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In This Issue

ROBERT COOK, professor of American history at the University of Sussex in England, probes the development of public memory of the Civil War in Iowa from 1865 to 1916, focusing on its two main carriers during that period: the state Republican Party and Union veterans themselves. He concludes that reconciliation between North and South became increasingly important to Iowans, but Union veterans never gave up their conviction that they had fought on the right side.

BREANNE ROBERTSON, a postdoctoral fellow at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, recounts the creation, destruction, and restoration of a New Deal-era mural at the federal courthouse in Cedar Rapids (now the Cedar Rapids City Hall). She traces the sources of the mural's style and iconography and considers the mural's oscillating cultural value and state of preservation against the backdrop of evolving attitudes toward New Deal art from the Cold War to the present day.

DOUGLAS FIRTH ANDERSON reviews three books about minority ethnic groups in minority branches of American Protestantism.

Front Cover

Citizens of Albion gather in a local cemetery in about 1900 in observance of Memorial Day. For more on the ways Iowans publicly remembered and memorialized the Civil War, see Robert Cook's article in this issue. Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

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Marvin Bergman, editor

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Editor's Perspective

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE that back issues of the *Annals of Iowa*, extending all the way back to 1863, are now accessible online via the State Historical Society of Iowa's website (www.iowahistory.org/publications). Actually, back issues have been accessible online for several years to anyone who has access to the Full Text Edition of EBSCO's *America: History and Life* (and they continue to be accessible that way). This new development simply makes the *Annals* more broadly accessible online.

Now readers and researchers from around the world will have fully searchable, enhanced access to the rich body of Iowa history scholarship contained in the *Annals of Iowa*. I encourage you to try it out. Search for your town or an Iowan or an event or topic in Iowa history that you would like to know more about. I think you will be amazed at the Iowa history riches available at your fingertips.

We do intend to continue to print the journal, and issues will not be posted online until a year after their publication date. To continue to receive current issues of the journal, you should continue to renew your subscription or maintain your Heritage Circle membership in the State Historical Society of Iowa.

However you read the *Annals of Iowa*, your continued support through your subscription or membership is vital for us to be able to continue to deliver the best Iowa history scholarship to a wide variety of readers, and I appreciate that support very much. I also appreciate the efforts of the University of Iowa Libraries and staff, especially Wendy Robertson, which were crucial for making this enhanced access possible.

—Marvin Bergman, editor

A War for Principle? Shifting Memories of the Union Cause in Iowa, 1865–1916

ROBERT COOK

IN SEPTEMBER 1870 Major General William Tecumseh Sherman, who had been one of the North's leading commanders during the Civil War, spoke in Des Moines before an enthusiastic throng of Union veterans. The late Civil War, he said, "was not like most wars, a war for conquest and glory. It was a war for principle." That principle, he explained, was "nationality. . . . Let the people of the Nation cherish this spirit of nationality and devotion to country, and the republic will never be destroyed."¹

It was not long before Sherman began to fear that the defeated Southerners were beginning to challenge the notion that Northern volunteers had fought a righteous war against an unlawful rebellion. When the general returned to Iowa for another soldiers' reunion in the fall of 1875, he urged his former comrades to set down their wartime experiences in print, "for the time is coming and is near at hand when the truth connected with our war must be told and the truth will vindicate itself." Twelve years later he had begun to doubt that the truth as he saw it would be vindicated. "The Rebels," he wrote, "succeed in their claim to have been the simon pure patriots and 'Union men' of our day and generation. They have partially succeeded and may completely succeed."²

Research for this essay was supported by a 2013–14 State Historical Society of Iowa Research Grant. I am grateful for that award and for the comments of two anonymous reviewers. I also thank John Zeller for his generous assistance during the research phase of this project.

1. *Daily Iowa State Register* (Des Moines) (hereafter cited as *DISR*), 9/2/1870.

2. *DISR*, 10/1/1875; W. T. Sherman to S. H. M. Byers, 5/1/1887, Samuel H. M. Byers Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines (hereafter cited as SHSI).

Sherman's fears that Americans would forget the noble purpose of the Union war effort were fully justified. Although he contributed his own memoirs to the truth-telling project so dear to his heart, the great Union cause soon lost its luster in American popular culture.³ In *Gone with the Wind*, David O. Selznick's sweeping 1939 adaptation of Margaret Mitchell's bestselling novel, Union troops are depicted as ruthless invaders of the Old South. By the mid-twentieth century, white Southerners' remembrance of the Civil War as a one-sided conflict fought by outnumbered cavaliers to protect a courtly plantation society was the country's dominant memory of its greatest catastrophe. When it came time to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the Civil War in 1961, the saviors of the republic had all died, and most Northerners would have found it hard to understand the black abolitionist Frederick Douglass's passionate assertion, made in defense of the Union cause, that there had been "a right side and a wrong side" in the Civil War.⁴

Scholars such as David W. Blight, Nina Silber, and Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary have identified the period between the late 1870s and the early 1900s as a critical juncture in American history, when memories of the Union cause waned under the pressure for sectional reconciliation. Those scholars have fashioned a broad-based explanation for why Northern and Southern whites embraced each other (sometimes literally) so soon after the slaughter of at least 750,000 combatants on both sides of the Civil War.⁵

3. William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman* (New York, 1875).

4. Frederick Douglass, quoted in David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 92. On the consensual origins of the ill-fated centennial, see Robert Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961–1965* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2007), 15–50. James Martin, a Wisconsin volunteer, was the last surviving Union veteran in Iowa. He died in September 1949. The last Iowa volunteer died nine months earlier. *Des Moines Register*, 9/21/1949.

5. Blight, *Race and Reunion*; Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1993); Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton, 1999). Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, MA, 2011), a probing study of the Union cause in wartime, argues (3–4) that the cause's declining salience has blinded historians to its importance to Northerners in the 1860s. For a convincing update on the number of Civil War deaths, see J. David Hacker, "A Census-Based Count of the Civil War Dead," *Civil War History* 57 (2011), 307–48.

Americans' reasons for doing so included a mutual commitment to a dominant discourse of Anglo-Saxon racism and imperialism, a rapidly growing consensus that the ordinary soldiers on both sides had fought courageously for a cause in which they sincerely believed, the shared appeal of romantic depictions of the plantation South, and a solidifying postbellum nationalism that was manifested in strong intersectional support for the republic's imperial ventures.

Recently, this paradigmatic account of a relatively swift and linear path to sectional reconciliation has been questioned by a growing number of historians, including John R. Neff, Robert Hunt, Caroline E. Janney, and M. Keith Harris, who contend that white Northerners, especially the aging "boys in blue," retained their allegiance to the Union cause well into the twentieth century.⁶ Although the persistence of wartime hatreds features prominently in their analyses, most of these scholars also stress that many Union veterans retained a clear-sighted understanding that slavery had precipitated the rebellion and that its destruction, essential to the defeat of the Confederacy, was an essential part of their achievement. Barbara A. Gannon and Andre Fleche have connected this emancipatory strand of Union memory to anti-racism, arguing that sizable numbers of white veterans retained a respect for their African American peers that was at odds with the wider society's view of blacks as uncivilized and dangerous.⁷

This study probes the development of Union memory in Iowa between 1865 and 1916 by focusing on the two main carriers of Civil War memory during that period: the state Republican Party and Union veterans themselves. I place greater weight than most modern scholars on the impact of interparty competition on the construction of Civil War memory in the late nineteenth century

6. John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence, KS, 2005); Robert Hunt, *The Good Men Who Won the War: Army of Cumberland Veterans and Emancipation Memory* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2010); Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2013); M. Keith Harris, *Across the Bloody Chasm: The Culture of Commemoration among Civil War Veterans* (Baton Rouge, 2014).

7. Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2011); Andre M. Fleche, "'Shoulder to Shoulder as Comrades Tried': Black and White Union Veterans and Civil War Memory," *Civil War History* 51 (2005), 175–201.

and generally support the view that Northerners were not as swayed by the sentimental appeal of reconciliation as some historians have suggested. I demonstrate, however, that backing for North-South amity increased among Union veterans and Republican politicians as the Civil War receded further into the past and that the pace of that emerging consensus quickened considerably in the 1890s. This article also confirms that while many Union veterans and their Republican allies did adhere to an emancipatory interpretation of the Union cause, their support for African Americans during one of the bleakest periods for domestic race relations in U.S. history was mostly limited and hesitant. Over time, white Iowans' profound commitment to American nationalism led them to endorse a version of Civil War memory that prioritized reconciliation with Southern whites over equal justice for African Americans. Yet it is clear that Union veterans did not surrender their conviction that they had fought on the right side of the Civil War. Nor did all of them fail to connect the wartime achievement of emancipation with contemporary struggles for black civil rights.

All scholars of historical memory acknowledge that groups, like individuals, remember the past within social frameworks and that they do so, necessarily, in highly selective ways.⁸ The formation of what the pioneering sociologist Maurice Halbwachs termed "collective memory" must be seen, moreover, as the result of an ongoing cultural negotiation involving elites and non-elites within a given society—a negotiation that ultimately tells us more about the present than the past. By highlighting the shifting nature of the victors' memory in Iowa, this study confirms the value of these insights. A once dominant sectional strain of Civil War remembrance—one that populated the American landscape with vast bronze and stone memorials to the Union cause and to those who risked and sacrificed their lives in support of the cause—eventually lost its grip on the national imagination primarily because it ceased to address the postwar republic's pressing need for consensus.⁹

8. There is a large and growing literature on historical memory. For useful introductions to the topic, see Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (New York, 2011); and Stefan Burger and Bill Niven, eds., *Writing the History of Memory* (London, 2014).

9. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coger (Chicago, 1992).

Remembering the Civil War in the Era of Reconstruction, 1865–1878

There were relatively few hints in the immediate postwar period of Union memory's impending decline. The reasons for its persistence in Iowa (as across the country) were twofold: first, the collective desire (on the part of bereaved family members, comrades, and the wider community) to remember and to honor those who had died to save the American republic; and second, the fraught politics of Reconstruction that sustained war-related issues into the late 1860s and 1870s.

About 75,000 soldiers from Iowa volunteered to defeat the Southern Confederacy, and they played a significant role in the Union's steady advance against the Rebels west of the Appalachians. More than 3,500 Iowa servicemen were killed or mortally wounded in battle during the war; about 8,500 more perished from disease. Roughly 8,500 were reported as wounded, and another 500 died in Confederate prisons.¹⁰ Most of those soldiers were white, but Iowa did muster one regiment of black troops. The First Iowa Volunteers (African Descent), later the 60th Regiment of U.S. Colored Infantry, was composed of a minority of free blacks and a majority of fugitive slaves from border states like Missouri. The regiment spent most of its time on garrison duty in or near the disease-infested Union supply base at Helena, Arkansas.¹¹

Iowans were determined that the sacrifice of the state's loyal citizen-soldiers should be remembered. Close kin of officers sometimes had the financial means not only to pay for the embalming and return of relatives who had died serving the Union but also to fund substantial funerary monuments carved by local stonemasons. James Redfield was a Union officer killed at Allatoona Pass, Georgia, in October 1864 and initially buried nearby. His body was brought home in late 1865 by the colonel's nephew, a

10. Casualty statistics are taken from Leland L. Sage, *A History of Iowa* (Ames, 1974), 153–54.

11. On the enlistment and service of the 60th USCI, see Robert R. Dykstra, *Bright Radical Star: Black Freedom and White Supremacy on the Hawkeye Frontier* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 196–98; David Brodnax Sr., "Will They Fight? Ask the Enemy": Iowa's African American Regiment in the Civil War," *Annals of Iowa* 66 (2007), 266–92; and Leslie A. Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009), 114–29.

fellow soldier, and reburied in the cemetery at Redfield in Dallas County. Three years later the officer's grieving widow paid for a fine marble base and pillar to be raised over the grave. The white shaft was draped with the flag of the republic and two crossed swords, and it was topped with an American eagle.¹² Another widow, the wife of Gustavus Washburn, an Iowa cavalry officer who died two years after Appomattox, paid for the construction of a masonic column that was wrapped in a tasselled Stars and Stripes attached to a sheathed sword.¹³

As residents of a young farm state, few Iowans could afford to pay for the disinterment and shipment of bodies, let alone for expensive funerary monuments. In a few cases regimental colleagues joined together to help defray costs to honor the deceased. Brigadier General Samuel A. Rice, a popular officer who was mortally wounded at the battle of Jenkins Ferry in April 1864, was buried several weeks later in his home town of Oskaloosa "amidst [a] vast concourse of people from town and country." His grave was topped shortly after the war by a 23-foot stone shaft funded by two Iowa regiments.¹⁴

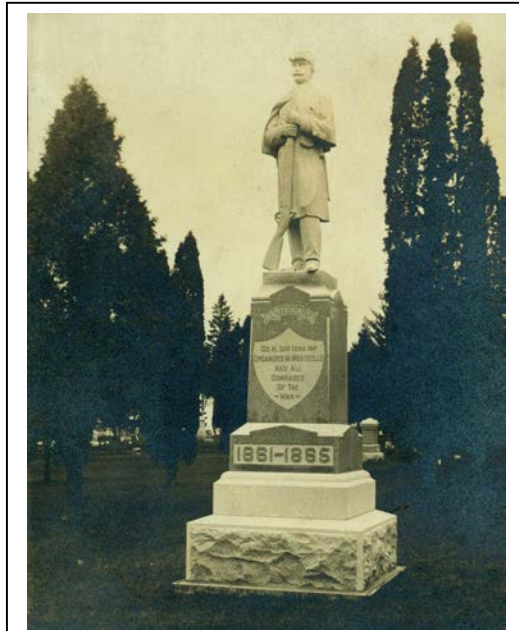
Iowans built monuments for several reasons. The stones functioned not only as mourning sites for grieving relatives, friends, and comrades but also as collective tributes from the living to the dead and as a means of communicating lessons of the North's wartime sacrifice to future generations. Entire communities banded together to build civic monuments dedicated to the memory of the state's fallen sons, most of whose bodies were interred in Southern soil at the expense of the federal government in new national cemeteries.¹⁵ Although the business of raising memo-

12. *Past and Present of Dallas County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1907), 663; *DISR*, 12/27/1865. The Redfield monument is still standing today, shorn, alas, of its carved eagle. My thanks to John Zeller for pointing out inaccuracies in the county history in an e-mail communication of 11/27/2014.

13. *DISR*, 1/21/1868; Leonard Brown, *American Patriotism; Or, Memoirs of "Common Men"* (Des Moines, 1869), 408. The monument was carved by Greenland, Lehman & Co. of Des Moines, who may well have manufactured the similar Redfield stone.

14. Lurton D. Ingersoll, "Brigadier General Samuel A. Rice, of Iowa," *Annals of Iowa*, 1st series, 3 (1865), 401; *Iowa State Register* (hereafter cited as *ISR*), 12/23/1865.

15. By the end of February 1866, for example, the bodies of 333 Iowa soldiers had been buried in the new U.S. government cemetery at Helena, Arkansas; 302 at



Civil War monument in Monticello memorializing "Co. H, 31st Iowa Infantry Organized in Monticello and All Comrades of the War." Photo, ca. 1900, from State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines (SHSI-DM).

rials to the Union dead peaked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a number of public monuments were built soon after the Civil War. Residents of the small Bay Settlement near Delhi in Delaware County dedicated their marble memorial in August 1865. An area newspaper proudly noted that it commemorated "the names and heroic deeds of thirteen martyrs to Union and Liberty."¹⁶

The impetus for these stone tributes came from local monument associations – small committees that used patriotic appeals to solicit donations from the wider community. Iowa veterans were often powerful voices in these fund-raising campaigns.

Little Rock, Arkansas; and 147 at Andersonville, Georgia. *ISR*, 2/27/1866. On the massive Union reburial program, see Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 103–41.
16. *Delaware County Union*, 9/1/1865.

In March 1867 one veteran urged Dallas County residents to support the building of a soldiers' monument. "Our boys were among the bravest where all were brave and true," he wrote. "Let us honor their memory and show that we are grateful for the liberties [for] which they sacrificed their lives."¹⁷ Although many Iowans responded generously to such appeals, not all of these early commemorative projects were successful. Efforts to construct soldiers' monuments in Davenport and Henry County, for example, stalled in the late 1860s, possibly because times were hard for many farmers and town-dwellers and possibly, as one writer speculated in April 1870, because peace was already beginning to breed forgetfulness.¹⁸

Hatreds engendered by four years of civil war and subsequent political conflict over Reconstruction, however, made it difficult for most Iowans to forget the recent bloodletting. Public ceremonies demonstrated the continuation of sectional hostilities during the political contest over how and how quickly the Rebel states should be reintegrated into the Union. One toast offered at an Independence Day gathering in Hopkinton in 1866 included "Our Honored Dead – An army of occupation sufficient to hold the South forever." Another referred to "the overpowered but unconquered Rebels."¹⁹

Politics drove Civil War memory in part because widespread violence directed by unrepentant Rebels against black and white Unionists demonstrated the need for continued Northern vigilance.²⁰ Most Iowa Republicans, confronted by intensive Southern white hostility to congressional policy, were certainly in no mood to embrace North-South reconciliation during Reconstruction.²¹

17. *Dallas Weekly Gazette*, 3/29/1867.

18. *Mount Pleasant Home Journal*, 4/8/1870. The Davenport monument was not completed and dedicated until July 1881.

19. *Delaware County Union*, 7/13/1866.

20. Southern violence, much of it orchestrated by former Confederate soldiers, is well documented in histories of Reconstruction. See, for example, Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, 1988), 425-44, 549-53, 559-62; and Mark Wahlgren Summers, *The Ordeal of the Reunion: A New History of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2014), 79-80, 96-97, 147-50.

21. On Iowa's postwar Republican Party, see especially Robert Cook, *Baptism of Fire: The Republican Party in Iowa, 1838-1878* (Ames, 1994), 159-234.

Their party had led the North's successful crusade against the Southern "Slave Power." After 1865 they lauded the party's wartime achievements, warning Northerners that the defeated Confederates still threatened the peace of the reunited nation. They also denigrated the allegedly treasonous wartime role of their Democratic opponents — especially that of the notorious "Copperheads" or Peace Democrats who conveniently loomed larger in the ruling party's institutional memory than the prowar Democrats who had contributed to the Union victory.

