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In This Issue

ERIC STEVEN ZIMMER, a doctoral candidate in American history at the University of Iowa, describes the Meskwaki fight for self-governance, in the face of the federal government's efforts to force assimilation on them, from the time they established the Meskwaki Settlement in the 1850s until they adopted a constitution under the Roosevelt administration's Indian New Deal in the 1930s.

GREGORY L. SCHNEIDER, professor of history at Emporia State University in Kansas, relates the efforts made by the State of Iowa to maintain service on former Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad lines in the 1970s as that once mighty railroad company faced the liquidation of its holdings in the wake of bankruptcy proceedings.

Front Cover

As the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad faced bankruptcy in the 1970s, it abandoned branch lines and depots across the state of Iowa. This 1983 photo of the abandoned depot and platforms in West Liberty represents just one of many such examples. To read about how the State of Iowa stepped in to try to maintain as much rail service as possible as the Rock Island was liquidated, see Gregory Schneider's article in this issue. Photo taken by and courtesy of James Beranek.

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In Memoriam:
A Tribute to
Dorothy A. Schwieder, 1933–2014

TOM MORAIN

IOWA HISTORY lost a great champion on August 13, 2014, when Dorothy Schwieder died at her home in Ames. For three decades, she reigned as the dean of Iowa historians. She taught Iowa history to thousands of students at Iowa State University, served multiple terms on the State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI) Board of Trustees, gave of her time freely to community history projects and research requests, and authored an avalanche of books and articles on the state's history. Besides writing dozens of book chapters, scholarly articles, and encyclopedia entries, she authored, coauthored, or coedited nine books, including a monograph on Iowa's Old Order Amish, an elementary and middle-school Iowa history text, a popular Iowa history book, and the sesquicentennial history of Iowa State University. Because she was on the SHSI board at the time, her one-volume survey, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, was ineligible for consideration for the Benjamin F. Shambaugh Award, but because of its obvious significance, Governor Terry Branstad issued Dorothy a special citation for its contribution to the field. In 2008 SHSI presented her with its Petersen-Harlan Award for significant lifetime contributions to Iowa history, and in 2012 she was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame.

Dorothy was my office mate, my mentor, my colleague, my coauthor, my favorite editor, my bridge partner, and my friend. She was also my job creator. After only a few years, Dorothy's Iowa history course at Iowa State had become so popular that she could no longer teach all the students who wanted to take it, even

when each section was expanded to 100 students and even when it was taught on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. I was hired to teach the overload – another 200 students, and the rest, so they say, is history.

When I was assigned a desk in Dorothy's office, she became the only regular history faculty member who had to share her office space. I feared that she would resent my presence, both in the office and as a trespasser on her Iowa history turf. I was wrong on both counts. She could not have been more gracious. She shared her syllabus, her reading list, and the best books to read as background sources. When I asked questions, she answered them and gave suggestions for my sections. I was surprised by how nice she was to me, but as the year went on, I found that she treated everyone the same way, students and fellow faculty members alike. She was a model of graciousness.

That gracious spirit extended to her family, her friends, her church, and her community, but it was in her role as Dorothy the Historian that I came to see it most clearly. She was equally at home in the classroom, in a small-town library or church basement, at a history conference or a SHSI board meeting. She took Iowa history to people all around the state. We all touched base with Dorothy when we wanted to start a research project. We wanted to get her suggestions or her recommendations for source material. If the truth were known, however, what we really wanted was her blessing – her affirmation, her approval – which, of course, she so readily provided. There is today a camaraderie among Iowa historians. We are a collegial crew, not competitive or turf guarding, and willing to help each other. It is Dorothy who set that tone and modeled a spirit of cooperative generosity.

And in a truly Dorothy-like way, that generosity extended to the people she wrote about in her books and articles. Her heart was with those whom more conventional historians ignored, those whose stories rarely made it into history books. In a way, her books, articles, and history talks paralleled and complemented the civil rights movement that was under way during the decades of her professional career. She brought to life people society – and most historians – were all too comfortable overlooking. She wrote about the wives of coal miners who worked long



hours washing, ironing, and cooking not only for their own families but for relatives and for boarders. She and Elmer were invited into the homes and even to the dinner tables of the Amish who trusted them to tell their stories to a skeptical world. She wrote about Iowa farm wives on the frontier and in the Great Depression a century later who struggled through good times and bad to earn a better life for their children.

One of her favorite anecdotes was about an experience interviewing a coal miner's wife in the family's home. Under Dorothy's kindness, the woman opened up and talked freely about the hardships and hard work she had endured. During the interview, the woman's husband came in and sat in the corner of the room. When the phone rang, he didn't get up to answer it. It became obvious to Dorothy that in this family, it was the wife's job to jump up to get the phone whenever it rang. After repeated rings, the wife turned to her husband and told him sharply, "You get it. Dorothy is talking to ME." Here was a woman who must have felt so often invisible, who was rarely if ever asked her opinion about anything. She relished this hour-long opportunity to share her story with someone who considered that story important. Dorothy carried with her that respect for the worth of all persons not only into the interview and the research but into her

writing as well. She found dignity in lives that others overlooked and treated them with integrity and her characteristic grace.

From the movie *Field of Dreams* comes the now famous tribute to the Hawkeye State — “Is this heaven? No, it’s Iowa.” When Dorothy comes to the Pearly Gates, she may wonder where she is and ask Saint Peter, “Am I still in Iowa?” He will respond, “No, this is heaven.” And Dorothy will say, “Then let me tell you about Iowa.” When she does, I hope he listens because no one knows Iowa better. Her legacy is not only in her writings, but in the spirit in which she engaged with her fellow Iowans — past and present — and her model of gracious generosity to all. We shall miss her.

Settlement Sovereignty: The Meskwaki Fight for Self-Governance, 1856–1937

ERIC STEVEN ZIMMER

ON NOVEMBER 17, 1937, an official at the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) in Washington, D.C., wired a brief, fragmented note to the superintendent at the Tama Indian Agency in central Iowa: “Congratulations to you and Indians results Iowa constitution election.”¹ The message’s hurried, celebratory tone came in response to news the OIA had received a day earlier: members of the Meskwaki tribe had accepted, by an excruciatingly narrow two-vote margin, a constitution in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA). Less than a month later, a message from several Meskwaki men about the same event arrived on the desk of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. This petition took a far different tone: “We members of the Sac and Fox Indians at Tama Iowa are not satisfied with the election

This article would not have been possible without funding from the University of Iowa (UI) Graduate Student Senate and a State Historical Society of Iowa Research Grant. The author presented drafts at UI history department conferences in 2012 and 2013 and at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association annual meeting in 2013. Many thanks go out to all of the readers, known and anonymous, who offered comments—especially Jacki Thompson Rand, Johnathan and Suzanne Buffalo, Douglas Foley, and Mary Bennett. The article is dedicated, with love, to Samantha, who married me just as it came off the press.

1. William Zimmerman Jr. to Ira D. Nelson, 11/17/1937, IRA folder, Meskwaki Historic Preservation Department and Museum, Tama, Iowa (hereafter IRA-MHPDM). For further information, see Judith Daubenmier, *The Meskwaki and Anthropologists: Action Anthropology Reconsidered* (Lincoln, NE, 2008), 45; and Theodore H. Haas, *Ten Years of Tribal Government under I.R.A.* (Lawrence, KS, 1947), 16–26. The Office of Indian Affairs became the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1947. This article uses the historically accurate former term throughout.

that was recently supposed to be held, which was supposed to adopt a mode of handling the Indian lands that belong to us." It came affixed with nearly a hundred Meskwaki signatures.²

These pieces of correspondence reveal the controversy surrounding a tribal legal transformation that had been brewing on the settlement for over three years. Since early 1934 Meskwaki tribal members had been considering the ramifications of the IRA, the most significant legislative change in Indian policy during the so-called Indian New Deal. That dramatic shift in federal policy presented tribes nationwide with a choice between retaining long-held forms of government and organizing under a constitution that purported to reaffirm tribal self-governance after several oppressive and assimilative decades. Despite a contentious debate over the IRA and the language its constitution would ultimately take, the tribe officially reorganized in the autumn of 1937.³

The ratification that fall marks a pivotal moment in the transformation of Meskwaki governance. The document recast the tribal government, and the Meskwaki Nation follows it to this day. This article surveys the years between 1856 and 1937, offering a case study of the ways American Indian communities have acted throughout history to affirm their tribal sovereignty. Meskwaki political maneuvering during this period—which included the leveraging of their unique land ownership—exposes weaknesses in the oppressive project of assimilation carried out by the OIA in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite its best efforts, the agency failed to snuff out the Meskwaki ability to engage their politics and control local affairs. Instead, tribal members

2. John Tataposh et al. to Harold L. Ickes, 12/13/1937, IRA-MHPDM. The Meskwaki Nation is formally recognized as the "Sac and Fox of the Mississippi in Iowa." *Meskwaki* roughly translates to "Red Earth People" and represents the tribal spelling. It is one of three tribes bearing the name "Sac and Fox," a title that derives from the close historical association between the Meskwaki and the Sauk. The two others are the Sac and Fox Nation in Oklahoma and the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska. See L. Edward Purcell: "The Unknown Past: Sources for History Education and the Indians of Iowa," in *The Worlds Between Two Rivers: Perspectives on American Indians in Iowa*, ed. Gretchen M. Bataille, David M. Gradwohl, and Charles L. P. Silet (Ames, 1978), 27.

3. Johnathan L. Buffalo, "Historical Overview of the Adoption of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 by the Sac and Fox of the Mississippi in Iowa," 30–33, IRA-MHPDM.

persistently dodged attacks on their sovereignty and negotiated internally to maintain, and ultimately reshape, their government.

Historians of Native America have been pushing back against monolithic and declensionist narratives of Indian history for several decades. Yet many Americans remain familiar with well-worn stories that frame the removal and relegation of Native peoples to federally assigned lands as an easy, straightforward process disrupted only when famous leaders like Crazy Horse and Geronimo led violent resistance movements. As bloody, destructive, and oppressive as the Native encounter with the expanding American nation often was, tribal peoples were not just militant warriors or passive players in a generally swift and easy conquest. As Frederick E. Hoxie observes, “Native people spent far more time negotiating, lobbying, and debating than they spent tomahawking settlers or shooting soldiers.”⁴

The Meskwaki story is one among many that reveal how tribal efforts to work against the pressures of colonialism and assert the tribe’s sovereignty extend deep into the past and took myriad forms.⁵ C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa has shown how, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the development of federal Indian policies like allotment – though long considered neat and almost automatic – were in reality hard-fought and highly contingent.⁶ The Meskwaki story similarly diverges from standard narratives of Native history. It exposes weaknesses in the fortress of American colonialism by showing how a small tribe that owned its

4. Frederick E. Hoxie, *This Indian Country: American Indian Activists and the Place They Made* (New York, 2012), 4.

5. See Charles F. Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* (New York, 2005), 188–204; and George Pierre Castile, *Taking Charge: Native American Self-Determination and Federal Indian Policy, 1975–1999* (Tucson, AZ, 2006). Several authors have recognized Meskwaki persistence as a unifying historical theme. See, for example, R. David Edmunds and Joseph L. Peyser, *The Fox Wars: The Mesquakie Challenge to New France* (Norman, OK, 1993), xvii–xviii. For discussions of sovereignty, self-determination, and self-governance, see Joanne Barker, “For Whom Sovereignty Matters,” and Taiaiake Alfred, “Sovereignty,” both in *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination*, ed. Joanne Barker (Lincoln, NE, 2005); and Susan A. Miller, “Native Historians Write Back: The Indigenous Paradigm in American Indian Historiography,” *Wicaso Sa Review* 24 (2009), 32.

6. See C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2012).

land carved a unique path through the policies of assimilation and allotment and fought to reform its government on its own terms.

This article follows in the footsteps of those scholars who have recently uncovered tribal strategies to work within and around their precarious relationship to the U.S. government over the past two hundred years.⁷ It emphasizes tribal-federal relations but makes a few cursory nods to state-tribal politics — a subject to be expanded upon in future research. In the 1850s a contingent of tribal members returned to Iowa and joined some Meskwaki who never left the state. In 1857 they purchased an 80-acre “settlement,” upon which tribal members subsisted and repelled federal incursions into their economic, political, and social practices until the State of Iowa transferred the land into federal trust in 1896. Thereafter, the OIA exploited a political rift within the tribe, which, over time, the agency used to weaken Meskwaki sovereignty and slowly erode tribal control over its governance. Even as their political power withered, tribal members continued to participate in local, and later national, politics. Meskwaki people organized around several key issues, made their voices heard, and influenced the outcomes of various disputes with local administrators. The Meskwaki encounter with the Indian New Deal of the 1930s shows how political developments in preceding decades shaped tribal responses to the IRA and, ultimately, how the tribe recast its government in 1937.⁸ Although this essay ends with the ratification of the constitution, debates over its ramifications for Meskwaki governance, as well as the tribe’s sovereign struggle, continue today.

THE MESKWAKI NATION holds a unique distinction in the history of Native America: it was the first tribe to purchase its land after the era of Indian removal in the mid-nineteenth

7. See, for example, Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Post-colonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis, 2007); David R. M. Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination: History of the Menominee Indians since 1854* (Lincoln, NE, 2005); and Valerie Lambert, *Choctaw Nation: A Story of American Indian Resurgence* (Lincoln, NE, 2007).

8. *Indian Reorganization Act of 1934* (6/18/1934), 984–88; and *Constitution and By-Laws of the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa* (Washington, DC, 1938). The constitution can be viewed in full at www.meskwaki.org/trcode.html, accessed 3/24/2013.

century.⁹ In 1857 the Meskwaki sidestepped the assignment of Indian tribes to federal reservations by working directly with the State of Iowa. In the 1840s most Meskwaki had been removed to the Indian Territory in present-day Kansas, which many tribal members despised because of its arid, treeless environment and sparse game. A small contingent returned to their homelands along the Iowa River, joining some Meskwaki who had never left. The Iowa legislature formally approved Meskwaki residency in an 1856 law, and the following year, the tribe purchased the 80-acre "settlement" through an agreement with the governor. The settlement is not a "reservation," as Indian lands are often called, because, although its legal status has changed over time, the tribe purchased and still owns the settlement communally. The State of Iowa held the settlement in trust on the condition that the Meskwaki paid property taxes and abided by state laws.¹⁰

For the duration of the nineteenth century, Meskwaki tribal members adhered to their customary economic, political, and cultural practices. They subsisted by hunting, gardening, and occasionally trading with locals and regional tribes, and continued to practice their clan/bundle-based religion and ceremonies.¹¹

9. I offer this claim tentatively. There are 566 federally recognized American Indian nations in the United States today and some 400 unrecognized Indian groups. Many communities have unique landed histories, wherein title has been passed down from colonial land grants or through treaties, among other scenarios. Moreover, land purchase has become a common practice in recent decades. The Jamestown S'Klallam of present-day Washington State purchased their land several decades after the Meskwaki. See Joseph H. Stauss, *The Jamestown S'Klallam Story: Rebuilding a Northwest Coast Indian Tribe* (Sequim, WA, 2002).

10. For a detailed account of Meskwaki history in the 1840s and 1850s, see Michael D. Green, "'We Dance in Opposite Directions': Mesquakie (Fox) Separatism from the Sax and Fox Tribe," *Ethnohistory* 3 (1983), 129–40. See also Stephen Warren, "'To Show the Public We Were Good Indians': Origins and Meanings of the Meskwaki Powwow," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 33 (2009), 4–5; Richard Frank Brown, "A Social History of the Mesquakie Indians, 1800–1963" (M.A. thesis, Iowa State University, 1964), 56–57; Natalie F. Joffe, "The Fox of Iowa," in *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes*, ed. Ralph Linton (London, 1940), 288–29; and Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 32–33.

11. Joffe, "Fox of Iowa," 263–64; U.S. Indian Agent Thomas S. Free, "Agency of the Sac and Fox Indians in Iowa," in U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1875* (Washington, DC, 1875), 290–91; Leander Clark, "Sacs and Foxes in Iowa," in U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1868* (Washington, DC, 1868), 307, quoted in Johnathan Buffalo, "1846–1856: The Iowa Journey,"

Tribal members handled internal affairs as they had for centuries. In keeping with the tribe's egalitarian values, leaders, who were drawn from kin-based clans, exerted influence "by force of personality" rather than the innate power of their chieftainship. Even "the [head] chief, for all of his imputed authority, was primarily the spokesman for the tribe, and his power was directive, not coercive."¹²

The Meskwaki conducted political affairs communally and went into council when decisions on specific "business of the moment [needed to be] transacted." The council normally met on four occasions each year—"at corn-planting, mid-summer, [at the] first frost, and mid-winter"—but also gathered when important issues arose. Meetings lasted for up to four days, and all adult Meskwaki "voted" by offering opinions to clan leaders outside the council. Women, wrote one observer, did not directly "engage men in public debate," and decorum precluded them from speaking during council. Nevertheless, Meskwaki women often met outside the council, developed a group opinion, and pressed the men of their respective households to share their position. That practice earned Meskwaki women a reputation for "turning public opinion this way or that." Nevertheless, only council members were involved in the final decision-making process. Generally speaking, tribal members respected and adhered to these consensual decisions.¹³

The importance of the state's role in facilitating the Meskwaki land purchase, as well as its non-intrusive policy toward the tribe until 1896, cannot be overstated. Since the earliest years of the republic, states have exploited the decentralized nature of American federalism—that is, the ambiguity over which practices fall under

Meskwaki History CD-ROM, ed. Johnathan Buffalo, Dawn Suzanne Wanatee, and Mary Bennett (Iowa City, IA, 2006).

12. Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 1. For more on customary Meskwaki governance, see Edmunds and Peyser, *Fox Wars*, 37; Nancy Bonvillain, *The Sac and Fox* (New York, 1995), 30–33; and Joffe, "Fox of Iowa," 271.

13. *Oxford Weekly Leader*, 8/7/1869; Mary Alicia Owen, *Folk-Lore of the Musquakie Indians of North America* (London, 1904), 26, 33; Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 1–2; U.S. Indian Agent W. L. Lesser, "Report of the Agent in Iowa, Report of the Sac and Fox Agency, Iowa," in U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1890* (Washington, DC, 1890), 103–6.

the purview of either the federal government or a given state—in order to conduct a “gradual local assertion of direct rule over Indians.”¹⁴ Unlike many other states, whose policies often harmed Native communities, Iowa maintained a policy that treated the Meskwaki paternalistically but was otherwise benign throughout the late nineteenth century. The state made no efforts to alter the settlement agreement or to interfere with Meskwaki self-governance for almost 40 years, most likely because of the tribe’s rural location and peaceful but limited contact with white settlers.¹⁵ As L. Edward Purcell writes, successive Iowa governors “seemed to regard seriously the trust placed upon them for the well-being of the tribe.”¹⁶ They not only refused to undo the tribe’s trust relationship, but acted as intermediaries. Tribal leaders frequently contacted the governor’s office for support when federal officials carried out policies with which the tribe disagreed, and a cooperative relationship developed between the Meskwaki and the state.¹⁷ Iowa’s acceptance of Meskwaki residency allowed tribal members to stabilize and reunify their community after two disjunctive decades, and the roughly 250 Meskwaki remained self-sufficient and self-governing through an era infamous for the repression of Native peoples.¹⁸

14. Deborah A. Rosen, *American Indians and State Law: Sovereignty, Race, and Citizenship, 1790–1880* (Lincoln, NE, 2007), xi.

15. U.S. Indian Agent Leander Clark, “Sacs and Foxes in Iowa,” in *Message of the President of the United States and Accompanying Documents to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Fortieth Congress, 1867* (Washington, DC, 1867), 25–26. On the Meskwakis’ good relations with their white neighbors, see Peter Hoehnle, “Die Colonisten und Die Indianer: The Unusual Relationship between the Meskwaki Nation and the Amana Society,” *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* 92 (2011), 90–99.

16. L. Edward Purcell, “The Meskwaki Indian Settlement in 1905,” *Palimpsest* 55 (1974), 35.

17. For examples of times the tribe contacted Iowa governors for support during disagreements with the federal government, see the correspondence between Leander Clark and Governor Buren R. Sherman from July 1882, in Correspondence, Miscellaneous, Indian Affairs, 1860–1887, RG 43 Governor, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines (hereafter SHSI-DM).

18. Buffalo, “1846–1856.” On the permeability of tribal boundaries, see Jacki Thompson Rand, “Primary Sources: Indian Goods and the History of American Colonialism and the 19th-Century Reservation,” in *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York, 2002), 136–37.

IN STARK CONTRAST to their relationship with the state, the Meskwaki were at odds with the federal government from the settlement's earliest days. The tribe's religion, economy, and political structure did not comport with the assimilatory agenda pursued by the OIA throughout the period. Federal administrators demanded that Native peoples across the country convert to Christianity, commit to a life of sedentary agriculture on individually owned plots of land, and embrace American-style democracy. The agency undertook strident efforts to force these changes upon Native Americans, including the Meskwaki, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁹

In an effort to force the Meskwaki back to Kansas, the agency convinced Congress to withdraw federal recognition from the tribe upon its exodus from the Indian Territory in 1856. As American Indian policy scholar Brian Klopotek explains, "Federal recognition establishes a political and legal relationship between a tribe and the United States that carries particular rights and responsibilities for both parties under federal law."²⁰ By revoking the tribe's recognition, then, the government could deny any responsibility to uphold the terms of earlier treaties, and refused to pay the Meskwaki the annuities that had contributed to the tribe's cash coffers for decades. OIA administrators assumed that without those funds, the tribe would be unable to survive and would return to Kansas, where it could be confined and controlled.²¹ Even without those funds, however, the Meskwaki continued to coexist peacefully with surrounding communities. Although tribal members may have been poor by white standards, the tribe as a whole did not suffer critically without its annuities; it subsisted, and during tough times some Meskwaki reached out to the state government or nearby settlers for support.²²

19. See Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians* (Lincoln, NE, 2001).

20. Brian Klopotek, *Recognition Odysseys: Indigeneity, Race, and Federal Tribal Recognition Policy in Three Louisiana Indian Communities* (Durham, NC, 2001), 2-3.

21. Lewis V. Bogy to Leander Clark, 11/17/1866, quoted in Johnathan Buffalo, "1867-1886: The New Neighbors," *Meskwaki History* CD-ROM. See also Warren, "To Show the Public We Were Good Indians," 5; Brown, "Social History," 42-46.

22. See Green, "We Dance in Opposite Directions," 138; George L. Davenport to Samuel J. Kirkwood, 9/26/1862, Correspondence, Miscellaneous, Indian Affairs, 1860-1887, RG 43 Governor, SHSI-DM.

After a decade, the OIA realized that its strategy had not broken the Meskwaki, and Congress restored the tribe's federally recognized status. The OIA paid annuities – some \$5,588 (nearly \$90,000 in 2013 dollars) – to the Meskwaki in the spring of 1867.²³ From the government's perspective, this recognition provided a legal mechanism through which the United States could once again oversee the tribe as a “domestic dependent nation” and subject it to OIA authority – an effort that coincided with the federal government's reinvigorated interest in Indian affairs following the Civil War. Accordingly, the agency constructed an office near the settlement and assigned agent Leander Clark to the Meskwaki. His primary responsibility was to pay annuities to the tribe, but by “continually attempt[ing] to interest” tribal members “in settling permanently on farms,” Clark and his successors also sought to carry out the OIA's broader agenda and to push tribal members toward assimilation.²⁴

The OIA attempted religious conversion, education, and the management of tribal affairs in accordance with its overarching goals to “civilize” all Natives into “docile believers in American progress.”²⁵ The OIA built a schoolhouse on the settlement and a pan-Indian school near the agency headquarters in nearby Toledo. Over the years, these facilities collaborated with churches on and near the settlement to expedite assimilation.²⁶ Some years

23. Joffe, “Fox of Iowa,” 289. According to Green, “We Dance in Opposite Directions,” 138, although the federal government “did not explicitly recognize the Mesquakies, it did quite obviously recognize the existence of a distinct band of the ‘Sacs and Foxes’ who were separated physically from the rest of the ‘united tribe.’” Indeed, the question of Meskwaki recognition as a distinct tribal entity remained unclear until 1901, when a court declared the tribe autonomous in *Peters v. Malin*. See Angela Keysor, “Emergence of a Distinct Legal Identity from the Forces of Assimilation: The Mesquakie Indians and the Fight for Citizenship, 1842-1912,” *Meskwaki History* CD-ROM.

