japanese gang labor to a variety of crops. This restoration provides a more complete and nuanced picture of western labor and helps make sense of the political interactions between farmers and labor. A greater acknowledgment of the Reconstruction Era Black Codes of the South as the basis of the Tramp Laws, which had spread across the nation by the 1890s, would strengthen the argument, particularly in regard to the cotton frontier of the Southwest. By the 1920s, migrant agricultural labor was on its way to being re-racialized around an Anglo/Mexican binary; as Wyman notes, "The Rio Grande was no longer the border between the United States and Mexico — the real border was becoming racial rather than geographical" (260).

Wyman also focuses on agricultural labor as an industrial system, which highlights connections between the growth of the West in the nineteenth century and the monoculture factory farming of today. Locavores and current students of globalization may be surprised to find Washington apples in Manchester, England, and California peaches in Europe in the nineteenth century. They were, in fact, a key element in the development of the West. Finally, "because the West's new crops were now sold on both national and world markets, they were beset with sudden, sharp price swings, during growing season and between seasons. . . . In this regard fruit raising and other endeavors were no different from western mining and logging, which also had heavy start-up requirements and suffered frequent shutdowns over collapsing prices" (19). The arc of globalization is longer and more profoundly important than is often considered. Ironically, the regional nature of Wyman's study is what highlights this key element.

Hoboes were a key element of western history, and they have too often disappeared from the historical record. Wyman has helped restore to the historical record the multiethnic peoples who were key to harvesting and developing the West.

*Homer Croy: Corn Country Travel Writing, Literary Journalism, Memoir*, edited by Zachary Michael Jack. North Liberty: Tall Corn Books, 2010. 264 pp. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Katherine Harper is manager of foundation relations at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Her research and writing have focused on the Iowa short-story writer Ellis Parker Butler.

Homer Croy, favorite son of Maryville, Missouri, made his name writing warm, witty depictions of the American Midwest — the region he

dubbed “Corn Country.” The collection under review bundles samples of Croy’s 1910s–1950s magazine work, excerpts from his nonfiction works, and chapters from the memoirs *Country Cured* (1943) and *Wonderful Neighbor* (1945). The earliest tales bear the stamp of his friend Ellis Parker Butler, the Iowa-born humorist who first invited Croy to join the Authors League and who introduced him to the editors of the major magazines. By the early 1920s, Croy’s byline was appearing regularly in *Collier’s* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, and he had developed a distinctive style of his own. This was a writer capable of creating both the comic adventures of the culturally oblivious Peters clan (*They Had to See Paris*, 1926) and *West of the Water Tower*, a naturalistic novel of small-town sin and shame that earned its author a Pulitzer Prize in 1923. Croy’s reminiscences of rural Missouri are warm and whimsical, casual in tone but not slangy, often suggestive but never smutty. They paint a timeless picture of farming life.

Beyond one out-of-print monograph and a few articles, to date no serious examination has been made of Homer Croy’s writings. Nor has his fascinating life been documented in a full-length biography. The introduction and section headings to this book by editor Zachary Jack — a seventh-generation Iowan — are a valuable addition to what little today’s readers might know about the one-time chronicler of Corn Country.

*Murals of Iowa, 1886–2006*, by Gregg R. Narber. Des Moines: The Iowan Books, 2010. 234 pp. Illustrations, notes. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Breanne Robertson is a Ph.D. candidate in art history at the University of Maryland. She is the author of “‘The Cultivation of Corn in Mayan and Modern Times’: Lowell Houser’s Winning Design for the Ames Mural Competition” (*Annals of Iowa*, 2011).

As Maine politicians and cultural leaders clash over the fate of Judy Taylor’s labor-themed mural at the Augusta Department of Labor building, *Murals of Iowa, 1886–2006* offers a timely and persuasive argument for the preservation of Iowa’s endangered artistic heritage. In this foray into the history of Iowa murals, Gregg R. Narber expands the scope of his earlier research on New Deal murals to provide a comprehensive look at mural art in Iowa from the late nineteenth century to the present day. With this ambitious undertaking, he seeks to familiarize Iowa residents with their cultural heritage, thereby increasing their appreciation for and protection of these public monuments.