The state's ruling political elite (many of whom were former Union officers) seldom missed an opportunity to appeal to demobilized Union volunteers by placing their party at the heart of the North's victory narrative. Presidential campaigns in the Reconstruction period were fought largely on issues arising out of the war: the sanctity of the Union debt, the civil rights of loyal African Americans, and the citizenship of former Confederates. In those contests, Iowa Republicans took every opportunity to brand their local opponents as traitors. "The Dem[ocratic] is the only party which has ever fired upon the flag," intoned one leading Republican editor in the midst of the 1868 campaign. "Had it never committed any other crime, this one would remain as a never-to-be washed away evil standing in damnation against it."²² Traducing their political opponents on the basis of their wartime record helped to guarantee that a majority of Union veterans in the state voted, as they had shot, for the party of Lincoln until the day they died.

During the immediate postbellum period, nothing illustrated the close relationship between Iowa-based Union veterans and the state Republican organization more clearly than the latter's support for a grand reunion of veterans in the late summer of 1870. Backed strongly by Governor Samuel Merrill, a Union officer seriously wounded in the advance on Vicksburg, the Republican-dominated legislature appropriated the princely sum of \$20,000 for the ambitious event.²³ While politicians clearly stood to gain from their sponsorship of the reunion (Merrill was re-elected later the same year), public support for the initiative was

22. *Daily State Register*, 8/21/1868.

23. *ISR*, 8/23/1878.



Civil War veterans attending a reunion of the 33rd Iowa Volunteer Infantry, Knoxville, ca. 1900. SHSI-DM.

overwhelming. Historians have linked war-infused nationalism to the dead on both sides, but it is important not to forget that the North's citizen-soldiers, able and disabled, who survived the late conflict were also potent repositories of Union memory after Appomattox.²⁴ The crowded streets of Des Moines testified to ordinary Iowans' determination to honor the living heroes who had saved the Union. There is no reason to suppose that politicians were any less convinced of the debt the state owed to them.

As many as 30,000 former Union soldiers descended on Des Moines for what one leading newspaper called "the most magnificent pageant the State has ever witnessed."²⁵ Seemingly endless columns of former Union troops paraded through the city

24. See, for example, Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 103–78. On the significance of disabled soldiers in the construction of postwar Union memory, see Brian Matthew Jordan, "Living Monuments': Union Veteran Amputees and the Embodied Memory of the Civil War," *Civil War History* 57 (2011), 121–52; and Brian Edward Donovan, "Like 'Monkeys at the Zoo': Politics and the Performance of Disability at the Iowa Soldiers' Home, 1887–1910," *Annals of Iowa* 71 (2012), 323–46.

25. *DISR*, 9/1/1870.



Members of Iowa GAR Post 116 of Indianola gather for a photo on July 4, 1908. Note the disabled veteran placed front and center. SHSI-DM.

center in their civilian clothes. The remarkable two-day event was noteworthy not only for quadrupling the city's population (the veterans brought with them about 20,000 women and children), but also for seeing General William Sherman nearly crushed to death by an excited crowd outside the state capitol. Pickpockets thrived as they wove furtively through the ranks of eager spectators while disabled organ grinders in blue (together with curiosities such as an eight-footed pig and a veteran's pet wolf) provided additional entertainment. Disabled soldiers were the objects of particular veneration, for their sacrifice in the national cause was painfully visible. They included Captain C. P. Johnson of the 17th Iowa, bedridden since being shot through the hip and stomach at the battle of Jackson, Mississippi, in July 1863. The impressive parade through town on August 31 included at least a dozen carriages containing maimed soldiers. "These wounded heroes were the the objects of the deepest admiration by all," noted one reporter, "and the showing of an arm shortened by half by rebel shot or shell, was an eloquence that carried its own glory and story with it."²⁶

Former comrades could be seen everywhere swapping stories of their wartime service. In one moving encounter, a battle-

26. *DISR*, 9/1/1870, 9/2/1870.

hardened veteran of the Atlanta campaign embraced a friend he thought had been killed at the Battle of Resaca. The man, named only as “Frank” in the local newspaper, had actually been wounded, captured by the Confederates, and then confined in the dismal Rebel prison pen at Andersonville.²⁷

Prominent speakers lavished praise on the veterans. The April 1861 levée en masse after the Rebels attacked Fort Sumter loomed large as a totem of Union memory, as did the soldiers’ love of the national flag. William W. Belknap of Keokuk, a prominent Iowa commander who had been appointed U.S. secretary of war by President Ulysses S. Grant, praised the patriotic civilian “uprising” against secession as well as the courage, resourcefulness, and endurance of the private soldier in wartime. Governor Merrill joined his Republican colleague in acknowledging the debt Iowans owed to the veterans for their valor and suffering in the national cause. The event was a genuinely collective one. Young people were prominent everywhere—not only as dependents of the veterans but also as participants in the formal exercises. Boys and girls, for example, wearing red, white, and blue sashes and rosettes, sang “The Glorious Cry of Freedom” (a version of the wartime favorite “The Battle Cry of Freedom”) watched by General Sherman and the other dignitaries.²⁸

Although none of the principal orators heralded the abolition of slavery as a leading accomplishment of the Civil War, African Americans—whose annual commemorations of emancipation were significant transmitters of Civil War memory in postbellum Iowa—were visible during the reunion. One hundred twenty former U.S. Colored Troops marched in parade and were addressed by white as well as black speakers.²⁹

It is impossible to say precisely how many of the mainly white veterans in Des Moines concurred with the two non-radical Republicans, Sherman and Belknap, that Union victory

27. *DISR*, 9/2/1870. Thirteen thousand Union soldiers died at Andersonville. Benjamin C. Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity: Civil War Prisons in American Memory* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2010), 2.

28. *DISR*, 1/9/1870.

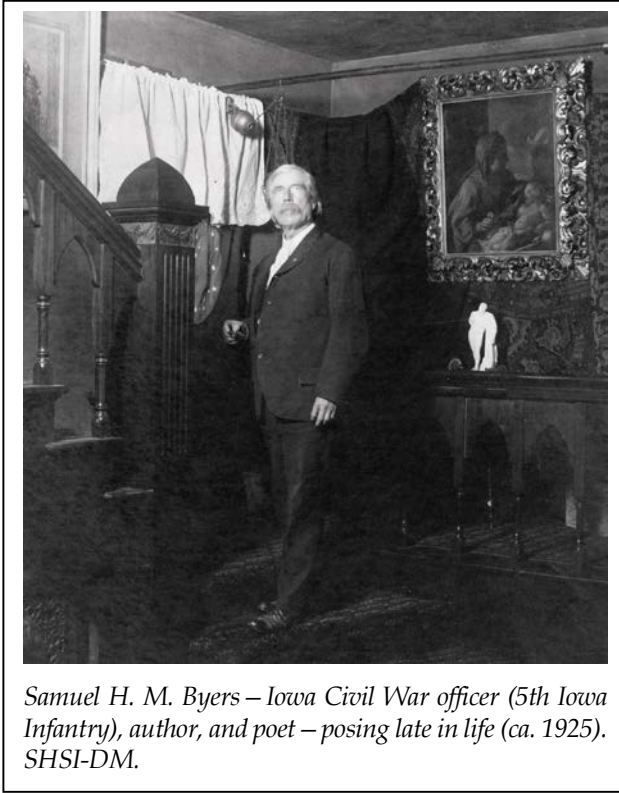
29. *DISR*, 9/1/1870, 9/2/1870. On black emancipation events in postwar Iowa, see Leslie A. Schwalm, “Emancipation Day Celebrations: The Commemoration of Slavery and Freedom in Iowa,” *Annals of Iowa* 62 (2003), 291–332.

was all about nationhood. For some, the emancipation of an entire race was also a major accomplishment of the war. Although the vast majority of Union soldiers had enlisted to save the republic and not to free slaves, many had come to share President Abraham Lincoln's conviction that the first objective was not possible without the second.³⁰ Support for abolition did not, by any means, always translate into opposition to racial prejudice in the North. However, many volunteers, even while harboring racist views of African Americans, had come to respect the patriotic loyalty of blacks, enslaved as well as free, and contrasted that loyalty with the treachery of Southern whites and Northern Copperheads. When Iowa Republicans declared in favor of black suffrage in June 1865, they did so primarily to acknowledge African Americans' support for the Union. Even Governor William M. Stone, a Union officer who did not belong to the antislavery wing of the state party, publicly defended enfranchising Iowa blacks on that ground. "We could not," he told an audience in Keokuk, "without the basest ingratitude, turn these men over powerless into the hands of their former rebel masters."³¹

Among those veterans who were convinced that white Northerners owed a debt to African Americans and that emancipation was a major component of the veterans' achievement was Iowa's celebrated soldier-historian and poet Samuel H. M. Byers. In November 1863 Byers had been captured in fierce fighting at Missionary Ridge and taken to an enemy prison camp at Columbia, South Carolina. He dedicated his first book, *What I Saw in Dixie* (1868), to Edward Edwards, a slave who helped him escape. "Our

30. Chandra Manning charts what she regards as most white Union troops' acceptance of emancipation and black troops in *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York, 2007), 81–102, 113–25, 148–57, 182–93. Her contention (221) that "astonishing changes took place in many white Union men's ideas about slavery and eventually, if more fragily, about racial equality," may be overstating the war's impact on soldiers' views of African Americans. Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, MA, 2011), 80–81, questions Manning's methodology and is generally more skeptical about the racial attitudes of ordinary white Union soldiers. His interpretation is broadly in line with that of Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York, 1988), 117–30, but for a more upbeat account, see James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York, 1997), 117–30.

31. *DISR*, 7/12/1865. On Iowa Republicans' support for black suffrage in 1865, see Cook, *Baptism of Fire*, 160–66; and Dykstra, *Bright Radical Star*, 200–215.



chains fell off together,” Byers recorded in the same year white Iowans went to the polls to enfranchise local blacks, “and I would not now ask a privilege or right from my Country that I would not willingly accord to him.”³² Frank, the Union prisoner of war who swapped stories with his long-lost friend at the Des Moines reunion, also remembered the help he had received from Southern blacks after his release from Andersonville: how he “had no money to get home, the colored people took care of him, [he] remained with them many weeks, taught a little school for the colored folks, raised enough money to reach the coast, and was sent home from Savannah.”³³ Personal memories of wartime

32. Samuel H. M. Byers, *What I Saw in Dixie; Or Sixteen Months in Rebel Prisons* (Dansville, NY, 1868), unnumbered dedication page.

33. *DISR*, 9/2/1870.

assistance may have contributed to Iowans' support for black suffrage in the 1868 referendum—an achievement that stoked the Republican narrative of the war as a profoundly moral crusade for the betterment of the nation.³⁴

Decoration Day speakers, some of them undoubtedly motivated by recollections of black loyalty to the republic during the war and its violent aftermath, placed significant emphasis on emancipation as a major component of the Union cause. Inaugurated in 1868 by John A. Logan, commander of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a new Union veterans' organization, as a day to commemorate the sacrifice of Northern soldiers, Decoration Day (or Memorial Day as it soon became known) was initially a relatively modest event in Iowa. Partly because the GAR got off to a slow start nationally and in Iowa, the holiday did not become institutionalized as a genuinely communal event attracting large numbers of participants in towns and villages across the state until the 1880s.³⁵ Nevertheless, the first Decoration Day in Des Moines on May 30, 1868, was a well-attended affair. Republican politicians, including Governor Merrill and state jurists, joined veterans and civilians in a mile-long procession to Woodland Cemetery, where young girls “robed in white and artless in innocence, with baskets of flowers,” decorated the graves of Union soldiers. A uniformed squad of armed veterans “baptized in the blood and smoke of war” fired volleys over the sacred plots, and a rapt crowd heard Judge George G. Wright, one of Iowa's leading Republicans, say that everyone present could not “but feel more than ever their duty to maintain, protect, and defend” the institutions of the republic. Thanks to the sacrifices of these devoted patriots, said Wright, “we rejoice in a freedom

34. On the culmination of the black suffrage crusade in 1868, see Cook, *Baptism of Fire*, 192–93; and Dykstra, *Bright Radical Star*, 222–29.

35. On the origins and early history of Decoration Day, see Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 65–77. Some of the GAR's initial problems were attributable to its inaugural system of Masonic-style grades, which imposed social distinctions on a fraternal and egalitarian veteran community. Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1992), 31–33. McConnell's supposition (33) that the organization's problems were also caused by many veterans' desire to forget about the war is not supported by the Iowa-based volunteers' manifest embrace of wartime camaraderie at the well-attended grand reunion in 1870.

matured, a bond delivered, of freedom to all men."³⁶ At the close of the speeches, Cyrus C. Carpenter, a Union veteran and rising star in the state's Republican Party, quoted from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, a paean not only to American democracy but also to the principle, seemingly confirmed by the North's victory, that that precious polity was grounded in the Founders' contention that all men were created equal.³⁷

Carpenter, a supporter of black suffrage, returned to Woodland four years later as governor of Iowa. This time he read from Lincoln's famous 1864 letter to the grieving Lydia Bixby, thanking her for giving her sons to help save the republic. Eschewing mindless triumphalism, as befitted his position as one of Iowa's more thoughtful politicians, Carpenter honestly acknowledged the existence of lingering "sorrow" among the people as well as their debt to the Union dead. But at least, he iterated, there were compensations: the Civil War had "emancipated a race" and "lifted and ennobled human nature itself in every lover of the Union."³⁸

By the late 1870s the main tenets and rituals of Union memory were all in place. Yet the victors were becoming increasingly anxious about maintaining the fruits of war. Righteous force had reunited the nation, but Southern whites had thrown off Republican rule at home and were vigorously contesting the imposition of black equality under the law. Hardly less troublingly, some elite Confederates (most of them openly supportive of the fight for Southern "redemption") were now fiercely contesting the North's victory narrative, which glorified the saviors of the Union and denigrated the South as a nest of traitors.³⁹ To make matters worse, growing numbers of Northerners, including a minority of liberal Republicans impatient with the corruption of the Grant

36. Brown, *American Patriotism*, 9, 10, 11.

37. On the eventful career of the Gettysburg Address in American memory, see Jared Peatman, *The Long Shadow of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* (Carbondale, IL, 2013).

38. *DISR*, 5/31/1872.

39. On the early literary defense of the Lost Cause, see especially Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 258–64; Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York, 1987), 47–62; and Sarah E. Gardner, *Blood & Irony: Southern White Women's Narratives of the Civil War, 1861–1937* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 39–73.

administration and many more Democrats with political ties to the white South, were advocating sectional reconciliation in part on Southern terms. Loyal Republicans did not oppose reconciliation per se in the late 1870s (President Grant himself had tried to foster it) but, alert to Northern voters' waning interest in Reconstruction, they worried that the issues of the war were being blurred by former Confederates like Alexander H. Stephens who downplayed slavery as a cause of the war, legitimized secession as the defense of constitutional rights, and cast doubt on the moral superiority of the Union cause.⁴⁰ Although reform-minded Republicans initially supported President Rutherford B. Hayes's policy of returning the South to home rule in 1877, a majority of Iowa Republicans soon feared that the president had abandoned the region's Unionists to their fate and surrendered political control of the ex-Confederacy to treasonous Democrats.⁴¹

Political leaders rapidly mobilized Union memory to raise the alarm. James S. ("Ret") Clarkson, editor of the state's leading newspaper, the *Iowa State Register*, welcomed another large veterans' reunion to Des Moines in September 1878 with the statement that the Civil War "was not a Greek to Greek struggle; it was a contest of Right and Justice, and wrong and oppression." Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Chester C. Cole disseminated a similarly uncompromising message to the assembled veterans. Any charity afforded to the ex-Confederates, said Cole, should be limited to the perpetrators of "that causeless and unholy rebellion" and not to the rebellion itself: "That was a crime against good government, against freedom and against humanity, and it deserves not and can never receive either condonation [*sic*] or forgiveness."⁴²

Former governor Samuel J. Kirkwood repeated the refrain the next day in his remarks to a large crowd gathered in Woodland Cemetery to see the dedication of a handsome memorial shaft in memory of Nathaniel Baker. (Nearly 10,000 people had viewed the late adjutant general's remains when he died two

40. Alexander H. Stephens, *A Constitutional View of the Late War between the States* (Philadelphia, 1868).

41. Cook, *Baptism of Fire*, 231-33.

42. *ISR*, 9/4/1878, 9/6/1878.

years earlier).⁴³ All reasonable men, said Kirkwood, wanted sectional antagonism to be healed as quickly as possible. "But," he added,

This sore on the body politic, must be treated somewhat like an ugly sore on the human body; we must guard alike against such treatment as will make the sore permanent, and such treatment as will, by too great haste to work a cure, skin the sore over without curing it, leaving it to break out again. It seems to me the tendency of the times is toward the latter error. . . . Some of our people seem to desire to ignore the fact that we have ever had a civil war, or to insist that if it shall be remembered at all it shall be only as an unfortunate and foolish quarrel in which both sides were about equally wrong and neither side especially to blame—that at least each side believed itself to be right and was fighting according to its convictions, and that no blame should attach to him who has convictions and has the courage to fight for them.⁴⁴

Embedded in this extended medical metaphor was the essence of Union memory: the deep conviction, shared with black leaders like Douglass, that there was indeed a right side and a wrong side in the Civil War and that, romantic hopes for peace notwithstanding, patriotic Iowans had fought and died for the right.

Holding the Line: The Union Cause in Transition, 1878–1893

These pointed warnings against sentiment and forgetfulness revealed that the pressures on Union memory were mounting. The end of Reconstruction, the emergence of a new generation of Americans born during or after the Civil War, the development of a vast integrated national market, and the yearning of ordinary Northerners for stability at a time of rapid economic change and social turmoil all contributed to a growing desire for sectional reconciliation between 1877 and the end of the century. During this transitional phase in the history of North-South relations, Iowans increasingly sought a lasting accommodation with their former enemies. Those efforts, however, did not signal their willingness to admit that the Union cause was morally equivalent to its Southern variant. In an era marked by fierce interparty com-

43. *ISR*, 9/16/1876.