24. Brown, “Social History,” 60. See also Hoxie, *Final Promise*, 2-3.

25. Hoxie, *Final Promise*, xvii.

26. Clark, “No. 85, Agency of Sac and Fox Indians in Iowa,” in U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872* (Washington, DC, 1872), 515-16; Clark to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Eli S. Parker, 1871, quoted in Buffalo, “1867-1886: The New Neighbors”; Clark, “Sac and Foxes in Iowa No. 125, Agency of the Sac and Fox Indians Residing in the State of Iowa,” in *Message of the President of the United States and Accompanying Documents to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Fortieth Congress* (Washington, DC, 1867), 349. For further information on the

later, the OIA even burned the settlement village with the dual purpose of tempering a smallpox outbreak and dispersing the Meskwaki onto individual sections scattered throughout tribal land.²⁷ Still, the Meskwaki refused the agency's vision of individual land ownership, and the tribe continued to share the settlement, following a usufruct system: Families selected a section of the settlement to occupy, constructed their dwellings, and cultivated small subsistence gardens. Tribal members passed on their use of a particular portion of the settlement to their descendants.²⁸

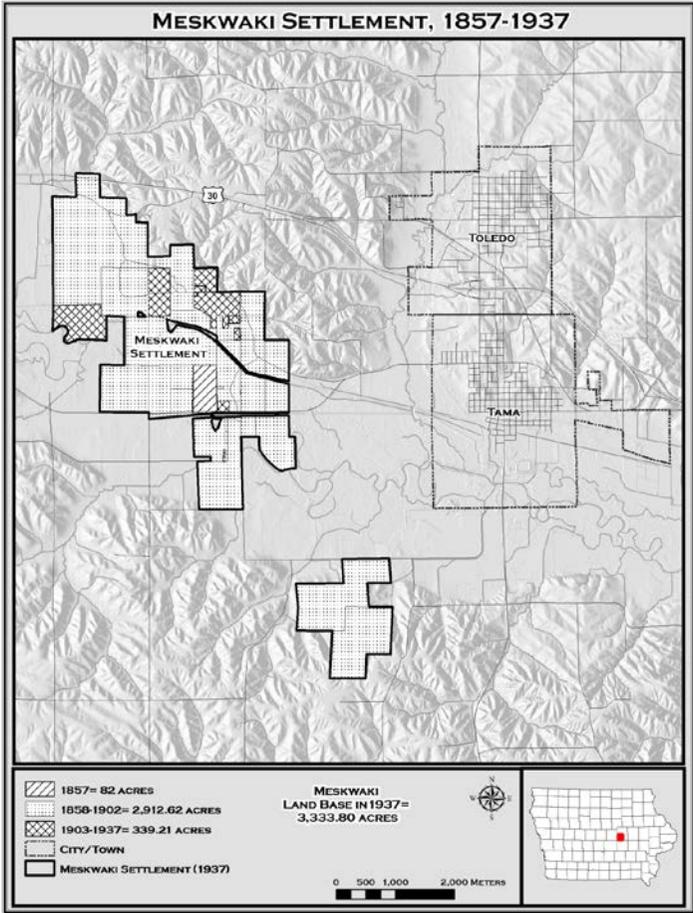
The government's decision to recognize the Meskwaki reflected, at least in part, an OIA strategy aimed at nudging the tribe away from subsistence and toward the local cash economy. From the Meskwaki perspective, however, it also created an opportunity for the tribe to exercise its sovereignty and tilt its precarious position between the state and federal governments to its advantage. Immediately upon receiving their payment in 1867, tribal members asked Clark to set aside \$2,000 of their annuities to purchase additional settlement lands. Clark agreed, and the tribe convinced him to facilitate its property purchases throughout his tenure. Despite the overarching assimilative agenda of the agency for which he worked—and its preference that the Meskwaki remain in Kansas—Clark was in some respects sympathetic to tribal concerns over handling their own affairs. He proved open to cooperating with the tribe, and tribal members even persuaded him to allow other Meskwaki to rejoin their growing community in Iowa.²⁹

use of boarding schools to fuse religious conversion and non-Indian education to further the project of assimilation, see John Troutman, "The Citizenship of Dance: Politics of Music among the Lakota, 1900-1924," in *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism Since 1900*, ed. Daniel M. Cobb and Loretta Fowler (Santa Fe, NM, 2007), 91-108; and Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, eds., *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences* (Lincoln, NE, 2006).

27. Warren, "To Show the Public We Were Good Indians," 2-3, explores how the 1901 village burning fit the OIA's assimilationist agenda.

28. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 34.

29. Joffe, "Fox of Iowa," 289; Leander Clark to E. S. Parker, "Second Quarter Report, 1867," 5/17/1867, file "Leander Clark—Correspondence 1866-69, 1872 Copies of Letters," box BL 57, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City (hereafter SHSI-IC); Clark to E. B. Fern, 2/24/1868, *ibid.*



Map created by Joshua Sales, Meskwaki Geographic Information Systems.

From 1867 forward, writes one historian, the Meskwaki had “an almost fanatic desire” to purchase land as opportunities arose, and the settlement grew to over 3,000 acres by 1915.³⁰ Very few sources from this era provide Meskwaki perspectives, but it appears that they had a prescient and pragmatic understanding of their position vis-à-vis the state and federal governments. Although federal recognition provided an opportunity for the OIA to establish local offices and schools and to pressure the tribe to assimilate, it also secured valuable cash assets the Meskwaki could

30. Brown, “Social History,” 59; Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 33.

use to purchase their land via their trust relationship with the state. In this way, tribal members negotiated their relationships with both governments and capitalized on the decentralized nature of the American federal system to protect and affirm Meskwaki sovereignty. Because “sovereignty takes material form and is built with material resources,” as the anthropologist Jessica R. Cattelino argues, it is clear that by expanding its land base, the tribe could subsist, stabilize its population, create a physical buffer between itself and its neighbors, and prepare for future growth.³¹

Meskwaki political maneuvering also spared them from two of the most destructive epochs in the history of federal Indian policy. First, they were largely unaffected by the so-called Indian Wars between 1850 and 1890. Instead, they maintained generally peaceful relations with their white neighbors.³² Second, the tribe avoided the ravages brought on by the 1887 Dawes Act, which established the allotment policy that dispossessed Native peoples nationwide of some 80 million acres of land by 1934.³³ The Meskwaki escaped that fate precisely because their ownership of the settlement helped insulate them from the unilateral authority Congress held over federally assigned reservations.

Over the next several decades, tribal members opposed even subtle OIA efforts to control their affairs. In 1876, for example, the federal government mandated that all tribal members had to register with the agency in order to receive annuities. Most Meskwaki grew suspicious of the government’s motives and refused to register, leading the OIA to punitively withhold annuities – just as it had during the decade before they were re-recognized in 1866. Much was at stake. The tribe did not rely completely on the annuities for subsistence, but the purchase of additional land

31. Jessica R. Cattelino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty* (Durham, NC, 2008), 128.

32. A.R.F., “The Indians of Iowa,” *Daily Iowa State Register*, 11/18/1869. On “Indian Wars and Skirmishes,” see Walter R. Echo-Hawk, *In the Courts of the Conqueror: The Ten Worst Indian Law Cases Ever Decided* (Golden, CO, 2010), 137.

33. Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power on the Frontier* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 256–92; Douglas E. Foley, “The Fox Project: A Re-appraisal,” *Current Anthropology* 40 (1999), 187. The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, 49th Cong., 2nd sess. (2/8/1887), 388, is also known as the General Allotment Act or simply the Dawes Act.

depended in part on the funds. Led by the chief's council, the Meskwaki refused to sign the rolls. The ensuing stalemate lasted nearly six years, with the tribe capitulating only after the lack of revenue led them to default on their property taxes in 1878, and the Secretary of the Interior personally assured Meskwaki leaders that enrollment would not decrease their annuities. Technically, the default breached the trust agreement with the state, and the Tama County government claimed the settlement briefly, but in title only. In an expression of ongoing cooperation, Iowa extended the deadline for payment to late 1882, which the tribe met.³⁴

During this episode, the Meskwaki narrowly avoided an effort to dismantle the settlement and force them back to Kansas. In 1878 combined pressure from the OIA and angry petitions from some Iowans nearly spurred Iowa to terminate its trust relationship with the tribe and almost prompted the U.S. Congress to remove them once again.³⁵ The OIA supported that effort, believing that returning the Meskwaki to the tightly controlled Indian Territory would speed their assimilation. But many locals supported the tribe and petitioned the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, expressing their belief "that it would be an act of great injustice . . . and a breach of faith on our part, to remove [the tribe] without their consent, from their own lands which they have purchased." These neighbors viewed the Meskwaki as "peaceable, quiet, honest and law abiding people [who] compare[d] favorably in their obedience to the laws with the . . . whites surrounding them." Iowa legislators sympathized with that view and did not alter their relationship with the Meskwaki. Assimilationists, however, still held sway in Washington, D.C. In early 1878 a resolution for the tribe's removal made it through the House of Representatives. Fortunately for the Meskwaki, who were "unanimously and utterly adverse" to the prospect of returning to Kansas, the resolution failed to pass the Senate, and the issue was not reconsidered.³⁶

34. Brown, "Social History," 61-63.

35. "To the Hon. Geo. W. McCrary, Secretary of War," 5/14/1878; and "To the Hon. Commission of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C.," both quoted in Buffalo, "1867-1886: The New Neighbors."

36. "To the Hon. Commission of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C.," quoted in Buffalo, "1867-1886: The New Neighbors"; A. R. Howbert, 1873, *ibid.*; T. A. Graham to John R. Rankin, 4/30/1878, *ibid.*

DESPITE the relative strength of their tribal sovereignty and their ability to elude these various attacks on their residency in Iowa, the Meskwaki did not completely avoid the corrosive effects of shifting federal Indian policy at the end of the nineteenth century. As thousands of American Indians died in confrontations with the U.S. military and from starvation on ill-supplied reservations, the Meskwaki continued to subsist in relative obscurity through the 1880s. Yet they remained vulnerable to increasing pressures to intervene in their affairs. Such threats would abruptly and fundamentally alter the Meskwaki ability to exercise their sovereignty by century's end. In 1888, for example, and despite the tribe's previous aversion to the practice, the OIA completed its first official Meskwaki census, listing 381 tribal members on government rolls.³⁷

An even more substantive change took place in 1891, when the OIA accelerated its efforts to reform tribal governments nationwide. That February, Congress authorized the creation of "tribal business councils" that "could make decisions on behalf of the tribe in transactions involving tribal or nonallotted lands." That initiative undermined tribes' chosen systems of governance by imposing a managerial formation with democratic overtones. Business councils would replace any existing form of tribal governance—for the Meskwaki, the chief-council system—and require that council members be elected by majority vote, thereby decreasing the power of clans, the chief, and decision making by consensus. In keeping with the American exclusion of women from the vote—and contrary to Meskwaki practice—only men would be allowed to participate in OIA business council elections. Because the settlement was technically "non-allotted land," the Meskwaki could have organized a business council, but they refused, deeply frustrating the OIA. One agent complained that Meskwaki obstinacy was "the worst problem to deal with . . . among any of the Indians" in the country. He advocated "break[ing]" tribal leaders' "power and influence" to strengthen OIA control.³⁸

37. Enos Gheen to John D. C. Atkins, 7/20/1888, microcopy 595, roll 450, Indian Census Rolls, 1885–1940, Sac and Fox, IA, 1888–1910, National Archives Microfilm Publications (Washington, DC, 1965).

38. Loretta Fowler, *Arapahoe Politics, 1851–1978: Symbols in Crises of Authority* (Lincoln, NE, 1982), 98; Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 4; Horace M. Rebok,

To do so, the trust relationship between the tribe and the state also had to be broken. This issue erupted in 1895. Some local whites organized a branch of the Indian Rights Association, a national group of assimilationist Christian reformers who believed in the destruction of Indian religions, languages, governance, and communal land ownership.³⁹ The group lobbied to transfer the settlement from Iowa to the United States, a strategy many state legislators also increasingly supported—even if only as a way to quiet this surge in local unrest. Illustrating this dramatic turn in the state's Indian policy, Iowa Governor Francis M. Drake advocated assimilation for the Meskwaki, apologetically telling them that adopting American culture was “the better way to live.”⁴⁰

On June 10, 1896, the political tide of American colonialism, which the Meskwaki had skirted for so long, swept in. Bowing to pressure from assimilationists, the state transferred jurisdiction and the land trust to the federal government, giving it the same legal status as other tribal lands. Congress accepted the transfer the same day, officially making the federal government the sole trustee over the Meskwaki settlement. Yet questions over the status of Meskwaki land, taxation, and criminal jurisdiction would continue well into the twentieth century.⁴¹

Despite these ambiguities, and the fact that the tribe owned and controlled its land, the 1896 transfer put the Meskwaki in a position shared by almost every other American Indian tribe: in an unequal trust with, and thus highly subordinate to, an overzealous OIA. Native scholar Walter Echo-Hawk has argued that the OIA's “powers over Indian tribes reached their zenith” at that

“Report of Agent in Iowa, Report of Sac and Fox Agency,” in U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1895* (Washington, DC, 1896), 165–69.

39. Benay Blend, “The Indian Rights Association, the Allotment Policy, and the Five Civilized Tribes, 1923–1936,” *American Indian Quarterly* 7 (1983), 67.

40. “Indians Claim Damages,” *Annals of Iowa* 3 (1897), 130–34.

41. *Sacs and Foxes of the Mississippi [Jurisdictional Transfer]*, 54th Cong., 1st sess., 6/10/1896, 598. Brown, “Social History,” 65, notes that “the State of Iowa . . . retained control over any judicial process within the settlement, jurisdiction of crimes against the laws of Iowa committed within the settlement by Indians or others, and the privilege of establishing and maintaining highways . . . [as well as] eminent domain over Indian lands for state and county purposes.” On the application of Iowa law to the Meskwaki, see also Joffe, “Fox of Iowa,” 311–12; and Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 48–57.

time. For about 50 years, beginning in 1886, the agency took Indian land across the country, increased its paternalistic control over tribal affairs, and cleared the way for the total "assimilation of Indians into settler society."⁴² Although the tribe still owned its settlement and would continue to pay state taxes for decades, and although legal questions over the first land purchase in 1857 delayed the transfer, the federal government finally took all of the settlement lands into trust in 1908.⁴³ As Meskwaki author and elder Donald Wanatee writes, his tribe suddenly found itself "governed under a separate law, administered by members of the White community" and increasingly "in a position of definite subordination" to the OIA.⁴⁴ The tribe would struggle to maintain its sovereignty in coming years, but its ability to negotiate with the federal government and manage its affairs was nearly broken during the first several decades of the twentieth century.

THE 1896 TRUST TRANSFER had opened the Meskwaki to external influence, but a key part of the ensuing political transformation was rooted in an intratribal controversy that had begun 15 years earlier. The dispute soon created a deep political schism that—with much encouragement from the OIA—damaged the tribe's ability to assert self-governance as the nineteenth century came to a close. At the height of the enrollment stalemate in 1881 an influential chief named Mamiwanige died. He had presided over the tribe since it established the settlement. Upon Mamiwanige's death, his eldest son succeeded to his leadership position, per tribal custom. That son, however, also died just a few weeks later. Faced with a leadership vacuum, the chief's council acted quickly to install a new leader named Pushetonequa.⁴⁵

That decision had long-lasting effects on tribal politics. Most Meskwaki initially accepted the council's decision to recognize Pushetonequa as chief. But the seeds of discord had been sown:

42. Echo-Hawk, *Courts of the Conqueror*, 189–91.

43. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 33.

44. Donald Wanatee, "The Lion, Fleur-de-lis, the Eagle, or the Fox: A Study of Government," in *Worlds Between Two Rivers*, 79.

45. Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 3–5; Brown, "Social History," 62–63.

In order to seat Pushetonequa, the council bypassed two of Mamiwanige's younger sons, who were considered "too young and incompetent" for the chieftainship. Thus, a dispute over tribal custom and hereditary right began to ferment. In the meantime, Pushetonequa led the tribe toward the twentieth century with his people's general support.⁴⁶

In the late 1890s, many local whites still supported the Indian Rights Association and the OIA; they fervently believed in assimilation and noted their frustration with the tribe's success in repelling any such efforts. The 1896 trust transfer had been a major victory for the reformers, who quickly set about further efforts to undermine tribal sovereignty and "civilize" the Meskwaki.⁴⁷ The transfer itself had provided the U.S. the authority to purchase land in Tama County for federal schools to manage Meskwaki education.⁴⁸ Observing the agency's continued inability to assimilate tribal members, Congress authorized the construction of a pan-Indian boarding school next to the Indian Office in Toledo.⁴⁹

When the OIA ordered the Meskwaki to enroll their children at the new school, tribal families unanimously refused. In November 1898 Pushetonequa and several councilmen traveled to the nation's capital, where the OIA attempted to bribe Pushetonequa with an official designation as the "Head [Meskwaki] Chief" and a \$500 annual salary. He declined. The government next threatened to send children from other tribes to the settlement school. That, the OIA said, would lead to eventual intermarriage with other tribes—a practice many Meskwaki opposed for fear of diluting their annuities across a larger population. Pushetonequa acquiesced, and he and several council members enrolled their children in mid-December. Their decision was unpopular, and most Meskwaki opposed the boarding school for

46. Wanatee, "Study of Government," 79; Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 3.

47. Horace M. Rebok, *History of the Indian Rights Association of Iowa and the Founding of the Indian Training School* (Toledo, IA, 1897); H. Sutherland, "That Indian Scare," *Midland Monthly* 8 (1897), 519.

48. "An Act Tendering to the United States Jurisdiction over Certain Indians Residing in Iowa and over Their Lands, and the Privilege of Purchasing Land in Tama County for Indian School Purposes" (2/14/1896), *Acts and Resolutions Passed at the Regular Session of the 26th General Assembly of the State of Iowa*, ch. 110 (1896), 114–15.

49. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 35; Brown, "Social History," 69–70.

another decade. Low enrollment forced its eventual conversion into a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients in 1911.⁵⁰

Pushetonequa's concession to the OIA deepened the growing dispute over his leadership. As early as 1898, one of Mamiwanige's bypassed sons, Oldbear, began disparaging Pushetonequa as a corrupt "government chief." Oldbear and his supporters framed Pushetonequa's acquiescence as greedy and against tribal interests, using it as a polemical issue to bolster Oldbear's claim to hereditary leadership.⁵¹ Anthropologist Douglas Foley suggests a lack of any evidence supporting Oldbear's claim that clan requirements or hierarchies could preclude anyone, including Pushetonequa, from tribal leadership positions. Thus the entire chieftainship dispute may have "hinge[d] on how strict" tribal succession rules were.⁵²

Nevertheless, the disagreement perpetuated an "ongoing fracture" in the community and eventually morphed into an ideological battle that changed Meskwaki politics.⁵³ This new politics only worsened after the OIA recognized Pushetonequa as the head chief in 1900—the same title it had offered in 1898. The chief's detractors quickly derided him "as a pawn in the white man's assimilation policy," and rumors about his true allegiance quickly spread across the settlement. The controversy slowly overtook tribal politics, and tribal members, local whites, and OIA agents began to measure political turmoil on the settlement by constructing a crude cultural binary that divided the tribe. In their paradigm, "Youngbears" supported Pushetonequa and were seen as "progressive" supporters of acculturation. The "Oldbears," on the other hand, were considered "anti-white" and "culturally conservative."⁵⁴

50. Brown, "Social History," 69-70; Lisa Dianne Lykins, "'Curing the Indian': Therapeutic Care and Acculturation at the Sac and Fox Tuberculosis Sanatorium, 1912-1942" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 2002).

51. Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 5; Brown, "Social History," 68.

52. Douglas E. Foley, *The Heartland Chronicles* (Philadelphia, 1995), 153-55.

53. Warren, "To Show the Public We Were Good Indians," 8.

54. Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 5; Foley, *Heartland Chronicles*, 153-54; Lisa Peattie, "Being a Mesquakie Indian," in *Documentary History of the Fox Project, 1928-1959: A Program in Action Anthropology Directed by Sol Tax*, ed. Fred Gearing, Robert McC. Netting, and Lisa R. Peattie (Chicago, 1960), 48.

Scholars have overemphasized this factional split as the central organizing theme of modern Meskwaki politics, in part because they have failed to adequately recognize OIA efforts to perpetuate and enflame political tensions in order to divide and control the tribe. But, as Judith M. Daubenmier writes, the Oldbear/Youngbear binary is “vague [and] simplistic” and does not accurately depict the ongoing Meskwaki conversations over tribal governance.⁵⁵ Meskwaki disagreement over Pushetonequa’s leadership certainly existed, and those vying for power often flung rhetoric framing the battle as one between progressives and conservatives. But tribal politics were never clearly dichotomous, and many tribal members did not identify with either faction. Rather, tribal leaders and their constituents alike attempted to determine the best course for their people during a chaotic and, at times, politically acerbic period, and to make their voices heard.⁵⁶

Shedding light on the ways Meskwaki political discord played into the government’s hands does not absolve some intransigent tribal members of their role in exacerbating a difficult political situation, but it does reveal the ways OIA agents exploited a tense political situation to further their assimilatory goals. The OIA recognized the opportunity created by the Meskwaki leadership dispute and endeavored to weaken the tribe’s ability to resist agency initiatives. Horace M. Rebok, the tribe’s agent

55. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 37. Such “factional binaries” have long been used to describe political discord within Indian tribes and have varied across Native contexts. For more on the perceived intersections of genetics and cultural awareness, see, for example, Lambert, *Choctaw Nation*, 37; Scott Richard Lyons, *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* (Minneapolis, 2010); and Larry Nesper, *The Walleye War: The Struggle for Ojibwe Spearfishing and Treaty Rights* (Lincoln, NE, 2002), 185–97.

56. Other examples of the tendency to view Native leaders as ensnared in a rigid and intractable politics are challenged in Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (New York, 2004), 7; and Benjamin R. Kratch, “Kiowa Religion: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Ritual Symbolism, 1832–1987” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Methodist University, 1989), 618. Ostler argues that “it is more productive to realize that Sioux leaders adopted a range of strategies based on reasoned assessments of changing conditions and possibilities.” They “were not always locked into polar antagonisms” but instead “adjusted their tactics in light of new circumstances and were responsive to changing opinion[s] among their people,” and all tried to do the “tough political work of mending fences and building unity.” All of this was aimed toward shared goals: the survival of their people and the defense of their sovereignty.

until 1899 and founder of the Iowa branch of the Indian Rights Association, remained committed, as he had so bluntly exclaimed three years earlier, to breaking the tribal leaders' power. He and his successors continued to wedge the tribe against itself. As a result of this continual prodding, by roughly 1905, Meskwaki political divisions had grown so entrenched that two separate tribal councils existed. One was sanctioned by the OIA and led by Pushetonequa and his supporters; the other was led by the Oldbears. Both sides vied for support from tribal members, while OIA agents fueled the already aggressive discourse, calculating that "the tribe was easier to control when divided" against itself.⁵⁷

Given the various challenges facing the tribe throughout this period it is not surprising that the agency successfully provoked the Meskwaki devolution into a pronounced and vitriolic politics. In addition to the settlement trust transfer in 1896, deep changes that accompanied the turn of the twentieth century proved equally daunting. During the first three decades of the new century, residents of the Meskwaki settlement underwent substantial social and economic changes. The settlement's population had doubled since the 1850s. More than 90 Meskwaki children attended OIA schools in neighboring states for part of the year, while a few Meskwaki lived and worked in urban areas like Des Moines.⁵⁸ In 1905 only about 15 framed houses had stood on the settlement; the majority of homes were still wickiups, the domed dwellings tribal members had customarily used. But by 1927 most Meskwaki lived in small "American-style" homes; only three families lived full-time in wickiups.⁵⁹ The Meskwaki, like other tribes,

57. Foley, *Heartland Chronicles*, 153–55.

58. Ira D. Nelson, "1936 Annual Statistical Report," 1–8, in file Annual Reports 051, 1935–1943, box 114, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Sac & Fox Agency, RG 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Great Lakes, Chicago (hereafter cited as NARAGL); George Young Bear, "Mesquakie News Tells of History: George Young Bear Gives Facts about Indian Education," *Toledo Chronicle*, 11/22/1928. For a Meskwaki account of the assimilation project and the boarding school system, see Adeline Wanatee, "Education, the Family, and the Schools," in *Worlds Between Two Rivers*, 100–103.