Narber chronicles concurrent developments in society, politics, and fine art to impart a more sympathetic attitude for public art com-

missions and to instill respect for their cultural value. Six chapters, organized chronologically, introduce readers to Iowa murals of the American Renaissance (1886–1920), the pre–New Deal era (1920–1933), the New Deal era (1933–1945), and the post–World War II period (1945–2006). Each section begins with a general historical overview followed by a series of discrete entries on individual artworks. Narber’s descriptions vary in length and content, depending on available data and relative importance. He variously describes subject matter, artist biography, patronage, reception, and state of preservation. Given the author’s previous publications on New Deal history, it is not surprising that a significant portion of this book is given to explicating the brief but vibrant period of Iowa art between 1933 and 1945. As might be expected, Narber also devotes considerable attention to Iowa’s most famous artist, Grant Wood.

Narber advocates the conservation of Iowa murals not only for their aesthetic appeal, but also for their educational value as reflections of ideology, both past and present. Writing for a general audience, he explains that murals communicate the attitudes and beliefs of the era in which they are made and thus help to establish and sustain defining mythologies “about who we are, and what makes America a nation and Iowa a state” (12). He demonstrates through his book that these ideas are flexible and that negotiations are common, especially when a mural message challenges a community’s self-perception. Destroying the offending mural is not the answer, however. The current mural controversy and others like it, including the painting over of *Law and Culture* (1935) at the Cedar Rapids federal courthouse in the 1970s, highlight the important cultural role that murals once played and still continue to play in shaping community identity.

The strength of Narber’s approach emerges in the sheer volume of material he covers, which itself proclaims the rich cultural heritage belonging to Iowa citizens. Attentive visual analysis and meticulous research reinforce this impression by underscoring the unique circumstances informing each work of art while also linking it to larger national and occasionally even international trends. Much of chapter three, for example, is devoted to the Mexican mural movement for its profound influence on New Deal artists, including Iowa muralists Harry Donald Jones and Lowell Houser. This balance of individual and comparative study allows for a more nuanced understanding of recurring mural themes over time and space. Narber rightly insists on the need for a more inclusive account of mural history if we are to recognize the productive crossings of politics, society, and culture in the evolving stories we tell about ourselves.

Narber employs an impressive array of archival and secondary sources to elucidate the circumstances undergirding Iowa mural projects, as copious footnotes attest. For this fact alone, *Murals of Iowa* will be a boon to future scholarship. Numerous illustrations also enhance the visual appeal and scholarly weight of this book by providing a visual record of Iowa murals unprecedented in print to date.

Nonspecialists interested in Iowa art will appreciate the author's conversational tone, lucid explanations of art historical terminology and iconography, and occasional popular culture references. Narber is at his best when discussing lesser-known New Deal murals, such as the intriguing and controversial mural at the Cedar Rapids courthouse and the contemporary murals sponsored by Principal Financial Group. His intimate knowledge of these latter artworks stems from his tenure with the company's art purchasing program, and his fluid writing reflects a clear appreciation of and comfort with these subjects.

*Murals in Iowa* is not perfect, however. Narber at times sacrifices his authorial voice and narrative focus in an effort to compile a complete record of political, social, and cultural histories. His heavy reliance on block quotations from primary and secondary sources attests to the breadth of research underpinning this book, but these passages are not always used to best effect, especially when they replace Narber's own capable visual analysis, and the frequency with which they occur tends to disrupt the master narrative.

Nonetheless, *Murals of Iowa* is a welcome addition to the small but growing literature on Iowa murals, which remain relatively unknown to scholars and Iowa residents alike. Narber proposes and demonstrates that our lack of awareness is the greatest risk to Iowa murals today. His book brings to our attention a rich and diverse constellation of Iowa art and challenges us to enlarge our cultural heritage beyond the works of a single artist or even a single decade. Filled with delightful images and local anecdotes that will appeal to a wide range of readers interested in Iowa culture, *Murals of Iowa* provides an accessible and highly informative survey of Iowa murals that will help to correct that neglect.

*Memories of a Farm Kitchen*, by Bob Artley and Rob Artley. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co., 2010. 95 pp. 38 recipes, illustrations. \$22.95 cloth.

Reviewer Jill M. Nussel is a lecturer at Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne. In her research and writing, she has used cookbooks to shed light on immigrants and their communities. She is completing a book manuscript, "From Stewpot to Melting Pot: Charity Cookbooks in America's Heartland."