44. *ISR*, 9/7/1878.

petition and the rapid expansion of veterans' organizations, the state's Republican politicians had every reason to maintain their grip on Union memory even though they, like the veterans, were by no means free from the countervailing pressures for sectional reconciliation. Political warfare and veteran-centered commemoration would continue to sustain Union memory in Iowa into the 1890s.

Blue-Gray reunions, beginning in the early 1880s, were among the most striking demonstrations of reconciliation after Appomattox. The first Iowa veterans to participate in one of these events were members of the First Iowa Infantry, a politically conservative and ethnically pluralistic regiment whose members had volunteered to defend the Union soon after the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter. The regiment had been bloodied at the Battle of Wilson's Creek on August 10, 1861, when 154 of its 800 members were killed, wounded, or went missing.⁴⁵ In August 1883 a number of the unit's survivors accepted an invitation to attend a reunion with their onetime foes in southwestern Missouri. Pleased to witness the unveiling of a monument to their commander, Nathaniel Lyon, who had perished in the engagement, they mingled easily with their Southern hosts in Springfield and on the old battlefield. One of the Iowans, revelling in the picnic-like atmosphere, spoke with some rank-and-file Confederate veterans. "I inquired of the old soldiers that fought us like tigers on that day," "G." told readers of the *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, "and they say, the thing is over and we are glad that it is. We respect the bravery with which we were fought, and we see that we are largely the gainers under the new order of things." The Iowa veteran added that he had also spoken to a number of local African Americans—whom he jokingly called "an occasional 'contraband of war.'" Each one insisted that the emancipated race had "no apprehension whatever" about the future.⁴⁶

The veterans' willingness to journey to Missouri revealed that by the early 1880s many Iowa veterans were keen to revisit—literally and metaphorically—the scenes of their youthful valor.

45. William Garrett Piston and Richard W. Hatcher III, *Wilson's Creek: The Second Battle of the Civil War and the Men Who Fought It* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000), 338. On the recruitment and composition of the First Iowa, see *ibid.*, 47–58.

46. *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, 8/14/1883.

Most were now in their forties or fifties. Time had given them an opportunity to sift their memories, to reflect at length on the most intense period of their lives. As they entered middle age they struggled for a more complete understanding of the war's place in their own personal narratives and of the meaning of the horrors they had witnessed and the hardships they had endured. The Iowans' return to Wilson's Creek seems to have convinced them that their former Confederate foes respected their bravery on the battlefield, were ready to admit that the defeated South was better off in 1883 than in 1861, and that racial issues—specifically the treatment of freed slaves by white Southerners—need no longer be a barrier to North-South amity. Their journey did not, however, indicate any desire on their part to forget the issues of the war. They were interested enough in emancipation and its aftermath to speak with local African Americans, and, crucially, they looked for reassurance that the ex-Rebels acknowledged the superiority of the Union cause.

Blue-Gray reunions were a relatively rare form of Civil War commemoration in the 1880s and early 1890s. Iowa's war effort was more commonly remembered during this period in numerous articles, memoirs, histories, and poems; in public speeches delivered on Memorial Day and at the funerals of wartime leaders; and at veterans' parades and regimental gatherings. It was also manifested in the preservation of battlefield relics (especially regimental flags) and the construction of civic monuments.

Major Samuel Byers was the leading chronicler of Iowa's contribution to the Northern war effort. His many literary outputs were generated partly by the prosaic need to make a living. After Reconstruction, Americans evinced a growing desire to know more about the Civil War. Northern magazines like *Century*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Lippincott's* paid handsomely for wartime memoirs.⁴⁷ But the major also shared the concern articulated by his patron and former commander, William Sherman, that Union memory would fade unless the victors recorded their views in

47. Byers received \$50 for several of his essays (\$50 in 1887 is equivalent to about \$1,300 in 2014). C. C. Buel to Byers, 6/3/1886, Byers Papers; *North American Review* business dept. memorandum, 2/4/1887, *ibid.* On the surge in popularity of Civil War recollections after Reconstruction, see Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 211-54.

print. His most important contribution to the memory of the war was his history of the state's war effort, *Iowa in War Times*, published in 1888. In it he hailed the Civil War as Iowa's "heroic age" and "the story of brave men." "It is an impressive thought," he wrote, "to realize that a thousand years from now school boys will be taught the story of these men. We owe the future something, we owe it to these men, that, as far as in us lies, the truth as to the heroism of these Iowa patriots, and the sacrifices of Iowa at home, shall be preserved." For Byers, emancipation remained an essential part of the story he intended for transmission down the ages. "It is a happy people," he wrote, "to whom fate gives the chance to strike a blow for human rights. That people's history is made."⁴⁸

The state Republican Party continued to champion Union memory during this period, partly because of the need to retain the support of veterans at a time when its dominance of the state was being hotly contested by a variety of political opponents and partly because the North's wartime experience remained so central to its own institutional identity. In every national election between 1878 and 1892 Republican leaders repeated the familiar charge that the Democratic party was the party of treason. Ret Clarkson's *Register* led the way, denouncing the Democrat-controlled Congress elected in 1878 as "the Confederate Congress" and gearing up for the next general election by announcing its determination to stand up to the solid South and "its unrelinquished purposes of evil."⁴⁹ When the Democrats tried to shed their Copperhead image by running former Union General Winfield Scott Hancock for president, Iowa Republicans rolled out local war hero and Democratic turncoat Brigadier General James M. Tuttle to testify that Hancock, the commander who stood firm against Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, would be controlled by Northern conservatives like George B. McClellan and his ex-Confederate allies. Tuttle contended that while the South was solidly Democrat "through bull dozing and fraud . . . [it] was also solid during the war, and we whipped it then, and we can and will do it again."⁵⁰ Although Iowa Republicans withstood the Dem-

48. Samuel H. M. Byers, *Iowa in War Times* (Des Moines, 1888), 6, 7.

49. *ISR*, 3/21/1879, 5/31/1879.

50. *ISR*, 8/6/1880.

ocrats' challenge in 1880, they were shocked by Grover Cleveland's victory in November 1884. When the new president announced his support for the return of captured Rebel flags in U.S. government hands and his opposition to veterans' pensions, they gorged on Union soldiers' outrage and hailed Benjamin Harrison's triumph in 1888 as a rebuke to the Democratic administration's "unpatriotic course . . . toward Union soldiers and their dependent wives and children."⁵¹

Iowa Republicans did not condemn all reconciliatory ventures in the 1880s. Cleveland's victory made it clear that sectional rhetoric and war-related issues alone were no longer enough to win national elections.⁵² They held the line, however, when former Confederate President Jefferson Davis died in New Orleans in December 1889. At a moment when newly empowered Southern Democrats were looking for tangible signs that their old enemies were tiring of the bloody shirt, most Republican editors in the state continued to condemn the departed Confederate chieftain. Clarkson's *Register* marked him as "the embodiment of the domineering rebellious spirit of the old slaveholding aristocracy" and still a confirmed "Rebel" at the time of his demise. The *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* described Davis as "chief of the greatest failure of modern times." For the *Cedar Rapids Republican*, he was a traitor who "deserves the unbounded condemnation of all who love their country and have not forgotten what it cost to save the union from dismemberment." Small wonder then that one New Orleans newspaper disparaged the torrent of condemnation from "the cold, icicular territory of Iowa, where the wintry blasts freeze the better impulses of human nature." The *Atlanta Constitution* also singled out Iowa Republicans for their harsh verdicts on the Southern president. "As a south-hater," it contended, "the Iowa State Register has had few equals and no superiors. . . . Brother Clarkson's paper has continued to preach sectionalism as it is understood in the blind tigers of Iowa."⁵³

51. *ISR*, 6/16/1887, 11/8/1888.

52. Stanley P. Hirshson, *Farewell to the Bloody Shirt: Northern Republicans and the Southern Negro, 1877-1893* (Chicago, 1968), 141.

53. *ISR*, 12/7/1889; *Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil*, 12/7/1889; *Cedar Rapids Daily Republican*, 12/7/1889; *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, 12/13/1889; *Atlanta Constitution*, 12/21/1889.

The *Constitution's* energetic editor, Henry W. Grady, was a well-known advocate of sectional reconciliation on Southern terms.⁵⁴ His disparaging reference to “blind tigers” – illegal drinking establishments – indicated his desire to increase the pressure on Iowa Republicans by making their continued sectionalism appear disreputable in the changing context of the 1880s. In fact, if Grady and other Southern editors had studied the editorials from Iowa more closely, they would have detected the stirrings of reconciliation even among hardened Republicans. Ret Clarkson may not have had much time for Jeff Davis (former U.S. Senator George W. Jones of Dubuque, a Democrat who acted as a pallbearer for his old college friend, was one of the few Iowans who did), but his paper’s dismissal of the proslavery president as someone who for years had been “only a reminiscence, a relic of a most gigantic rebellion, lagging superfluous upon the stage,” hinted at a desire to draw a line under the past and move forward. So did its concluding “hope that . . . there may come forth a new South that will strive in honorable rivalry with the North, for the trophies of peace and the triumphs of loyalty and justice and equal rights to all men.”⁵⁵

Any shift on the part of Iowa Republicans towards reconciliation, however, would have to be on Northern terms. It could hardly have been otherwise given the intensity of the party’s battles with Democrats, prohibitionists, and agrarian radicals whose efforts to appeal to whites on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line gave them a greater stake in sectional reconciliation and the mnemonic changes that were likely to achieve it. Those same political contests highlighted the continuing importance to the state’s dominant party of its large soldier constituency. That importance increased during the 1880s as Union veterans organized more effectively as members of a reinvigorated Grand Army of the Republic.

The GAR functioned as the main conduit for Civil War remembrance and the transmission of wartime values to the next

54. William A. Link, *Atlanta, Cradle of the New South: Race and Remembering in the Civil War’s Aftermath* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2013), 140–42, 151–56.

55. *ISR*, 12/7/1889. Jones’s sadness on viewing Davis’s remains was described in *The Caucasian*, 12/12/1889: “His face was livid with tears, and as he bowed over the dead he uttered, ‘My poor friend, my poor friend,’ and passed on sobbing into the mayor’s parlor.”

generation of Americans throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁵⁶ Iowa's Union veterans did join other fraternal associations, including the Society of the Army of the Tennessee (membership of which was restricted to officers) and regimental reunion groups, but the GAR's political influence and capacity to mold Civil War memory stood head and shoulders above any other Union veterans' organization. It did not attract a mass membership across the Northern states until the late 1870s, when Union veterans began to mobilize seriously in their collective interest. A permanent Iowa department of the GAR had been created by the beginning of 1879. It reached its peak strength 11 years later, when the state department counted 435 posts with a total membership of 20,324.⁵⁷

The GAR served multiple purposes. As well as lobbying for federal pensions, a cause backed strongly by Iowa Republicans, it also provided financial resources and physical spaces that enabled Union veterans to take care of their own and to recall their service to the nation. The impulse to remember was a powerful one for the aging soldiers, and it grew more potent as time went by. "The mists of fading years are rapidly clouding the recollection of America's Great Rebellion," asserted General Josiah Given, the newly inaugurated commander of Des Moines's Crocker Post in March 1879. "The corrosion of time is working decay in the old fellowships and friendships of the camp and field, and the days of old age . . . are fast stealing upon us." Given's remarks were motivated by a concern for present-day problems as well as nostalgia and fraternalism. "In these times of peace and reconciliation," he reflected, "engrossed as we are with the cares of life, we are prone to forget the lessons of the past. Whatever be our individual views as to the course pursued towards our former enemies . . . we will all agree that in an extended country like ours . . . treason may raise its hydra head at any time and from any quarter."⁵⁸

56. The standard history of the national GAR remains McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, although Gannon, *The Won Cause*, is an important corrective. On the Iowa department, see Jacob A. Swisher, *The Iowa Department of the Grand Army of the Republic* (Iowa City, 1936).

57. Swisher, *Iowa Department*, 34, 38.

58. *ISR*, 3/21/1879.

Iowa's GAR members met regularly in local halls. There they conducted business meetings and passed resolutions about federal pensions and other matters. Importantly, they also narrated their experiences of the War of the Rebellion not only to one another but to others beyond their immediate circle. In the beginning, these meetings were usually exclusively male affairs. From 1883 onwards, however, Woman's Relief Corps units were set up as GAR auxiliaries to support veterans and soldiers' families, many of whom were mired in poverty. Populated by loyal women of all ages and political inclinations, the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) demonstrated that Union memory was not entirely a male preserve even if the male victors took the lead in constructing it. While GAR and WRC posts held their own separate business meetings, their members liked nothing better than convening at the end of formal business for a convivial "social" in which the veterans and their womenfolk would join in singing much-loved songs of the 1860s like "Home Sweet Home" and "Marching Through Georgia."⁵⁹

The GAR's commitment to Civil War remembrance gave its members public visibility, especially (though not exclusively) at Memorial Day gatherings. By the 1880s, the involvement of GAR posts helped to render these exercises community-wide events that spanned the generations, even in a western town like Sioux City that did not possess a critical mass of veterans until after Reconstruction and where wartime commemoration was as much a celebration of regional growth as national patriotism.⁶⁰ On the last Monday of May each year, businesses in urban places across the state closed as a mark of respect to the Union dead. Veterans processed with members of civilian groups to local cemeteries, where schoolchildren decorated the graves of the fallen with flowers and where patriotic orators dispensed lessons for the living based on their reading of the soldiers' sacrifice.

Most GAR members in Iowa were white, but, remarkably, given the virulent racism of the age, the national organization

59. The national WRC claimed 100,000 members by 1890. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 71.

60. Tony Klein, "Memorializing Soldiers or Celebrating Westward Expansion: Civil War Commemoration in Sioux City and Keokuk, 1868–1938," *Annals of Iowa* 71 (2012), 300–305.

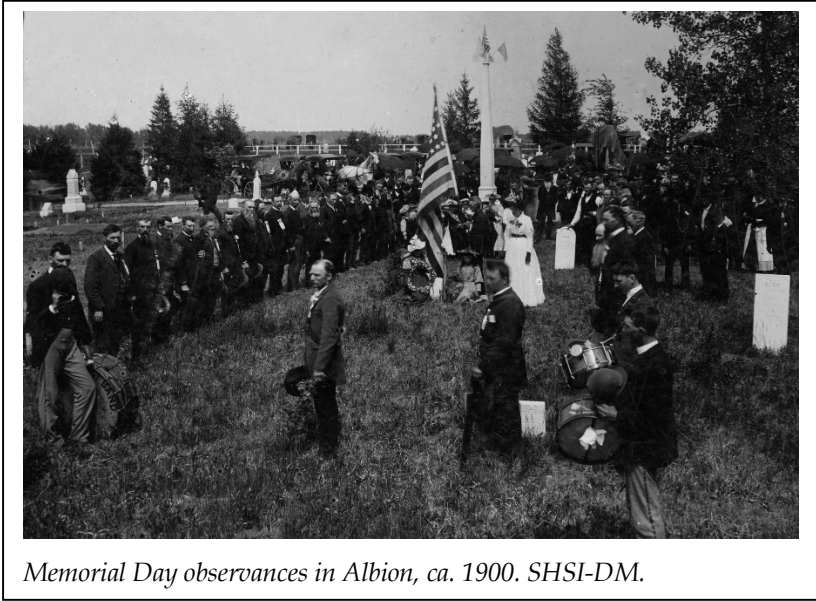


Wives of members of GAR Post 472 in Grant, ca. 1880. SHSI-DM.

adhered to an official policy of racial integration that recognized the support African Americans had rendered the Union. Opposition to blacks joining GAR posts did exist, but that opposition was often contested. When Des Moines's Crocker Post, one of the largest in the state, tried to bar a black veteran named Robert Bruce, a white member protested, and Bruce and two other black veterans were eventually admitted in 1889. All told, there were about 40 integrated GAR posts across the state.⁶¹

In books and articles and at reunions, Memorial Day ceremonies, and other Civil War-related events across the state in the late nineteenth century, veterans and non-veterans insisted that Iowans of all ages must remember the old soldiers' patriotic sacrifice for the Union. One orator, H. S. Wilcox, told a large crowd in Des Moines in May 1891 that the republic's citizen-soldiers had undergone all manner of sufferings during the "long agony" of the war to save the nation. "God forbid," he said, "that this

61. Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 97, 90.



Memorial Day observances in Albion, ca. 1900. SHSI-DM.

Nation should ever so far forget the sources of its glory as to fail to distinguish between those who fought to save its life and those who strove to destroy it.”⁶² Although nation-saving was usually singled out as the primary purpose of the Union war effort, emancipation was often woven into these victory narratives. Slavery, the veterans knew, had caused the rebellion. Its destruction helped to save the nation and burnished the Union cause with a luster that eluded most of humanity’s brutal wars.

Rev. H. O. Breedon, a local Disciples of Christ minister, took up the emancipatory theme in May 1889, when he told the assembled veterans of the capital’s two GAR posts that he esteemed them for their “willing sacrifice upon the altar of National freedom and National unity,” for writing liberty “on four millions of dark foreheads.” In his 1891 speech H. S. Wilcox pronounced “the very name of slavery . . . a stench” made so “by the sacrifice of these, our sacred dead.” The Union soldiers now buried in the ground, said Wilcox, “knew more about religion than the pastors of the church. They knew that slavery was a horrid crime.”⁶³

62. Undated newspaper clipping [5/1891], minute book, box 27, Crocker Post #12, Post Records, Iowa Department GAR, SHSI (hereafter cited as CPR).