59. Duren H. Ward Collection, BL21, folder 11, SHSI-IC; John J. Sullivan, "Sac and Fox Agency and Sanatorium, Iowa," 9, *Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, Samuel A. Elliot Collection, #9165 Series I, Board of Indian Commissioners Reports, box 5C, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY; C. M. Richards, "Tama Indians Abandon Wickiups

increasingly struggled to subsist via local hunting and farming.⁶⁰ The tribe leased settlement land to local farmers to pay property taxes. Individuals continued to farm small plots of land and hunt near their homes, while many men also began laboring for railroads, factories, and farms. Several owned tractors and other tools, and more than 40 owned horses.⁶¹ English grew prevalent, though most continued to speak fluent Meskwaki.⁶² Tribal members explored faiths ranging from their customary clan/bundle ceremonies to the Native American Church and various Christian sects.⁶³ They also “converted . . . culture into a commodity” by developing a powwow festival in 1913, performing for thousands of white tourists.⁶⁴ Women made souvenir jewelry and toys for sale to tourists.⁶⁵ One entrepreneurial Meskwaki even took to “raising silver foxes,” presumably for sale locally.⁶⁶ By forcing tribal members to carefully consider the best strategies for tribal economic, social, and political survival, these changes shaped Meskwaki politics as the tribe struggled to maintain its sovereignty in the early twentieth century.

Under these circumstances, the OIA incrementally increased control over Meskwaki governance. Although Oldbears continued

for Modern Homes; Progress in Last Few Years Was Greatest in History,” *Toledo Chronicle*, 12/15/1927.

60. Warren, “To Show the Public We Were Good Indians,” 21.

61. Joffe, “Fox of Iowa,” 302–3.

62. *Ibid.*, 294; “1936 Annual Statistical Report,” 1, file Annual Reports 051, 1935–1943, box 114, NARAGL; “100 Persons from Our County Hear Story of Indian,” *Newton News*, 4/18/1935.

63. Peattie, “Being a Mesquakie Indian,” 44–46; “Percy Bear,” *Surveys of Indian Industry, 1921–1926*, box 1, NARAGL; “1936 Annual Statistical Report,” 1–11, file “Annual Reports 051, 1935–1943,” box 114, NARAGL; Donald Grant, “The Indian-Union of Primitive, Modern Culture: Radios, Newspapers, Cookstoves, Modern Homes Fail to Crowd Out Age-Old Customs at Tama Reservation,” *Des Moines Register*, 6/17/1934. See also Buffalo, “The Meskwaki World amid Centuries of Spiritual Assault: Historical Perspective on Alien Belief Systems Imposed on the Meskwaki Tribe,” unpublished manuscript, folder “Buffalo, Johnathan L., The Meskwaki World amid Centuries of Spiritual Assault 2012,” SHSI-IC.

64. Warren, “To Show the Public We Were Good Indians,” 21; Sol Tax, “The Social Organization of the Fox Indians” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1935), in Gearing et al., *Documentary History*, 5–6.

65. Nelson, “Annual Report, January 1, 1935,” file “Annual Reports 051, 1931–1935,” box 113, NARAGL; Tax, “Social Organization,” 5.

66. Grant, “The Indian.”

to criticize Pushetonequa, his cooperation with the OIA actually remained limited. Whites viewed him as a hindrance to assimilation, and even famed anthropologist George Bird Grinnell opined that the chief's frequent opposition held the tribe back.⁶⁷ Yet discord prevailed. In early 1914 some 200 tribal members petitioned that Pushetonequa be replaced with Peter Old Bear, one of his primary political rivals. Although their demand was not met, OIA Superintendent Robert L. Russell seized the opportunity to increase federal control. Lamenting the Oldbear/Youngbear dispute as irreconcilable, he characterized the tribe as dysfunctional and its politics as detrimental to assimilation. That March, Russell asked the OIA for the authority to appoint the Meskwaki chief's council—a responsibility usually left to the chief. The tribe attempted to maintain control of the council and offered to reduce it from 12 members to 5, whom they would elect directly. Meanwhile, several Oldbears again petitioned the OIA to repeal Pushetonequa's title. Recognizing the importance of maintaining a veneer of tribal authority, the OIA decided to temporarily leave the chief in his position and the council at 12 members. This apparent equilibrium did not last long. By October 1914, the OIA superintendent was unilaterally selecting council members, enabling the agency to drastically reduce Pushetonequa's authority. The effects of these intrusive OIA strategies were staggering. Indeed, tribal historian Johnathan Buffalo argues that after the loss of power to select council members, Pushetonequa's "potency to act" as a tribal leader "was broken."⁶⁸

From that point until 1929, Meskwaki governance took the form of an agency-appointed business council. That was a far cry from self-governance as it had existed before 1896 and was also eerily similar to the tribal business councils the OIA had unsuccessfully attempted to form in the 1890s. Nearly subsumed by OIA pressure, the council struggled to maintain any semblance of the authority it previously wielded. The OIA incrementally tightened its grip on local authority by reducing the council from 12 members to 5 and refused to recognize a new chief following Pushetonequa's death in 1919. Without clear leadership and still

67. George Bird Grinnell, *The Indians of To-day* (New York, 1915), 283.

68. Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 7-8.

grappling with partisanship, the council “refused to meet for a year” until the OIA replaced it. The new group also held “little or no authority” and functioned only to “validate agency decisions, to communicate these decisions [to the tribe], and to report tribal community reactions” to agency decrees.⁶⁹

Although the Meskwaki stood at a disadvantage to the OIA after 1919, tribal members remained politically active and never abandoned their quest for local control. The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 conferred federal citizenship on all Native Americans in the United States; thereafter, many Meskwaki vociferously exercised their newfound vote in non-tribal elections. Even as the OIA managed tribal “schools . . . police, and most of their domestic affairs,” as one Iowan wrote, many Meskwaki took great interest in education and government. Seventy-seven Meskwaki voted in the 1924 election, their first as U.S. citizens.⁷⁰

In 1928 several Meskwaki – possibly exploring strategies for reaffirming their control over local activities – sent a letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles H. Burke about removing the tribe from federal trusteeship. In order to do so, he responded, the tribe would have to agree to fully allot the settlement into individually owned parcels. They did not.⁷¹

That same year the tribe launched a series of efforts to reclaim its governance. It held several meetings over the course of a month and nominated an Oldbear as chief who then selected a council. The tribe sought OIA recognition of this new government’s authority, but the agency dodged the effort by insisting that the council be democratically elected. In May 1929 tribal members elected a seven-member council split between Oldbears and Youngbears. This attempt at bipartisanship, a reporter wrote, came with “great expectations” for a new era of political cooperation. The two groups, however, could not agree on several issues and, at various times, refused to meet. The tribe called several additional elections, each time hoping to seat a functioning

69. *Ibid.*, 7-9; Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 39.

70. *Indian Citizenship Act of 1924*, 68th Cong., 1st sess. (6/2/1924); Edgar R. Harlan to Mildred Hutchins, April 1936, file 49D, part 10, group 2, Edgar R. Harlan Papers, SHSI-DM; “Story of the Tama Indians,” *Boone News-Republican*, 4/5/1928.

71. Buffalo, “Historical Overview,” 10-11.

council. Eventually, five elders organized an acting council, but even then one coalition dominated.⁷²

These post-1928 councils never achieved meaningful authority, although efforts to replace the acting council with an elected one continued until 1934. The OIA, however, stifled Meskwaki efforts at self-governance by consistently refusing to recognize any council “without a written constitution and without full tribal consent.”⁷³ Even the acting council recognized its limitations; when an OIA agent asked it to settle a domestic relations dispute between two tribal members, the councilors stated that they “did not consider their authority sufficient to act as arbitrators . . . or even to make a recommendation.”⁷⁴

The Great Depression added economic strife to political turmoil. Before it began, Richard Brown writes, the Meskwaki were “poor” but “experienced no actual destitution.”⁷⁵ The tribe’s subsistence practices and recent efforts at economic diversification kept them afloat. But tribal members suffered more than most of their white neighbors because, as OIA Superintendent Jacob Breid remarked in early 1934, they did not have “a fair chance to get a job” until employment in white communities stabilized.⁷⁶ Charities as far away as Des Moines and programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division and the Indian Relief and Rehabilitation Program provided much-needed relief.⁷⁷ Meskwaki men and women found jobs in these programs or at the OIA sanatorium in Toledo, but the demand for employment

72. *Ibid.*; *Toledo Chronicle*, 5/9/1929; Nelson to John Collier, 2/23/1935, file “Letters Sent 1934,” box 36, NARAGL.

73. Buffalo, “Historical Overview,” 12.

74. Westwood, “Memorandum for Mr. Collier,” IRA-MHPDM.

75. Brown, “Social History,” 74.

76. Jacob Breid, “1934 Annual Statistical Report,” 3, file “Annual Reports 051, 1931-1935,” box 113, NARAGL.

77. Harlan to H. D. Bernbrock, 4/30/1932, file 49C, part 8; and H. M. Rhode, memorandum 12/15/1930, file 49C, part 7, both in Harlan Papers, SHSI-DM. For general information on the CCC-ID, see Donald L. Parman, “The Indian and the Civilian Conservation Corps,” *Pacific Historical Review* 40 (1971), 39-56. For more on the IRRP and other Indian-oriented relief programs, see Virginia Davis, “A Discovery of Sorts: Reexamining the Origins of the Federal Indian Housing Obligation,” *Harvard Blackletter Law Journal* 18 (2002), 211-39.

stayed so high that officials had to rotate work schedules in order to spread wages as evenly as possible across the tribe.⁷⁸

The 1920s and '30s were turbulent years on the Meskwaki settlement. Partisanship within the tribe was exacerbated by OIA efforts to divide the tribe against itself. The agency also successfully repelled repeated tribal efforts to reclaim the sovereignty it had wielded before 1896. With the nation reeling from the Great Depression, the Meskwaki would undertake an arduous initiative to regain control over their collective governance – an effort that reshaped tribal politics.

THE “INDIAN NEW DEAL” laid out the new approach to Indian policy taken by the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It included a variety of provisions to improve conditions for American Indians nationwide, spearheaded by FDR’s Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier.⁷⁹ He abandoned allotment and instilled new respect for tribal customs, replacing old policies with the Indian Reorganization Act. This sweeping law sought to remedy the numerous Indian policy failures identified in the sharply critical 1928 Meriam Report.⁸⁰ Despite the improvements espoused by the Indian New Deal, continuities with earlier policies existed, as Cathleen D. Cahill points out, “particularly the [OIA’s] tendency toward paternalism and essentialist thinking about Indigenous cultures.”⁸¹ But Collier’s efforts became,

78. See boxes “CCC-ID Program Records,” and “Indian Relief and Rehabilitation General Records,” both in NARAGL. These collections offer general insight into the various relief projects taking place on the settlement in the 1930s. See also Lykins, “Curing the Indian,” 147.

79. Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920–1954* (Tucson, AZ, 1977), 113–34. See also Harry A. Kersey Jr., *The Florida Seminoles and the New Deal, 1933–1942* (Boca Raton, FL, 1989).

80. The “Meriam Report,” written by the Brookings Institution, Institute for Government Research, is formally known as *The Problem of Indian Administration: Report of a Survey Made at the Request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, and Submitted to Him, February 21, 1928* (Baltimore, 1928), and can be viewed at www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED087573.pdf, accessed 5/30/2012.

81. Cathleen D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869–1933* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2011), 257. For more on Collier and the IRA, see Philp, *John Collier’s Crusade*; Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York, 1984); Akim Reinhardt, “A Crude Replacement: The Indian New

at least for the Meskwaki, an opportunity to reestablish self-governance and defend their sovereignty.

Originally called the Wheeler-Howard Act, the IRA underwent an arduous period of legislative debate and amendment beginning in February 1934. As Congress considered the bill, Collier and his aides held a series of ten meetings in Native communities across the nation, where they pitched the ideals of the IRA to various tribal delegations.⁸² Those congresses, as they were called, provided an opportunity for the OIA to take its newly reconstituted mission – to replace “administrative absolutism” with local, tribal self-governance – from the bureaucratic halls of Washington to the communities it influenced. Neither Native communities nor Congress received the Wheeler-Howard Act as well as Collier had hoped, and the effort nearly floundered. Nonetheless, the much-altered bill became law on June 18, 1934, despite the obstacles presented by a highly polarized Congress. It ultimately offered a watered-down form of self-governance embodied in tribal constitutions that tribes could compose and ratify. Collier continued to claim that, despite the many changes made by Congress, the IRA still provided an opportunity for Indians to regain much of the independence and authority they had lost during assimilation. But their self-governance would continue to be couched under federal authority.⁸³

Native tribes that chose reorganization took a series of steps. They first had to vote to accept the IRA and then draft a tribal

Deal, *Indirect Colonialism, and Pine Ridge Reservation*,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 6 (2005), 1–56; Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934–1945* (Lincoln, NE, 1980); Felix S. Cohen, *On the Drafting of Tribal Constitutions*, ed. David E. Wilkins (Norman, OK, 2007); Elmer R. Rusco, *A Fateful Time: The Background and Legislative History of the Indian Reorganization Act* (Reno, NV, 2000); Wilcomb E. Washburn, “A Fifty-Year Perspective on the Indian Reorganization Act,” *American Anthropologist* 86 (1984), 279–89; Jennifer McLerran, *A New Deal for Native Art: Indian Arts and Federal Policy, 1933–1943* (Tucson, AZ, 2009).

82. Deloria and Lytle, *Nations Within*, 80–153, provides an excellent discussion on the congressional debates over the Wheeler-Howard Act. For the meetings with Native communities, see Vine Deloria Jr., ed., *The Indian Reorganization Act Congresses and Bills* (Norman, OK, 2002).

83. Haas, *Ten Years of Tribal Government*, 1; Deloria, *Indian Reorganization Act*, xv; Collier, “Facts about the New Indian Reorganization Act: An Explanation and Interpretation of the Wheeler-Howard Bill as Modified, Amended, and Passed by Congress,” 9–10, file 46U, part 43, group 4, Harlan Papers, SHSI-DM.

constitution under OIA guidance. Such assistance included a process of repeated revision and a clear agency effort to pressure tribes to integrate democratic governance into their constitutions. The IRA required the Secretary of the Interior to call a ratification election once tribes had a completed draft and, assuming tribal approval, the secretary had to formally approve the document for it to take effect.⁸⁴

For the Meskwaki, this process began in April 1934 even as Congress debated the Wheeler-Howard Act and Collier and his OIA held its congresses across the country. At a meeting on April 7, the tribe selected an eight-member committee to study, interpret, and explain the IRA. Over the course of nearly 20 such meetings, this group went over the law, carefully weighing and explaining its merits to tribal members.⁸⁵ Edgar R. Harlan, curator of the Historical, Memorial, and Art Department of Iowa (now known as the State Historical Society) in Des Moines, sent an inquiry to Collier in September 1934 on behalf of several Meskwaki as to the full impact the legislation would have on the tribe. Harlan, a non-Native widely viewed by the Meskwaki as a friend and advocate, noted that many Meskwaki were unclear about the changes between the original Wheeler-Howard Bill and the final IRA. He therefore requested an explanation of precisely those sections that would directly affect the Meskwaki, given the settlement's unique status as both communally owned *and* in a federal/tribal trust. Harlan noted that such an explanation would clarify the IRA for the Meskwaki "so that each individual, regardless of his factional attitude, may know exactly what he is in favor of, and what the law proposes, and what he is against." Harlan further observed that most opposition stemmed from Meskwaki suspicions of IRA provisions that had nothing to do with their tribe; they tended to doubt new policies that appeared "manifestly intended for a different tribe or culture."⁸⁶

84. Deloria and Lytle, *Nations Within*, 141. Hass, *Ten Years of Tribal Government*, 3, notes that from 1934 to 1936, 181 tribes accepted the IRA while 77 rejected it.

85. Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 15-17.

86. Harlan to Collier, 9/25/1934, file 49U, part 43, group 4, Harlan Papers, SHSI-DM. Harlan was a close friend of the tribe throughout his career as the curator at the precursor to the State Historical Society of Iowa. He worked directly with Jonas Poweshiek (a Meskwaki who lived in Des Moines and worked at the

The tribe was well aware of the Indian Office's steadfast support for the IRA. The agency strongly encouraged the new policies and showed little restraint in selling them to the Meskwaki. Collier asserted that there would be no retribution against tribes that did not accept reorganization, but he presented them with a harsh alternative, arguing that tribes that refused the IRA would "merely drift to the rear of the great advance open to the Indian race." It is not implausible, therefore, that the Meskwaki felt threatened by Collier's rhetoric, especially as he argued that non-IRA tribes would "stand still and . . . continue to lose [their] lands."⁸⁷

A complex political situation developed around the IRA issue, and lasted throughout the process.⁸⁸ While many Meskwaki viewed reorganization as a new and effective tool for self-governance, others wanted to reject it and return to the chief-council system.⁸⁹ Still others rejected both proposed options, refused to participate in the process, or were undecided on the issue.

When the IRA became law in 1934, the tribe had already been working toward the restoration of its self-governance for over half a decade. Yet the form of that self-governance and, more importantly, who would be at the helm, remained unclear. Some feared that reorganization would provide disproportionate political advantage to IRA supporters. For some tribal members, the old politics reemerged, complicating matters even further: the Youngbears, it was popularly assumed, supported the IRA, while many Oldbears opposed it.⁹⁰ It is reasonable to assume that a third group also existed outside this rigid binary: tribal members who weighed their support for reorganization not because of any factional affiliation but because they were undecided as to

historical society), was ceremonially adopted into the tribe in the early 1920s, and frequently acted as a liaison between the tribe and non-Indians.

87. Collier, "Facts about the New IRA," 16.

88. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 40–46, offers an excellent account of the Meskwaki encounter with the IRA elections and the constitution-making process.

89. Edward Davenport, George Young Bear, Horace Poweshiek, and William Poweshiek to John Collier, 6/29/1937; Young Bear, Charles Davenport, C. H. Chuck, Peter Morgan, John Tataposh, and Sam Slick to John Collier, 12/13/1937, both in IRA-MHPDM.

90. Brown, "Social History," 80; Foley, *Heartland Chronicles*, 151.

whether the law posed effective solutions to the political problems their people faced.

An election in June 1935 offered the Meskwaki only two choices: accept or reject reorganization. Several Meskwaki opposed the IRA based on their recollections of the pre-1896 era. Jack Old Bear and four others wrote to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes in December 1934, arguing that, as owners of their land, the Meskwaki should not have to comply with the IRA. Instead, they argued, the tribe was “capable of self-government” without the law and was already attempting to seat a governing council. Fearing that reorganization would strip them of ownership of the settlement, they asked to be exempted from the law.⁹¹ Collier responded on Ickes’s behalf, assuming that the Meskwaki had misunderstood the act. He reassured them that the IRA would not disrupt their collective ownership and reaffirmed their right to hold an IRA election.⁹²

Collier’s response did not satisfy the many tribal members who remained unsure of the effects the law would have on their community. As opposition grew, Collier asked the agency superintendent, Ira D. Nelson, to gauge Meskwaki inclinations toward the bill and to uncover the causes of Meskwaki discontent. Nelson responded, noting that, based on his observations at a tribal meeting, only a few Meskwaki opposed the law. By May 1935, the Meskwaki had organized a number of meetings at which the IRA’s provisions were explained and discussed in detail, and Nelson reported that he had made every effort to thoroughly explain them. He admitted, however, to feeling that certain tribal members would be “much better satisfied” by a visit from another OIA official prior to the election. The agency accordingly sent two representatives to Tama to discuss the IRA just before the election. They were likely tasked with promoting the law to tribal members.⁹³

Their efforts paid off. During the election of June 15, 38 percent of eligible Meskwaki turned out to vote. They accepted the

91. Jack Old Bear, Joe Peters, Harrison Kapayou, and John Tataposh to Ickes, 12/18/1934, IRA-MHPDM.

92. Collier to Old Bear, 1/21/1935, IRA-MHPDM.

93. *Ibid.*; Nelson to Collier, 5/18/1935, IRA-MHPDM; Collier to Nelson, 5/24/1935 and 6/11/1935, IRA-MHPDM.

IRA by a wide margin of 63 to 13.⁹⁴ The election was notable for two main reasons. First, and most obviously, the Meskwaki accepted the law, moving their tribe into the second phase of reorganization. Second, although the wide margin of victory seemed to show overwhelming support for the IRA, the reality was far more complicated: The amount of Meskwaki "opposition was much greater than the number of 'no' votes would indicate," because some 62 percent of tribal members, who were either undecided on the issue or opposed reorganization outright, intentionally abstained from voting.⁹⁵

The opposition had attempted to nullify the IRA election through boycott. Convention incorrectly holds that the abstainers did not understand democratic elections or thought they were following tribal custom and believed that by not showing up, they would be counted as voting against the IRA. Also, it has been argued, the low voter turnout may have been due to an inability of many tribal members to travel to the ballot place. Both of these arguments fail to recognize that many Meskwaki had been participating in democratic elections for over a decade and that agency reports describe the settlement as "small and [therefore] easy for the voters to get together," especially in the good weather offered by a June election.⁹⁶ Thus, some tribal members may have opposed the IRA due to their political affiliations, others because they suspected that the IRA would negatively affect their community or land ownership. Still others could have had any number of reasons not to support the law. But none of these rationales should be equated with a widespread misunderstanding of an electoral process in which tribal members had been participating for years.

A more likely explanation lies in the possibility that the opposition misinterpreted Section 17 of the IRA, leading them to develop a strategy that would use a loophole to stymie the legislation. Nelson noted in a spring 1936 letter to Collier that those opposing the IRA "claim[ed] that it is necessary for at least thirty percent

94. Nelson to Collier, 6/15/1935, IRA-MHPDM.

95. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 43. See also Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 17-18.

96. Benjamin Reifel to Collier, 3/5/1937, IRA-MHPDM.

of the adult Indians of the reservation to sign a petition requesting and authorizing the adoption of the proposed constitution and bylaws."⁹⁷ Although this letter came several months after the 1935 election, it suggests that some anti-IRA Meskwaki thought that by abstaining from the election the previous June, they could keep the electoral turnout below 30 percent. Doing so, they mistakenly believed, would nullify the IRA. Their interpretation of the law was inaccurate because, although the 30 percent provision did exist, it only applied to tribal corporate charters, not to elections for the IRA or for constitutional ratification.⁹⁸ The abstentions, then, reveal another calculated—if ultimately unsuccessful—effort by some Meskwaki to prevent reorganization and maintain their customary system of governance.