When I first looked at Bob Artley's *Memories of a Farm Kitchen*, I was skeptical that this book could add to a scholarly narrative. After all, nearly half the pages are recipes. There are no photographs, just illustrations and watercolor paintings of the author's memories of his childhood separated by over 80 years of time and space. But after reading his folksy narrative, I am happy to report that I was wrong. It is an excellent addition to scholarly inquiry.

Bob Artley is the long-retired editorial cartoonist for the now defunct *Des Moines Tribune* and has illustrated several farm-related children's books and may be best known for his syndicated cartoon (and book collection), *Memories of a Former Kid*. In *Memories of a Farm Kitchen*, he recounts his childhood and teen years spent on the family farm near Hampton, Iowa. Born in 1917, Artley spent the 1920s and Great Depression years in the home built by his grandfather in 1912. Here we see this kitchen as the heart of not only his family home but also of a child's universe. The kitchen served as a center for all things on the farm: chores, food preparation, the laundry, thresher dinners, a place to write letters, and even a place of worship.

The book is remarkable for its vivid detail about the items in the kitchen, its functional layout, and the author's folksy description of the activities that took place there. We meet Artley's parents: the father who threshed wheat, butchered animals, and hauled ice to the icebox; the mother who toiled over a washtub, canned meats and vegetables, prepared countless meals, and then cleaned up afterward, who also used the kitchen as a place where she wrote countless letters to far-flung family and made buckets of popcorn to ease the stress of homework.

In Iowa during the first decades of the last century, food storage could mean the difference between eating and starvation. Artley explains that the roads outside his family's farm were often too snow-covered in the winter or too muddy in the spring to go into town. Months of separation from a grocery store meant the family lived on what was gathered and preserved from the previous harvest. The Artleys did not have a smokehouse, but we see his father working at a table in the cellar rubbing the hams with hickory-flavored salt. Readers are introduced to the intricacies of sausage making, preserving meats and vegetables, separating cream, and rendering lard.

The book's drawings and watercolors are certainly interesting even at first glance, but I was not originally convinced of their utility for scholarship. However, the drawings demonstrate intricate details of everyday existence that might not be captured by photographs. I doubt that most people kept or even took photos of their laundry and canning facilities. Artley's drawings of the kitchen highlight the most

important features so readers can see the organizational structure of a farmhouse kitchen.

Dorothy Harchanko provides 34 pages of recipes and instructions for everything from lye soap to canning meat to millet biscuits to cookies. In today's world of prepared foods, readers are enriched by the sheer variety of foods created at a time that did not include toasters, microwaves, or refrigeration. The only way to cook was to physically stoke the fire in the stove — a job that fell to Artley and his brothers.

Much of the strength of this book is in what we don't see written, but what we can infer. Iowa farmers faced economic hardships during the 1920s and were particularly hard hit during the Great Depression. But in Artley's memories, we feel little deprivation. Only once does he refer to the stressful times of the Depression. In those difficult times, surely the parents struggled to make ends meet, but instead we see his parents keeping careful ledgers. During the Depression, many families went hungry from time to time. Here we see Father leading the evening prayer, thanking God for their dinner, whereas the very fact that the family had dinner every night was a testament to their own hard work. In fact, the dinners Artley's mother served from the larder — sausage and millet muffins — were some of his favorite meals.

There's yet another story within this story. In 2010, Artley was 93 years old and suffered a series of strokes, so the book was completed by his children and stepchildren. The result is a revealing memoir of life on an Iowa farm during the Great Depression.

*Reading Places: Literacy, Democracy and the Public Library in Cold War America*, by Christine Pawley. *Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010. xi, 325 pp. Tables, notes, appendixes, index. \$80.00 cloth, \$28.95 paper.

Reviewer Joan Bessman Taylor is assistant professor of library and information science at the University of Iowa. Her research and writing have focused on the history of reading and readers and the promotion of reading.

To call Christine Pawley's most recent book-length contribution to print culture studies a case study of Wisconsin's Door-Kewaunee Regional Library Demonstration of 1950–1952 is to obfuscate its scope and insight into the creation of official literacy policies and how these intersect with constructions of identity, citizenship, and freedom. It functions on dual dimensions: as a tale of library and reading history in Wisconsin — a history sharing similarities with other midwestern states — and as an argument for historians to conduct what Pawley terms “a middle layer of analysis” examining the organizational con-

text as a link between individuals and wider social and cultural conditions (16).