63. Undated newspaper clippings [5/1889 and 5/1891], minute book, box 27, CPR.

Partly mythologized white emancipationist interpretations of the Civil War were vital not only to many veterans' understanding of their wartime service but also to those Iowa Republican politicians keen to retain the support of African Americans at home and nationally. Early in 1891, the same year congressional Republicans failed to pass the so-called Lodge Force Bill to safeguard black voting rights in the South, Des Moines's grand opera house hosted an interracial memorial service for Abraham Lincoln sponsored by a coalition of the loyal that included the GAR, the Colored Republicans Club, and the Young Men's Republican Club.⁶⁴ The nation's martyred president remained a focal point for Union memory during this period, and Iowans continued to link his name with the achievement of emancipation. In an implicit condemnation of the South's Lost Cause narrative, Judge Charles A. Bishop of the Young Men's Republican Club stated that slavery had played a central role in causing "the war of the rebellion." While acknowledging honestly that Northerners had not fought initially to free black people, Bishop insisted that the growing conflagration had increased Northerners' "moral feeling" against slavery. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (which was read out at the meeting along with the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural) was, he contended, "perhaps . . . the most important of all the documents known in history," and emancipation was "an act that burned away the greatest shame the nation ever knew." The speaker then turned his attention to the present-day condition of African Americans. Refuting pervasive negative stereotypes of blacks as work-shy and prone to criminality, Bishop emphasized the progress blacks had made since Appomattox. "In many instances," he said, "the slave of yesterday has become the man of nation-wide influence of today, while in many thousands of other instances they hold honored places in the intellectual, business and governmental life of our country."⁶⁵

64. The Lodge Force Bill passed the House of Representatives with virtually unanimous Republican backing in July 1890 but never made it out of the Senate. Historian Stanley P. Hirshson argued that some powerful Iowa Republicans, Clarkson among them, backed the measure because of election defeats in 1889. Hirshson, *Farewell*, 206.

65. Undated newspaper clipping, [2/1890], minute book, box 27, CPR.

Despite their relatively strong backing for the state's small (and generally poor) black community, Iowa's Union veterans and leading Republican politicians were unable to prevent the rise of Jim Crow and the hideous violence that accompanied it in the 1890s. Ret Clarkson was one of a minority of Iowa Republicans to speak out against racial segregation after the Lodge Bill's defeat. In a speech titled "The Party of Lincoln, Grant, and Blaine" delivered in Louisville, Kentucky, in May 1893, he insisted that his party must stand for "human rights, as the cardinal doctrine of our faith" and condemned the recent exclusion of an African American from an all-white "social political club" in New York. "No republic," Clarkson averred feelingly, "is stronger in actual liberty than its weakest home."⁶⁶ Those were fine words, but by that time Southern political strength and a host of new issues that bore no relationship to the Civil War were rendering Union memory increasingly vulnerable to consensual pressures.

The Waxing and Waning of the Union Tide in Iowa, 1894–1916

Union memory crested in Iowa in the 1890s, a tumultuous decade when the United States was plagued by tremendous social change, widespread labor unrest, and continuing interparty conflict. It was a period, too, when the republic advanced onto the world stage with its swift military victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898 and its subsequent occupation of the Philippine Islands. These strains and events did not lead Iowans to abandon their belief in the justice of the Union cause, but they did occasion important shifts in Union memory that contributed to its accommodation with, though not its complete capitulation to, the sentimental narrative of sectional reconciliation. Those shifts were evident not only in the way Iowa Republicans campaigned during the watershed presidential contest of 1896 but also in their veteran constituency's growing readiness to embrace the old Rebel foe.

On August 10, 1894, just three months after Jacob S. Coxey's "army" of unemployed workers had completed its controversial march to Washington, D.C., about 5,000 Union veterans, including

66. James S. Clarkson, *The Party of Lincoln, Grant and Blaine. Annual Address of James S. Clarkson, President of the National Republican League of the United States . . . May 10, 1893* (n.p., [1893]), 4, 6, 16.

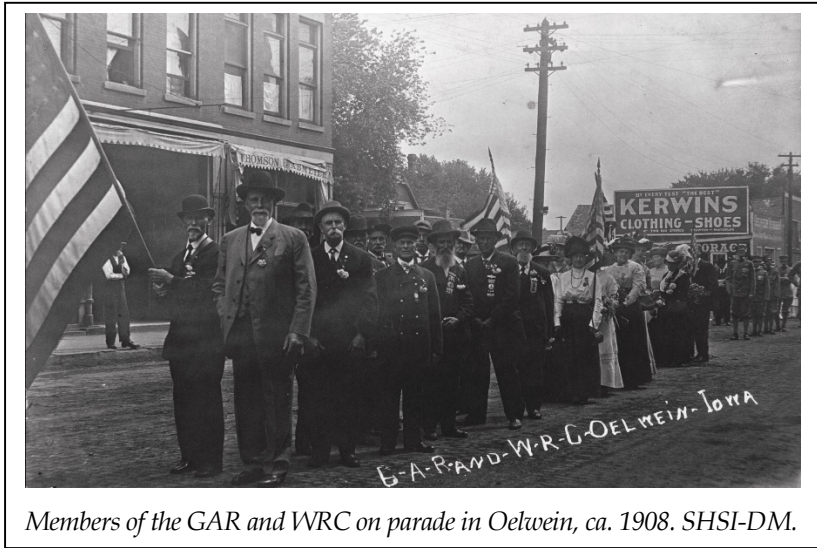
a dozen or so surviving members of the all-black 60th U.S. Colored Infantry, gathered in Des Moines to participate in Flag Day.⁶⁷ The ceremony involved the veterans' transferral of the state's regimental flags, many of them preserved with the assistance of local women, from the state armory to the capitol, where they were to be kept for posterity in hermetically sealed glass cases — "patriotic object lessons, not only to the present generation but to our children and children's children down the ages."⁶⁸ The observances were poorly organized. Weary veterans, some of them shaded with umbrellas by their daughters, were forced to stand for three hours in the burning sun before they could set off for the capitol. Nevertheless, the event was watched by thousands of spectators, many of whom were genuinely moved by a sight that inspired still-powerful emotions of sadness and thanksgiving. A long parade headed by Republican governor Frank D. Jackson and anchored by the flag-bearing veterans moved slowly through a downtown decorated with triumphal arches and Civil War-themed storefronts. When the procession finally reached the capitol, Governor Jackson hailed the Civil War as "a war for freedom, a war for the unchaining of millions of human beings," and lauded the veterans for their loyalty to the Stars and Stripes. "The insult to the flag and the people's law," he continued in an adept demonstration of the contemporary resonance of Civil War memory, "is no greater, made by the red handed anarchists in placing the torch where it destroys life and property, than it is by the so-called industrial army traveling through the country intimidating and holding up communities for food and shelter."⁶⁹

That patriotic spectacle did more than contribute to the Republicans' successes in the 1894 state and congressional elections. Jackson's rhetorical efforts to harness Union memory in the service of present-day conservative objectives foreshadowed his party's actions in the presidential election campaign of 1896. In previous contests Republicans regularly tarred their Democratic

67. *ISR*, 8/11/1894.

68. *Ibid.* Iowa women, the wife of Governor John H. Gear prominent among them, played a leading role in trying to preserve the state's battle flags not only from decay but also from the veterans' penchant for cutting off pieces of the flags as souvenirs. *ISR*, 12/16/1871, 2/25/1881.

69. *ISR*, 8/11/1894.



Members of the GAR and WRC on parade in Oelwein, ca. 1908. SHSI-DM.

opponents as wartime traitors. In this tight contest, however, the fusion of Populists and Democrats necessitated a more creative GOP strategy that mixed traditional uses of Civil War memory with a concerted effort to brand class warriors on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line as the new danger to the nation.

In Iowa's Seventh Congressional District, Congressman John A. T. Hull, a disabled veteran, faced strong challenges to his nomination and election. Clarkson's *Register* predictably informed readers in early June that nearly all Union veterans were working for Hull's return to Congress in order to continue the fight for veterans' rights—or, as the *Register* put it, "to right the wrongs that have been inflicted upon their disabled comrades during the role of the present copperhead, conscript and rebel administration."⁷⁰ The congressman's campaign managers, including General Sherman's brother Hoyt (a Des Moines businessman), issued a circular to veterans titled "Rally Once Again, Comrades." The document unashamedly urged the district's wartime heroes to dress their lines "and as of old stand . . . shoulder to shoulder,

70. *ISR*, 6/3/1896. Cleveland had been elected for a second, non-consecutive term in November 1892.

and march in solid column to the ballot box" to return Captain Hull to Congress.⁷¹

The national Republican Party deployed Union memory in an equally familiar manner when it sponsored a Northern generals' tour of the Midwest to help shore up the veterans' vote. The region's GOP leadership also used Civil War loyalties to deflect opposition attempts to drive a wedge between debtor states in the West and creditor states in the Northeast. However, as Patrick Kelly has observed, there were signs in this overwrought contest that even the most orthodox Republican leaders were beginning to shift their ground.⁷²

The threat to sound money and social stability allegedly posed by the opposition's pro-silver presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan, induced pro-business Republicans to target conservative Democrats as potential allies in the campaign. In September a Marshalltown-based railroad manager wrote to Major General Grenville M. Dodge, the state's preeminent living war hero and a powerful Republican in his own right who was heavily involved in the business of Civil War commemoration at the national level. He reported that many Iowa Democrats—those who believed "in paying their honest debts with an honest dollar . . . in law and order . . . [and] that after the Southern States had been whipped back into the Union, that sectional lines had disappeared and forever"—were "making a heroic fight" for the Republican standard-bearer, William McKinley, a former Union officer from Ohio who was amenable to North-South amity.⁷³

The possibility of attracting support from these pro-reconciliation Democrats alarmed by their party's fusion with radical Populists induced some Republican leaders to set aside

71. *ISR*, 6/6/1896.

72. Patrick J. Kelly, "The Election of 1896 and the Restructuring of Civil War Memory," in Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds., *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 180-212.

73. L. M. Martin to G. M. Dodge, 9/18/1896, box 11, General Correspondence, Grenville M. Dodge Papers, SHSI. Dodge's efforts to solicit veterans' donations for a national monument to Sherman after the warrior's death in 1891 revealed the wealth gap separating him from most of the "boys in blue." "It is almost impossible to get much out of soldiers," he reported. "I had no idea of the condition and poverty that so many of the old veterans of the army were in." Dodge to F. Hecker, 1/18/1892, Dodge Papers.

old quarrels. Congressman Frank T. Campbell told an audience at the Iowa State Fair that “no discredit” should be heaped on ex-Confederates “for they have all realized the mistake they made, and the hard lines of cruel war have been nearly obliterated with the lapse of time.” At the same gathering, Governor Francis M. Drake referred to “the loyal spirit” that enthused Republicans and Democrats in 1861, adding that he had “nothing to conceal when I speak of the love of patriotism and the love of the nation’s credit.”⁷⁴ Even Ret Clarkson’s *Register* was impressed by the carefully orchestrated visit of Confederate veterans to McKinley’s home in October. The paper welcomed the mingling of the Blue and the Gray on distinctly Northern terms:

The breaking down of party lines in this year’s campaign will more thoroughly unify the American people than any other event since the British troops laid down their arms at Yorktown. We have faced Confederate soldiers in battle array, have met and talked with numbers of them since the war, and we are free to say that we would rather trust that portion of them, in control of the government, who are now standing firmly for the preservation of the National honor and the business safety of all the people, than to trust northern or any other men in control who advocate National dishonor to serve the interests of millionaire silver kings. Confederate soldiers were disloyal to the Nation but they were not dishonest.⁷⁵

The GOP’s harnessing of Union and reconciliatory strains of Civil War memory in 1896 appeared to pay political dividends. Over 55 percent of Iowa voters supported McKinley, their ballots enabling him to crush his challenger in the Electoral College.

As Clarkson’s campaign editorial revealed, Republican leaders’ growing embrace of sectional reconciliation did not betoken any dilution of their conviction that the Union cause had been right. However, it did require them to tune out uncomfortable realities in their dealings with Southern whites. Congressman John F. Lacey of Oskaloosa is a case in point. In his public addresses during this period Lacey, a former Union Army officer, was increasingly prone to complement Unionist orthodoxy with appeals for an end to sectional calumny. He told a Memorial Day

74. *ISR*, 9/9/1896.

75. *ISR*, 10/11/1896.

crowd in Des Moines in May 1897 that Southern whites now recognized that Union victory was for the best. "The day of peace and reconciliation has fully come," he gushed, "and no heart to-day in all this throng beats with anything but love for all who live under our flag." Northerners should not forget the war, he added, "but we should seek to keep alive none of its animosities."⁷⁶

In the same speech Lacey acknowledged, as had "G." (the Iowa veteran of the battle at Wilson's Creek), the importance to many Northern whites of a palatable resolution of the race question as a prerequisite for reconciliation. On a recent visit to Virginia, he recounted, he had toured several of the old battle sites. Approaching the field at Manassas, his party had "met a large number of negro children on the road in holiday attire going to the 'breaking up of school.'" There would have been no black school without Union victory, he asserted. These young African Americans "were the living evidences of the changes that were brought about by the fearful journey which the Union troops traveled before the humiliation of Bull Run was atoned for by 'peace with honor' at Appomattox."⁷⁷

It is impossible to say whether, at a time of rising Southern white fury against blacks, Lacey really believed his own rhetoric. He clearly wanted others to believe it, but his private report of another trip to Virginia the following month revealed his understanding that the ex-Confederates were less reconciled to defeat than he claimed in public. After visiting the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington, he told his brother that he had found the school "essentially confederate in all its teaching." He expected the students to grow "more national" over time but confided that it was a sobering experience "to have no flag decorating the hall but that of the state of Virginia and to hear no praise of anything except the deeds of Virginia in the late war."⁷⁸

The dwindling band of Union veterans in Iowa exhibited the same tendency to suppress, perhaps less wittingly than a well-connected politician like Lacey, their anxieties about the growth of the Lost Cause and the marginalizing of African Americans in

76. Undated newspaper clipping [5/1897], minute book, box 24, CPR.

77. *Ibid.*

78. J. F. Lacey to W. Lacey, 6/27/1897, vol. 228, John F. Lacey Papers, SHSI.

the pursuit of intersectional peace and national greatness. Several factors contributed to this tendency: not just the reassurances of Republican leaders but also the old soldiers' own sense that they lived in an age of anarchists, socialists, and, as one of them put it, "grasping, money-getting, bloodless ingrates."⁷⁹ That conviction led many of them to conclude that they had more in common with their former foes than they had with many contemporary Northerners. Furthermore, widespread Southern support for the Spanish-American War provided them with what seemed to be incontestable evidence that the old Rebels were now loyal to the republic. Des Moines's Crocker Post sent congratulations to ex-Confederate General Fitzhugh Lee for his patriotic course as U.S. consul in Havana and held its first "smoker" with a group of visiting "johnnies" four years later.⁸⁰

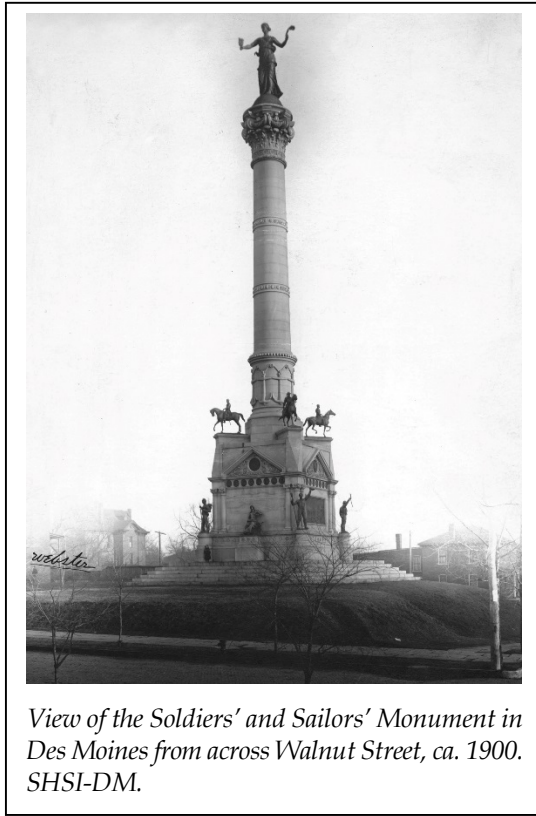
Southern whites' backing for a conflict that signaled the republic's emergence as a great power appeared to put the seal on the Union veterans' sacrifices. Those men had fought to save the United States and destroy slavery, and now their former enemies publicly admitted their fealty to the nation. That development enabled most of them to endorse reconciliation while still upholding the cause for which they had fought. One mark of this shift was the Union veterans' declining resistance to the return of Confederate flags in federal hands. In 1887 Union veterans on the streets of Des Moines denounced President Grover Cleveland's support for the return of U.S. government-held Confederate battle flags as "the most serious menace that has ever threatened our Republican form of government." In 1905, however, the *Des Moines Register and Leader* noted the muted reaction to Congress's recent decision to return to the states Union and Confederate battle flags in its possession.⁸¹

Determined that future generations should remember what they and their deceased comrades had suffered and achieved on behalf of the country, Iowa's Union veterans continued to commemorate their patriotic service into the twentieth century. Still

79. Cyrus C. Carpenter, "The Charge on Battery Robinet," *Annals of Iowa* 1 (1893), 221.

80. J. A. Pleasants to J. J. Stuckey, 4/30/1898, minute book, box 24, CPR; Undated newspaper clipping [9/1902], minute book, *ibid.*

81. *ISR*, 6/16/1887; *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 3/5/1905.



dominated by the Republican Party, the state government provided substantial funds for the physical memorialization of the Union cause. The most impressive of these monuments—the soaring Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Des Moines and the imposing Iowa memorials constructed on several nationally owned Civil War sites in the South—could not have been built without the financial assistance of the state. The original impetus for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument (dedicated in 1894) came partly from Iowa women concerned, like Sherman and other Union soldiers, about the growth of the Lost Cause, but it would not have taken the form it did without a generous appropriation of \$150,000 from the General Assembly.⁸² The appropriations for

82. Louise R. Noun, "The Iowa Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument," *Palimpsest* 67 (1986), 86. The Iowa Women's Monument Association issued a public call for a

the state's monuments in the South totaled nearly a quarter of a million dollars.⁸³

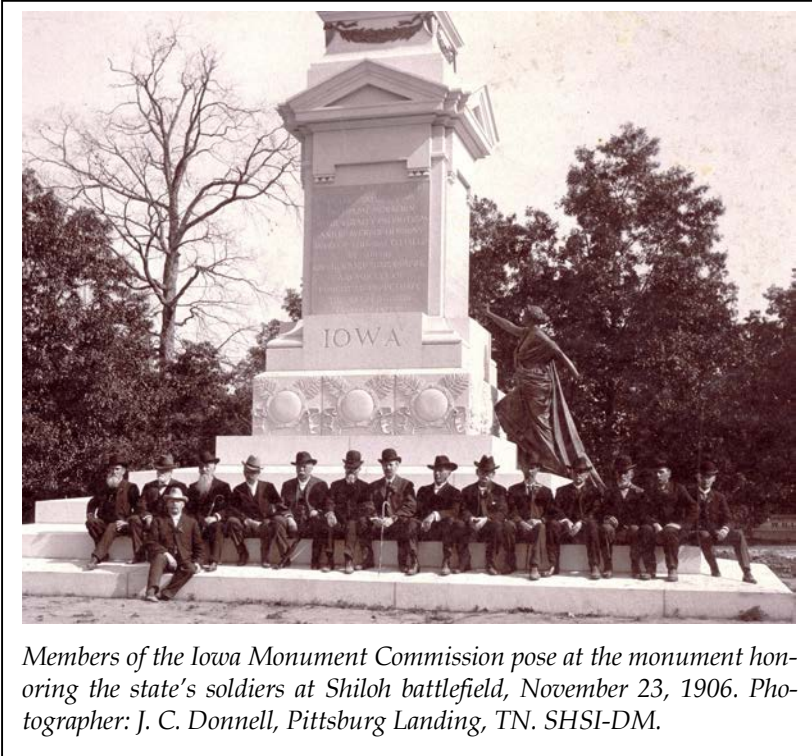
In November 1906 Albert B. Cummins, the state's progressive Republican governor, escorted a large party of Iowans, numerous veterans among it, on a high-profile railroad journey into the heart of the old Confederacy, where they dedicated state-funded memorials at Vicksburg, Andersonville, Chattanooga, and Shiloh.⁸⁴ Cummins took care to cultivate good relations with the old soldiers. By the time he embarked on the tour, he could be confident that they would not resent him glad-handing Southern dignitaries and endorsing North-South amity.