The OIA and Meskwaki supporters of reorganization disregarded their opponents as legally naïve and quickly set about drafting the Meskwaki constitution following their 1935 victory. Several eager Meskwaki had elected a constitutional committee in 1934, before the IRA had even become law. That group, which included George Young Bear, Edward Davenport, and brothers Horace and William Poweshiek, worked in close conjunction with the agency for some 18 months to craft the document. They requested and amassed copies of constitutions from other tribes and used them as guides while OIA agents critiqued the document's form and language. The OIA did leave the majority of the legal decision making to the tribe. The committee proceeded very slowly through each stage of the process, wary of making mistakes or drafting language the tribe might not accept. OIA field agent Benjamin Reifel, observing this caution, called the committee "one of the most exacting that I have ever worked with." Another administrator called them "extraordinarily painstaking in their deliberations."⁹⁹

97. Nelson to Collier, 3/19/1936, IRA-MHPDM.

98. F. H. Daiker to Nelson, 5/18/1936, IRA-MHPDM. See also *Indian Reorganization Act*, sec. 17.

99. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 40–41; *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 5/17/1936; Westwood, "Memorandum for Mr. Collier"; Reifel to Ed Davenport, 3/5/1937, IRA-MHPDM; Reifel to Collier, 3/1/1937, IRA-MHPDM; Westwood, "Memorandum to Organization Division of the U.S. Department of the Interior," 3/16/1937, IRA-MHPDM.



The Meskwaki Constitutional Committee – (from left) George Young Bear Sr., William Poweshiek, Horace Poweshiek, and Ed Davenport – spent over three years drafting and revising the document that still governs their tribe today. Photo (ca. 1937) from the Meskwaki Historic Preservation Department and Museum, Meskwaki Settlement.

As it became increasingly clear that the tribe was on the verge of a new system of self-governance, several issues arose regarding the constitution's form and content. Perhaps the most contentious disagreement among tribal members focused on the redistribution of settlement land. Although the tribe's communal use system had sufficed in the settlement's earliest years, by the early twentieth century, it created "wide variances in land distribution [where] a few families had as much as 60 acres while others had only enough for a homestead and garden."¹⁰⁰ Some Meskwaki supported allowing the council to reassign lands under the constitution in order to share the settlement more equally. That proposal met resistance from those claiming larger tracts of land, as they often rented or share-cropped their plots to other tribal members, making land an especially important Depression-era issue.¹⁰¹

100. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 30, 43; Grant, "The Indian."

101. Westwood, "Memorandum for Mr. Collier."

Land remained at the center of Meskwaki politics, but whereas it had previously been a unifying buffer between the tribe and external forces, by the 1930s it was also a point of internal discord. The committee searched for a politically balanced land reform process that would ameliorate the issue without alienating enough Meskwaki to endanger the constitution. Its final version recognized extant land assignments but empowered the tribal council to reassign settlement lands under certain circumstances. Despite this compromise, the provision continued to fuel opposition to the constitution and would, in part, nearly stymie its ratification.¹⁰²

Tribal citizenship was another major issue, and it, too, focused on concerns over land and tribal resources. Although the tribe remained composed almost entirely of full-blooded Meskwaki, by the mid-1930s some had married or had children with members of other tribes.¹⁰³ Meskwaki Sam Slick argued to Superintendent Nelson that tribal “children should be enrolled with the father,” as was customary. If the tribe adopted “just anyone,” Slick argued, there would develop “such a mix-up” that people would cease to regard “real” Meskwaki. As Indians repeatedly intermarried with members of other tribes, he complained, they occupied Meskwaki land via the inheritance system.¹⁰⁴ Again attempting to placate those on both sides of this hotly contested issue, the final constitution continued the patriarchal adoption

102. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 43–46; D’Arcy McNickle, “Memorandum to Mr. Harper, Re: Sac and Fox Indians, Tama, Iowa,” 12/30/1936, IRA-MHPDM; Westwood, “Memorandum to Mr. Collier.” See also Meskwaki Constitution, art. X, sec. 1 and art. XI.

103. Westwood, “Memorandum for Mr. Collier,” notes that virtually no intermarriage occurred between whites and Meskwaki, but some tribal members married members of other Native tribes, “particularly [the] Winnebago and Potawatomi.”

104. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 43–46. This issue also arose in 1931 when “the question came up as to who should be enrolled” following tribal intermarriages. To solve the issue, the “Indian Office told the [Meskwaki] to get together and decide for themselves; the decision was that the children should follow the Father—a mother marrying outside the tribe lost her rights.” See “Minutes, January 8, 1935,” folder “749 Community Meetings—Minutes of Meetings and Related Correspondence”; and “Memo Re. Sac and Fox Indians of Iowa: Washington, Feb. 4, 1931,” in folder “771 Charities and Benevolences—Rations (Food and Clothing), Misc. Correspondence, 1931–1933,” both in box 293, NARAGL. See also Meskwaki Constitution, art. II.

system preferred by Slick but also allowed the tribal council to formally adopt children of mixed Meskwaki lineage in some cases.

The committee struggled throughout 1937 to gain support for the document. They had attempted to craft a constitution that was both effective and politically palatable. The constitution reduced the minimum age for a seat on the tribal council to 25 and opened it to females. Some tribal members viewed both of these changes as controversial deviations from established custom. (Although women had long played an integral role in tribal politics, they had not previously been allowed to hold a seat on the council.) Additionally, under reorganization, many duties that had once been left to the chief's council, "such as representing the tribe in negotiations with the government and resolving disputes among its members," would be transferred to the new, elected council.¹⁰⁵

Contention also arose because some tribal members remained unsure of the IRA's potential consequences. The committee had numerous meetings throughout 1937 with agency representatives as drafts of the document made the rounds through the OIA. Federal officials offered various, although generally slight, changes. Many Meskwaki remained unclear about the constitution's provisions. In February one asked Charlotte Westwood, a federal official close to the committee, "for a statement of what a constitution is and the purposes of the proposed tribal constitution." Westwood took the request seriously because she felt that some tribal members did "not understand the purpose or meaning of [re]organization."¹⁰⁶ Although some Meskwaki might have been unclear as to some nuanced legal language encapsulated in the document, virtually all saw that it would shift tribal governance and power dynamics. By November 1937, the fate of the pending constitution was far from assured. But the time had arrived for the ratification election.

Four years of political turmoil surrounded the IRA, leading to a dramatic election late in 1937. The constitution had received its final OIA approval in early autumn, after which the agency set the election date and forwarded 200 copies to tribal members

105. Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 45; Meskwaki Constitution, art. IV and art. X, sec. 3-4.

106. Westwood to Zimmerman, 2/20/1937, IRA-MHPDM.

for final clarification of its provisions and implications. With the sovereign decision to restructure their government and build a new political future for their community before them, tribal members cast their ballots. On November 13, with more than double the previous election's turnout, the tribe ratified the document by an excruciatingly narrow vote of 80 to 78. Assistant Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman approved it five weeks later, officially restructuring the Meskwaki government under the Indian Reorganization Act.¹⁰⁷

THE MESKWAKI NATION continues to be governed under the 1937 constitution. It established an elected council of seven tribal members who carry legal authority over matters of tribal membership, taxation, education, healthcare, land assignments, and relations between the state and federal governments.¹⁰⁸ But the constitution has never existed without controversy. Its opponents immediately attempted to overturn its ratification. John Tataposh, for example, wrote to President Roosevelt, arguing that because the settlement was "communally owned by the [tribe], [and] purchased with their ancestors' own money," every tribal member had "a right of ownership of the land . . . to the disposal of our affairs as he sees fit." The IRA and its constitution, he asserted, should not be applicable on the settlement, and tribal governance should occur exclusively on Meskwaki terms.¹⁰⁹ To make his case, Tataposh drew on his tribe's history. Because of the settlement's anomalous status in the decades before 1896, the Meskwaki had experienced an unparalleled level of political autonomy during an era of land dispossession and sovereign suppression. The tribe's involvement with the OIA after that time, leading up to the battles over reorganization in the 1930s, mirrored that of Native nations across the country, with some key distinctions based on its unique land ownership. Meskwaki tribal members struggled throughout to maintain their sovereignty as the

107. Zimmerman to Nelson, 9/22/1937, IRA-MHPDM; Nelson to Collier, 9/30/1937, IRA-MHPDM; Daubenmier, *Meskwaki and Anthropologists*, 45; Buffalo, "Historical Overview," 25.

108. Brown, "Social History," 81.

109. John Tataposh to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 2/2/1938, IRA-MHPDM.

pressures of OIA interference and internal partisanship tore at their political fabric.

In the twenty-first century, members of the Meskwaki Nation continue to draw on this history. The settlement boundary, as in many indigenous communities, still marks an autonomous Meskwaki space that “reinforce[s] tribal cultures and identities.”¹¹⁰ Daily life requires tribal members to transcend those boundaries, and they continue to assert their sovereignty by working across the American political system. The Meskwaki Nation uses assets like gaming revenues to bolster education and healthcare and to purchase additional land. Yet in some ways, generations-old political disagreements remain. The tribe has attempted to repeal or dramatically reform its constitution approximately once per decade over the past 75 years, most recently in 2004.¹¹¹ Moreover, not long ago a Meskwaki tribal judge referred to the constitution as “flawed and biased from the start” because, in her view, the federal government had forced the IRA onto her community.¹¹² Some might see her statement, or the highly publicized turbulence surrounding the 2003 Meskwaki Casino shutdown as reminiscent of the discordant politics of the early twentieth century.¹¹³

As the longer arc of Meskwaki history reveals, however, the conversation between tribal members and surrounding governments—as well as among themselves—over the meaning and form of Meskwaki sovereignty has been ongoing since at least the mid-nineteenth century. Because of the tribe’s ownership of the settlement, the Meskwaki story is in many ways unique. But its core characteristics are not. The Indian policies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are too often remembered as being overwhelming for American Indian tribes. Such histories cast Native peoples as unable to defend themselves, their resources, or their rights against the pressures of assimilation and

110. Rand, “Primary Sources,” 136–37.

111. Buffalo, “Historical Overview,” i, 29–47, details the seven major attempts (1938, 1948, 1962, 1978, 1986, 1994, and 2004) to reform the tribal constitution.

112. Theresa Essman Mahoney, “Practical Tips for Advocates of Indian Children: A Tribal Perspective” (slideshow presented at the 2011 Iowa State Bar Association’s Juvenile Law Seminar, 5/6/2011), 3–4.

113. “Appeals Court Sides with NIGC on Casino Shutdown,” *Indianz.com*, 8/28/2003, www.indianz.com/News/archives/001047.asp, accessed 7/13/2012.

allotment. Looking to the Meskwaki Nation reminds us that while American Indians were indeed affected by the oppressive policies of the time, tribal members used their resources, both physical and political, to understand and engage the changing political world around them. Even in moments of weakness relative to the OIA, the Meskwaki people remained active and searched for strategies to regain local control. They acted opportunistically to defend their right to self-governance, because their interest rarely, if ever, strayed far from protecting and affirming their tribal sovereignty.

Saving a Piece of the Rock: The State of Iowa and the Railroad Problem, 1972–1984

GREGORY L. SCHNEIDER

A TRIP ON THE ROCK ISLAND branch line near Iowa Falls in May 1975 dramatized the issues plaguing the newly bankrupt railroad. Near Rodman, steel track was stamped with the date 1904, much of it consisting of light 60-pound rail nearly three-quarters of a century old. Such track may have been suitable for the demands of shipping grain on branches through the 1950s, when most grain was hauled in boxcars, but the development of heavier jumbo hopper cars (which weighed 263,000 pounds when fully loaded) employed on branch lines by the 1970s necessitated regular maintenance and heavier rail. A train on the line averaged only ten miles per hour, “rocking and rolling” over uneven track. It was little wonder that derailments were common, slowing shipments of grain out of the rich farm fields and cooperative elevators in northwestern Iowa. The federal government had refused assistance to repair the track, leaving the state of Iowa to create an innovative program to do so. But worry about the survival of not only the railroad but of small farm communities led one shipper at Dows, Iowa, to state, “If you lose the railroad the elevator will go out of business and the town will die.”¹

The story of bad track and slow orders was not uncommon on railroads during the 1970s, for the entire American railroad

1. Dan Piller, “Trip Dramatizes Rock Island’s Woes,” *Des Moines Register*, 5/18/1975.

industry was in crisis. For well over a decade, railroads had suffered from decreased investment. Their rate of return on equity was a dismal 4 percent during the 1950s; it would sink further to about 2 percent in the 1970s.² Many railroads were becoming less and less able to attract private investment capital. As a consequence, railroad companies deferred maintenance on track, roadbed, structures, and equipment. During the 1960s, railroads had sought to abandon passenger trains at a record pace. When they were not permitted to do so, railroads provided such bad service on unprofitable trains that they drove away the few remaining passengers. By the time Amtrak was formed in 1971, railroad passengers had declined to about 4 percent of the traveling public from 29 percent a decade earlier. Railroads also saw their working capital decline precipitously, giving rise to the post-World War II "railroad problem," which Senator George Smathers (D-FL) diagnosed in Senate hearings in 1958: "A mighty industry has come upon sick and precarious times."³ A spate of bankruptcies in the Northeast, led by the Penn Central Transportation Company, forced the federal government to bail out the northeastern roads with the creation of Conrail in 1976. Yet no federal bailout was looming for troubled lines in the Midwest during the decade.

The major hindrance to railroad profitability during the post-World War II period was continued regulation of rates and service by the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC). The ICC may have once been a necessity in the late nineteenth century in order to prevent abuses and restore order to an anarchic rate system in the railroad industry. By the 1950s, however, the railroads were no longer a monopoly; rather, they competed for traffic with trucks rolling on highways constructed by the government. Likewise, barges were delivering corn and grain to Gulf of Mexico ports on waterways dredged and maintained by the government, and airlines were stealing passenger traffic at government-subsidized airports, where airlines paid no taxes (unlike passenger

2. For the figure in 1970, see *The American Railroad Industry: A Prospectus* (Washington, DC, 1970), 4, generally known as the ASTRO Report, in Judith R. Hope Files (Domestic Council), box 42 (Union Pacific), Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

3. *Ibid.*

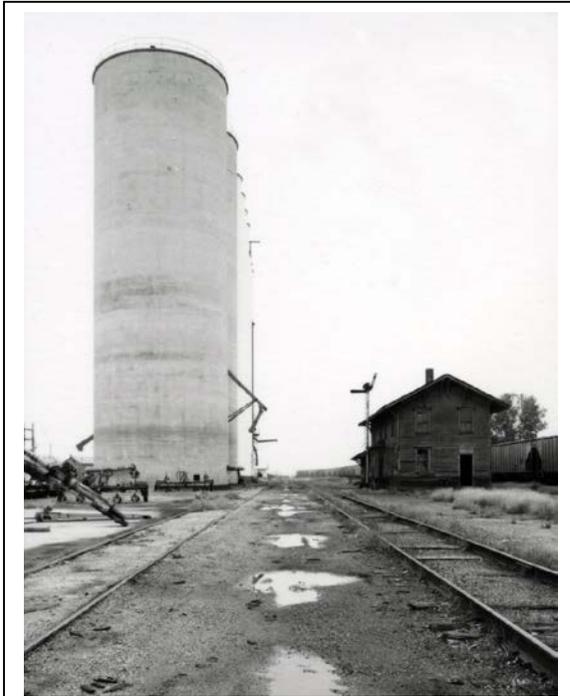
train depots, which were subject to property taxes). The automobile took passengers away from railroads on a federally funded highway system that put the final nail in the coffin of passenger trains. All of the changes necessitated some alteration of a regulatory structure that was impeding railroad profitability and the industry's ability to compete in delivering transportation services.⁴

No state was more symptomatic of "the railroad problem" in the United States during the 1970s than Iowa. In the peak years of railroad mileage in the early twentieth century, 10,500 miles of railroad crisscrossed the state; by 1974, that number had decreased to 6,500. The bankruptcies of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad (Rock Island) in 1975 and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (Milwaukee Road) in 1977 further reduced railroad lines to 3,400 miles. Today, the state possesses less than one-third of the railroad mileage it had at the dawn of the twentieth century.⁵ Even by the mid-twentieth century, Iowa's rail mileage, constructed during a time before trucks and highways linked agricultural shippers to the ports and urban areas of the nation, far exceeded its need. But by the 1970s, it was clear that much of Iowa's rail network was no longer needed, and abandonment of branch lines led many experts to fear that only a few major lines would remain in the state.

The bankruptcy and feared liquidation of the Penn Central helped spur proposed federal solutions to the railroad problem. Congress and the Nixon administration created the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) in 1971 to remove the burden of intercity passenger service from the private railroads. To rehabilitate the bankrupt northeastern lines, particularly the Penn Central, Congress passed the Regional Rail Reorganization (3R) Act in 1973, leading to the establishment of the U.S. Railroad

4. For a concise summary of the federal government's regulatory policies regarding railroads, airlines, and trucks, see Mark H. Rose, Bruce E. Seely, and Paul F. Barrett, *The Best Transportation System in the World: Railroads, Trucks, Airlines, and American Public Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Columbus, OH, 2006).

5. See Iowa Rail History at the Iowa Department of Transportation website: www.iowadot.gov/iowarail/history/history.htm (accessed 7/25/2012). The best history of Iowa railroads from the beginning to the 1990s is Don L. Hof-sommer, *Steel Trails of Hawkeyeland: Iowa's Railroad Experience* (Bloomington, IN, 2005).



Abandoned depot, Rockford, Iowa (September 1982), dwarfed by two adjoining elevators. Rockford once loomed large in eastern Iowa railroading. Between 1883 and 1913, the town was a division terminal with a roundhouse, coal chute, water station, and ice house. The two-story depot is all that remains today, but it has been preserved and restored on its original site by the Rockford Historical Society. All photos taken by and courtesy of James Beranek.

Administration (USRA). The USRA was given the task of developing a Final System Plan for the bankrupt eastern lines, which swelled to seven railroads by 1975. In early 1976 Gerald Ford signed the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform (4R) Act into law, implementing the recommendations of the USRA to create the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) and allowing for borrowing to rehabilitate railroads in the East and Midwest. Exactly where Iowa's place was in this developing nationalization

of rail lines was a prominent concern for state officials throughout the 1970s.⁶

How did Iowa policymakers respond to the railroad crisis in the state? How did they try to prevent the decline of the private rail network and work with railroads like the Rock Island to provide help to maintain service to dependent shippers in the state? Fearful of losing service on rail lines throughout the state, Iowa policymakers aided the Rock Island (and other railroads) in order to provide support for rehabilitating branch lines in the state. These efforts to “save a piece of the Rock” paid dividends for Iowa shippers after the venerable line was liquidated in the 1980s because a majority of the property in the state was saved for use by other railroads. The state’s efforts reveal a rare instance of government-business cooperation that helped preserve service in some areas and allowed for other companies to benefit once the Rock Island was gone.

THE EFFORT to save the railroad network in the state began over the issue of energy, particularly shortages of fertilizer and fuel because of the oil embargo by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in the fall of 1973. “The combination of a wet corn crop and a late harvest in the fall of 1972 that first alerted Iowans to an energy shortage” led the Iowa General Assembly and the administration of Republican Governor Robert Ray to establish the Iowa Energy Policy Council “to plan and to coordinate Iowa’s energy efforts.”⁷ The council, made up of nine representatives from the General Assembly and the private sector, soon discovered that the ties between energy policy and transportation—particularly the growing problem of serving

6. The railroad problem was also a prominent concern of newspapers in the state, including the *Des Moines Register*. One issue of concern to Iowans was the proposed Amtrak route through Iowa, which employed the Burlington Northern mainline from Burlington in the southeast part of the state to Council Bluffs in the west, bypassing the state’s largest cities and university towns. A second train, running on the Santa Fe Railroad, skirted the southeast edge of Iowa, crossing the Mississippi River at Fort Madison. See, for example, *Des Moines Register*, 12/22/1970, 1/8/1971, 1/23/1971, 1/29/1971, 4/1/1971, and 4/19/1971.

7. “Iowa Statement on Project Independence,” 9/11/1974, Energy Policy Council, Departmental and Subject Files (Vermeer), 1969–1983, Robert Ray Papers, RG 43 Governor, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

rural grain elevators — demanded governmental action to determine the best way to employ energy resources in the state.⁸

Recognizing the importance of railroad transportation in the state for conserving energy, the Energy Policy Council lobbied hard to secure funding to rehabilitate railroad lines. “The railroads are potentially the most energy efficient carrier of goods on long-distance, inland trips. The deterioration of rail service in Iowa, as in other states, shows the price being paid for the nation’s failure to have an energy-related transportation policy.”⁹ Discussion among council members centered on rehabilitating branch lines, many of which were in deplorable condition. As a commemorative pamphlet described the situation, “Deferred maintenance, inefficient use of freight cars and the inability of some carriers to cope with the increased shipping brought about as a result of the Russian Grain deal, finally took its toll on Iowa’s rail system.”¹⁰

In 1974 the Iowa General Assembly created the Rail Assistance Program, to be administered by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT). Program staff identified seven branch lines as candidates for state assistance, including two on the Rock Island: the branch from Indianola to Carlisle and the 120-mile Iowa Falls gateway in northwestern Iowa. Ideally, the railroad company was to perform the rehabilitation work on the line, with expenses shared equally by the state, the railroad, and participating shippers. Railroads would receive interest-free loans from the state and shippers to cover the costs of rehabilitation, with funds to be repaid based on the number of carloads shipped over the branch. The initial appropriation for the Rail Assistance Program was \$3 million, far less than the state spent on its road network. Nonetheless, by 1982 the program had written 29 contracts to upgrade track on 17 branch lines totaling 1,191 miles at a cost of \$79 million.¹¹

8. The nine members of the Energy Policy Council were Harriette Baum, James Fuller, Harriett Lindberg, Orren Olson, Robert Porter, Senator James Gallagher (D-Vail), Senator Calvin Hultman (R-Waterloo), Representative Gregory Cusack (D-Davenport), and Representative Brice Oakley (R-Burlington).

9. “Iowa Statement on Project Independence.”

10. “Iowa Rail Assistance Program,” folder 9 (DOT, 1982), box 238, Ray Papers.

11. *Ibid.*, 2-3.



Abandoned track, Elmira, Iowa (June 1981). Located 9.4 miles northeast of Iowa City, Elmira was a busy junction – but never a town – that boasted a depot, freight house, two water tanks, and up to 60 passenger and freight trains per day in 1898. Fifteen months after the Rock Island closed in March 1980, all that was left were the Burlington–Minneapolis main track, a weedy passing siding, and a switch-stand and station sign well used for target practice by hunters.

THE ROCK ISLAND desperately needed the state funds. By 1974, the railroad had reached an endgame in its long-sought merger with the Union Pacific Railroad (UP). The ICC had approved the merger of the two properties (subject to stringent conditions imposed on both properties that would have, in effect, redrawn the western railroad map), but by the time the decision was announced in November 1974 the UP no longer wanted the Rock Island, whose infrastructure and track had decayed during the decade-long merger proceeding.¹² In anticipation of federal funding being available for reconstructive aid to railroads in the

12. Gregory L. Schneider, *Rock Island Requiem: The Collapse of a Mighty Fine Line* (Lawrence, KS, 2013), documents the merger fiasco and the battle within the railroad industry over the Rock Island.

Midwest as a consequence of the passage of the Regional Rail Reorganization (3R) Act in 1973, the Rock Island applied for a \$100 million loan from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), with backing from Iowa state officials, including Governor Ray, who wrote letters petitioning the FRA to support the application. Conceivably to help shepherd the loan application through the federal bureaucracy, in October 1974 the Rock Island board of directors hired John W. Ingram, former head of the FRA, as the railroad's new president. Ingram, a railroad marketing expert, changed the Rock Island's image to a blue-and-white color scheme and bold R trademark, with "The Rock" replacing the old beaver pelt Rock Island emblem and its vermilion-and-yellow color scheme. But neither the change in executives nor the new image led the FRA to approve the loan. Instead, laughably, the railroad received \$9.1 million from the FRA in February 1975, which Ingram told the government would have allowed the railroad to operate through March. With no other recourse, on March 17, 1975, the Rock Island board filed for bankruptcy in Chicago.