In the late 1940s, the Wisconsin Free Library Commission (WFLC), a state agency created to support public libraries, recognized the disparities in service across the state and planned a demonstration of ideal library service in a rural area. It was thought that if people could see the benefits of high-quality library service in action, they would be more likely to support funding for libraries through local taxes. This demonstration involved establishing a regional library that would provide a wider range of services than individual towns or villages could, a key component of which would be a bookmobile traveling to the most remote locations. The adjoining counties of Door and Kewaunee, together forming the Door Peninsula, were selected as the site for this experiment. At the conclusion of the three-year trial period, voters were asked to pass a referendum permitting the project to continue. Even in light of success evidenced by increased library circulation figures and improved reading scores of the rural grade-school children who used the bookmobile services in large numbers, reactions to the demonstration were mixed. Door County voted in favor of the tax levy, and its bookmobile continued for more than 30 years. Kewaunee County turned it down, halting the bookmobile service altogether. Pawley illuminates the motivations, satisfactions, frustrations, and fears of those involved through an analysis along three levels — societal, individual, and institutional.

Throughout *Reading Places*, Pawley emphasizes the importance of “locality and sociability in understanding the reading practices of ordinary Americans, particularly in the context of public policies designed to shape that reading” (28). Figuring prominently are differences in class, gender, and ethnicity and how these affect societal values. Imbued with disparate migrant experiences, Cold War-era Wisconsin was the site of much cultural conflict. Varying values governed everything from how time should be spent at home to what should be included in the curriculum of the one-room schoolhouses to the degree to which government should intervene in local affairs (including the allocation of federal dollars). Each of these influenced the divided reactions to the Door-Kewaunee Regional Library Demonstration.

Although primarily about library development in Wisconsin, the work establishes broader implications. The real need to extend rural library services was shared by neighboring states, as were concerns about what should (or should not) be read by whom and to what end. The efforts of the Iowa Library Association in the early 1950s, for instance, focused on lobbying for the Library Services Act (1956) in order

to secure federal funding for rural libraries. Even today, of the 542 public libraries in Iowa, 412 serve populations of less than 2,500. As a former resident of Iowa and author of *Reading on the Middle Border: The Culture of Print in Late-Nineteenth-Century Osage, Iowa*, Pawley relates many examples from events in Iowa, the Midwest, and the nation.

Beyond its illumination of the complex interactions and tensions historically influencing support for or opposition to libraries, factors still pertinent and recurring as libraries reinvent themselves in light of ubiquitous technology use and the current economic recession, *Reading Places* makes an equal or greater contribution in its lucidity regarding the research methods used to access that history. Pawley draws on newspaper coverage and interviews with more than 25 key individuals to vividly convey the experiences of those who were involved in the demonstration. She also uses often overlooked primary sources — institutional records, particularly library circulation records — to reveal patron borrowing patterns and individual reading choices, thereby providing comparisons to the claims made by the various stakeholders. Her inclusion of tables of circulation information and relevant statistics, as well as her precise descriptions of her methodological approach, serve as a model for scholars and researchers while elucidating the importance of retaining records that are routinely discarded. *Reading Places* is a timely call to action to print culture historians, library advocates, and anyone interested in the future of public archives.

*Beauty Shop Politics: African American Women's Activism in the Beauty Industry*, by Tiffany M. Gill. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010. xi, 192 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$75.00 cloth, \$25.00 paper.

Reviewer Malia McAndrew is assistant professor of history at John Carroll University. Her Ph.D. dissertation (University of Maryland, 2008) was "All-American Beauty: The Experiences of African American, European American, and Japanese American Women with Beauty Culture in the Mid-Twentieth Century United States."

The politics of African American hair is a rich, vibrant subject of academic inquiry. In *Beauty Shop Politics*, historian Tiffany M. Gill moves the scholarship beyond its overemphasis on the political meanings of hair styling practices to examine the politics of beauticians themselves. Gill argues that beauty culture professions have historically served as important vehicles through which black women have advocated political change in America. By examining the lives of black beauticians, beauty school owners, and members of beauty culture associations, Gill

links black beauty culturists to the major political and social struggles that African Americans took part in over the course of the twentieth century.