Many speeches were made on that journey of commemoration and reconciliation. The Iowa delegates lauded the state's citizen-soldiers for risking and in many cases surrendering their lives to save not only the republic but also the South. Union victory, they contended, had set both on the road to a greater future. The veterans among them recalled their experiences in battle. "It seems like a dream," one recounted, "yet terrible." Several paid tribute to the courage of the Iowans' onetime Confederate foes, now happily redefined as fellow Americans, but none dissented from Captain J. A. Brewer's assertion at Andersonville that the state's Union dead had "died in behalf of a holy cause." Although a handful of speakers singled out the destruction of slavery as a desirable outcome of the war for the nation, only Colonel Alonzo Abernethy, a veteran of the 9th Iowa, condemned racial oppression

state Civil War monument in May 1891. The group observed that "this duty is not less imperative . . . because the people of the South are mistakenly doing honor to treason in the erection of memorials to . . . the Lost Cause. . . . Those people and especially the women of that section are yearly setting up false shrines, and pilgrimages are made to them which tend to weaken the ties that bind the Nation. Shall it be said that we who are right have less devotion to our principles than those who are wrong to theirs?" *ISR*, 5/24/1891.

83. Alonzo Abernethy, *Dedication of Monuments Erected by the State of Iowa: Commemorating the Death, Suffering and Valor of Her Soldiers on the Battlefields of Vicksburg, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Shiloh, and in the Confederate Prison at Andersonville* (Des Moines, 1908), 17.

84. The trip itself cost taxpayers more than \$8,000 (equivalent to over \$200,000 in 2014). W. B. Bell to A. B. Cummins, 12/31/1906, box 32, Albert B. Cummins Papers, SHSI. For a full account of the event, see William C. Lowe, "'A Grand and Patriotic Pilgrimage': The Iowa Civil War Monuments Dedication Tour of 1906," *Annals of Iowa* 69 (2010), 1-50.



Members of the Iowa Monument Commission pose at the monument honoring the state's soldiers at Shiloh battlefield, November 23, 1906. Photographer: J. C. Donnell, Pittsburg Landing, TN. SHSI-DM.

and only then in the broadest terms. The war, he said at Chattanooga, "taught that a free people cannot permit any part or class of their number to suffer oppression or wrong. It was a costly lesson, but it had to be learned; and America, both north and south, and all humanity, are the better for its learning."⁸⁵

One Iowan did dwell at length on the politically inconvenient subject of race: General James B. Weaver of Ottumwa, a nationally prominent Iowa veteran who had stood as Populist candidate for president in 1892 and who had long been a vocal advocate of sectional reconciliation. Revisiting the now peaceful battlefield at Shiloh, Tennessee, for the first time since he had fought there in April 1862, Weaver challenged Mississippi Governor James K. Vardaman's recent declaration that blacks were inferior to whites. Weaver did so not to call for the enforcement of equal

85. Abernethy, *Dedication*, 210, 98, 139.

rights but to urge African Americans to leave the United States voluntarily. The federal government, he said, had “liberated them and sent them adrift without chart or compass. It must now promote their exodus.”⁸⁶

It is tempting to see Weaver’s backing for Abraham Lincoln’s policy of colonization as evidence for the view of some scholars that Northerners’ growing appetite for reconciliation contributed to the marginalization of blacks and the emancipationist strain of Civil War memory. We should be wary, however, of jumping to such simplistic conclusions. Weaver was a political maverick. He had left the Republican Party in the 1870s to support farmers’ insurgencies whose potency depended on the creation of inter-sectional coalitions. His public support at Shiloh for colonization, moreover, was controversial and contested at home. Clarkson’s *Register and Leader* printed strong condemnation from a local white journalist, Leonard Brown, who charged Weaver with canvassing for Southern votes ahead of the 1908 presidential election. It also contained vigorous criticism from S. Joe Brown, a black Des Moines lawyer who reminded Iowans that black soldiers had helped to save the Union. African Americans, Brown asserted, had no intention of being shipped off to Africa to be brutalized by European imperialists: “We are not Africans, but Americans.” At least one white Union veteran was also alarmed by Weaver’s performance. George W. Crosley insisted privately that he and his comrades had done their “whole duty at Shiloh and on other battlefields to get the solution of the race problem *started right*; it remains for our posterity to determine the solution along the lines of eternal justice and it will correctly be solved along those lines.”⁸⁷

Although large numbers of Union veterans regarded the destruction of slavery as an integral part of their patriotic achievement, relatively few of them followed through on that conviction to try to improve the lot of African Americans in the white supremacist climate of the early twentieth century. But some did.

86. *Ibid.*, 269, 276. On Weaver’s postwar political career, see Mark A. Lause, *The Civil War’s Last Campaign: James Baird Weaver, the Greenback-Labor Party and the Politics of Race and Section* (Lanham, MD, 2001).

87. *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 11/26/1906; Crosley, quoted in Lowe, “Grand and Patriotic Pilgrimage,” 44.

In 1916 members of Des Moines's Crocker Post voted unanimously to ask city authorities to ban a scheduled showing of a new "photo-play" titled *The Birth of a Nation*. As well as condemning D. W. Griffith's pathbreaking fusion of Lost Cause and reconciliatory strains of Civil War memory for what they called its "exaltation and vindication of secession" and denigration of the North "for waging war for the suppression of the rebellion of 1861," they also laid into the virulently racist movie on the grounds that it "insults and dishonors the colored race . . . a race who are just emerging by their own efforts from the slough of ignorant bondage unto the light of education and intelligence and manhood."⁸⁸ The protest highlighted the persistence of the emancipatory strand of Union memory. More than a half-century after Appomattox some proud survivors of the Civil War in Iowa were still prepared to draw lines in the sand that proslavery Confederates and their modern-day sympathizers should not be allowed to cross.

Conclusion

As the United States became an international force, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish Union memory from a strident consensual nationalism that served many different purposes, not least the Americanization of foreign immigrants.⁸⁹ When it came to transmitting their narrative of the war to future generations, the veterans' dominant message was certainly unswerving fidelity to the United States. (GAR members in Iowa and beyond devoted a significant amount of time and resources in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to supplying local high schools with national flags and telling schoolchildren about the central lesson — allegiance to the United States — they should take

88. Minutes of meeting, 3/4/1916, minute book, box 25, CPR. The Crocker Post was not the only GAR unit to assail Griffith's new film. See Brian Matthew Jordan, *Marching Home: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War* (New York, 2014), 194–95. The interracial campaign against *Birth of a Nation* in Des Moines was assisted by the adoption of a city ordinance in 1907 banning entertainments likely to inflame racial hatred. Melvyn Stokes, *D. W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation: A History of "The Most Controversial Motion Picture of All Time"* (New York, 2007).

89. On this theme, see especially O'Leary, *To Die For*, 172–93.

from their wartime sacrifice.)⁹⁰ But memories of the Union cause did not fade completely. They remained embedded not only in the opposition of some Iowa veterans to *The Birth of a Nation*, but also in the troubled recollections of Union prisoners of war like former Iowa cavalryman Wesley Templeton, who found it impossible to forget “the horrors of human misery” he had encountered while a prisoner at Andersonville.⁹¹ They were transmitted to future generations by men such as Asa Turner, an Iowan who commanded a black regiment during the Civil War. Turner lectured in Des Moines in May 1911, portraying the service of U.S. Colored Troops in “glowing” terms.⁹² Overshadowed though they were in the first half of the twentieth century by that lily-white strain of reconciliatory memory described by David Blight and other scholars, Union memories enjoyed something of a revival during the 1960s when, galvanized by the actions of the modern civil rights movement, white liberals like historian Allan Nevins and U.S. Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois drew on them to promote passage of a comprehensive civil rights bill.⁹³

Such memories constitute a strain of myth and remembrance that merits close analysis, not least for its tendency to elevate Northerners’ sense of superiority over Southerners (the novelist Robert Penn Warren scathingly called it the North’s “Treasury of Virtue”) and its capacity (evident in justifications of the Spanish-American War as a crusade to liberate oppressed Cubans) to

90. Iowa veterans gave Old Glory to local schools as part of the national GAR’s Americanization efforts. On February 21, 1896, for example, Crocker Post members presented a large flag to North Des Moines High School. The flag cost \$7.50, with the money being raised by “voluntary contributions.” Minute of meeting, 3/7/1896, minute book, box 24, CPR; O’Leary, *To Die For*, 179–80.

91. Wesley Templeton, unpublished reminiscences, folder: “Accounts of Service,” box 1, Wesley G. L. Templeton Papers, SHSI. The memories of POWs on both sides were always a potent obstacle to sectional reconciliation. See Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity*.

92. *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 5/26/1911. Turner’s public lecture was delivered before the Cosmopolitan Literary Association at the city’s Colored YMCA.

93. Robert Cook, “Ordeal of the Union: Allan Nevins, the Civil War Centennial, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1960s,” in Iwan W. Morgan and Philip John Davies, eds., *Reconfiguring the Union: Civil War Transformations* (New York, 2013), 192.

bolster American imperialism.⁹⁴ Most Iowans who lived through the Civil War, however, would have been puzzled, if not angered, by such criticism. Ret Clarkson had planned to begin his Louisville address in 1893 with a rousing affirmation of the Union cause: "It has been a generation of courage and conscience, and sacrifice, and final victory, and growth of liberty and the betterment of mankind. It has been the generation of the Union Soldier, whose memory and example will defend hereafter the Republic that his valor and his patriotism saved more faithfully and more sufficiently than standing armies, or multiplied navies could defend it."⁹⁵ Iowa's silent Civil War sepulchers and monuments may have lost the power to move us, but there remains something about them yet that commands our attention.

94. Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War: Meditations on the Centennial* (New York, 1961), 53; Abernethy, *Dedication*, 250; Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York, 2009), 207-8; Hunt, *The Good Men*, 126.

95. Clarkson, typescript draft of Louisville speech [1893], box 4, James S. Clarkson Papers, Library of Congress.

Politics in Paint: The Creation, Destruction, and Restoration of the Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse Mural

BREANNE ROBERTSON

IN 2011 Iowa residents had the opportunity to glimpse part of a mural cycle that had been hidden from sight for nearly 50 years. Executed between 1935 and 1937 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's federal art programs, *Opening of the Midwest* and *Law and Culture* originally adorned all four walls of the Cedar Rapids federal courthouse (fig. 1). *Opening of the Midwest*, concentrated on the north wall, portrays scenes of western expansion, including pioneer settlements, Native American villages, farming, railroads, and industry. The remaining three walls trace the development of judicial and social order in Iowa by contrasting historical vignettes with aspects of contemporary 1930s life. Grisaille lunettes above the doors and windows depict Solomon, Hammurabi, and other ancient lawmakers and honor the historical origins of the American judicial system.

With its vibrant color palette, volumetric style, and explicit depictions of death and disease, *Opening of the Midwest* and *Law and Culture* generated sustained controversy over the appropriate role and appearance of public art in Cedar Rapids. Censorship won out in 1954 and again in 1964, when local judges determined

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Figure 1 (cont. on facing page). Francis Robert White, Opening of the Midwest, 1936–1937. Oil on canvas, Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse (now Cedar Rapids City Hall), Cedar Rapids. Photograph in the Carl M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

that the offending imagery should be painted over. The mural was all but destroyed—covered and forgotten for decades, until the flood of 2008. Spurred to action by that natural disaster, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) worked quickly to prevent further damage to the historic artwork and to restore one wall of the mural to its original state. Additional preservation efforts on the part of the city of Cedar Rapids uncovered a second wall in 2013, and work on a third wall is currently under way.

Today, only the north and south walls of the mural remain visible. This state of preservation—the condition of being partially restored—embodies the long history and mixed fortune of Iowa’s New Deal art. In this article I explore multiple facets of the Cedar Rapids federal courthouse mural, including its conception and execution, its intended meaning, and its varied public reception from 1937 to the present day. As part of my analysis, I trace visual sources for the mural’s style and iconography, as well as consider the means by which the artists employed diverse subject matter—ranging from vigilante justice to indigenous Mexican pyramids—to construct a particular history and community identity for Iowa residents. I also consider the mural’s oscillating cultural value and state of preservation against the backdrop of evolving attitudes toward New Deal art, both during the Cold War and in the present day.

In the Shadow of Grant Wood

Opening of the Midwest and *Law and Culture* represent the collaborative effort of five Iowa artists—Francis Robert White (1907–1986),



Harry Donald Jones (1906–1995), Howard Johnson (1913–1963), Everett Jeffrey (1906–1983), and Don Glasell (1895–1965) – whose mural training and professional relationships grew out of their experience working with famed Regionalist painter Grant Wood.¹ The artists spent much of the early 1930s painting alongside Wood, first during the 1932 and 1933 summer art programs in Stone City and later during the short-lived federal relief program, the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). During that period the artists strove to emulate Wood’s celebrated narrative style and to embody the cooperative regionalist spirit he envisioned as the future of American art.

A native of Cedar Rapids, Grant Wood (1891–1942) rose to national prominence when his easel painting *American Gothic* won a bronze medal from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1930. Wood leveraged his newfound celebrity to promote Regionalism, a cultural movement that valued local scenery and small-town life as authentic and untapped sources for American art.² As a foremost practitioner of the style, Wood harbored hopes of establishing the Midwest as a significant art center. In 1932 he founded the Stone City Art Colony about 20 miles northeast of Cedar Rapids with his friends Edward Rowan (1898–1946), director of the Little Gallery in Cedar Rapids, and Adrian Dornbush (1900–1970), former director of the Flint Institute of Art and current

1. The scholarship on Grant Wood is extensive. For a general overview of his life and art, see James Dennis, *Grant Wood: A Study in American Art and Culture* (New York, 1975); Wanda Corn, *Grant Wood, the Regionalist Vision* (New Haven, CT, 1983); and R. Tripp Evans, *Grant Wood: A Life* (New York, 2010).

2. In the 1920s and 1930s this approach to art was considered radical for its break from European and East Coast precedents in both form and subject matter. Wood’s success and personal popularity among younger artists elicited complaints from Iowa’s academic painters, particularly with regard to art judging at the Iowa State Fair. See Chris Rasmussen, “Agricultural Lag: The Iowa State Fair Art Salon, 1854–1941,” *American Studies* 36 (September 1995), 5–29.

art instructor at the Little Gallery. The program operated for only two summers — 1932 and 1933 — but its scenic location, close-knit social scene, and dedicated faculty of prominent midwestern artists left a lasting impression on participants from across Iowa and surrounding states. With courses in composition, figure drawing, lithography, sculpture, picture framing, and plein-air painting, the Stone City Art Colony instilled in its students both technical excellence and a distinctly Regionalist approach to art. Wood instructed younger artists to resist turning to Europe and the East Coast for artistic inspiration. He believed that regional artists should paint what they knew best — their local surroundings — and that in doing so they would help to create a truly native school of modern American art.

During the Stone City summer sessions, Glasell, Jeffrey, Johnson, and White lived on the grounds of Green Mansion, where they attended classes, shared meals, and socialized in the evenings. The painters developed personal friendships and mutual professional respect for one another. They also absorbed Wood's Regionalist doctrine and, enjoying the privilege of studying with the famous artist himself, endeavored to match his distinctive style of painting in their creative efforts. In that regard, the four men were very much like their peers. The tendency among the colony's aspiring painters to mimic their Stone City professor was quite common; the practice became so prevalent, in fact, that other faculty members grew tired of their students' production of "little Woods."³ Despite its short duration, the summer program provided an unparalleled opportunity for Iowa artists to meet Wood and to demonstrate their talent and commitment to American Regionalism. For those whose skills he esteemed, like Jeffrey and Johnson, the Stone City Art Colony served as an informal audition for employment under the New Deal federal art programs.

Shortly after his inauguration on March 4, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt instituted a flood of domestic reform policies and work programs to assuage the economic trauma of the

3. Evans, *Grant Wood: A Life*, 164. For a fuller history of the Stone City Art Colony and the artists who attended its school, see "When Tillage Begins: The Stone City Art Colony and School," Busse Library, Mount Mercy University, projects.mtmercy.edu/stonecity/index.html.