The bankruptcy judge, Frank McGarr, appointed a single trustee to lead the railroad through reorganization. At the end of March, McGarr chose his former law partner William Gibbons, who knew nothing about railroads (but a lot about corporate bankruptcy law). Gibbons kept Ingram on as president of the line. Gibbons resisted arguments being raised by rival railroad executives, such as the Chicago and North Western Railway's Larry Provo, that the Rock Island be liquidated; he also spurned the Rock's main bondholder, Henry Crown, who wanted to liquidate the property. Instead, Gibbons, in an effort to save the railroad, sought the assistance of Iowa and other states for track rehabilitation.

Fearing the possible liquidation of the Rock Island in March 1975, Iowa DOT officials Maurice Van Nostrand and John Millhone wrote a memo about the railroad and its impact on Iowa's economy. Summarizing the railroad's significance in the state, they wrote, "The Rock Island has 1,960 miles of track in Iowa, runs 58 trains within the state daily. The railroad's payroll in the state is \$26 million. It pays taxes in Iowa of \$1.5 million annually. There are 1,090 firms employing 39,000 Iowans which rely upon the Rock Island for transportation. There are 125 communities

which rely on the Rock Island as their only source of rail transportation."¹³

Iowa officials seized on the Rock's bankruptcy to petition federal officials about the state's vital interest in keeping the railroad operating. Van Nostrand and Millhone described three possibilities: "1) the continued operation of the Rock Island through the injection of financial assistance; 2) a merger of the Rock Island with the Union Pacific; and 3) dismemberment of the Rock Island with different lines assigned to other railroads." The memo went over the competing arguments, dismissing the first two because of the FRA's refusal to grant a loan to the railroad and the second because of the UP's unwillingness to move forward on the merger. The third alternative was called the Provo alternative, named after Chicago and North Western Railway president Larry Provo, who told a Senate Commerce Committee hearing in Washington on March 10, 1975, that the Rock Island should be liquidated. Van Nostrand and Millhone recommended instead that the state intervene in the bankruptcy case to ascertain whether the railroad could survive and to testify "in the hearings before the ICC to seek the strongest possible protection for Iowa shippers." "At a minimum," they concluded, "we intend to ask that some rail service be provided on all the Rock Island lines for at least two months."¹⁴

The State of Iowa and its Republican governor, Robert Ray, were more than happy to oblige the trustee of the Rock Island, as well as other railroads interested in a public-private partnership to preserve branch lines in the state. Given the need to rehabilitate lines to deliver commodities such as corn and wheat to Gulf of Mexico ports, the Rock's management did not hesitate to pursue rehabilitation efforts with the state and worked in partnership with the state and shippers to do so.

DESPITE the miserable condition of its finances and infrastructure in the mid-1970s, the Rock Island recognized earlier than most railroads the asset it possessed in the grain branches in the

13. Maurice Van Nostrand and John Millhone, "Rock Island Railroad," to Members of Energy Policy Council, n.d. [March 1975], box 204, Ray Papers.

14. *Ibid.*, 3-4.

northwestern corner of the state. Gathering commodities in jumbo hopper cars, an innovation coming to take the place of boxcar loading of grain and corn, led the Rock Island, as early as 1967, to promote unit grain trains (trains dedicated to shipping a single commodity) to haul wheat and corn to the Gulf of Mexico. The Rock Island possessed the longest north-south line of any railroad, stretching from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Kansas City, Missouri (what was called the spine line), and from there to Herington, Kansas, and south to Galveston, Texas.

Rock Island President Jervis Langdon promoted the unit trains in literature the railroad distributed throughout its territory. Titled "You Are Witnessing the Birth of a Market," the pamphlet described how the Rock received a tariff rate allowing it to link midwestern states with Gulf ports for exporting grain to Japan, West Germany, and other destinations. The pamphlet claimed that shipments of wheat "zoomed upward from 8,590,000 bushels in 1967 to 41,600,000 bushels in 1968."¹⁵ That affected the Rock Island's bottom line substantially and contributed to an increase of revenue. (Although the railroad still lost \$4 million in 1968, that was far better than its \$12 million deficit in 1967.) As many as six or seven Rock Island diesel locomotives pulled trains of more than one hundred hopper cars through the Midwest during the autumn harvest season, contributing to a successful strategy to deal with the growing losses in the company's balance sheet.

As Richard Nixon's détente policy contributed to the strengthening of trade relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, Iowa farmers increasingly found export markets for surplus corn and grain. By the late 1970s, however, surpluses became a problem as energy shortages and bad track on the railroads led to declining shipments and increased storage of corn.

Rock Island trustee William Gibbons solicited assistance from across the state of Iowa, traveling to meet with shippers who could help the Rock provide cars to its storage facilities and meeting with state officials to discuss partnerships in the branch line rehabilitation program. Three major branches needed assistance

15. Rock Island Railroad, "You Are Witnessing the Birth of a Market," accession 2068, box 9, Jervis Langdon Papers, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware.



Abandoned depot and track, Shell Rock, Iowa, on the Rock Island's Burlington–Minneapolis mainline (October 1980). Successor Iowa Northern Railroad restored service to Shell Rock from Nora Springs one year later and reopened the entire line between Cedar Rapids and Manly in 1982. The depot (ca. 1872) is no longer extant.

from the state: the line between the Rock Island's main at Atlantic, Iowa, north to Audubon; the eleven-mile branch from Indianola to Carlisle in Warren County; and a 120-mile stretch of line between Iowa Falls and Superior in the north-central part of the state. All the lines met a cost-benefit threshold determined by the Rail Assistance Program, and each had important shippers who needed rail service and were willing to share the costs with state officials and the railroad. In preliminary discussions the state noted that the Rock's finances were such that it could not expect to contribute anything to the costs of rehabilitation at the moment, with promises of payments coming in the future.

The 13-mile Carlisle-Indianola line served two major shippers with a total tonnage of 2.1 million bushels of grain hauled each year in 600 covered hopper cars. But the new cars, heavier at 200,000 pounds than the old steel frame boxcars, had taken their toll on the track. At places, track speeds were barely 5 miles per hour, with an average of only 10 miles per hour. "The rail on

the branch line was 65 to 75 pound steel that is from 67 to 79 years old." The ties were in bad shape and ballast consisted of cinders and dirt, leading, even at the slow speeds, to frequent derailments. The cost of rehabilitating the branch was estimated to be \$498,000, which was to be paid by the state and shippers. That sum would only return the branch operations to a consistent 10 miles per hour, hardly a style of railroading to stir the purse strings of Wall Street investment bankers.¹⁶

And that was the main point of this innovative public-private partnership. If shippers wanted to keep rail service, they would have to join with the state to ensure its continuation. A group of shippers in western Iowa formed the Audubon-Atlantic Branch Line Improvement Association and loaned the Rock trustee \$100,000 to upgrade service on the branch. The state provided more money with the goal of improving track speeds to 20 miles per hour on the 25-mile branch. Gibbons traveled to Atlantic to receive his check and to inaugurate the new service.¹⁷ Rock executives set a goal of moving 1,000 carloads of grain annually over the branch by 1976, but that goal was never achieved. Rock Island traffic manager Richard Lane reported in 1977 that the railroad had moved only 327 cars for the year, "almost exactly the same number as we moved in 1975." With close to \$750,000 spent on the upgrades to the line, the results were unimpressive to say the least.¹⁸

"THANKS in large part to help from the State of Iowa and from Iowa shippers, the Rock Island seems to be making a go of it." So read a wildly optimistic editorial in the *Des Moines Register* focused on "the apparent revival of the Rock Island."¹⁹ Despite decent quarterly reports made by Gibbons and his attorney, Nicholas Manos, at six-month status hearings on the Rock Island bankruptcy, the railroad still hemorrhaged cash, and attorneys

16. Energy Policy Council Railroad Report, August 1974, folder 5 (Energy Policy Council), box 173 (Vermeer), Ray Papers.

17. "Working on the Railroad," *Des Moines Register*, 10/14/1975, clipping file, Iowa State Department of Transportation Library (hereafter cited as IDOT), Ames.

18. Schneider, *Rock Island Requiem*, 188.

19. "Rock Island Revival," *Des Moines Register*, 10/17/1977, clipping file, IDOT.

for Rock Island bondholder Henry Crown still urged the Rock's liquidation.

So did rival railroads, most acutely the Chicago and North Western (CNW) and its president, Larry Provo. Provo took a dim view of the entire Iowa effort to rehabilitate branch lines. To the initial state proposal to upgrade a branch at Roland, near the main line at Nevada, Iowa, for \$700,000, Provo responded, "Surely, if this line were not there we do not believe that anyone would seriously consider making an investment to construct the line today." Provo argued that there were not enough cars shipped to justify the expense and urged instead that the State of Iowa support a petition to abandon the line. Believing that the shipment of grain from small cooperatives had come to an end, Provo sought the abandonment of close to 1,500 miles of branch lines in the state. "The small country grain elevators," he predicted, "will have a different function. They will become intermediate points between farmers and larger grain elevators."²⁰

The CNW had pursued a different strategy, relying less on collecting grain from branch lines and focusing instead on being the main railroad hauling Union Pacific freight eastbound to Chicago. Before the Union Pacific-Rock Island merger had been jettisoned, UP President John Kenefick had begun a relationship with Provo, culminating in having UP trains running over CNW tracks from Fremont, Nebraska, to Chicago. The CNW had always been the UP's biggest exchange partner for freight in the Omaha area (an issue that complicated the UP's efforts to merge with the Rock Island, as CNW chairman Ben Heineman intervened against the merger and got what he wanted — a prolonged fight within the ICC). But now, with the Rock Island in disrepair and lacking the financial capital to rebuild its main lines, Kenefick renewed the connection with the CNW. In 1978, adding fuel to the fire, the Federal Railroad Administration provided a \$100 million loan to the CNW to rehabilitate its Clinton-to-Council Bluffs mainline.²¹ Given that situation, as well as the CNW's

20. Larry Provo to John Millhone, 3/31/1975, folder 7 (Energy Policy Council, 1975), box 173, Ray Papers; Dan Piller, "Railway Chief's Blunt Talk Wins Few Friends in Iowa," *Des Moines Register*, 3/15/1976, clipping file, IDOT.

21. Hofsommer, *Steel Trails to Hawkeyeland*, 237; H. Roger Grant, *The North Western: A History of the Chicago & North Western Railway System* (DeKalb, IL, 1966), 222.

access to the Powder River coal fields in Wyoming and lucrative shipments of coal over the UP to Chicago, Provo remained hostile to Iowa's approach to rehabilitating marginal branch lines.

STATE AID to the Rock Island could not restore profitability to the bankrupt railroad. In the wake of three successive brutal winters in 1977, 1978, and 1979, followed by spring flooding and washouts throughout its operating territory, the railroad was nearing an impasse in the reorganization proceedings. Then, on August 28, 1979, the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), joined by the United Transportation Union (UTU), struck the railroad. For five weeks, management teams operated a sparse number of trains over less than 20 percent of the property, with the great majority of the Rock Island idled by the strike. In the court bankruptcy proceedings, attorneys and the Rock trustee argued over whether the railroad had sufficient cash to operate. Determining that it did not, on September 24, 1979, the ICC ordered other railroads to provide directed service over the property after BRAC ignored President Jimmy Carter's order to return to work. The crews slowly came back to their jobs, but the railroad they returned to was no longer the Rock Island—rather it was operated by Kansas City Terminal Railroad management using Rock Island crews. Other railroads, like the CNW, the Burlington Northern, and the Milwaukee Road, also operated on Rock Island tracks in Iowa under the directed service order, their losses subsidized by federal taxpayers.²²

On January 25, 1980, citing the failure of the trustee to show how a reorganized core property could restore profitability to the railroad sufficient to pay the substantial debt the railroad now owed creditors (over \$400 million), Judge Frank McGarr decided that the property should be liquidated, culminating in an order to embargo shipments on the property after March 24 and aiming for a total cessation of operations on the railroad by March 31, 1980. Other lines had been liquidated in the past, but nothing compared to the scale and scope of the Rock Island's 7,000-mile system being liquidated. The Rock Island would be (and remains) the largest liquidation of a railroad in history.

22. Schneider, *Rock Island Requiem*, 227–31.



An original Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Minnesota station, built in 1871 at Greene, Iowa (October 1978). With the depot threatened by demolition in 1987, the town raised the money necessary to move it to a new site near the Greene Historical Museum.

IOWANS were deeply concerned about the Rock Island's failure, especially about how it would affect the state's economy and railroad service in the state.²³ As a potential long-term solution, in 1980 the state legislature created the Iowa Railway Finance Authority (IRFA) to provide for the financing of essential railroad lines and their rehabilitation under a grant program established by the legislature. The Ray administration and the legislature continued to seek innovative ways to keep rail lines in service in difficult times for the industry.²⁴

For the short term, Iowa policymakers sought continued operation under extended ICC-directed service operations. Other railroads, primarily the CNW, had operated on Rock Island track.

23. The *Des Moines Register* ran banner headlines, akin to REMEMBER THE MAINE, announcing the end of the Rock Island.

24. The IRFA is still in operation; its grant funds continue to provide assistance to Iowa railroads. Its 2008 annual report is available at http://publications.iowa.gov/6892/1/IRFA_Annual_Report_2008.pdf (accessed 12/15/2013).

The CNW operated over the spine line between the Iowa-Minnesota border to the south through Des Moines, paying the Rock Island estate over \$1 million per month to do so. It also operated over the grain branches in the northwest corner of the state. The Burlington Northern Railroad and the Milwaukee Road also operated on the Rock Island's lines. The shutdown of the railroad on March 31, 1980, threatened shippers with a loss of railroad service. After the shutdown, as a way to provide continued rail service to vital shippers, the trustee negotiated rentals of properties to railroads that had operated under directed service.

In the short run, that solved the problem of continued service on Iowa lines. It was no long-term solution, however. If Rock Island trustee Gibbons could not find buyers for the rail properties in the state, then service would end, leaving shippers in the lurch. Governor Ray, IDOT, and the state legislature wanted to assure shippers that rail service would continue even if no potential buyers could be found to operate on former Rock lines.

One of the alternatives that was least popular among IDOT staff was to grant the CNW control over former Rock Island and Milwaukee Road branches. The CNW had strongly opposed the Iowa branch line improvement project, drawing the ire of some state officials and many shippers, who saw its service as poor and feared that it would dominate Iowa's rail network after the Rock Island's demise. IDOT Director Raymond Kassel pointed to a shipper survey produced by the Iowa Railway Finance Authority as evidence that the CNW was ill-equipped to provide effective service over former Rock Island lines. According to Kassel, shippers had complained about "deferred maintenance, track conditions, lack of motive power, failure to pull loaded trains, poor turn-around time for trains, failure to make car payments due to shippers for their equipment, and excessive delays north of Kansas City." Train turn-around time, according to shippers, was taking 15-30 days, compared to 12-15 days when the Kansas City Terminal ran the Rock under directed service.²⁵ Kassel and others in state government favored the sale of many of the former

25. Raymond Kassel to Donald Yaden, U.S. Department of Transportation, 10/3/1980, box 204 (Vermeer), Ray Papers.

Rock Island lines to the Kansas City Southern Railroad, a company without a presence in Iowa, in order to ensure rail competition in the state.

James Wolfe, president and CEO of the CNW, responded harshly to Kassel's proposal. "Your continuing attempts to try to bring in a new carrier into the State of Iowa to replace the now-defunct Rock Island will do nothing but prolong the agonies which your constituency faced in the past, the burden on Iowa of too many unprofitable railroad companies." Wolfe defended the CNW's record, bragging that "the efforts being made by our employees in your State [are] no less than Herculean. On an annualized basis, the employees of the North Western have already moved 20 percent more grain than moved in 1978. By the end of the year [1980], we expect to move over 350 million bushels of grain, exceeding the combined North Western-Rock Island efforts in 1978 by over 30 percent."²⁶ In sum, Wolfe argued for the continued control of former Rock Island lines in the state by the CNW rather than a new carrier.

The man in control of the disposition of Rock Island assets was William Gibbons. Working with a much reduced staff and still directed by Judge Frank McGarr and the U.S. District Court in Chicago, he would negotiate to dispose of lines to other railroads, interested state governments, and shippers. Gibbons proved to be a hard bargainer, seeking to maximize returns on the railroad's assets in order to gain the most capital to reorganize the company.

Delaying the sale of assets was the Rock Island Employee Transition Act, written by Kansas Republican Senator Nancy Kassebaum and signed into law by President Jimmy Carter. It ensured that former Rock Island employees would receive back pay and vacation pay totaling \$75 million paid from the Rock's estate. Judge McGarr placed an injunction on the law – claiming that labor had already been paid for five years when the railroad was in bankruptcy and that the law represented an unfair taking of property from the estate to pay workers for a railroad that no longer operated. The Railway Labor Executives' Association petitioned the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals to lift the injunction,

26. James Wolfe to Raymond Kassel, 10/17/1980, box 204 (Vermeer), Ray Papers.

but it was upheld in a decision written by Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stephens. After a year of wrangling, the case, *Railway Labor Executives' Association v. Gibbons*, came before the U.S. Supreme Court, which unanimously decided that the Rock Island owed no obligations to workers from its estate as the law violated the U.S. Constitution's uniform standard of bankruptcy clause (in that no other bankrupt railroad was being required to pay labor from the assets of its own estate). With that decision announced in March 1982, the Rock's reorganization hit high gear, and line sales began to materialize.²⁷

THE STATE OF IOWA, like most midwestern states affected by the Rock's liquidation, feared that the trustee was delaying line sales and forcing states to pay too much for track in the hope that the government could find an operator. At a Midwest Governors' Conference held on March 4, 1982, in Oklahoma City, Gibbons defended the prices he was asking for lines in Oklahoma and other states based on the salvage price for the rail and other equipment. He also showed how many sales had been negotiated. There had been only two leases and sales in Iowa (a seven-mile segment to the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railroad and a four-mile segment to the Keokuk Junction Railroad).²⁸ In some cases, the process worked out badly for the public interest. The Choctaw Route, linking Memphis, Tennessee, to Tucumcari, New Mexico, for example, was almost entirely abandoned except for small line segments sold to short-line operators. In other cases, such as the sale of the Rock Island's line from Tucumcari, New Mexico, to St. Louis, Missouri, to the Southern Pacific Railroad for \$57 million, the process worked well for reestablishing service on essential lines.

States like Kansas were incensed by the slow process, and U.S. Senator Bob Dole threatened an investigation of Gibbons.²⁹

27. Schneider, *Rock Island Requiem*, 277-80.

28. William Gibbons, remarks to Midwest Governors' Conference, Oklahoma City, 3/4/1982, box 239, Ray Papers.

29. Bob Dole to Frank McGarr, 10/7/1981, and Gibbons's reply, 10/15/1981, in folder 1, box 5, Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Library, Norman, Oklahoma.



Abandoned depot and track, Oskaloosa, Iowa, photographed four months after the Rock Island had shut down (July 1980). The depot, built in 1887–88, was added to the National Register in 1990 and has been restored and reused as a restaurant. The tracks have been removed.

Kansas Governor John Carlin even called for total liquidation if sales continued to be delayed. Ray responded that the State of Iowa was considering purchasing the Rock Island from the trustee. "It would be a tragedy if portions of the Rock Island were liquidated prior to the time when the state can act to save them. . . . I do share your frustration at the slow pace with which the Trustee is moving to dispose of Rock Island property," but "I am reluctant to support a call for immediate liquidation at this time."³⁰

Governor Ray feared that the trustee would hold out for exorbitant prices in Iowa. The Rock Island's main east-west line across the state was dormant, and some feared that it would be abandoned and sold for scrap. To ensure that vital lines were not lost for rail service, the IRFA and IDOT, in cooperation with Ray, proposed purchasing "essential Rock Island trackage." An IDOT report from April 1981 stressed that "a total loss of service on

30. Robert Ray to John Carlin, 7/17/1981, box 239 (Wilson), Ray Papers. In the bankruptcy hearing, the State of Kansas represented all midwestern states as intervener in the case.

essential Rock Island trackage in Iowa could cost Iowa's economy hundreds of millions of dollars per year in additional transportation costs, and additional highway system wear. Thousands of railroad and non-railroad jobs could be lost." "In northwest Iowa alone, the impact of continued rail service . . . exceeds \$15 million annually."

ON THE OTHER HAND, the projected cost of purchasing "core Rock Island" track in the state (about 1,400 miles) was \$65-\$118 million, with track rehabilitation estimated to cost an additional \$97 million. How would such an expense be paid for? IDOT proposed a railroad diesel fuel tax of one cent per gallon, which could raise an estimated \$10-15 million per year. Other proposals included a property tax on railroads and the collection of delinquent taxes (the Rock Island and Milwaukee Road, both in bankruptcy, owed approximately \$4-5 million to state coffers). Other financing could come from the issuance of state bonds, and operators would share start-up costs and qualify for rehabilitation aid from the assessed taxes on the railroads themselves.³¹ The goal was to form a limited partnership that would help maintain and operate essential Rock Island track in the state.

The proposal, which would have been an expensive proposition for Iowa, drew opposition from state legislators, such as State Senator Dick Drake (R-Muscatine), who favored a different approach to the problem. Drake asked 18 questions about the proposal. Much of his concern centered on the idea of a limited partnership and on the accumulation of debt from bonds that would accrue to state taxpayers.

The proposed diesel fuel tax also raised concerns. C. Philip Baumel, a professor of agriculture and transportation expert at Iowa State University, argued that the diesel fuel tax might lead railroads to cut back service as the fuel tax caused their costs to rise. It might also lead to higher truck use on the roads, resulting in higher highway maintenance costs for the state.³²

31. Doug Gross, Memo to Governor Ray, 4/23/1981, with attachment, "State Involvement of Essential Rock Island Trackage," box 33 (Gross), Ray Papers.

32. Doug Gross, Memo to Governor Ray, 5/16/1981, box 33 (Gross), Ray Papers.



Abandoned depot and platforms, West Liberty, Iowa (May 1983). Freight service had resumed on the defunct Rock Island's former east-west main-line through West Liberty when this photo was made, but the depot and platforms remained abandoned and unneeded. Today the depot has been restored as a museum and houses West Liberty's Chamber of Commerce.

Although the plan was opposed by some railroads, such as the CNW, which called the plan "socialistic," other railroads removed their opposition. The Milwaukee Road, which hoped to gain trackage rights over the north-south spine line, dropped its opposition in May 1981. The Burlington Northern also saw the state's plan as a feasible way to handle the disposition of lines. The stumbling block remained the CNW, which intended to purchase the north-south spine line from the Rock estate. Besides worrying about the lack of competition if the CNW should succeed in gaining control of that line, state officials also worried that if the CNW was able to purchase the spine line from the Rock estate, the State of Iowa would be "left with the dog lines—and those lines would probably result in the state being unable to attract general partners and may result in the state being unable to divest itself of the lines in the future."³³

33. Doug Gross, Memo to Governor Ray, 6/8/1981, box 33 (Gross), Ray Papers. The state of Minnesota, which was also concerned about the line being sold to

Ultimately, the Iowa General Assembly passed a modified limited partnership plan (House File 874), which authorized the IRFA "to participate in limited partnerships and create a special railroad facility fund to retire bonds." The diesel fuel tax was kept in the bill, with the IRFA managing the fund and the tax collected, which was estimated to be worth \$1–\$3 million. Claims that the plan was socialistic were challenged by the railroads, which asserted that the state's sole responsibility under the law would be to collect the diesel fuel tax and that the state was not liable for the venture under the limited partnership approach. IDOT was concerned, however, that the scaled-down plan would not be enough to "develop a system of financing which will make it in the private sector's economic self-interest to become involved in providing continued, competitive and improved rail freight service in Iowa." There was also concern that a scaled-down version would only purchase bits and pieces of the former Rock Island and not the entire system, making it more difficult to sell "unconnected segments." That, in turn, would make it difficult to achieve a prosperous, or even viable, rail network.³⁴

The legislature passed the original bill in August 1981, allowing for the excise tax on diesel fuel, with the IRFA to manage the fund for the purposes of "providing for the financing of railway facilities and enhancing the continued operation of railroad facilities." The tax was to go into effect on October 1, 1981, but seven railroads in the state, including the Santa Fe, CNW, Milwaukee Road, Union Pacific, and others, joined by the intervening Iowa Railroad Shippers Company, filed a petition in equity in November 1981 seeking a delay on the collection of the tax. A temporary injunction was granted on December 28, 1981. After the trial court in Polk County upheld the tax, the railroads appealed on three grounds: discrimination against the railroads in violation of Section 11503 of U.S. Code 49; violation of the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution, whereby surviving railroads were burdened

the CNW, produced a lengthy report on the spine line. Planning Division, Minnesota Department of Transportation, *The Minnesota North/South Rail Corridor: A Study of the Alternatives for Mainline Route and Local Service Needs* (Minneapolis, 1981), available in IDOT, Ames, Iowa.