In *Beauty Shop Politics*, we learn of black beauty culturists who, in the early twentieth century, doubled as organizers for Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and went on to become labor leaders in the International Ladies Garment Worker's Union. Gill further positions noted black hair care industrialists, such as Madame C. J. Walker and Annie Turnbo Malone, as social agitators who fought against sexism within the black community as they sold beauty culture as a means for black women's economic advancement. By the 1930s, beauty culture organizations formed to help legitimate their profession and lobby state governments for favorable legislation. Gill's most powerful evidence for her thesis comes from the middle decades of the twentieth century, when beauty culturists worked as grassroots organizers in the fight to dismantle Jim Crow. In addition to participating in sit-ins and marches themselves, beauticians used their shops to politicize patrons. They distributed NAACP literature, registered voters, collected donations, and made the civil rights movement a topic of conversation on their shop floors. In the post-civil rights era, Gill asserts, this tradition was kept alive by beauticians who used their businesses to educate black women about healthy eating, the need for breast and cervical cancer screenings, and the growing rates of HIV infection among black females.

Throughout Gill's work, she asserts that black beauty culturists were effective social and political organizers because of their unique economic position. As self-made businesswomen, black beauticians secured their financial livelihood from within the African American community. Unlike domestic servants, who worked under their white employers' watchful eye or schoolteachers who were beholden to local school boards, beauticians could operate in the world of politics without the fear that white reprisals would leave them jobless. In addition, Gill argues, the beauty shop was a good incubator for political activism because women gathered there for long periods of time and were accustomed to talking about community issues. Much political groundwork could thus be laid under the guise of doing hair.

*Beauty Shop Politics* more than adequately supports its central argument that black beauticians served as key mobilizers for African American social and political movements over the course of the twentieth century. It is most convincing for the first six decades of the century and then falls somewhat short in its investigation of more recent advocacy efforts. Gill only sparingly discusses the politics of Black

Power and the Afro in the 1970s. In addition, her analysis of beauticians' health activism in the late twentieth century does not make a distinction between the efforts of contemporary beauticians who have been co-opted by mainstream health organizations and the earlier work of beauty culturists whose activism was borne out of the black community itself. Despite this declension at the end of the text, *Beauty Shop Politics* remains a convincing chronicle of black women's social and political mobilization via the beauty industry.

*Memory of Trees: A Daughter's Story of a Family Farm*, by Gayla Marty. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. xv, 237 pp. Illustrations, bibliographical note. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewer Zachary Michael Jack is associate professor of English at North Central College. A native Iowan and resident of rural Jones County, he has edited many books of midwestern history, agriculture, and essay, including *Homer Croy: Corn Country Travel Writing, Literary Journalism, and Memoir* (2010) and *Iowa: The Definitive Collection* (2009).

I'm glad to have read Gayla Marty's smart, soulful memoir, *Memory of Trees: A Daughter's Story of a Family Farm* and happier still to recommend it. Although the Martys, like so many midwestern farm families, long ago sold out, Gayla Marty stands out as a farmer's daughter whose deeply felt epiphanies concerning the blessing and balm of her agrarian upbringing have been fully realized in an adult life lived in the Twin Cities. As the old saying goes, you can't take the farm out of the farmer's daughter, and for this fact we, her readers, are fortunate. Unlike other recent memoirs of its ilk, *Memory of Trees* is admirably understated and wholly but not blindly appreciative — not a purveyor of the wild child's woe-is-me, couldn't-wait-to-leave-the-farm tell-all that pervades today's farm memoirs written by erstwhile rural sons and daughters.

Although the trees that lend the book its name — maple, oak, birch, spruce, etc. — are episodically described in what amount to interstitial prose odes — the title itself misdirects: the book's front cover features good black dirt, tilled deep, for example, but only the foggiest outline of a tree may be made out. Marty's is not, then, principally a memoir of botany, ecology, or even sustainable agriculture, but a narrative of a daughter's role as a witness to, and sometimes player in, the machinations of a midwestern dairy farm near Rush City, Minnesota, in the 1960s and 1970s. Every farm family should be so lucky as to have a recorder as faithful as Marty, and she herself seems cognizant of her gift and its attendant burdens. "What was written on my

own forehead," she writes, "had not been visible to me, but now I knew part of it — that I should see this and write it down" (221).