Great Depression. Government support for the arts soon followed, and in December 1933 the administration established a short-term pilot program to employ professional artists, the PWAP. Employing language that paralleled that of the burgeoning Regionalist movement, Washington officials issued a memorandum that outlined their programmatic commitment to local subject matter and their optimism about the educational and uplifting effect of public art.

It is our belief that the Project will rescue many artists from their former position of isolation and will inspire them to create a record which will be of permanent value, of the American scene and of our American life today. . . . We believe that the PWAP is not only a 'putting to work' plan, affecting an important class of citizens in great distress but it is a Governmental step forward, toward bringing about a finer American civilization.⁴

Wood's established reputation as a Regionalist artist dedicated to painting rural landscapes and local Americana made him a natural choice to oversee the incipient federal arts program in Iowa. Edward Rowan, newly appointed technical director for the PWAP, nominated his good friend for the position, and Wood accepted. As state director, Wood maintained sole discretion in selecting artists for inclusion and in assigning them work.

Johnson and Jeffrey were among the earliest American artists to receive government support when they assisted Wood on the ambitious mural cycle *When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follow* (1933–1934). Premised on the idea that “farmers . . . are the founders of human civilization” — a quote borrowed from Daniel Webster's 1840 speech on agriculture — Wood planned an epic multi-panel composition depicting agriculture, the practical arts, and the fine arts to be installed in the library at Iowa State College.⁵ For several months the PWAP artists worked in a repurposed swimming pool on the University of Iowa campus in Iowa City. Johnson spent endless hours painting on the scaffolding, trans-

4. Memorandum, 12/20/1933, microfilm reel DC 3, frame 487, Public Works of Art Project Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as AAA).

5. Daniel Webster, “Remarks on the Agriculture of England,” speech, Boston State House, 1/13/1840, in *The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster*, ed. Edward Everett, 18 vols. (Boston, 1903), 2:293–307.

ferring Wood's designs to canvas, and occasionally serving as a model for other PWAP artists. Jeffrey's contributions were more modest. He primarily produced easel paintings under the PWAP, but he also assisted with small jobs related to the mural. Des Moines artist Harry Donald Jones, a student at the University of Iowa, joined Wood's cooperative mural team in December 1933. One of the few artists associated with the mural cycle who never attended the Stone City Art Colony, Jones had proven his artistic skill the previous year by winning a prize at the Iowa State Fair. He worked alongside Wood, Jeffrey, Johnson, and more than a dozen other handpicked artists on the collaborative mural experiment.⁶

Although the expiration of the PWAP less than six months later left the work incomplete, glowing reviews in the national press declared Wood's cooperative mural a success.⁷ The favorable reception of this high-profile project helped to secure additional funding for the arts. The federal government created the Section of Painting and Sculpture (1934–1942), the Treasury Relief Art Project (1935–1938), and the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (1935–1943) to administer federal art patronage.⁸ The popularity and prestige surrounding the PWAP mural

6. Lea Rosson DeLong has published an excellent study of the PWAP mural cooperative in Iowa. For a more detailed account of this collaborative effort, see Lea Rosson DeLong, *When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follow: Grant Wood and Christian Petersen Murals* (Ames, 2006).

7. The panels depicting the fine arts were never begun. For national press coverage of the mural, see the January 1935 issue of *Fortune* magazine.

8. Established in October 1934, the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture (later renamed Section of Fine Arts) hired artists to decorate newly constructed federal buildings. Unlike TRAP and the WPA, the Section was not a relief program. Instead, the agency awarded federal art contracts through a series of anonymous competitions intended to ensure standards of quality and equal opportunity for artists. TRAP, created in August 1935, was the smallest of the federal art programs and a sister program to the Section within the Treasury Department. TRAP hired relief-eligible artists to embellish existing federal buildings that lacked construction appropriations to finance such works. The WPA, established in May 1935 (renamed the Work Projects Administration in 1939), also provided economic relief to artists during the Great Depression. As the largest and most far-reaching of the federal art programs, the WPA commissioned artists to decorate non-federal government buildings, such as schools and public libraries, as well as to create small-scale works of art, including posters, photographs, and paintings. For an overview of the federal art programs, see Victoria Grieve, *The Federal Art Project and the Creation*

cycle also inspired in Wood and his team a desire to see the project through to completion. As the *New York Times* reported, the Iowa muralists “decided that they were not stopping, pay or no pay.”⁹ Placing the needs of the group above individual competition, the painters agreed to pool and reallocate their paychecks so that none of their peers would be laid off during the final weeks of the project. The artists also made plans to live in tents, to share meals, and to contribute outside income to cover expenses for the whole group after the program officially disbanded in June. Despite such idealistic pronouncements, the men did not maintain their altruistic measures for very long, if at all. The federal government granted only partial funding for the incomplete PWAP project, and by mid-summer the dozen-artist team had been reduced by half.

By autumn 1934, Wood’s promise that his former staff would resume their cooperative efforts under a permanent federal art agency began to feel impossibly far away. Several alumni had moved to Cedar Rapids in anticipation of renewed government support, but no commissions came. Howard Johnson lived at the Granby Building, where he shared studio space with fellow artists Arnold Pyle, Jack Van Dyke, and others from the PWAP mural project. These artists were in frequent contact with Stone City classmates Everett Jeffrey, who still resided in his hometown of Cedar Rapids, and Francis Robert White, who returned to Iowa after working several months in the Illinois division of the PWAP. Over the next year, the painters began to reflect more critically on their PWAP experience and to consider the implications of Wood’s continued leadership over mural commissions in the state. Waiting for the new federal art programs to take shape, the men grew increasingly impatient with the dearth of work available to their group. Wood’s national stature and steady employment no doubt exacerbated their frustrations. While their former

of *Middlebrow Culture* (Urbana and Chicago, 2009); Jonathan Harris, *Federal Art and National Culture: The Politics of Identity in New Deal America* (Cambridge, 1995); Marlene Park and Gerald Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal* (Philadelphia, 1984); and Francis V. O’Connor, ed., *Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project* (Greenwich, CT, 1973).

9. Edward Alden Jewell, “Quickenings: Visions That Stir the Mural Pulse,” *New York Times*, 5/27/1934.

mentor taught university courses and contributed paintings to contemporary art exhibitions across the nation, they remained unemployed, anxiously awaiting the return of federal work relief programs.

White's art philosophy, for example, grew out of and in resistance to his professional involvement with Wood. Born in Oskaaloosa, Iowa, in 1907, White was already an accomplished artist when he joined the PWAP employment rolls in winter 1934. He had attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Art Students League, studied European art during his travels abroad, and received a prestigious Guggenheim Foundation fellowship in 1930 to learn glass and mosaic technique in England, Italy, and France. White also studied painting at the Stone City Art Colony, but Wood felt that the younger artist's talents were better suited to glass design than to his preferred medium of painting. He included White on the Iowa PWAP employment roster but did not recommend him for either easel or mural assignments. When Edward Rowan approached the state director on behalf of White, Wood proposed a compromise that would allow the aspiring muralist to transfer to Chicago and continue his painting studies there. Such an arrangement, Wood confided to Rowan, would relieve him of "an embarrassing position" because White was "bound and determined" to paint murals. "You and I both know he hasn't the qualifications for a designer of murals," he wrote.¹⁰ Even though White could not have known his former teacher's opinion as baldly as this letter states, he must have suspected his job relocation resulted from Wood's low estimation of his mural ability.

Jeffrey experienced a similar rebuff under the PWAP. Wood had hired the Stone City alumnus at the earliest opportunity, but he assigned the younger artist to the easel division. Jeffrey harbored aspirations of becoming a mural painter and ran afoul of Wood by circumventing PWAP protocol to arrange mural jobs

10. Grant Wood to Edward Rowan, 1/6/1934, Record Group 121, entry 105, box 2, Treasury Relief Art Project Papers, Records of the Public Buildings Service, National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as TRAP Papers, NARA). Wood's commitment to American Regionalism probably shaped his assessment of White's talents as a painter, since the younger artist had traveled widely and experimented with a range of subject matter and styles.

on his own. According to Leata Peer Rowan, Edward Rowan's wife, Jeffrey had really "gummed things up" for Wood, forcing the older artist "to set on him" to keep him in check.¹¹ Wood's disciplinary actions no doubt left Jeffrey with frustrated ambitions as well as a bruised ego. To make matters worse, Jeffrey lived in Cedar Rapids and spent much of his time working on-site at Wood's Iowa City mural studio. Many of his peers considered him to be part of the PWAP mural team under Wood's direction, yet his name does not appear among the 14 men listed as contributors to the Parks Library project.¹² Jeffrey surely resented that omission, since it meant that he received no credit for his work. In light of Wood's earlier chastisement, he may have considered it a deliberate slight.

Johnson, Jones, and several of their peers also resented Wood's way of delegating work under the PWAP. As principal artist on the project, Wood closely supervised all aspects of design and execution, and he limited participation on the mural cycle to specific roles and tasks. Arnold Pyle, for instance, had sole responsibility for mixing paint so that all of the colors would remain consistent throughout the project. Other assistants enlarged the figures in Wood's preliminary drawings, transferred the full-scale cartoons to canvas, and painted mechanical details and lettering. In addition, the collaborative nature of the Iowa State College project required artists to emulate Wood's celebrated style of realism. Artist John Bloom likened the process of copying and enlarging Wood's composition to an elaborate, large-scale paint-by-numbers kit. "We started out with a small sketch [Wood's] in color. This was drawn to full size on brown wrapping paper and traced on canvas. Then we mixed oil paint and poured it in cans keyed to numbers on a tissue overlay of the sketch."¹³ At every stage, Wood expected the artists to subsume their individual style and design ideas to maintain the pictorial

11. Leata Peer Rowan to Edward Rowan, 12/28/1933, microfilm reel D 141, frames 71-73, Edward B. Rowan Papers, AAA.

12. The mural panel lists Bertrand Adams, Lee Allen, John Bloom, Dan Finch, Elwyn Giles, Lowell Houser, Albert Gregory Hull, Howard Johnson, Harry Donald Jones, Francis McCray, Arthur Munch, Arnold Pyle, Thomas Savage, and Jack Van Dyke.

13. John Bloom, quoted in Gregg R. Narber, "These Murals Were a New Deal," *The Iowan* 32 (Spring 1984), 13.



Figure 2. Grant Wood, "Engineering" from *When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follow*, 1934-1935. Oil on canvas, Parks Library, Iowa State College (now Iowa State University), Ames, Iowa. Courtesy Brunnier Museum, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Photograph © Carole Gieseke, 2015.

unity of the whole. While some artists did not mind Wood's oversight and considered it a privilege to work alongside him, others chafed at the creative restrictions imposed on their art. Jones, for instance, recalled painting only the brick wall in the "Engineering" panels (fig. 2).¹⁴

By early September 1935, more than a dozen of Wood's former students and colleagues had become severely disenchanted with his oversight. They believed that his continued administrative leadership would suppress creative expression under the new federal art agencies, and they worried about the fair distribution of assignments, since they felt Wood had abandoned team projects in favor of personal commissions in the year since the PWAP had ended. As Tom Savage later recalled, "We sort of had a split up with him. We were a little aggravated with him because he was a big shot and all that. He was able to acquire all this

14. DeLong, *When Tillage Begins*, 289. Several of the PWAP mural artists also took exception to Wood's celebrity, which frequently overshadowed their personal contributions in media coverage of the cooperative mural.

money and decide what to do with it. . . . He just forgot us after he got so far. We thought we'd like to keep on with him."¹⁵ When it seemed that Wood would again assume a directorship position in the federal art programs, 16 artists mounted a formal protest against his appointment.¹⁶ Striking out on their own, they organized an alternative cooperative society for the purposes of combining their talents and amplifying their collective voice to obtain mural commissions under the new federal art projects.

The Cooperative Mural Painters and Progressive Politics

Francis Robert White scheduled an organizational meeting for Iowa artists on Labor Day, 1935. The previous summer White had accepted an offer from Edward Rowan to act as director of the Little Gallery and to assume responsibility for his weekly art column in the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*. In that capacity, White emerged as an influential leader on the Iowa art scene. In shared studio space at the Granby Building in Cedar Rapids, he gathered around himself a splinter group whose members shared a more radical political ideology and desire for personal artistic expression. There he formed an artists' union, the Cooperative Mural Painters Group (CMP). Other disillusioned classmates included Don Glassell, Everett Jeffrey, Howard Johnson, and Harry Donald Jones.¹⁷

15. Tom Savage, interview by Lea Rosson DeLong, 4/16/1982, quoted in Gregg R. Narber, *Murals of Iowa, 1886–2006* (Des Moines, 2010), 124.

16. See, for example, Francis Robert White to Holger Cahill, 9/12/1935, reprinted in DeLong, *When Tillage Begins*, 367–68. White also followed up with a telegram to Cahill that included an explicit objection to Wood's leadership and 16 signatures representing the new organization's membership. He apparently neglected to ask members' consent before appending their names to the message, prompting some artists to feel misrepresented in the exchange. See Francis Robert White to Holger Cahill, telegram, 9/12/1935, RG 69, entry 1023, box 19, Records of the Works Projects Administration, Correspondence with State and Regional Offices, 1935–1940, Iowa, NARA; and DeLong, *When Tillage Begins*, 152.

17. "Explains Aims of New Group Painters," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 10/10/1935. As the primary spokesman for the group, White is often credited as founder and figurehead of the Cooperative Mural Painters; however, Jones played an equally strong role in spearheading the organization. Like White, Jones felt disillusioned with Wood's leadership in Iowa's arts community. A major impetus to form the group emerged through Jones's personal correspondence with Washington official Edward Rowan. Rowan encouraged Jones to organize a group of Iowa artists to paint murals with the promise that he would find them "walls to write on." Johnson, another founding member, may have assisted in planning the organiza-

As spokesperson for the newly formed cooperative group, White was eager to secure not only federal visibility but also eligibility for work-relief assignments. He wrote to officials at both the Treasury Department and the Works Progress Administration to inform them of the organization and to request federal patronage, particularly in the field of mural painting. Invoking the society's formidable adversary, White underscored that some of the members "had practical experience in assisting Grant Wood" and asserted that their collective expertise merited governmental consideration. "A mural team of this quality," he reasoned, which is both "state wide in representation and able to work cooperatively in small units or as a whole, presents a very competent instrument for the decoration of public buildings."¹⁸

White's direct appeal for government support worked. Less than a month later, the CMP received an offer from Olin Dows, head of the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP), to create mural decorations for the Cedar Rapids federal courthouse. One of the new federal art agencies formed in the summer of 1935, TRAP was a work-relief program that hired professional painters and sculptors to create art for existing government buildings. Administrators considered TRAP a sister program to the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture. Like that agency, TRAP strongly emphasized "quality." Although relief requirements imposed some restrictions on the program, TRAP officials typically reserved federal commissions for artists broadly considered to have a high degree of skill.

Dows appointed White to serve as the official "master artist" who would oversee the design and execution of the mural project. The Iowan, however, was quick to emphasize the egalitarian working arrangement of the cooperative society. Invoking the founding principles of the CMP, White reminded Dows that the collaborative nature of the mural project would remain a paramount con-

tion, since the inaugural meeting most likely took place in a studio he shared with Arnold Pyle and Jack Van Dyke. In all, ten of the artists who had worked with Wood on the Iowa State College mural joined the organization: Bertrand Adams, John Bloom, Lowell Houser, Everett Jeffrey, Howard Johnson, Harry Donald Jones, Christian Petersen, Arnold Pyle, Tom Savage, and Jack Van Dyke. For more on the origins and activities of the CMP, see DeLong, *When Tillage Begins*, 141-56.

18. Francis Robert White to Holger Cahill, 9/6/1935, quoted in DeLong, *When Tillage Begins*, 148.

sideration in its design and execution and advised him of the importance “of keeping in mind the development of more than one man’s ideas, of giving latitude to other competent designers, and of giving credit to their achievements.”¹⁹ As these veiled critiques of Wood’s prior leadership suggest, White and his fellow artists viewed themselves as laborers whose concerns about wages and working conditions aligned them with other oppressed members of the nation’s working class. The artists had even scheduled their inaugural meeting for Labor Day to underscore that point.

Having endured unemployment and economic uncertainty firsthand, the members of the CMP – like many artists and writers during the Great Depression – were sympathetic to leftist political ideas and to the aims of Social Realism. A movement that flourished in the 1930s, American Social Realism represented a belief that populism, or the political appeal to ordinary people, offered a platform to revitalize American democracy and institute progressive social change. Although not affiliated with any particular political organization, Social Realism held special appeal for artists on the political left and center who united under the banner of the Popular Front to stem the rise of fascism in Europe and the United States. Many of these artists expressed admiration for the utopian ideals of Communism in the Soviet Union, but they were not necessarily committed to the Communist Party. Instead, they maintained informal political allegiance through their involvement in an array of affiliated cultural organizations. As art historian Pat Hills has observed, the Popular Front strategy called for coalition building, rather than local revolution, to support the global fight against fascism. A desire to foster a “united front of all people” produced a conciliatory rhetoric and a reformist agenda that permitted the Popular Front movement to collaborate with and integrate into various progressive platforms, including Roosevelt’s New Deal programs.²⁰

19. Francis Robert White to Olin Dows, 10/8/1935, RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA. White made a similar pronouncement to the local press a few days later. Following the official announcement of his leadership status on the project, the artist clarified that the “fact that he has been named master artist does not constitute a personal commission.” “Explains Aims of New Group Painters.”