34. IDOT, "A Discussion of Rail Finance Proposals," 8/11/1981, box 38 (Gross), Ray Papers.

with a tax to pay for the abandoned lines of railroads that no longer operated; and violation of the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution in that the revenue from the tax would not benefit them, but rather potential competitors who took over abandoned lines. In 1983 the Iowa State Supreme Court, in a 5–4 decision sided with the plaintiffs on their charge that the diesel fuel tax violated Section 11503 of U.S. Code 49, in that the railroads were unfairly taxed, unlike other transportation services in the state.³⁵

BY THE TIME the Iowa Supreme Court ruled on the case, the CNW had purchased the spine line from the Rock Island trustee for \$93 million, following a lengthy bidding war between the CNW and the Soo Line Railroad, which wanted to gain access to Kansas City. The state of Iowa took no position on either railroad, only wanting to ensure trackage rights for other railroads no matter who won the bid. In the Chicago District Court, Judge McGarr entertained the competing bids. The CNW initially bid \$76 million for the property. The Soo Line upped the bidding to \$95 million, but, given the lateness of its bid and fears that Soo Line financing would fall through, the sale of the line to the CNW was approved in June 1983 after the CNW increased its offer to \$93 million. (The Soo Line had upped its bid to \$100 million, but attorneys for the ICC and the Justice Department convinced McGarr that the CNW bid was the more legitimate one.)³⁶

One of the last major line sales of former Rock Island property in Iowa was to Heartland Rail Corporation, a Des Moines company that had been formed the previous year as TRAIN and for a while had been negotiating with the trustee to purchase the former Rock Island east–west mainline. The trustee sought \$81 million for the property, which would encompass the section of the main line from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to Bureau Junction, Illinois. (The trustee had leased the main line from Chicago to Bureau Junction to CSX Corporation and had sold the line from Chicago to Joliet, Illinois, to the Regional Transportation Authority, a commuter operator now known as Metra.) The amount

35. *Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway et al. v. Gerald D. Bair et al.*, Supreme Court of Iowa, 264/69397, from Iowa Tax Research Library at <http://itrl.idr.iowa.gov/mx/hm.asp?id=14CF>, accessed 12/21/2013.

36. Schneider, *Rock Island Requiem*, 285–87.

Gibbons requested was far too high for a line that would need serious upgrading and new signals on its route. Many sections of the line had not seen regular train service since the end of directed service over the Rock Island in 1980. The Iowa Railroad had operated over portions of the line between Council Bluffs and Adair, and later to Bureau Junction, but, with the absence of regular service in central Iowa, the track and property had decayed.

After lengthy negotiations and a loan of \$15 million from the IRFA, Heartland purchased the property for \$31.5 million in February 1984 and began operations over the line a few months later, contracting with Iowa Interstate Railroad Company to do so. Early operations were difficult, and the railroad depended heavily on support from the IRFA for its first decade of operations, but with the ethanol fuel boom and good management, Iowa Interstate began to turn around its fortunes and became a well-respected and profitable operation over the former Rock Island. Other shortlines in the state, such as the Iowa Northern Railroad, also profited on former Rock Island rails as a result of the limited partnership with the IRFA.³⁷

THE STATE OF IOWA had pursued a policy designed to save essential branch line trackage in the state in the mid-1970s. By the late 1980s, many of the branches it had sought to save, including the Rock Island's line from Indianola to Carlisle (now a nature trail) and the line from Atlantic to Audubon (abandoned almost entirely by Iowa Interstate in the early 2000s), had lost online traffic to trucks or had shippers close their doors permanently in the new postindustrial economy. Many more branches continue in operation as a result of the foresight of Iowa public officials and the investments made in rail service in the state, including the key northwest branch lines, which were operated first by the CNW and then by the Union Pacific.

The state's decision to fund the rehabilitation of other key routes in the state, such as the Iowa Interstate and Iowa Northern

37. Schneider, *Rock Island Requiem*, 287–89; William Petroski, "Fledgling Heartland Rail Sets Out to Prove its Critics Wrong," *Des Moines Register*, 11/4/1982; Fred W. Frailey, "The Iowa Interstate Story," *Trains* (June 2011), 31–37.

mainlines, continues to reap benefits for the state and for shippers dependent on reliable rail service. Not every rail line could be saved; abandonments dominated the news in Iowa during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. Yet the decisions made by Governor Ray, IDOT policymakers, and state legislators created an innovative and effective public program that saved not only a piece of the Rock but also other vital elements of the railroad network in the Hawkeye state.

Book Reviews and Notices

The Worlds the Shawnees Made: Migration and Violence in Early America, by Stephen Warren. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. xii, 308 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Jacob F. Lee is a postdoctoral fellow and visiting assistant professor of history at Indiana University, Bloomington. His current book project is *Rivers of Power: Indians and Colonists in the North American Midcontinent*.

In *The Worlds the Shawnees Made*, Stephen Warren reorients the history of the Shawnee Indians and the Midwest, both temporally and spatially. Most studies of the Shawnees and colonialism in the Ohio River valley center on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and famous Shawnee leaders like Blue Jacket and Tecumseh. Warren, however, emphasizes the long history of the region and its peoples, beginning with the Fort Ancient ancestors of the Shawnees. He also demonstrates that the history of the Midwest cannot be told in isolation. Through the Shawnees, he links the Midwest to the South and Mid-Atlantic. As disease and warfare pushed the Shawnees out of the Ohio valley during the mid-1600s, trade and other opportunities lured them to borderland regions—the Illinois Country, British Carolina, and the Susquehanna River valley—where the Shawnees became slave traders and military allies to Europeans and Indians alike. As the borderland communities collapsed in the late seventeenth century, Shawnees reunited in William Penn’s “peaceable kingdom,” which crumbled when British colonists decided that land was the Shawnees’ most valuable resource. From the 1720s to 1754, under pressure from Pennsylvania, the Shawnees returned to the Ohio valley, where they used their knowledge of North America and their many connections to build powerful alliances that linked the Midwest and the South.

Warren makes several important interventions in Native, midwestern, and early American history. First, in contrast to scholars who have established the power of place in shaping Native identity and spirituality, Warren finds Shawnee identity rooted in ceremonies that survived centuries of migration and upheaval. Using sources ranging from origin stories to contemporary rituals, Warren shows the importance of migration and reinvention to Shawnee identity. Because the frequency and breadth of their relocations make the Shawnees unusual in early

America, Warren's work does not overturn those studies that emphasize place, but he demonstrates that Native peoples construct identities in many ways. Second, although he perhaps understates the vulnerability of migrants (see, for example, the fate of the Westos), Warren reveals that movement was a source of power, as the Shawnees used connections made in their travels as weapons in the fight against colonialism. Only through their alliances with other Indian nations could the Shawnees reject both France and Britain. Finally, Warren begins the history of Indian removal in the early 1700s, when Pennsylvanians swindled territory from neighboring Indian nations. He rightly argues that Indian removal was not a single event but a centuries-long process of dispossession of Native peoples by colonists.

The Worlds the Shawnees Made is a valuable history of the Shawnees from the pre-colonial era to the Seven Years' War, but Warren assumes that his readers will have substantial knowledge about the Shawnees' experiences in the 60 years that followed. Two of his arguments depend on that knowledge. First, he alludes to the diplomatic work of Blue Jacket and Tecumseh as the culmination of the coalitions Shawnees forged during the mid-1700s. Some discussion of those alliances would buttress Warren's argument that the Shawnees gained power from their trans-regional movements. Second, and more significantly, Warren proposes a "long history of removal," of which the Indian Removal Act of 1830 was only part, but in 1754, the Shawnees remained on the Ohio valley homelands of their ancestors (155). A century of further removals lay ahead of them. Those interested in the conclusion of that story will have to look elsewhere. Minor qualms aside, Warren offers a welcome addition to the growing literature on the Native peoples of the Midwest and their adaptations in the face of colonialism.

Warrior Nations: The United States and Indian Peoples, by Roger L. Nichols. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. xiii, 237 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer Robert Wooster is Regents Professor of History at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. His books include *The American Military Frontiers: The United States Army in the West, 1783-1900* (2009).

Were the conflicts between Indians and the United States of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries inevitable? In *Warrior Nations*, featuring case studies that examine the causes of warfare between the United States and the Indians of the Ohio Valley (1786-1795), the Red Stick War (1813-1814), the Arikara War (1823), the Black Hawk War (1832), the Minnesota Sioux War (1862), the wars on the Southern Plains

against the Cheyenne and Arapaho (1864–1865), the conflicts against the Chiricahua Apaches (1861–1872), and the Nez Perce War (1877), Roger Nichols concludes that they were indeed inevitable. Throughout the ongoing invasions of North America, newcomers saw Native peoples as barriers to the rightful expansion of western civilization who should be either pushed aside or forced to change their ways. Indians, on the other hand, were equally determined to retain their traditional lands, independence, and existing cultures. “Looking back over these wars,” Nichols argues, “it is hard to see how they might have been avoided. No doubt people of goodwill occasionally represented one or both sides, but their actions had little impact on the existing disputes between the invaders and the indigenous people. Ethnocentrism drove both groups” (194).

Based on the wisdom gleaned from a half-century of scholarship on the subject rather than on significant new research, Nichols’s comparative survey represents a laudable attempt to craft a systematic assessment of the causes of Indian-white conflict. Neither side, he insists, made much of an effort to understand the other. Whites expected Indians to reject their traditional notions of clan retaliation against injuries inflicted by outsiders; Indians expected whites to accept that young men of the tribes could not be prevented from seeking fame and fortune through raids and warfare. Incessant pioneer demands that Indians be shunted aside, the ham-handedness of the federal government (in failing to check excesses by white frontiersmen and insisting on the acculturation of the tribes), and the militarized, decentralized nature of most tribal societies were common features of these conflicts, but Nichols also recognizes the importance of local circumstances. Religion, inter- and intra-tribal divisions, international border issues, questionable treaties, corruption, the American Civil War, and aggression by Indians, pioneers, and the U.S. Army alike often added to the ugly mix.

Iowa readers will find the assessment of the causes of the Black Hawk War to be of particular interest. Nichols identifies this as the lone “accidental war” (98, 190) of the conflicts under review. Following tradition, he identifies General Henry Atkinson’s mistaken decision to send volunteer rangers ready to “shoot first and ask questions later” (80) ahead of his more disciplined regular infantrymen as the immediate trigger of a war the Sauk and Meskwaki neither wanted nor expected. More fundamental conflicts over land and its resources, however, had set the necessary preconditions for such an accident. The federal government demanded removal of the tribes; beset by white intrusions, internal divisions, and shrinking resources, most Sauk and Meskwaki moved to Iowa in 1831. But Black Hawk and most of the so-called

British Band returned to Illinois the next year, a decision Nichols sees as resulting from disaffection among Indian women with the unbroken soil of Iowa and the “frustrations and fears” that convinced the disaffected Natives “to ignore the reality of their circumstances” (97). Many of their Sauk and Meskwaki cousins refused to join the move; the federal government would not or could not police unruly pioneers; British assistance never materialized; and neighboring Winnebagos and Potawatomis had no intention of offering refuge, and even allied with the United States.

The results of this and other conflicts, Nichols demonstrates, are sobering. Both the British Band and their cousins who had remained in Iowa suffered the same fate, giving up another 6 million acres of land before eventually being forced to move again, first to Kansas and then to present-day Oklahoma (although some Meskwaki eventually settled on their settlement near Tama, Iowa). The neighboring tribes who had allied with the federal government likewise had to cede their traditional areas, albeit a bit more slowly. In the end, white insistence that the tribes give up their land, customs, and culture gave Indians few real options; “because these contests pitted groups with vastly differing demographic, economic, and military resources, it comes as no surprise that the invaders won” (194).

Citizen Explorer: The Life of Zebulon Pike, by Jared Orsi. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. xii, 392 pp. Illustrations, maps, chronology, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer David A. Walker is emeritus professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa, where he taught western history for 37 years.

When Zebulon Montgomery Pike died in 1813, he was more highly regarded than Meriwether Lewis. Today, however, Pike is not deemed worthy of three years of bicentennial adulation as Lewis was. Unlike previous biographers who often portrayed Pike as the “lost pathfinder” — perhaps even a traitor — Jared Orsi establishes the explorer’s ardent nationalism and idealistic response to hardship through a core question: “How did Pike himself and the early republic more generally develop and sustain nationalism when their ideals bumped up against the physical challenges of the North American environment?” (6). Orsi answers, “Pike’s life . . . opens up a window for understanding nature and nationalism in the early republic — not because he was typical of the nation or causally essential to its development — but because he and the nation grew up together” (6).

Pike, commissioned as an officer in 1799, quickly attached himself to General James Wilkinson, commander of the U.S. Army and governor of Upper Louisiana Territory. In August 1805 Wilkinson ordered Pike to take 20 men and provisions and explore the Mississippi River for four months in search of its headwaters. His instructions were nearly identical to Thomas Jefferson's instructions to Lewis and Clark: keep a diary; note weather and natural resources; obtain information about the Indians; gather specimens of animals, plants, and minerals; and draw maps. Of particular interest to many readers of this journal, Pike dined with Julien Dubuque, the early French settler who had opened profitable lead mines and served as intermediary between various governments and Indian tribes in the region. Farther north, Pike considered building a fort across from the mouth of the Wisconsin River in present-day Iowa.

Pike made blunder after blunder, all of which delayed his expedition and resulted in his men suffering through cold and snowy winter months. In late January 1806 they arrived at a British fur post on Leech Lake, near the desired headwaters. There they remained until spring before returning to St. Louis. Orsi maintains that Pike's "greatest achievement was to begin mapping . . . the upper Mississippi country . . . discern the vast extent of [British fur operations and] . . . understand the connections among Indians, their rivalries, their economies, and their politics" (123).

With a few weeks rest, in mid-July 1806 Pike set out on his second and most extensive western exploration with a party of 23 men, including 17 who had been with him the previous year. Once again Pike was to identify resources, explore rivers, survey the region and map it, conduct Indian diplomacy, and determine the extent and navigability of the Arkansas and Red rivers while avoiding alarming Spanish authorities. Orsi is convinced that Pike was not trying to reach Santa Fe illegally as suggested by the "secret orders theory." "His behavior is best explained as part of a larger set of mistakes and poor decisions occasioned by failure of his resources" (201). Pike first spotted what he initially labeled the Grand Peak (now bearing his name) in mid-November 1806. The expedition spent two winter months lost in the Colorado Rockies before crossing into Spanish-claimed territory.

In late February 1807 Pike and his men were escorted into Santa Fe and eventually south to Chihuahua, where the Spanish governor promised to take them into the United States. In what the author accurately calls "a comfortable captivity" (205), Pike, while clearly believing in the superiority of American nationalism and maintaining his prejudices against political and Catholic corruption and superstition, enjoyed

Spanish hospitality. Throughout, Pike struggled to keep maps and journals, managing to smuggle out most of the documents, some of which were stuffed into gun barrels.

Upon his return, Pike was caught up in the treason trial of former Vice President Aaron Burr; however, the author found no evidence that Pike knew anything about or participated in any of Burr's activities. A congressional committee subsequently exonerated Pike. Congress considered bills to compensate Pike and his men with land and double army pay, but it never approved that legislation. In 1810 Pike published *An Account of Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi and through the Western Parts of Louisiana*. Aimed primarily at Congress, the volume described both expeditions as Pike wanted the world to view them.

This is an extremely well-written biography, fully documented with abundant primary and appropriate secondary sources. Orsi goes beyond a traditional biography to drive home an unmistakable theme: Pike "found solace in a nationalist idea—the republic's promise to reward citizens' virtue" (5). An excellent map, absolutely essential to follow the narrative, precedes each chapter. The text is enhanced by contemporary illustrations and portraits as well as landscape photographs, most taken by the author. *Citizen Explorer* is a must read for anyone interested in the early nineteenth-century American West and in an individual who deserves notoriety for expanding what would later be termed Manifest Destiny.

The Lost History of the New Madrid Earthquakes, by Conevery Bolton Valencius. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. ix, 460 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliographical essays, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Robyn Lily Davis is assistant professor of history at Millersville University of Pennsylvania. Her Ph.D. dissertation (University of Oklahoma, 2009), was "Science in the American Style, 1700–1800."

In her engagingly written *Lost History of the New Madrid Earthquakes*, Conevery Bolton Valencius explores the most powerful seismic upheavals ever experienced in the contiguous United States. Making the broadest possible claims for the interpretive importance of the devastating yet nearly forgotten New Madrid earthquakes of 1811 and 1812, Valencius explains how that cataclysm—three massive earthquakes and many subsequent tremors centered in the bootheel of southeastern Missouri but felt from Iowa Territory to Natchez, Mississippi, and from the upper Missouri River to the Atlantic seaboard—was lost to popular memory, downplayed by politicians and land promoters, and ultimately denied by scientists.

Valencius offers a vivid report of the environmental and social upheaval wreaked by the New Madrid earthquakes, neutralizing claims that they had limited impact. Looking for the toll among an as-yet sparse white population ignores the devastation wrought on the Native communities that had for centuries made the region a hub of trade, diplomacy, and cultural exchange. For Native Americans seeking refuge from white encroachment in the New Madrid hinterland, the earthquakes altered the region's topography for the worse, permanently destroying the environment on which their cultures had been built.

Thus, while many white and black Americans reacted to the earthquakes by turning inward, stimulating the Christian revivalism of the Second Great Awakening, many Indians saw the earthquakes as a sign that they were to leave white ways behind. The disaster therefore contributed to cultural, spiritual, and military resurgences among the Shawnee, Cherokee, and Creek. Valencius uses the ultimately failed prophetic movements of the Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa to illuminate the irreversible losses that the region's indigenous inhabitants suffered—losses of political power, cultural autonomy, traditional ways, and, ultimately, of the land itself.

At the same time, Valencius suggests that the region's upheaval and subsequent remaking were only partly a result of natural disaster and the displacement of the Natives. As she explains it, modern technology had a hand as well: the *New Orleans*, the first steamboat to ply the Mississippi, was by coincidence on its inaugural voyage in December 1811. Steam's revolutionary powers to transform communications, commerce, and travel spurred the development that rebuilt the region. The *New Orleans* was a product of the "vital world of scientific imagination" (176) in which many nineteenth-century Americans lived, pursuing vast questions about the workings of the earth—and doing so collaboratively, across institutions and communities alike. For Valencius, the technological, engineered, industrialized America that emerged in the decades between the Civil War and World War I was built on the engaged thinking and scientific investigations rife in early American culture, visible to us in the widespread reportage of the New Madrid earthquakes and worthy of our attention. There was then no bright line between amateurs and experts, making American science commonplace and demotic: ordinary people at the threshold between knowing science and *knowing scientifically* made sense of the catastrophe.

Yet despite the initial widespread interest in the earthquakes, by the end of the century they had been almost entirely lost to scientific study. That shrinking acceptance emerged from a growing rift between expert and lay communication. As seismology professionalized, it

relied more heavily on technology, rejecting the sensible, local, non-instrumental “vernacular” science of everyday people. In detailing how these events were forgotten to such an extent that the very occurrences came to be denied, Valencius provides an enriched understanding of the state and purpose of early American science, its production of knowledge, its networks and boundaries. She offers as well a cautionary tale about the seductive yet constricting lure of quantified data.

Questioning what we think we know about the earthquakes, Valencius makes a case for why such knowledge matters, detailing the ways contemporary earth sciences have evolved to retrieve and reanimate not only those forgotten memories but also their meaning. Hers is a vast story spanning the two centuries since the earthquakes and connecting environmental history to community building; to the cultural, political, and social history of the nation; to histories of Native American spirituality, cultural resurgence, and military insurgency; to frontier revivalist religion; and to the very practices of scientific inquiry. As such, Valencius has written a text for scholars and lay readers alike.

Although the history of seismology itself may be of interest primarily to specialists, her larger argument about how science is packaged bears important lessons for more than midcontinent seismicity. At the outermost edge of the New Madrid seismic zone, closer to the more limited seismic activity of the Nemaha Uplift, Iowans remain safe from potential earthquake damage. Yet Valencius’s story of the willful denial of science serves as a warning to us all that we ignore uncomfortable science and its attendant public policy debates at our peril.

Free Black Communities and the Underground Railroad: The Geography of Resistance, by Cheryl Janifer LaRoche. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2014. xviii, 232 pp. Illustrations, maps, charts, notes, index. \$85.00 hardcover, \$25.00 paperback, \$22.50 e-book.

Reviewer Rebecca Conard is professor of history and director of the graduate program in public history at Middle Tennessee State University. She is the author of *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* (2002) and *Places of Quiet Beauty: Parks, Preserves, and Environmentalism* (1997).

Cheryl LaRoche examines the long road to freedom literally at ground level. By carefully researching documentary sources along with archaeological evidence and oral tradition, and by observing historic and contemporary landscapes, LaRoche pieces together the histories of four free black communities in southern Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio to construct a compelling picture of the Underground Railroad in operation. Geography is the main focus, but she also gives voice to the unsung black

men and women who established these outposts in the clandestine network of waterways and pathways that were the routes of escape.

At Rocky Fork, Illinois, collected family histories align with land ownership records, archaeological evidence, and extant geographical features on undeveloped land to document four homesteads in a heavily wooded area that anchored what is believed to have been "one of the first stops on the Underground Railroad along the Mississippi River in Illinois" (42). At Miller Grove, Illinois, landscape features, public records, and the letters of two abolitionists who traveled the backcountry as Bible salesmen reveal the story of a cluster of farms associated with 68 African Americans who were freed in the 1840s by four white families in south-central Tennessee. At Lick Creek, Indiana, freedom papers, land records, and archaeological evidence help to document the early nineteenth-century origins of a rural settlement of African Americans who farmed or worked as tradesmen and who were aided to freedom by Quakers before the Underground Railroad flourished as an organized operation. At Poke Patch, Ohio, the documentary record thickens to expose the interconnections between the Baptist and AME churches and white industrialists who supported abolition. Working together, they transformed the iron-furnace region of southern Ohio into a haven for African Americans escaping enslavement via the Ohio River.

In part two LaRoche calls attention to the geographies of resistance, noting that "the landscape is an intimate yet underexplored component of the Black experience, where danger lurked and freedom beacons" (87). She traces the land settlement patterns of interconnected families, the valleys and rivers that linked black settlements and other safe havens, the caves and remote wooded areas that provided temporary cover, and the cemeteries that record the final resting places of countless individuals, some well known and others whose names are just coming to light, who made the Underground Railroad work. In chapter six, LaRoche asks us to consider "the dispersed, often individual escapes culminating in the Underground Railroad" as one of the migrations ingrained in black history, from the Middle Passage to the Great Migration of the early twentieth century (105). In part three she examines the interconnections among black abolitionists, black churches, black fraternal organizations (particularly the Free Masons), and missionary societies to support her argument that the "covert works of African Americans drove the efforts inside one of the world's most successful resistance movements" (156).

The Geography of Resistance is carefully researched, tightly organized, and written from the heart. At times LaRoche's language soars, yet she never reaches beyond the evidence. Iowa stations along the Underground Railroad are not the subject of this book, but in many

respects the book provides a model for linking the many local histories associated with the Underground Railroad to the national story. Notably, LaRoche recognizes the natural environment as an agent of history, and she deftly weaves the landscape into each story. In other respects, the book demonstrates the level of scholarship that is now possible thanks to research conducted in recent decades by federal archaeologists and by African American historical organizations, and the work that has been encouraged and guided by the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program of the National Park Service. It is hard to imagine this book having been written 20, or even 10, years ago, but it is a good example of what may be to come.