The author is at her best describing the sweetly intentioned, utterly fallible members of her clan, lovingly parsing layers of family leaders and legends. As a trained journalist, Marty writes actively, with muscular verbs deployed in staccato rhythms that make for non-nonsense, monosyllabic music, like this: "Every other day, the bulk truck comes to pick up our milk from the cold tank in the new milk house. The driver pushes a giant hose through a trap door and attaches it to the bulk tank, and all the milk is sucked cleanly out" (52). Elsewhere the writing turns more rhapsodic, increasingly so as the memoir advances chronologically toward the present day, and as the voice of author, forced to bear witness to the illness and death of her elders and the ultimate auction of the farm, leans toward the worshipful. Of her uncle Gaylon, for example, Marty waxes, "I still see him in the sunlight, surrounded by a green field, fire lilies in the ditches, his face in the shade of the brim of his hat, light shirt, denim blue jeans . . . exulting under the sky" (230).

The author's ability to move between the utilitarian prose of a communications professional and the loftier rhapsodies of her family's Swedish Baptist faith distinguishes her writing, but such strengths sometimes turn to weakness when religious themes, so prominent in early chapters, functionally disappear in the book's broad middle. The author's intervening departure from the farm and from the book's initial eco-theological motifs makes the narrative and its author seem increasingly urban and secular with each successive chapter. Moreover, her laconic voice, coupled with the inherent timelessness of the farm, often make the whys and wherefores and whens of the story hard to track. A case in point is Marty's husband, Patrick, whom the memoir mentions only belatedly and obliquely, and the author's home in the Twin Cities, likewise mentioned sparingly. These omissions and others hint at unexplained gaps in a memoir that is, in the final analysis, far more revealing of the family than of the author-daughter as an adult.

In the end, midwestern readers, especially those with farm backgrounds, will discover in *Memory of the Trees* a well-wrought and historically relevant recollection. Like a sturdy hutch or table hewn by a farm elder, the art here shows signs of being fussed over and thoroughly worked. Others may want from it more roughness or more refinement; I like it just the way it is.

*Monster Fire at Minong: Wisconsin's Five Mile Tower Fire of 1977*, by Bill Matthias. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2010. xvi, 176 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendixes, index. \$14.95 paper.

Reviewer Ken Brown is a battalion chief with the Iowa City Fire Department and teaches History and Philosophy of the Fire Service at Kirkwood Community College.

*Monster Fire at Minong* is a first-person account of the largest forest fire in the Midwest in more than 50 years. In addition to the author's recollections and personal notes, Bill Matthias interviewed more than 130 people who were involved in fighting the fire. The narrative follows the course of the fire from its start with a single match at a campfire on a Saturday afternoon through its eventual control and extinguishment along a riverbank in the early morning 17 hours later. The book keeps readers' interest and also informs them about how wildland fires were fought in the Midwest in the 1970s.

The second section of the book draws several of the lessons learned from the fire. The magnitude of the fire, unusual in the Midwest, forced fire departments and natural resources agencies to adopt many of the tactics and strategies already in use by western fire departments and the U.S. Forest Service for dealing with any future fires. Before the Minong fire, a wildland fire in the Midwest was considered a local problem; afterwards it was recognized that a forest fire is a regional problem that needs state resources as quickly as possible. No fires as big as the Five Mile Tower Fire have ravaged the Midwest since then — a testament to the value of the lessons learned at that fire.

## New on the Shelves

"New on the Shelves" is a list of recent additions to the collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa. It includes manuscripts, audio-visual materials, and published materials recently acquired or newly processed that we think might be of interest to the readers of the *Annals of Iowa*. The "DM" or "IC" at the end of each entry denotes whether the item is held in Des Moines or Iowa City.

### Manuscripts

Ernst, Daniel P. Collection on Wadena Rock Festival. 1 ft., 1970–1974. Documentation files related to the Wadena Rock Festival compiled by Daniel Ernst, a partner in the Dubuque law firm that represented the event's promoters in Iowa district and supreme court cases and helped clear other legal impediments to staging the festival. Includes court documents, news clippings, and some snapshots. DM.

Girls Volunteer Aid (Des Moines). 1 scrapbook, 1917–1950s. Scrapbook related to "girls volunteer aid" group in Des Moines, a service club organized to support soldiers stationed at Camp Dodge and Fort Des Moines during World War I. Scrapbook includes information about the wartime group, its postwar activities as a "distinguished service club," and some biographical information about its individual members. DM.