20. The Popular Front’s public embrace of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal was particularly appealing to artists. The impetus behind the 1935

Motivated by anger as well as by utopian Communist ideals for the future, Wood's former students embraced the intellectual and cultural activism of Popular Front politics. They mobilized politically by forming the CMP, by participating in labor protests and demonstrations, and by creating socially engaged art. White even echoed the movement's coalition-building rhetoric in a statement to the local press when he explained that one primary goal in forming the CMP was to present a "unified front in the national art field."²¹

As the group's members grew more confident in their opposition to Wood's administrative leadership, they also denounced his prescribed brand of Regionalism. In February 1936 White and Jones journeyed to New York City for the first meeting of the American Artists' Congress (AAC), a professional artists' union associated with Popular Front politics.²² There White delivered a scathing lecture in which he described Iowa artists' oppressive working conditions under the PWAP and disparaged the federal government's handling of their complaints. Although he refrained from using Wood's name in his public address, White openly satirized the Regionalist's well-known essay *Revolt against the City* (1935) by calling his paper "Revolt in the Country."²³ White made frequent allusions to Wood throughout his presentation,

formation of the American Artists Congress (AAC) was to replace more sectarian organizations such as the John Reed Clubs. Although its founding members belonged to the Communist Party of the United States, most of the officers of the AAC were not actual party members but merely left-leaning liberals.

21. "Explains Aims of New Group Painters."

22. White and Jones were the only two Iowa artists whose names appear in the "call" for the first meeting of the AAC. Jones reportedly left the conference early because he found the political tenor of the proceedings too leftist for his taste, but his account of the event does not seem to match the progressive politics he embraced in his public murals during this period. It is more likely that the artist later tried to diminish his engagement with the AAC because of Cold War assumptions about its "Communist" agenda. Don Glasell also was a member of the AAC, although he did not attend its inaugural meeting in 1936.

23. Attributed to Wood, the pamphlet *Revolt against the City* (1935) was most likely ghostwritten by his University of Iowa colleague Frank Luther Mott. Wood seems to have lent his name to the pamphlet as a personal favor to Mott, who issued the manifesto as the first installment in the "Whirling Wind Series," a platform designed to showcase Regionalist writings. Despite its dubious authorship, the essay does reflect Wood's philosophy and ambitions for developing a Regionalist school of painting. See Evans, *Grant Wood*, 232-33.

which celebrated the successful efforts of a group of organized artists—the CMP—to defeat the WPA’s appointment of Wood and thereby bring an end to his tight-fisted rule.²⁴ He underscored the group’s social consciousness and progressive art philosophy, which he juxtaposed against the seemingly apolitical, idealized portrayals of rural living so common in Wood’s Regionalist canvases. He noted that not all Iowa artists felt “prompted to make pseudo-romantic halos” out of present economic hardships, nor were they “necessarily corn-conscious in their approach to art.” “In presenting the case of Iowa,” he explained, “it is first necessary to discard the popularized version of the bucolic painter, milk pail in hand, and to realize that serious painters here as elsewhere are confronted with realities [of the Depression] and are responsive to them.”²⁵

For White, Jones, and other members of the CMP, the Cedar Rapids federal courthouse project offered an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate their socially engaged mode of art. Not only was the TRAP assignment one of the largest federal commissions in the state, it was also the first significant New Deal mural project to advance without Grant Wood’s involvement. In

24. The CMP’s activities did not actually dissuade Washington officials from extending a leadership position to Wood. In 1935 WPA administrators offered the regional directorship to Wood who, having been informed of the telegram lodged against him, declined the offer and refused any further participation in the federal art projects. For details of this exchange, see the correspondence between Grant Wood and Holger Cahill between October 9 and October 16, 1935, in RG 69, entry 11, Records of the Work Projects Administration, Central Files General 1935–1944, NARA.

25. Francis Robert White, “Revolt in the Country,” in *Artists against War and Fascism: Papers of the First American Artists’ Congress*, introduction by Matthew Baigell and Julia Williams (New Brunswick, NJ, 1986), 192–95. Jones also defined his artistic persona in opposition to Wood. In an interview following the acceptance of his painting *Country Gasoline Station* (1936) in the annual exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, he quipped that the work had been “painted without inspirational aid of milking cows, the recently published recipe for midwestern ideas.” Jones’s caustic remark ridiculed Wood’s observation, published just a few days earlier, that all of his best ideas had come to him while milking a cow. Jones’s pronouncement must be considered in light of his participation in the inaugural meeting of the AAC, presumably in support of White’s “Revolt in the Country” speech. By disavowing rural inspiration, Jones reiterated one of the central arguments White had made about Regionalism and its presumed dominance in Iowa art. See “Show Accepts Jones Painting: Iowa Fair Winner to Hang in Philadelphia,” *Des Moines Register*, 1/26/1936.

their collaborative organization as well as in their choice of style and subject matter, the CMP artists consciously modeled their ideal for an alternative and, they believed, more democratic system that would permit "the fine arts field of Iowa [to] be stimulated to its full promise and accomplishment."²⁶

Revolution in Paint

Between 1935 and 1937, the CMP completed the only TRAP mural project in the state, *Opening of the Midwest* and *Law and Culture*. Like many progressive artists of the 1930s, the CMP artists held that public art had a significant role to play in social transformation. In its subject, style, and method of execution, the Cedar Rapids mural cycle operated as a visual manifesto for the artists' New Deal optimism and Social Realist sensibilities. Measuring approximately 5½ feet tall by 216 feet long, the paintings wrapped the upper walls of the third-floor courtroom in an epic historical narrative meant both to celebrate and to advocate New Deal social reform.

The collaborative nature of the mural cycle demonstrated an idealized prescription for labor. The project was a "strictly cooperative" enterprise, as one newspaper put it.²⁷ Although the group collectively agreed on the general theme and color scheme, each painter maintained full control over the design and execution in his allotted wall space. Furthermore, the artists performed extensive manual labor on the scaffolding yet worked harmoniously side by side for the good of the entire project. A 1936 photograph, published in the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, captures the camaraderie and close working conditions of the CMP artists in the courtroom (fig. 3). Howard Johnson stands atop the scaffolding, at the far left of the image. Shirtless due to the summer heat and holding a sketch pad in his hand, he draws a pencil study of Bill Walters, the live model who stands before him. Don Glasell, kneeling at the far right, produces additional sketches of the model from an anterior view, while Francis Robert White, seated at the center of the scaffolding, transfers a charcoal sketch of his

26. Francis Robert White to Holger Cahill, 9/6/1935, quoted in DeLong, *When Tillage Begins*, 149.

27. "Eggs to Blend Mural Paints," *Des Moines Register*, undated [1936].

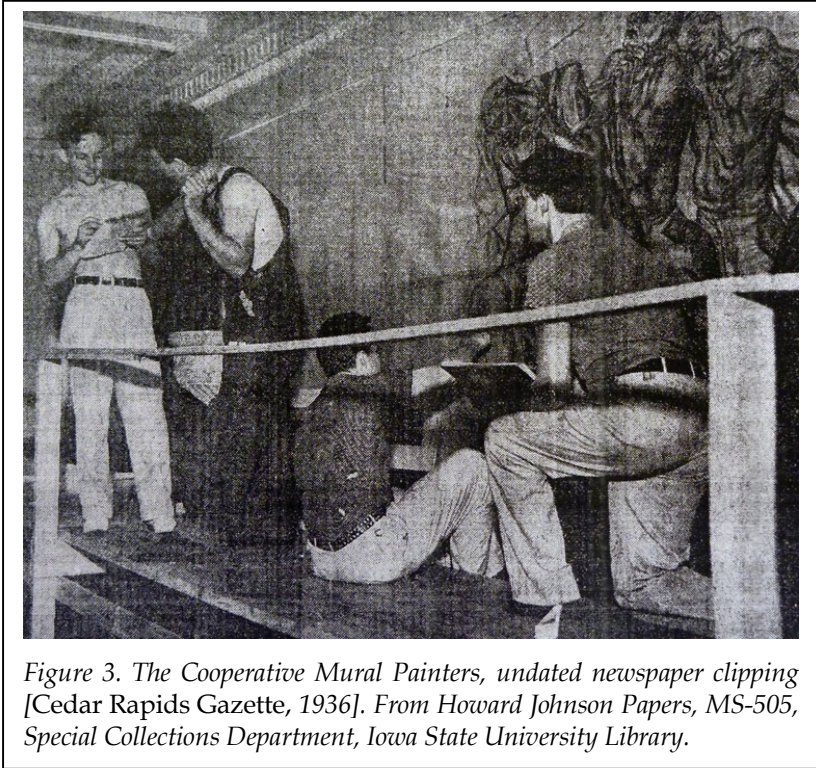


Figure 3. *The Cooperative Mural Painters*, undated newspaper clipping [Cedar Rapids Gazette, 1936]. From Howard Johnson Papers, MS-505, Special Collections Department, Iowa State University Library.

composition to the canvas before him. Explicitly comparing the CMP's egalitarian working arrangement to Wood's earlier mural project, the caption informed readers that "formerly . . . one man [had] directed the designing and the others merely did his labor." White, by contrast, "was not usurping all the creative glory for himself."²⁸

Equally important, the artists' status as federal employees imbued them with the feeling that they belonged to a participatory democracy. Early correspondence between White and Dows

28. "Large Federal Art Project Under Way in U.S. Courtroom Here; Co-Operative Job," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, undated [1936]; "Eggs to Blend Mural Paints"; and Adeline Taylor, "Murals to Adorn Walls of Federal Court Room Here Will Depict Parallel Progress of Law and Culture; Large Relief Art Project," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 12/22/1935, all in MS 505, Howard C. Johnson Papers, Special Collections Department, Iowa State University Library, Ames (hereafter cited as ISU Library). The "one man" was, of course, Grant Wood.

at the TRAP headquarters in Washington, D.C., indicates that the CMP artists were keenly aware of the federal government's agenda for public art. On October 8, 1935, White sent the TRAP chief a note expressing his gratitude and enthusiasm for the project and assuring him that he would "do all that is within [his] power to encourage and to express fine workmanship and fine design." He admitted that the cooperative artists did not yet have a comprehensive outline for such a large-scale mural project but explained their ambition to paint an original concept based on "the growth of our concepts of justice."²⁹ In accordance with the federal art program's preference for American Scene subject matter, the theme would contrast historical incidents and figures with contemporary scenes of the judicial process.

The CMP soon extended its proposal beyond the development of justice to include the advancement of culture as well. In a letter outlining the dual theme, Harry Donald Jones articulated the idealistic notions that he and his colleagues held about the social meaning and purpose of public art.

The idea of the unity of all human knowledge as providing the foundation for law has appealed to me strongly from the first. I felt in considering the functions of a courtroom that I am in the presence of great issues, where men act, not alone in accord with the rules of present expedience but in obedience to an accumulation of values which is the measure of civilization itself. Under this general heading I feel that the two main subjects [of the mural] would be "Law and Culture," the former as representing the specific development of our institutions of justice, and the latter as instilling those concepts of order, humanity, beauty and moral responsibility which are the support of the law.³⁰

The artists envisioned a compositional layout that placed White's design at the front of the courtroom, directly behind the judge's bench. His meditation on American justice would be balanced on the south wall with a consideration of American culture. Taking an archaeological view of the subject, Jones planned to portray scientists unearthing Mayan architectural monuments,

29. Francis Robert White to Olin Dows, 10/8/1935 and 10/10/1935, RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA.

30. Harry Donald Jones to Olin Dows, 9/19/1935, microfilm roll DC 25, RG 121, frame 189, TRAP Papers, AAA.

Pueblo pottery, and Mound Builder burial remains. The side walls, designed by Jeffrey, Johnson, and Glasell, would unify the composition and its respective themes of law and culture by showing “the parallel growth of legal status with cultural progress.”³¹

Over the next several weeks, White carried out research and began to formulate preliminary designs for the group’s judicial theme. Time constraints forced him to relegate biblical law and other American judicial antecedents to the grisaille lunettes above the doors and windows. He also discarded “the most theoretical and elaborate ideas in favor of a very objective approach.” Focusing on the contemporary American justice system, White based his composition on his firsthand observations of daily court functions. He attended legal proceedings, interviewed deputies and judges, and produced sketches during visits to the county jail. To generate additional interest and appeal, White planned to incorporate individual portraits and local settings in his depictions of the court system and imprisonment.³²

31. Taylor, “Murals to Adorn Walls of Federal Court Room.” In late November White drafted a letter to Dows with an update on the mural. Jones had spent the past two weeks gathering research, drawing, and designing the section of the mural “for which his Mexican background particularly suited him.” Jeffrey, assigned a mural section on the east wall between two grisailles, was preparing a composition that contrasted “the summary justice of vigilante committees with the police protection afforded under an established legal form.” Glasell assumed responsibility for the six grisaille panels, which paid tribute to historical and biblical systems of law, while White took charge of the design and drawing for the north wall. In addition to that work, he was gathering material for the remaining wall spaces in the courtroom. Johnson, who split his time between the courthouse mural and a related mural assignment in the adjoining post office, performed a smaller but equally important role in the design process. He conducted research on historical fact, made drawings of inanimate objects, determined the layout, prepared tracing and transparency designs, and served as a model for various scenes throughout. There is no indication in the archival record whether Johnson completed the mural for the post office, located in the lobby of the federal building. The project remained still in the planning stage in late February 1937, when Johnson sent a detailed proposal to TRAP administrator Henry La Farge. Johnson, taking inspiration from American poet Walt Whitman’s “Carol of Occupations” (1900), envisioned a mural illustrating labor in agriculture and industry, with particular attention to the activities of Cedar Rapids federal workers and postal employees. See Francis Robert White to Olin Dows, 11/29/1935, and Howard C. Johnson to Henry La Farge, 2/23/1937, both in RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA.

32. Francis Robert White to Olin Dows, n.d. [October 1935], RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA.



Figure 4 (cont. on facing page). Francis Robert White, *Study for North Wall*, 1935. Photograph No. LC-USZ62-8436-8001 and LC-USZ62-84367001, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

On December 22, the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* reported that White had nearly completed his preliminary sketches for the north wall. Rendered in charcoal on brown paper, the drawing highlights three social benefits of the American justice system: trial by jury; the law's protection of the individual; and the law's protection of society (fig. 4). In the left portion, White calls attention to the judicial tenet of "presumed innocence." The vignette contains an ensemble of bondsmen and defense counsel, who assist accused individuals during their imprisonment and trial. White expresses faith in the trial system by including an innocent individual's acquittal. The panel at right conveys the protection of society by showing the formal arrest process, in which accused criminals are removed from the streets, undergo fingerprinting, pose for a mug shot, and serve jail time. The central panel spans the architectural niche that designates the judge's bench at the front of the courtroom. Replicating the daily activities of the very room it adorns, the scene shows a judge presiding over a case.³³

Having spent months on the design, White received a sharp blow to his artistic ego when TRAP refused to approve his sketches for the north wall. Worse still, Washington officials did not merely request revisions to the existing drawings, but recommended a complete overhaul in concept as well as design. In a letter dated February 26, Dows informed White of the agency's decision, noting that the artist might "use somewhat similar subject matter" in his next design, but conceded that "it would be simpler to

33. Taylor, "Murals to Adorn Walls of Federal Court Room."



change the subject matter itself and use something having to do with the development of the town” instead.³⁴

However disappointed White felt upon receiving Dows’s letter, he agreed to the redesign and began conducting research on his newly assigned subject matter. In his compliance with TRAP recommendations, White nevertheless struggled to identify materials related to the “development of the town” that would remain in keeping with the ideological and thematic content of the rest of the room.³⁵ For one thing, the government’s suggested revision stripped the courtroom mural of its primary thematic anchor. Without an entire wall devoted to contemporary justice, the conceptual unity and didactic clarity of *Law and Culture* would suffer. Additionally, White understood that local civic history was ubiquitous in federal art commissions. A popular subject among Regionalist painters especially, the historical development of the town seemed not only trite but also uninspiring as a topic for socially engaged art.

Committed to the progressive ideology of the Popular Front, the CMP artists expressed a sincere belief in the progressive nature of Roosevelt’s administration. They considered the New Deal, in general, and the federal art programs, in particular, as a means to reinstate the founding tenets of American democracy, to restore economic balance and stability in the wake of corporate actions that had led to the stock market crash, and to effect positive

34. Olin Dows to Francis Robert White, 2/26/1936, RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA. In his letter to White, Dows did not enumerate the reasons for the decision; however, Treasury Department officials probably preferred a simpler color palette and more orderly design. Dows’s request for full-color line drawings of the other three walls underscores a general concern that “the whole room will be crowded.”

35. Francis Robert White to Olin Dows, 3/3/1936, RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA.

social change without violence or revolution. Heralding the progressive actions of an enlightened federal government, the artists nevertheless set out to expose past and present injustices like poverty, racism, corruption, and greed.

To accomplish those goals, the muralists gravitated toward politically resonant subject matter, bold colors, and expressive line. They looked especially to Mexico's modern muralists, who garnered fame and popularity exhibiting and working in the United States, as inspiring examples for how to create socially engaged art. Between 1930 and 1934, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco executed major mural commissions across the nation, including the controversial and highly publicized fresco panels at Rockefeller Center and Dartmouth College. Gathering ideas and opinions for the courtroom murals in Cedar Rapids, White and Jones visited several of the Mexican artists' murals during their February travels to the East Coast. The duo made a special stop in Michigan to consider Rivera's *Detroit Industry* fresco cycle, and they consulted murals by Orozco, Rivera, and other Social Realists during their stay in New York City.³⁶

Jones's contribution on the south wall represents the most obvious tribute to the Mexican muralists (fig. 5). At the far left of the composition, Jones depicts Orozco seated on scaffolding, actively drawing the base outline for his fresco at Dartmouth College.³⁷ The portion of the mural cycle that Jones reproduces in this scene is significant. In addition to being one of the most controversial and famous passages of the Mexican artist's design, the image of the flayed Christ figure destroying symbols of world religions serves as an economical, shorthand symbol of Orozco's overarching social critique. The Dartmouth College mural, *The Epic of American Civilization* (1934), conveyed a radical message that the artist-revolutionary was the redeemer of a morally and spiritually corrupt social order. Moreover, Orozco's hemispheric perspective on American history countered narrow U.S. nation-

36. Francis Robert White to Olin Dows, 2/12/1936, RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA.

37. Jones underscores the manual labor behind mural painting by portraying an anonymous worker alongside the famous artist. The figure wears overalls and faces away from the viewer, his face obscured. Applying wet plaster to the surface of the wall, the worker stands as an everyman. Jones also may have conceived of the figure as a surrogate self-portrait.