Across the Divide: Union Soldiers View the Northern Home Front, by Steven J. Ramold. New York: NYU Press, 2013. ix, 223 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$49.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Donald C. Elder III is a professor of history at Eastern New Mexico University. He is the editor of *Love amid the Turmoil: The Civil War Letters of William and Mary Vermilion* (2003) and *A Damned Iowa Greyhound: The Civil War Letters of William Henry Harrison Clayton* (1998).

In *A Stillness at Appomattox*, Bruce Catton related an incident from the Civil War involving Colonel Stephen Thomas of the Eighth Vermont Infantry. A staunch Democrat at the start of that conflict, by 1864 Thomas had embraced many of the wartime measures adopted by President Abraham Lincoln, a Republican. When Thomas returned home on leave, he was berated by his prewar associates for having forsaken his political principles. "Thomas, you've changed — we haven't," they stated. "Fools never do," was the colonel's reply.

That exchange illustrates the central thesis of Steven Ramold's *Across the Divide*. Ramold asserts that many of the men who served in the Union Army underwent a change in attitude similar to that experienced by Stephen Thomas. Believing that the suppression of the rebellion was a just cause, Union soldiers were willing to accept more expansive governmental policies designed to help accomplish that goal. Civilians, however, were not always as agreeable to those changes. This, Ramold suggests, left Union soldiers increasingly disconnected (both physically and psychologically) from those they had left behind.

Ramold identifies six issues that illustrate the chasm between Northern soldiers and civilians: (1) Union soldiers increasingly sensed that they faced opposition from people back home as well as in the Confederacy; (2) "a new gender reality" generated by the conflict alienated many Northern soldiers; (3) the issue of abolition proved problematic

for soldier-civilian relations; (4) the decision by the Lincoln administration to use conscription found a much different reaction among the troops than it did at home; (5) Union soldiers and Northern civilians perceived the danger posed by the antiwar movement in the North very differently; and (6) soldiers assessed the 1864 presidential campaign very differently than their civilian counterparts did. All of these issues culminated in an "us versus them" mentality that permeated Northern ranks throughout the war.

To support his thesis, Ramold consulted a wide range of primary and secondary sources. He also made a concerted effort to examine a wide spectrum of Northern opinion rather than simply focusing on individuals from the more populous states east of the Appalachians. As a result, Iowans will be able to read of the views expressed by soldiers from the Hawkeye state like Charles Musser and the Remley brothers. They will also find accounts of Iowans who opposed the war, notably Henry Clay Dean. This depth and breadth of coverage strengthens Ramold's conclusion that Union soldiers, by and large, developed an identity separate and distinct from the one they held before they enlisted.

Many readers will finish *Across the Divide* convinced that Ramold has made a compelling case for his argument. It should be noted, however, that other historians have examined the same subject and reached a very different conclusion. In *The Union War*, for example, Gary Gallagher asserts that Northern soldiers retained a belief from the beginning of the war to the end that they were fighting to preserve the republic. In his telling, Union soldiers held true to the same tenet that they had embraced before the war, undergoing none of the changes that Ramold finds. Melinda Lawson's *Patriot Fires* also represents a point of view at odds with Ramold's. Lawson argues that many Northern citizens' support for Lincoln's wartime measures was at least equal to, and perhaps greater than, that found by Ramold among Union soldiers. Readers interested in *Across the Divide* might therefore be best served by also perusing the works of Gallagher and Lawton.

Like virtually any book, *Across the Divide* suffers from a few flaws. Some of these, such as an unsatisfactorily brief index, may well have been beyond Ramold's control. Other drawbacks come from factual errors that made their way into print. Benjamin Butler, for example, served in the U.S. House of Representatives rather than in the Senate, and John Brown was executed in 1859 instead of 1860. The book's positive attributes, though, far outweigh its few faults. Skillfully written and thoroughly researched, *Across the Divide* represents a valuable contribution to the growing body of work focused on the social and cultural aspects of the Civil War as experienced by the Northern populace.

Home Front: Daily Life in the Civil War North, by Peter John Brownlee, Sarah Burns, Diane Dillon, Daniel Greene, and Scott Manning Stevens. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. xx, 193 pp. Illustrations, exhibition checklist, notes, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Dan Lewis is the director of Educational Programs for the Virginia Community College System. He has taught American literature and U.S. history at several community colleges in Virginia.

Home Front: Daily Life in the Civil War North is an interdisciplinary collection of essays on “the visual culture of Civil War-era home fronts in the North” (4). The genesis of this volume was a joint exhibition by two of Chicago’s major cultural stakeholders that “juxtapose[s] war-era paintings from the collection of the Terra Foundation [for American Art] with a wealth of material drawn from the Newberry Library’s collection, including popular prints, illustrated newspapers . . . and other ephemera” (8). The book showcases not only a diverse array of “home-front artifacts” (8) but also a talented group of scholars, most of whom are affiliated with one of the two institutions.

At the heart of this scholarship is the notion that the Civil War period encompassed a wide range of different home fronts—spanning urban to rural, New England to Midwest, New York City to Chicago. *Home Front* provides a counterpoint to treatments of the sectional conflict that privilege the battlefield. Instead, it “open[s] a new window onto a world far removed from the horror of war and yet intimately bound to it” (10).

One of the ways Peter John Brownlee and Sarah Burns explore the home front of the Northeast is by focusing on periodicals that were circulated in that region. Brownlee examines prints and cartoons that depict slaves, contrabands, and freedmen and finds that the Confederacy’s overreliance on cotton helped to shape the “slave’s trajectory from bondage to freedom” (18). Burns writes about several of Winslow Homer’s wood engravings in *Harper’s Weekly*, a popular illustrated newspaper, because they highlight women’s increasing agency that was engendered by the exigencies of war: women serving as nurses in hospitals and as laborers in factories producing munitions.

Scott Manning Stevens considers another home front that has been a blind spot in the historiography of the Civil War: “the American Indian home front” (47). Stevens surveys depictions of Native Americans during the war years and concludes that “the home front for the Native Nations of North America was a place of lawlessness and danger in the face of land-hungry settlers” (69).

Daniel Greene and Diane Dillon make much of several U.S. Sanitary Fairs in Chicago and New York that were held to raise funds for

the Union's war effort. Those events not only "brought the war home" to civilians in urban landscapes but also provided opportunities for artists to support the Union cause by painting nationalist pictures and "creat[ing] moving memorials to lives lost in the war" (73, 129).

The authors of *Home Front* contend that the volume offers "a vivid portrayal of the ways in which ordinary Northerners dealt with crisis and calamity, and—ultimately—strove for healing and renewal" (9). Although the book does a good job of introducing readers to the visual culture of the North's different home fronts, the essays are largely silent on the extent to which paintings and prints actually helped audiences come to terms with the war's inherent destructiveness. For instance, Dillon argues that several landscape paintings featuring "glorious scenery" completed in the war years "would have offered visual escape to eyes weary of war" (150), but she provides no contemporary commentary on those art works in support of this intriguing interpretation. Although Dillon and her colleagues struggle at times to convince their readers that the war informed a plethora of art works produced during the war, they nonetheless demonstrate the promise of using visual culture to probe "the undiscovered country" of the home front.

Harriman vs. Hill: Wall Street's Great Railroad War, by Larry Haeg. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. xvi, 375 pp. Maps, illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Sean Kammer is assistant professor of law at the University of South Dakota Law School. He is the author of "The Railroads Must Have Ties: Edward R. Harriman and Forest Conservation, 1901–1908" (*Western Legal History*, 2010).

I have been taught to reject the idea of cyclical history. In reading Larry Haeg's compelling account of the Northern Pacific financial panic of 1901, however, I cannot help but think that history, in this case, has indeed repeated itself; in at least one important respect, the twentieth century closed the same way that it opened. In both eras, new technologies inspired frenzies of speculative stock buying (in the early twentieth century, railroads and steel; at the end of the century, microprocessors and the Internet), and in both, the markets crashed in spectacular fashion.

Haeg, a former executive vice president of corporate communications for Wells Fargo, recounts the epochal battle for control of the Northern Pacific between James J. Hill, who built the Great Northern, and Edward H. Harriman, who headed the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific. At the time, the Northern Pacific itself seemed an unlikely target. The company, after all, had already twice gone bankrupt, even after

receiving its unprecedented public subsidies. Indeed, the battle started not over the Northern Pacific, but rather over the Burlington railroad, which both Hill and Harriman sought for its connections to Chicago. With the financial backing of J. P. Morgan, Hill beat Harriman to the Burlington. However, in making that railroad a subsidiary to the Northern Pacific, he unwittingly invited a takeover attempt of that company. When Hill and his allies discovered that Harriman and financier Jacob Schiff had begun secretly buying Northern Pacific stock, the parties each sought to acquire as much stock as they could, ultimately leading to an “inadvertent corner” of Northern Pacific stock, a ten-fold explosion in its price, and a broader financial panic as investors tried to cover their positions. With effective control of the Northern Pacific in doubt, and with the financial world in shambles, Hill and Harriman formed a new corporation, the Northern Securities Company, to hold stock in Hill’s Great Northern, the Northern Pacific, and the Burlington, with each having representation on the company’s board of directors. The problem was that this combination of interests seemingly conflicted with antitrust laws. The new president, Theodore Roosevelt, used his “big stick” to break the monopoly, thereby ushering in a new era of financial regulation.

Haeg leaves some larger questions unanswered: What broader forces created the environment that made the 1901 panic possible? What were the ripple effects of the panic on the economy? What does this episode say about American financial capitalism? But answering those questions may have detracted from his central narrative, one that he tells with extraordinary gracefulness.

The author’s purpose was to bring the events to life, and in that he succeeds. By focusing on the personalities and motivations of the people involved, he injects energy into a subject—corporate finance—that can sometimes seem tedious. His greatest achievement is in breaking down complex legal-financial material to make it accessible to lay readers. However, some of the techniques Haeg employs blur the line between history and historical fiction. On a few occasions, for instance, he hypothesizes as to what must have been going through Hill’s mind. What the author reveals, though, is not Hill’s thoughts, but the author’s own biases. In many parts, the story seems to be written from Hill’s perspective. Hill is the protagonist, Roosevelt the antagonist, almost as if they were characters in the modern gospel of economic libertarianism, *Atlas Shrugged*. Somewhere, Ayn Rand is smiling.

The Most Defiant Devil: William Temple Hornaday and His Controversial Crusade to Save American Wildlife, by Gregory J. Dehler. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013. viii, 254 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer James A. Pritchard is adjunct assistant professor of natural resource ecology and management at Iowa State University. An environmental historian, he specializes in the history of national parks and the history of wildlife conservation and wildlife science.

William Temple Hornaday flamboyantly engaged in what he viewed as a “life-and-death battle for the very soul of wildlife protection” during the Progressive Era (120). Historian Gregory Dehler’s excellent biography elucidates the fascinating career of Hornaday, one of several midwesterners to play a national role in conservation.

Studying under biologist Charles Bessey at the Iowa Agricultural College in Ames, Hornaday found his calling as a museum curator and taxidermist, his “quest for realism” fundamentally changing exhibitions (50). Employed by Henry Ward’s Natural History Establishment, Hornaday traveled to South America, Africa, and Asia collecting specimens. After continuing as a taxidermist at the National Museum, he served 30 years as director of the New York Zoological Park.

Fearing imminent extinction of the American bison, in 1886 Hornaday traveled to Montana to collect a family group for the National Museum, which he justified on scientific and educational grounds. In his view, millions of visitors to natural history museums would learn about wildlife, gaining an appreciation for conservation. Hornaday never regretted gathering and displaying specimens, even after adopting the view that overhunting had decimated wildlife. In a 1931 letter to Rosalie Edge, Hornaday wrote, “I am not a repentant sinner in regard to my previous career as a killer and preserver of wild animals, but I am positively the most defiant devil that ever came to town” (187).

Hornaday later blamed sportsmen (and public apathy) for wildlife depletion, perceiving a *de facto* conspiracy among hunters, the firearms industry, stodgy conservation organizations, and agency scientists, whom he included in the “Regular Army of Destruction” (128). His vociferous campaigns to shape protective legislation created friction with the board of the New York Zoological Society. Dehler clarifies political factions as Congress debated pelagic sealing, firearm limitations, shooting grounds on refuges, and bag limits, from the Weeks-McLean Act of 1913 to the “Duck Stamp Act” of 1934. Hunters, never understanding Hornaday’s connection with a broad public audience, thought of him as a sentimental preservationist. A particular strength of Dehler’s account is its clear stage-setting of policy actors and their relationships, including

T. Gilbert Pearson (Audubon Societies), Will Dilg (Izaak Walton League), and many others.

The author forthrightly examines Hornaday's limitations, including his prejudices relating to race and ethnicity. Hornaday's prickly personality produced abrasive relationships as he "argued vehemently" over precise details of conservation tactics and strategy (159). Brought up as an Adventist in Iowa, Hornaday tended to see issues as moral absolutes, adopt unrelenting positions, and perceive opposition in personal terms. Offending some conservation leaders, Hornaday, with his "fiery, confrontational style, unbending moralism, and eagerness to challenge conservation organizations," nonetheless effectively focused public attention on critical issues (182). By the 1930s, conservationists, tired of internecine warfare, sought to heal rifts in the movement.

Dehler succinctly assesses Hornaday's legacy. Millions toured the New York Zoological Park during his tenure. The author argues that Aldo Leopold and others adapted parts of Hornaday's outlook on moral responsibility. Hornaday's positions indelibly shaped legislation, including the notion that wildlife refuges were not established exclusively for hunters. Ideas he debated on a national stage shaped refuges and conditions for migratory wildlife throughout the Midwest. Most significantly, Hornaday "expanded the scope of animals that deserved protection" beyond economically valuable game species toward a more general concept of wildlife, a harbinger of later endangered species protection (201). In 1929, Hornaday returned to the Ames campus to witness the unveiling of a plaque commemorating his contributions.

The Most Defiant Devil is exhaustively researched, engagingly written, and well integrated with memoirs and other histories. This outstanding biography provides perceptive insights into Hornaday's motivations and his dynamic role.

Pure and Modern Milk: An Environmental History since 1900, by Kendra Smith-Howard. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. x, 229 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Maureen Ogle is an independent historian. She is the author of *In Meat We Trust: An Unexpected History of Carnivore America* (2013) and *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer* (2006).

If ever there was a moment for historians to move agricultural history out of its ghetto and into the history mainstream, surely this is it. In recent years, the Pollanesque crusade to "save" family farms and to eat small/local/organic has shoved to center stage a long-standing but decidedly fringe crusade to reform the nation's food system. The campaign

is well intentioned but mired in impracticality (and thus often burdened with the charge of elitism). Food reformers, most of them urban, ignore the complex relations between farm and city, between agriculture and urbanization. The two are intimately, inextricably linked; to ponder either in isolation is a mistake of the first order.

Happily, Kendra Smith-Howard avoids that mistake in her first-rate survey of more than a century of milk in America. She notes that the "rhetoric" of today's food reformers "stresses the existence of two agricultural systems — one local and self-sustaining and the other industrial and large-scale" (65). But, as her work demonstrates, for most of the past two centuries, American farmers have "operated on the local and national levels simultaneously." That was particularly true in the early twentieth century, when many farmers viewed "the rise of national manufacturing and a mass market" not as "forces that eroded local rural economic vitality" but as paths "toward . . . economic independence," paths that led, not surprisingly, straight to city tables (65).

Smith-Howard details the ways urban growth shaped perceptions of what milk was or should be and thus how farmers produced milk (and butter). Her engaging narrative delineates the connections among, for example, new ideas about breastfeeding (urban women), the impact of bovine tuberculosis (widespread and devastating to cow herds in early twentieth-century America), the adoption of pasteurization (to satisfy consumers' demand for "fresh, pure, country" milk), and farmers' struggles to cope with chronic labor shortages (as young people migrated to cities). The embrace of technological innovation down on the farm, she argues, was (and is) less corporate plot than the result of sensible business decisions made by farmers who understood that without cities, they had little reason to farm.

Smith-Howard also documents the ways Americans' insistence on low food prices and their passion for the next, new, big (profitable) thing often inspire episodes of lunacy. Consider the history of recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH). This synthesized version of bovine somatotropin (BST) landed on the market in the 1980s. Manufacturers touted it as a tool for increasing milk output without the need for extra (expensive) feed. That sounded good in theory, especially to inflation-dogged consumers. But the supplement appeared at a moment when taxpayers were shelling out big bucks to farmers in an effort to downsize a bloated dairy and milk supply system. The last thing dairy farmers needed was a way to make more milk. (As is true of most foods in the United States, demand for milk rises and falls in response to demographics—a youth-skewed population means more milk drinkers—but also in relation to whatever food fads dominate at any given moment.

When milk, butter, or eggs, for example, are deemed “unhealthy,” demand drops; it rises again when consumers move on to the next food-avoidance fad.)

It is not only food reformers who could take a few tips from *Pure and Modern Milk*. Historians could learn from it, too. As the food crusade expands and gains clout, it is crucial that Americans think realistically about the future of their food system. Alas, historians, who could further that project, are missing in action. They’ve studiously (or so it seems) avoided digging into the histories of every major agricultural-related point of contention, whether the rise of confinement and manure lagoons or the introduction of antibiotics, artificial insemination, and genetically modified organisms. And agricultural history’s ghetto location means that few historians of urban America have pondered the infinite links that connect farm to city and back again. That, in turn, means that today’s food reformers are operating in a dangerous contextual vacuum. Here’s hoping that more historians follow Smith-Howard’s lead in tackling topics related to contemporary, and often contentious, political and social issues.

Gardening the Amana Way, by Lawrence L. Rettig. A Bur Oak Book. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013. ix, 121 pp. Color and black-and-white photographs, botanical names, references, index. \$27.50 paperback.

Reviewer Mary Swander is professor of English at Iowa State University and Poet Laureate of Iowa. Her list of books includes *Parsnips in the Snow: Talks with Midwestern Gardeners* (1990).

In an informative and engaging style, Lawrence L. Rettig gives a well-researched and fascinating account of the history of gardening in the Amanas from its early influences, including King Ludwig of Bavaria and the neighboring Meskwaki Indians, to the gradual shift from vegetable to flower gardens after the Great Change, when the Amana Colonies abandoned communal life during the Great Depression. Rettig takes readers on a tour of his own garden, which is listed in the Smithsonian’s *Archive of American Gardens*. Trellises and plants distinctive to the Amanas, seed saving, recipes, fermentation and preservation, and crafts are all included. Old-time black-and-white photographs capture both the hard utilitarian work and the bits of fun that went into Amana planting, cultivation, and harvesting rituals. Contemporary color photographs accent the beauty and grace of today’s flower gardens.

Gardening the Amana Way should be on the shelf of every gardener in Iowa and beyond the boundaries of the state. The book is written by

a gifted gardener, a descendant of the original settlers of the Community of True Inspiration who was born in the Amana Colonies and who has been committed to a home and small plot of land for decades. Rettig and his spouse have carefully preserved a foodways tradition that should be of interest to folklorists, historians, agronomists, chefs, and anyone interested in local and regional food systems. Through horticulture, the book provides significant insight into one of Iowa's most intriguing immigrant early settlement communities.

Quaker Brotherhood: Interracial Activism and the American Friends Service Committee, 1917–1950, by Allan W. Austin. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2012. xi, 257 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Kristin Anderson-Bricker is associate professor of history at Loras College. Her dissertation (Syracuse University, 1997) was "Making a Movement: The Meaning of Community in the Congress of Racial Equality, 1958–1968."

The content explored by Allan Austin in *Quaker Brotherhood* intersects with the history of Iowa through the Scattergood Friends School. In 1938 the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) created a hostel for European refugees fleeing the growing threat to Jews at the defunct Scattergood Boarding School in West Branch, Iowa. Because of its isolated location in agricultural America, the Scattergood Hostel provided an ideal location to achieve Quaker goals of assimilating Jewish refugees into American society. The hostel provided a space to recuperate from the forced loss of community, a curriculum to assist in adjusting to new lives in the United States, and contacts in the region to relocate refugees in nearby communities. At the same time as the AFSC was carrying out this peace work, it was also working toward its goal of improving race relations through intercultural connections. Specifically, this small group of Quakers believed in ameliorating racism by transforming individuals. They created opportunities for people to have contact with those different from themselves, and through those experiences hoped for greater understanding between diverse peoples. The 185 guests who resided at Scattergood on their way to more permanent lives in America brought diversity to Cedar County and interacted with Iowans in both formal and informal ways. By 1943, the flow of refugees had slowed and the Iowa hostel closed.

Although a minor story in *Quaker Brotherhood*, Scattergood Hostel provides a good summation of the interracial activism of the AFSC up to that point. Beginning in the 1920s, the organization fought racism by promoting personal contact between people of color and whites,

particularly members of the Society of Friends who reflected the racist attitudes of the society at large. The Interracial Section (1924–1929), the American Interracial Peace Committee (1927–1931), and the Institute of Race Relations (1933–1941) used educational outreach to recruit African Americans to Quaker pacifist ideas and to create opportunities for blacks and whites to build personal relationships. The summer workshops of the 1930s, which brought together interracial faculty and students for one month of study and shared living, carried the ideas of social science research to the AFSC. These ideas affirmed the Quaker belief in the malleability of human nature and the ability to transform human values and attitudes, but also pushed AFSC leaders to realize that in order to end racism, they needed to reform society; racist ideals may be culturally constructed, but the economic system in America exacerbated racism. In fact, AFSC leaders came to see the competition between various peoples for limited economic resources as a root cause of prejudice.

The refugee crisis of World War II led them to an additional realization: by responding to the needs of displaced peoples, they also worked toward building an interracial society. So, after the war, the AFSC leaders determined to work on race obliquely. In other words, they needed to solve human problems—especially around poverty—and in the process, the interracial groups of people involved would build relationships and abandon their prejudices and fears. By the early 1950s, the AFSC no longer labeled its indirect approach as race relations work, preferring to house it in the Community Relations Committee. Some programs provided assistance to improve housing, others challenged segregated schools, and still others taught self-reliance. Most successfully, they worked to expand the range of jobs available to African Americans. A well-entrenched philosophy by the early 1960s, the community relations approach led AFSC staff to embrace the ideas and tactics of Saul Alinsky.

Essentially, *Quaker Brotherhood* conveys the difficulties of achieving racial reform in America during the first half of the twentieth century. The AFSC persisted despite constant financial challenges and some Quakers' continued resistance to racial equality. In assessing the work of this organization, success must be measured in small increments: one white individual realizing that the African American across the table differed little from himself; an African American getting a job in a previously all-white department store; poor neighbors learning self-reliance through gardening and canning. The interracial activism of the AFSC—plagued by inadequate finances, conflict among staffers, the starts and stops of committee work, and success measured in the transformation of one life—reveals that achieving change is long, slow, and unexciting. Small numbers of individuals spent lots of time thinking

and talking and incrementally trying out ideas decades before the civil rights movement brought faster-moving changes. Thus, Austin leaves us with an important lesson to learn about reform, applicable to both the past and present.

Black Print with a White Carnation: Mildred Brown and the Omaha Star Newspaper, 1938–1989, by Amy Helene Forss. Women in the West Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. xii, 241 pp. Illustrations, table, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 paperback.

Reviewer Darrel E. Bigham is professor of history emeritus at the University of Southern Indiana. He is the author of “The Black Press in Indiana, 1879–1985” in *The Black Press in the Middle West, 1854–1985* (1996) and *We Ask Only a Fair Trial: A History of the Black Community of Evansville, Indiana* (1987).