Grant, Daniel Seaver. 3 vols. Handwritten reminiscences (transcription included) of Daniel Seaver Grant (1840–1914), who moved from Massachusetts to the Midwest in 1864, eventually settling in Marshall County in 1875. DM.

Sherwood, Benjamin. 6 documents, 1851–1853. Letters between Benjamin Sherwood (Marion County) and grandson Benjamin Sherwood Hedrick (Cambridge, MA), discussing farming, Iowa resources, and national politics, particularly the issue of protective tariffs. DM.

Waizman, Jacob. 3 ephemera items; 1 photo, 1945. Provisional identification card for civilian internee of Buchenwald concentration camp that belonged to Holocaust survivor Jacob Waizman (Des Moines), with accompanying information and photo of Waizman and wife Paula, who was also a concentration camp survivor. DM.

### Audio-Visual

Civil war. 1 black-and-white photograph, 1864. Portrait of George W. Devin (Ottumwa), an adjutant in the 47th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, accompanied by a copy of his pension records and biographical information. DM.

Des Moines views. Photo album (9 black-and-white photographs), ca. 1910. Small "Souvenir of Des Moines" album with leather cover containing photos of ice wagon, foundry, and other local scenes. DM.

Iowa cabinet card portraits. 136 cabinet card photographs, 8 cartes-de-visite, 1 tintype, 1870s–1890s. Studio card portraits by Iowa photographers from various communities. DM.

Iowa postcards. 2 stereographs, ca. 1875. Two stereograph views of new bridge near Monroe. DM.

Iowa postcards. 21 photographic and lithographic postcards, ca. 1910. Postcard views of Iowa communities: Denison, Dexter, Des Moines, Oakland, Perry, Roseville, Villisca, and Woodward. DM.

Iowa railroads. 1 half-tone print, 1901. Half-tone print showing McKinley Special crossing the Boone Viaduct (Des Moines River) on the Chicago & North Western Railway. Published by Boone Blank Book Company. DM.

Loemker, Herman (Rev.). 165 lantern slides, ca. 1910–1934. Lantern slide collection of Rev. Herman Loemker, German Methodist Episcopal minister, including views of Iowa communities where he lived and preached (Colesburg, Denison, Earlville, Garner, Gladbrook, et al.) and slides with illustrations and graphics used in presentations on temperance and Methodist church history. DM.

Norden Singers (Des Moines). 12 black-and-white photographs, 1895–ca. 1950. Photographs of the Norden Singers, a chorus comprising men of Swedish heritage. DM.

Sherman, Benjamin Harry. 8 black-and-white photographs, ca. 1910. Photos related to Dr. Benjamin Harry Sherman of Dexter, a family physician and inventor of an early X-ray machine. Portraits, residence, and photo of Sherman in his office with X-ray machine. DM.

## Map

Des Moines. 1915. Map of Des Moines's wholesale and manufacturing district published by — and showing properties owned by — F. M. Hubbell & Son. DM.

## Published Materials

*An Address Delivered at Lincoln, Sept. 26, 1878: During the Nebraska State Fair and upon the Invitation of the State Board of Agriculture*, by A. S. Paddock. [Omaha?]: Nebraska State Board of Agriculture, 1879. 21 pp. IC.

*Anamosa Penitentiary*, by Richard Snively and Steve Wendl. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010. 127 pp. IC.

*Birder's Guide to the Iowa and Cedar River Valleys*. [Cedar Rapids]: WDG Communications, Inc., 2009. 65 pp. IC.

*Booking in Iowa: The Book Trade in and around Iowa City: A Look Back*, by Joseph A. Michaud. Iowa City: The Bookery and Camp Pope Book Shop, 2009. 146 pp. IC.

*A Cherokee Daughter of Mount Holyoke*, by Althea Bass. Muscatine: The Prairie Press, 1937. 26 pp. IC.

*Dr. Flint's Treatise on the Heart, Kidneys, Circulation, Brain and Nerves Giving their Anatomy, Physiology, and Diseases and their Means of Cure with Illustrations and a Summary in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian*. 2nd ed. New York: Mack Drug Co., 1888. 90 pp. IC.

*The Enigma of Wesley Monroe Sauer and His Quixotic Descent into Madness*, by Timothy C. Parrott. Iowa City, 2009. 41 pp. *Biographical sketch of an Iowa City poet, prankster, and character (1894–1953)*. DM, IC.