Author Amy Helene Forss describes Mildred Dee Brown (1905–1989) as publisher of the longest-running black newspaper founded by a black woman in American history. She was actually the *co-founder* (with her then husband) of the *Omaha Star* in 1938. Always sporting a white carnation corsage, Brown became matriarch of the historically African American near north side of Omaha. Born in Alabama, the newlywed migrated northward with her physician husband in 1928, part of the Great Migration that transformed the cities of the Midwest. After brief stays in several other midwestern cities, she and her husband settled in Omaha in 1938. Over the five decades that followed, Brown’s weekly newspaper played a variety of roles – promoting communication within the black community and between blacks and whites as well as advocating fair housing, school desegregation, fair employment, and racial harmony. The late 1960s proved her greatest challenge, as riots racked the north side and much of the infrastructure and the population suffered enormous damage.

Forss argues that Brown’s achievements were significant. She was the only black, female newspaper owner not to inherit a weekly from her husband. The only surviving black newspaper in Nebraska (with circulation figures not clearly provided, unfortunately), the *Star* was built on Brown’s strong sense of family tradition, promotion of the politics of respectability, support for community activism, encouragement of racial solidarity, and alteration of strategies to fit the times. No one ever doubted who was in charge of her newspaper, though.

Forss takes us through eight chapters of narrative. The first discusses Brown’s family’s roots in Alabama; the second her participation in the Great Migration. During the Browns’ brief sojourn in Sioux City, they created a newspaper, the *Silent Messenger*, for fellow congregants

at the Malone African Methodist Episcopal Church. Chapter three reviews the early days of the Omaha paper, especially noting Brown's ability to develop strong ties with black and white city leaders. Forss then describes the role of gender and politics in the black newspaper industry, and especially the importance of self-help and etiquette columns for readers. Chapter five explores the *Star's* involvement with Catholic leadership in combating racial discrimination and unfair employment practices. Next is a review of the ending of restrictive covenants and segregated public schools. In chapter seven Forss examines Brown's role as mediator, not activist, in three race riots of the late 1960s. The last chapter covers her later years and her puzzling decision to leave her estate, and especially her successor as publisher, for the courts to decide. (In the end, the newspaper was claimed by a niece, who had had an adulterous relationship with Brown's common-law husband.)

This book reflects extensive use of oral history but unfortunately not much effort to place the *Star* in context. Forss briefly touches the topic of black newspapers in general only at the beginning of chapter four. What exactly accounted for the longevity of this weekly? (The author could have made better use of Henry Lewis Suggs's *The Black Press in the Middle West*, for starters.) Except for a reference to the Browns' brief residence in Des Moines and Sioux City in the mid-1930s, this work is silent on the subject of Iowa history. Readers might wish to consult Allen W. Jones's essay on the black press in Iowa in the Suggs anthology as well as D. G. Paz's piece on Nebraska found there.

This is clearly a pietistic work, marred too often by lapses in diction and syntax. It does offer a distinctive look into the life of a remarkable woman.

The Garage: Automobility and Building Innovation in America's Early Auto Age, by John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013. xi, 263 pp. Maps, table, illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95 paperback.

Reviewer Mary Anne Beecher is professor and chair of the Department of Design at The Ohio State University. Her research and writing have focused on, among other areas, roadside architecture.

The research and writing team of John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle have produced no fewer than ten non-fiction narratives that trace the history of the landscape, built environment, and cultural experiences of Americans whose lives have been touched by the automobile, the roadside, the highway, and many of their byproducts. The authors' latest offering

is a book that focuses on the purchase, housing, and maintenance of the automobile from the early twentieth century into the early 1960s.

The Garage is a well-documented and well-illustrated history that considers the subject of "the garage" in its various forms. First, they detail the evolution of the service station for the automobile from the blacksmith shop that served previous forms of transportation through the independent garage to the franchised enterprise. They examine the garage as an increasingly prominent building type on Main Street America from its impact on the development of urban commercial districts to the rise of the highways and byways that shaped modern American automotive transportation by the middle of the twentieth century. They also analyze the dealerships where cars could be purchased and maintained, focusing on the new modes of customer relations that emerged to meet the needs of customers and on the new modes of management and compensation that framed the labor relations required to sustain automotive repair and maintenance businesses. Finally, they establish the history of the storage of the car at home or in specialized consolidated structures. Fireproof storage garages emerged to accommodate the increasing number of automobiles found in inner cities, but the authors especially emphasize the presence of garages in middle-class suburban neighborhoods, from their humble and somewhat hidden beginning as a sort of shed behind the house to the demonstrative presence of the hyper-storage environments that began to dominate the suburban streetscape after World War II.

The authors' analysis, using descriptive narrative and a rich collection of drawings and photographs of the three types of architectural environments, is thorough, systematic, and vivid in its representation of the archetypes. Anyone interested in the history of such buildings will find the book useful for its provision of cultural context as well as its presentation of a detailed explanation of the evolution of typical site conditions, building construction methods and materials, and the emergence of new spatial layouts that corresponded with the new functional demands brought on by increasingly complex automotive technologies. Readers specifically interested in Iowa history and its connections to this topic will be happy to find several references and narratives detailing automotive service businesses that operated in Iowa communities.

In general, however, this book best provides a national perspective on the development of the modern built environment that is dedicated to maintaining the automobile. By also including an analysis of the roles of labor practices and varying models of management, the influence of gender on the built environment and customer services, and the impact of major world events such as wars and the Great Depression, Jakle and

Sculle do much to solidify the architectural and historical significance of “the garage” as a basis for approaching its preservation and interpretation. By reminding us that modern technological advances such as the automobile exist both as commodities and also as personal objects that become embedded deeply into people’s lives, Jakle and Sculle make the case for considering the architectural and experiential requirements for the use, maintenance, and protection of the car as key factors in further establishing its place in American culture.

Small-Town Dreams: Stories of Midwestern Boys Who Shaped America, by John E. Miller. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014. xiv, 528 pp. Photographs, map, notes, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Drake Hokanson is an independent scholar, author, photographer and editor, and professor emeritus at Winona State University. He is the author of *Reflecting a Prairie Town: A Year in Peterson* (1994) and *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street across America* (1988).

Americans have long had a warm spot for the midwestern small-town boy, fishing with a cane pole from the railroad bridge on a summer day, or, a generation later, hanging out at the soda fountain on Main Street, or of any generation gazing down the long road leading out of town, aching to make a mark on the larger world. The formative experiences of midwestern small-town boys in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were different from those of girls, and distinct from those who grew up, say, in seacoast villages in New England or certainly big cities everywhere.

How did a midwestern small-town upbringing help shape the lives of young men who went on—and went away—to do great things? What are the forces in small towns of the region that helped create greatness in politicians, artists, scientists, entertainers, authors, sports figures, industrialists, and mega-merchants? John Miller’s *Small-Town Dreams* is a partial answer to those questions—partial not because of any failings of the book, but because of the enormity of the questions. The questions take on added significance in an increasingly placeless electronic world when so many small towns and villages across the region are down in their cups as the energy of the nation flows to brighter places elsewhere. The book is, as Miller writes, “an effort to comment on and reassert the importance of place in people’s lives, with a specific emphasis on the small-town experience” (4–5).

The core of the book brings readers biographies of 22 varied men, including the likes of Henry Ford (Michigan), Frederick Jackson Turner (Wisconsin), Sinclair Lewis (Minnesota), Ronald Reagan (Illinois), John

Steuart Curry (Kansas), George Washington Carver (Missouri), and Sam Walton (Missouri), plus three Iowans: Bob Feller, Meredith Willson, and Grant Wood, all cast in the context of the shaping influences of their early days in towns on the Middle Border.

Miller's selection of subjects is naturally subjective; the Midwest has generated legions of leaders in many fields over the past 120 or so years. Mark Twain is not profiled, nor Aldo Leopold, Bob Dole, or even Abraham Lincoln. But this is no criticism; his selections are solid, and the essays are well researched, detailed, and strongly written to create a clear sense of the effect that this peculiar sort of American place had on a given man.

But what about the women? Miller, no stranger to women's history and biography, has authored three books on Laura Ingalls Wilder. Here he offers only that he wishes to focus his resources on men. Clearly, given the very different upbringings of boys versus girls in the late nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, a book on midwestern girls who shaped the nation would be a very different study.

Miller explores common traits and events among his wide-ranging small-town boys, including the fact that most of them had life-altering experiences early on and dreams of doing big things in bigger places. Perhaps the comparative isolation of midwestern small towns and the call of the train whistle led to the experience common to all of them: Every one of them left, usually for one coast or the other. Nevertheless, most of them returned to the home town to visit from time to time and reflected warmly on early lives there.

Clearly young minds are greatly influenced by the surroundings of their growing up, but measuring that influence is a tricky thing. Miller takes special care to avoid faulty causation and false conclusions, and he builds lovely stories around what these men said of their midwestern upbringings and what they did later that clearly expressed their backgrounds.

No Iowan ever used his small-town roots to better advantage than Mason City native Meredith Willson, the author of *The Music Man*, which ran on the New York stage for 1,375 performances and was made into a popular movie in 1962. Miller accurately points out that Mason City was hardly a tiny burg when Willson grew up there, but Willson, perhaps better than anyone, understood the nature of small midwestern towns at the turn of the twentieth century when he created River City, Iowa, and Professor Harold Hill.

The biographical essays in *Small-Town Dreams* are arranged chronologically into sections, each of which has an introduction to the demographic shifts of, and American attitudes toward, small towns during the era under consideration. That in itself is a welcome foray into how

towns of the region shrank with the century-long migration to cities and suburbs and how the nation's attitudes shifted from thinking of small towns as the hearth of the American idea to places where sentimental boys return.

Limping through Life: A Farm Boy's Polio Memoir, by Jerry Apps. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2013. x, 235 pp. Photographs. \$22.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Pamela Riney-Kehrberg is professor and chair of the history department at Iowa State University. Her latest book is *The Nature of Childhood: An Environmental History of Growing Up in America since 1865* (2014). She is also the author of *Childhood on the Farm: Work, Play, and Coming of Age in the Midwest* (2005).

Jerry Apps's *Limping through Life* provides a unique window into the experience of polio. In 1947, at the age of 12, Apps contracted polio. The illness left him a changed child. The boy who could previously run like the wind would no longer be able to make full use of a partially paralyzed right leg. Fortunately for Apps, his farming parents would not allow him the luxury of self-pity, or permit him to vegetate in the house after the worst of the illness had passed. Instead, his father plopped him on a tractor, and Apps's physical therapy consisted of forcing his right leg to move, so that he could work the brakes. Every night after work, his father massaged horse liniment into his leg. Before long, Apps could walk again, although he would always limp, and he could no longer run.

The damage inflicted by polio was also evident in other ways in Apps's life. The psychological pain was acute. Apps writes, "Being alive and not being able to do what other kids were doing at your age can be devastating. It can change how you see the world and how you react to it. I have never gotten over believing that I must constantly prove myself so I won't be seen as worthless" (235). Nonetheless, Apps credits that feeling of worthlessness for the striving he did in high school, college, and throughout his career. In high school, he pushed himself to achieve, and a kind teacher directed him into activities that did not require two good legs, such as forensics, drama, and the school newspaper. He graduated valedictorian, an achievement that allowed him to think about college, given that it carried a semester's tuition at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Once at the university, Apps pushed himself to succeed in the classroom. Following that first tuition-free semester, he also worked at a number of jobs in order to pay the bills. He never told anyone that he had suffered from polio as a child.

The same was true after graduation. Had he revealed his history with polio, he might have been classified 4-F and exempted from military duty. Instead, he neglected to tell anyone, did his military service, and then returned to civilian life as a graduate student. What followed was a long career in extension and in teaching and in writing. At every turn, he pushed himself to succeed. Today, he continues writing while fighting with post-polio syndrome, a return of symptoms that affects many adult survivors in their later years.

Limping through Life is well worth reading. It is an engaging mid-western story of pain, striving, and hard work. Apps's descriptions of his parents' reactions to his illness are priceless and heartbreaking. His father's successful attempt to rehabilitate him through hard work and horse liniment captures both the strengths and weaknesses of farm families facing hardship. They made the best they could of what they had but unfortunately missed the damaged soul that needed tending. This story of farm childhood, polio, and making a new life where a weak leg would not matter is bound to intrigue anyone with an interest in the history of the Midwest, agriculture, or childhood, and makes an excellent addition to the list of recently published memoirs detailing farm life at the middle of the twentieth century.

Rock Island Requiem: The Collapse of a Mighty Fine Line, by Gregory L. Schneider. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2013. xviii, 380 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$37.50 hardcover.

Reviewer Kevin Byrne is professor emeritus of history at Gustavus Adolphus College. His research and writing have focused on military history and the history of technology and railroads.

In the words of a venerable song, the Rock Island line was "a mighty fine line." Gregory Schneider's history of the railroad from roughly 1948 to 1988, however, demonstrates that the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad became a mighty troubled line during those years. How those troubles arose, how executives sought to allay them, and how their efforts failed are the central issues Schneider explores. The Rock Island—ultimately extending from Chicago through Des Moines to Denver, from St. Paul to Galveston, and into Memphis and New Mexico—had played a significant role in midwestern history since the 1850s. Following World War II, however, the company ran aground, eventually leading to the massive liquidation that accounts for the term *requiem* in the book's title.

A historian of American conservatism, Schneider admits to deep affection for this particular railroad. The author's regard for "the Rock"

is evident throughout his well-researched volume, as he seeks to explain the demise of what had been a powerful midwestern railroad. He draws knowledgeable on government hearings and legal proceedings, the railroad's corporate archives, newspaper accounts, and the work of other scholars to produce a "policy history" (9) involving lots of business and legal history. Familiarity with topics such as regulatory agencies, mergers, and bankruptcy is not absolutely necessary but helpful for understanding Schneider's account.

Emerging from 15 years of bankruptcy in 1948, the Rock Island prospered for a decade as America's economy boomed. By 1960, though, declining profitability led the railroad's president and its directors to seek assistance. The most promising, and perhaps sole, solution involved merger. Of two main suitors, managers concluded that the Union Pacific Railroad presented the sounder option, given its fiscal strength and complementary service area. Merger, however, required permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), which opened hearings in 1964. To the chagrin of management and the detriment of the railroad's fiscal and physical condition, those hearings stretched on for 11 years. Schneider rightly castigates the ICC for the unreasonable delay, although his narrative also points strongly to the machinations of the president of the Chicago & North Western, who repeatedly devised legal and procedural obstructions to thwart the merger. In fact, many other railroads contributed to the devastating interval, placing narrow self-interest ahead of a more comprehensive solution to the industry's problems. Each objection lengthened the process.

Schneider also criticizes the federal government for withholding from the Rock Island the corporate welfare it lavished on the Pennsylvania–New York Central merger (the Penn-Central) and later on Conrail. Unlike the Rock Island, those entities received enormous outlays of federal dollars. By 1974, when the ICC finally approved the Rock Island merger, Union Pacific leadership had lost interest, and the Rock Island filed for bankruptcy once more the following year. Rampant inflation, a stagnant economy, and oil crises in the 1970s exacerbated the railroad's headaches. Despite subsidies from the states of Iowa and Illinois and some shippers, declining revenues doomed the railroad. A court-appointed trustee labored for five years to develop a viable reorganization plan but was stymied at each critical point. Some of the Rock Island's own investors preferred its liquidation, as did competing railroads, and labor unions successfully lobbied to continue service on drastically unprofitable routes. Mother Nature also piled on, producing three brutal winters in the late 1970s. A major labor strike precipitated

the final crisis. The Carter administration partially deregulated railroads in 1980, too late to stave off the company's termination.

Remarkably, liquidation proved successful. In 1984 the Rock Island became the Chicago Pacific Corporation. While maintaining railroad holdings, the corporation diversified into several other sectors and benefited from an improving economic environment. Maytag purchased Chicago Pacific in 1988. The core east-west line, meanwhile, emerged as the Iowa Interstate Railroad, and the core north-south tracks ironically were subsumed by the Union Pacific. All prospered.

The "major culprit" (297) in the demise of the Rock Island, Schneider concludes, was the federal regulatory system. Certainly the failure of federal agencies to adjust to a changing economic landscape led to profound inequities; for example, trucking and airline industries competed with railroads but received billions of dollars in indirect subsidies (via the interstate highway system and tax-financed municipal airports). Yet Schneider acknowledges that several other culprits were crucial, even noting that "the biggest reason for the Rock Island's collapse" was far more structural and complex: "shifts in technology, demographics, communication, and government relations with business" (299). Overall, his evidence supports this more nuanced emphasis, one accentuating an array of forces, from weather to organized labor to determined, even devious, resistance by railroad leaders to the Rock Island's survival. Readers, of course, will judge for themselves how to apportion blame. And many will join Schneider in understandably lamenting the loss of a railroad crucial to the Midwest's past.

RAGBRAI: America's Favorite Bicycle Ride, by Greg Borzo. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013. 168 pp. Illustrations, tables, index. \$22.99 paperback.

Reviewer Leo Landis is museum curator at the State of Iowa Historical Museum, where he curated the exhibit, *Riding through History: A River-to-River Legacy on Wheels*.

The *Des Moines Register's* Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI) began in 1973, when John Karras and Donald Kaul invited readers to participate in a six-day ride from Sioux City to Davenport. It lacked organization and did not have an official name or vendor support. Today, it is a seven-day ride, and the *Register* claims that it is the oldest, largest, and longest recreational bicycle ride in the world. It attracts an international audience numbering more than 10,000 cyclists.

Two previous publications have chronicled the ride and its history. RAGBRAI cofounders John and Ann Karras's *RAGBRAI: Everyone Pronounces it Wrong* (1999) documented RAGBRAI's first 25 years, and the photographic account *River to River, Year after Year: RAGBRAI through the Lens of Register Photography* highlighted the imagery of the ride (2002). Following RAGBRAI XL, Grinnell College alumnus Greg Borzo wrote this update.

Borzo uses interviews and personal experience as main sources for the work. The strengths include anecdotes documenting memorable characters, days, and events. Reader will learn of figures from the Great Six-Day Bicycle Ride of 1973, including Carter LeBeau of Davenport, who would become a 40-year rider and was known for his mismatched rugby socks. It covers 83-year-old Clarence Pickard of Indianola, who became a focus of Iowans who wondered, "Can an octogenarian bicycle across the state in six days?"

The work includes a few paragraphs on each year's ride, covering topics such as teams, food, and other traditions, and catches readers up on the recent management of the ride by T. J. Juskiewicz, a Floridian who became ride director in 2004. The effort is not without errors. The town south of Dubuque is Zwingle, not Zingle (48), and the Cedar River, not the Cedar Rapids River, flooded Waverly in 1999 (87). Additionally, his brief reference to *Des Moines Register* history misses the mark on Gardner Cowles Sr.'s arrival in Des Moines (88). Cowles did not arrive in Fort Des Moines in 1849; he was not even born until 1861.

The work is, however, a generally sound chronicle of the ride's rhythms and routines, and the table "RAGBRAI Vital Statistics" offers readers a quick reference on each ride's starting point and concluding town. It includes cumulative totals through RAGBRAI XLI in 2013. The timeline captures RAGBRAI's place in the cycling culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s and includes present-day bicycling (62-64). Borzo should also be commended for covering issues such as deaths on the ride and the resulting Crawford County ban of 2007-2008.

Borzo's work is a solid complement to the Karrases' book and an excellent popular look at the ride. It is not the answer for an academic audience but offers incidents, characters, and topics for future consideration. For a casual reader, it is a delightful discussion of RAGBRAI. It is breezy and quick like the best days on the ride, as long as there is a tailwind.

The Iowa State Fair, by Kurt Ullrich. Iowa and the Midwest Experience Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014. ix, 134 pp. Illustrations. \$25.00 paperback.

Reviewer Chris Rasmussen is associate professor of history at Fairleigh Dickinson University. He is working on a book about the Iowa State Fair.

For most fairgoers the Iowa State Fair is a kaleidoscopic blur, but Kurt Ullrich's appealing black-and-white photographs of the 2013 fair freeze time, capturing moments that enable us to see the fair more clearly.

Ullrich's book is divided into chapters on the fair's history, sounds, animals, competition, commerce, and youth. The fair's history is a tale of both tradition and innovation. The livestock judging and midway look nearly identical to their predecessors a century ago, but Iowans now take selfies and photos of the fair's exhibits to post on Facebook or send to friends. Ullrich's photo of a fairgoer snapping a cell phone photo of the iconic Butter Cow encapsulates the mixture of tradition and innovation that has always lain at the heart of the fair. To the extent that pictures can illustrate sound, his photographs suggest the fair's cacophony of rock bands, brass bands, fiddling, and yodeling. Iowans will compete at seemingly anything: biggest boar, best ears of corn, plate of apples, chess, barbecue, best beard, stacking hay bales, throwing cow chips. Some of these contests are lighthearted, but Ullrich's most revealing photos capture the intense, competitive focus of the 4-H exhibitors, so different from the carefree gaze of the fairgoers ambling across the grounds. As for the animals, as we look at them, they look right back at us. The fair has always been accompanied by salespeople, who hawk everything from lemonade to satellite dishes. And the young people, whether showing livestock or riding the carousel, are evidence that the fair will still be there, reassuringly familiar, yet new as always, decades from now.

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.

Published Materials

Note: Once per year, in the Fall issue, we list separately in this section all of the books processed since the last such listing about specific locales (towns or counties), schools, and churches, listed alphabetically by town or school name. Full publication data will be included for local and school histories; only the names of churches and the years covered will be included for church histories.

Local Histories

Anamosa. *Anamosa*, by Becky DirksHaugsted. Images of America Series. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013. 127 pp. DM, IC.

Appanoose County. *Appanoose County*, by Appanoose County Historical Society. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013. 127 pp. IC.

Bremer County. *Lost Bremer County: Vanished Towns of the Cedar Valley*, by Linda Betsinger McCann. Des Moines: The Iowan Books, 2012. 146 pp. DM, IC.

Cedar Rapids. *Kenwood Park . . . through the Years: A History of Kenwood Park, Iowa*, by Cindy Lundine. N.p., 2005. 64 pp. IC.

Center Point. *Through the Twentieth Century in Center Point*, by Mary Gilchrist Holman; edited by Sally Holman Hill. N.p., [2000?]. 152 pp. IC.

Des Moines. *Des Moines Who's Who, 1986: Biographical Sketches of Men and Women of Achievement*, edited by Michael D. DeVolder. Des Moines, 1985. 174 pp. DM, IC.

Eddyville. *Eddyville*, by Lee Ann Simmers Dickey. Ottumwa: PBL Limited, 2012. 113 pp. IC.

Washington. *Washington*, by Michael Kramme. Images of America Series. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013. 127 pp. DM, IC.

School Histories

Dubuque. *The Story of St. Anthony's: Dubuque's First Catholic School on the Hill*, by Marlys Dunphy. Iowa City: Brushy Creek Publishing, 2012. IC.

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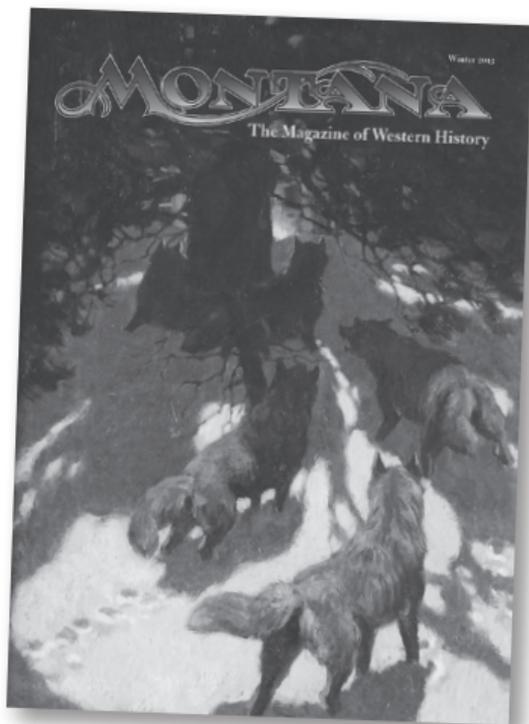
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