*From the Great Lakes to the Great Plains: Meskwaki Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, edited by Lynn M. Alex. Milwaukee: Wisconsin Archeological Society, 2008. 202 pp. DM, IC.

"General Nathaniel B. Baker and the Grasshopper Plagues in Northwest Iowa, 1873–1875," by Matthew M. Colbert. M.A. thesis, Iowa State University, 2009. 87 pp. IC.

"The Grassroots Diffusion of the Woman Suffrage Movement in Iowa: The IESA, Rural Women, and the Right to Vote, by Sara Anne Egge." M.A. thesis, Iowa State University, 2009. 110 pp. IC.

*Instructions to Agents with Rules and Rates of the Home Insurance Co. of Iowa City, Iowa*. Davenport: Luse & Griggs, 1867. 31 pp. IC.

"Iowa Agritourism Consumer Profile: Demographics, Preferences, and Participation Levels," by Melissa Sue Nasers. M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 2009. 99 pp. IC.

*Iowa's Industrial Survey*. N.p., [1929?]. 20 pp. IC.

*Living Arrows: A Story in Two Parts*, by Hildagarde Spielbauer Brooks. [LaVergne, TN]: XLibris Corp., 2009. 359 pp. *Story of a large German American family from Guttenberg, with emphasis on the years of the Great Depression and World War II*. DM, IC.

*The Modern Educator: Radio*. Philadelphia: Atwater Kent Manufacturing Co., 1930. 24 pp. IC.

*The Present Condition of the Live Cattle and Beef Markets of the United States and the Causes Therefor*, statement of Philip D. Armour before the Special Committee of the United States Senate. Chicago: Chicago Legal News Co., 1889. 23 pp. IC.

*Rules and Regulations Governing the Operation of Motor Carriers*. [Des Moines: Board of Railroad Commissioners of the State of Iowa?], 1923. 8 pp. IC.

*Since I Started for the War: Letters and Diary of Solomon B. Humbert, Co. B, 31st Iowa Volunteer Infantry*, by Jeanine Humbert Johnson and Cynthia Huffman Sweet. Cedar Falls: Sweet Press, 2007. v, 171 pp. *Civil War*. IC.

*A Speech, Delivered at the Nebraska State Fair in the City of Lincoln, Tuesday, Sept 2, 1873*, by J. Sterling Morton. N.p.: Nebraska State Board of Agriculture., 1873. 24 pp. IC.

*Sportsman's Guide to the Iowa River Valley*. [Cedar Rapids]: WDG Communications, Inc., 2008. 32 pp. IC.

*A Tallgrass Prairie Alphabet*, by Claudia McGehee. A Bur Oak Book. Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2004. *Children's book*. DM, IC.

*This I Remember*, by Delma Schares. [Bangor, ME]: Booklocker, 2009. 140 pp. *Memoir by a woman (b. 1927) who grew up in Ashton, then spent most of the rest of her life in Jesup*. IC.

*Tour of Iowa Counties: Historical Sketches of Southwestern Iowa Counties (Fremont, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Taylor Counties)*, by Alexander R. Fulton. N.p., n.d. IC.

*Upper Midlands Memories: A Collection of Recollections*. . . . N.p., n.d. 24 pp. *One-page sketches of notable midwesterners, including Herbert Hoover, J. N. "Ding" Darling, the Duesenberg brothers, and Billy Sunday*. IC.

*Xúc mảy: (Never Happen)*, by Gary Pool. Tabor, 2009. 370 pp. *Vietnam War memoir by Iowa author*. DM, IC.

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RALPH SCHARNAU has taught U.S. history survey classes at Northeast Iowa Community College, Peosta, for the past ten years. His research interests focus on Dubuque and Iowa labor history. Since January 2002, he has written monthly op-ed pieces for the *Dubuque Telegraph Herald*. His article in this issue of the *Annals of Iowa* is his third for the journal.

CHAD WILLIAM TIMM is assistant professor of education at Grand View University in Des Moines. He earned a master’s degree in history and a PhD. in education from Iowa State University. His current research centers on the impact poverty has on student achievement. He dedicates this article to his grandfathers, Loel C. Timm and William L. McNamara, both veterans of World War II.

## The State Historical Society of Iowa

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