Figure 5. Harry Donald Jones, "Our Inherited Culture" from *Law and Culture*, 1936–1937. Oil on canvas, Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse (now Cedar Rapids City Hall), Cedar Rapids. Photograph No. 121CMS-8A-IO-8B, *Photographs of Paintings and Sculptures Commissioned by the Treasury Relief Art Project*, Records of the Public Buildings Service, Record Group 121-CMS, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

alism by presenting episodes ranging from pre-Columbian antiquity and the Spanish Conquest to the modern militarized nation-state.³⁸ Perhaps inspired by this example, the adjacent vignettes in Jones's composition, titled "Our Inherited Culture" and "American Archaeological Research," foreground the rich cultural legacy of Native American civilizations in the New World (fig. 6). With this prominent inclusion of American archaeologists studying the cultures of ancient Mexico and the U.S. Midwest and Southwest, Jones promoted a multiethnic, inclusive definition of American identity and underscored his belief in the central role of art in revitalizing modern society.³⁹

38. For a thorough history and analysis of this mural, see Mary Coffee, *Orozco at Dartmouth: The Epic of American Civilization* (Hanover, NH, 2007).

39. American scientific developments such as archaeology had only recently introduced cultural relativism and bestowed aesthetic value on native accomplishments, particularly in architecture and craft. This interpretive shift was



Figure 6. Harry Donald Jones, *Our Inherited Culture from Law and Culture*, 1936–1937. Oil on canvas, Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse (now Cedar Rapids City Hall), Cedar Rapids. Photograph No. 121CMS-8A-IO-9B, *Photographs of Paintings and Sculptures Commissioned by the Treasury Relief Art Project, Records of the Public Buildings Service, Record Group 121-CMS*, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

Jones's quotation of the Dartmouth College mural also acknowledges the aesthetic precedent behind the disjointed narrative and vivid color scheme evident throughout the CMP's design. The Cedar Rapids mural cycle exhibits the distinctive monumentality, bold outline, compositional movement, and roundness of form more typical of murals by Rivera and Orozco than of those by the artists' former mentor, Grant Wood. In addition, all of the walls employ a fluid montage of figures and episodes in the Mexican manner. By condensing past and present, history and fiction, the muralists achieved a dynamic composition that activates the public space as a site of historical memory. Viewers must make sense of the open-ended narrative sequence and, in doing so, reconcile the manifest social relations linking them not only to other

concomitant with changes in the U.S. government's policy toward Native American nations. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs transitioned from a policy of forced assimilation to one of cultural preservation. The New Deal facilitated progressive efforts to study and renew indigenous traditions, especially in the arts. See Jennifer McLerran, *A New Deal for Native Art: Indian Arts and Federal Policy, 1933–1943* (Tucson, AZ, 2009).

members of the community, but also to the identities and actions of residents in the past. By calling attention to one's place within an exploitative social order, the CMP artists hoped to radicalize ordinary Americans' thinking and compel positive social change.

The design plans for the east and west walls further demonstrate the group's leftist reform agenda. Prominently displayed polychrome vignettes by Everett Jeffrey and Don Glasell call attention to social injustices such as mob violence, slavery, corporate greed, and religious superstition. The most overt expression of these Popular Front tendencies is Jeffrey's graphic portrayal of a lynching on the western frontier (fig. 7). In 1935 leftist artists made lynching the subject of a targeted campaign. That year both the NAACP and the Communist Party's John Reed Club held anti-lynching exhibitions in support of political and legislative efforts to make lynching a federal offense.⁴⁰ In Jeffrey's treatment of the subject, a group of men and women gather to witness a criminal's execution in a nineteenth-century town square. Behind them, the accused man sits astride a pale horse. Facing away from the crowd, he leans slightly forward with his hands bound behind his back. A noose, attached to a nearby tree, hangs ominously around his neck. At the appointed time, the assembled crowd will startle the steed with a rifle shot and thus secure the man's grisly fate.

By mid-March, White found a design solution that would match his colleagues' progressive political stance yet also fulfill TRAP's requirements for the north wall. As White explained to Dows, his revised panel would take advantage of local source materials and complement the overall theme of *Law and Culture* in its portrayal of "the cultural development of the Mid-West from the days of conquest to the present settled and industrialized state." He had already worked out some of the ideas he would employ in his redesign, since he expected to incorporate

40. Lynching was well established as a manifestation of racism by the 1930s. Detailed studies of lynching appeared throughout the decade, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) presented an anti-lynching bill to Congress in 1934, 1935, and again in 1938. For more detailed analysis of the 1935 anti-lynching art exhibitions, see Marlene Park, "Lynching and Anti-Lynching: Art and Politics in the 1930s," in *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*, ed. Alejandro Anreus, Diana L. Linden, and Jonathan Weinberg (University Park, PA, 2006), 155-80.



Figure 7. Everett Jeffrey, "Evolution of Justice" from *Law and Culture*, 1936–1937. Oil on canvas, Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse (now Cedar Rapids City Hall), Cedar Rapids. Photograph No. 121CMS-8A-IO-6A, Photographs of Paintings and Sculptures Commissioned by the Treasury Relief Art Project, Records of the Public Buildings Service, Record Group 121-CMS, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

a previous competition mural sketch. Titled "Pyre of Conquest: The Opening of the Middle West," the award-winning design illustrated the forced displacement of Native Americans and the early struggles of white pioneers on the frontier.⁴¹ White planned to elaborate upon this scene by adding a steamboat, a tugboat, and an early railroad as symbols of territorial expansion; a mid-western farm as a symbol of established agrarian settlement; and

41. The Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture did not provide work relief but rather awarded federal contracts to artists through a series of regional and national competitions. White had submitted the mural sketch "Pyre of Conquest: The Opening of the Middle West" as his entry in one such contest. Following a blind jury process, the Section awarded White a mural commission for the post office in Missouri Valley, Iowa; however, White's composition changed substantially from his competition design to the finished mural, perhaps because of his adoption of the theme "Opening of the Midwest" for the Cedar Rapids federal courthouse. Completed in 1938, the Missouri Valley post office mural takes "Iowa Fair" as its theme instead.

a diesel engine as a symbol of the technological and industrial conversion of natural resources in modern society. Addressing potential concerns about the chronological and spatial treatment of such a complex composition, White assured Dows that each stage of development corresponded to a historical era and that the narrative sequence would progress from left to right. He also outlined the formal elements of his proposed design, which he envisioned as a tripartite arrangement of figural areas separated by passages of landscape.⁴²

TRAP officials and the supervising architect were amenable to White's proposed design. The committee unanimously agreed that the revised panel was "much more suitable for the court room than the first one" and asked White to submit a color sketch for formal approval. Characteristic of the close oversight that Treasury Department programs exercised throughout the New Deal era, Dows noted that officials were not entirely satisfied with certain details of the preliminary design. He instructed White to improve the naturalism of both the cow and the barn in his next composition. The committee considered the precise and accurate rendering of such details essential to public works of art, as local residents elsewhere had demanded revisions to federal artworks based on factual errors. Referring to the peak of the gable in White's sketch, Dows wrote, "I understand this is being projected as a gable, but would like to know definitely about this. Won't you, when you send in the finished color sketches, just add a note explaining what kind of a barn this is?"⁴³

In the next phase of the mural project, TRAP officials turned their attention to the work of Jones, Johnson, Jeffrey, and Glasell. Upon reviewing sketches of the other three walls—which they had tentatively approved based on written descriptions—Treasury Department administrators expressed concern that the "conception and general vitality" of the designs did not match the quality of White's panel.⁴⁴ The inferior "conception and general vitality"

42. Francis Robert White to Olin Dows, 3/15/1936, RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA.

43. Olin Dows to Francis Robert White, 3/24/1936, RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA.

44. Olin Dows to Francis Robert White, 6/10/1936, RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA.

impugned in the letter no doubt referred to the overtly politicized imagery and expressive style woven throughout the painters' scale drawings. In addition to Jones's homage to Orozco and to Jeffrey's historical episode of lynching, Glasell's preliminary sketch heralded working-class solidarity and organized labor strikes in the fight against corporate greed. Moreover, their art, which had previously aspired to the naturalistic figuration and orderly precision of Wood's pastoral scenes, now employed a deliberately harsh color scheme, tilted perspective, and distortions of scale and perspective to expressive effect.

Dows encouraged White, as master artist, to assume a more supervisory role in the project. "It is absolutely essential in executing this work that you do the finishing and be responsible for the drawing of the entire room, for there are grave doubts in the minds of the Treasury Projects whether work that in sketch form is so doubtfully executed will be satisfactory at full size." Those instructions must have presented a significant challenge for White as he had disavowed his leadership standing and promised complete artistic freedom among the CMP group. Acknowledging the hierarchical implications of such close supervision, Dows nevertheless emphasized the seriousness of his request. "We are all aware that this is an interesting project from the social point of view and that your handling of it as a group project is to be greatly commended," he penned to White. "But we also feel that it is absolutely essential that work placed in a Federal Building should be of complete and undisputed technical efficiency."⁴⁵

As Dows's final remark indicates, the itemized criticism handed down from Washington centered on technical and formal qualities of the work rather than its controversial subject matter. The Treasury Department approved of the general idea for *Law and Culture*, but the committee felt that the overall composition contained too many artistic points of view. The organization and draftsmanship, Dows explained, could be improved, par-

45. Ibid. A comparison of panel descriptions and preliminary sketches reveals several thematic and compositional revisions for individual panels in the mural cycle. Jones, for example, substituted the scene on public health and the control of venereal disease for a proposed panel called "The Movies." See Edward Bruce and Forbes Watson, *Art in Federal Buildings: An Illustrated Record of the Treasury Department's New Program in Painting and Sculpture* (Washington, D.C., 1936), 224.

ticularly in the lunettes that appeared crowded and insufficiently naturalistic. Furthermore, the application of color looked unnatural and even garish in places. The Mayan serpent column on the south wall, for instance, seemed “unnecessarily bright and gaudy” to the committee, while the green-gray faux stone treatment of the grisailles recalled synthetic plasticine more than the intended granite or marble. With regard to the side walls, Dows observed only that the anatomical accuracy and scale of the human figures required attention throughout. His detailed analysis demonstrates careful looking on the part of Washington officials, yet the letter contains almost no commentary regarding the pictorial content of each scene. For all its efforts to ensure appropriate and noncontroversial works of public art, the Treasury Department’s silence regarding the graphic portrayal or placement of the lynching scene in the Cedar Rapids courthouse mural indicates that the subject matter did not raise alarm. Dows even made explicit reference in his letter to the vignette “Evolution of Justice” as an example where bodily extremities are rendered in a distorted and disproportionate manner. His recommendation to Jeffrey to draw correctly the hands of the lynched man reveals not only government officials’ awareness of the scene but also an implicit approval of its historical, albeit violent, subject matter.⁴⁶

How can such a nonchalant response on the part of U.S. government officials be explained? At the very least, New Deal administrators tolerated a degree of social criticism based on the principle that a democracy licensed freedom of speech and because they believed that the federal art programs were helping to build a more democratic culture. In addition, the CMP artists tempered their critical social commentary with affirmative images of contemporary life. Jeffrey’s historical episode of lynching, for example, is followed by a contemporary scene of police protecting society by dispersing a mob (fig. 8). This balance of imagery was intended not merely to placate Washington officials; the artists espoused a genuine belief in New Deal social programs.

46. Olin Dows to Francis Robert White, 6/10/1936, RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA. For deeper analysis of the ideological confluence of the New Deal and the Popular Front, see Andrew Hemingway, “Cultural Democracy by Default: The Politics of the New Deal Arts Programmes,” *Oxford Art Journal* 30 (2007), 269–87.



Figure 8. Everett Jeffrey, "Evolution of Justice" from *Law and Culture*, 1936–1937. Oil on canvas, Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse (now Cedar Rapids City Hall), Cedar Rapids. Photograph No. 121CMS-8A-IO-6B, *Photographs of Paintings and Sculptures Commissioned by the Treasury Relief Art Project, Records of the Public Buildings Service, Record Group 121-CMS*, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

Although White's labor activism and open hostility to Wood earned him a reputation among much of the Iowa art community as a "radical" and "left-wing" artist, he considered himself nothing more than an ardent New Dealer. As he later put it, "I agreed very much with the philosophy of those days. It was very stimulating because for the first time artists became public figures. They worked with the community on public buildings and tried to give a medical, social and humanitarian message to the people of the United States. They became spokesmen . . . in the sense that they symbolized the New Deal in their art."⁴⁷

47. Francis Robert White, quoted in Lea Rosson DeLong and Gregg R. Narber, *A Catalog of New Deal Mural Projects in Iowa* (Des Moines, 1982), 13. In addition to spearheading efforts to form the CMP, White led an artists' boycott against the Art Salon at the 1936 Iowa State Fair. The union objected to the practice of forcing artists to "gamble" for monetary prizes, arguing that the fair board should instead pay all participating artists a rental fee to display their art. When the board denied

The CMP viewed Roosevelt's social reform projects as a positive development in society and strove to create socially progressive public art to match. At once Social Realists and dedicated supporters of the New Deal, the artists did not shy away from publicizing historical transgressions and current social ills in American society; yet the mural design as a whole conveys idealism and optimism for a better future through New Deal reforms. Taking "community service" as his theme, Glasell crafted a panorama of contemporary 1930s life that included fire and police officers, a cooperative store, and a work relief office. In every instance, Glasell's community members place the good of the whole above their individual needs. The fire and police officers forgo security and physical safety; the cooperative store and work relief office privilege the financial comfort of all members of the community over personal greed. Jones similarly championed public social programs in his depiction of an anti-syphilis campaign. Located on the east wall at the rear of the courtroom, the collage-like scene highlights advancements in medical knowledge and the benefit of social health measures (fig. 9). An oval inset shows a doctor treating a nude patient, whose strategically placed hands preserve his modesty yet also allude to his affliction. Through proper education and treatment, Jones stresses, public health programs can eradicate venereal disease. Legible newspaper headlines, drawn from actual issues of the *Chicago Tribune*, underscore the point by announcing Sweden's success in eliminating the disease, while a woman stands with her arm outstretched in an oratory pose, directing the way to a better future through enlightened governance and social reform.

Early Reception of the Mural

On December 17, 1936, Washington officials granted final approval of the mural cycle based on a series of black-and-white photographs submitted at the conclusion of the project. Dows confessed that he still did not like the lunettes of historical lawmakers, which he considered "brutal and out of scale" compared to the rest of the design. Apart from that component of the composition,

their request, White and the other members declined to participate in the exhibition. See "Opposing Iowa Art Groups Aim Boycott at Fair Salon," unidentified newspaper clipping, 8/23/1936, Johnson Papers, ISU Library.



Figure 9. Harry Donald Jones, "Public Health" from Law and Culture, 1936–1937. Oil on canvas, Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse (now Cedar Rapids City Hall), Cedar Rapids. Photograph No. 121CMS-8A-IO-8A, Photographs of Paintings and Sculptures Commissioned by the Treasury Relief Art Project, Records of the Public Buildings Service, Record Group 121-CMS, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

Dows and the other TRAP officials agreed that the completed mural project looked "considerably better than it did in the sketches." They singled out White's contribution for special praise, observing that the execution of the north wall seemed "particularly well done." The following year Dows's TRAP successor, Cecil H. Jones, reiterated the agency's favorable assessment of the mural cycle. In a letter to another Iowa artist, Jones declared, "The mural for the Court House in Cedar Rapids has been completed in a manner which is satisfactory to us. . . . The group of artists combined their talents and efforts on this job and, as far as I know, worked very harmoniously. The job was amazingly free from friction when one takes into consideration the manner in which it was done."⁴⁸

48. Olin Dows to Francis Robert White, 12/17/1936, and Cecil H. Jones to Dorothea Tomlinson, 10/11/1937, both in RG 121, entry 119, box 11, TRAP Papers, NARA. The WPA's Federal Writers' Project also took note of the TRAP mural,

Local artists committed to Grant Wood's Regionalist philosophy nevertheless condemned the artistic inferiority of the courthouse murals. Such critical reception focused principally on aesthetic concerns. The CMP represented a deliberate departure from the flattened, decorative appearance and schematized naturalism made famous by the artists' former teacher. The fact that the cooperative had looked to Mexico for inspiration would have been clearly evident as well. In a manner consonant with American Social Realism and its Mexican mural precedent, the Cedar Rapids courthouse mural cycle employed figural distortion and a vibrant color palette to activate the image and to achieve expressive ends.⁴⁹

The *Cedar Rapids Gazette* published a complete photographic set of *Opening of the Midwest* and *Law and Culture* in 1937. Employing stridently inflammatory language, the accompanying caption called attention to formal and iconographic elements that, over the next 30 years, would be consistently trotted out in service of negative assessments of the piece.

Eyes of prisoners, spectators, the jurors and the judge alike . . . nowadays never escape the highly controversial and vivid mural paintings which adorn the courtroom's four walls. . . . Frank treatment of such subjects as campaigns against venereal disease and lynchings brought forth a deluge of protest from federal court attachés when they first walked into the courtroom as the artists decamped with paints and brushes. Although most court officials said plaintively "we wanted something softer and more refined," [the] wittiest comment was attributed to Federal Judge George C. Scott, who purportedly glanced around the room and said: "I'm suffering mural turpitude."

describing its location and identifying four of the five artists in its entry on the Cedar Rapids Federal Building. See Federal Writers' Project, *Iowa: A Guide to the Hawkeye State* (New York, 1938), 191.

49. These visual characteristics increasingly carried leftist political resonance for American viewers in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In an incident prefiguring the Cold War, Social Realist Edward Millman's public murals were subjected to accusations that they were "un-American in theme and design" and that they displayed "communistic influence." This reactionary rhetoric was typical of an orchestrated campaign against federal art funding. See Andrew Hemingway, *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926-1956* (New Haven, CT, 2002), 172.

When the judge, his bailiffs and clerk look toward the back of the courtroom it is difficult for their eyes to escape the rear wall, painted by Jones. From a center composition of almost glaring red, depicting relics of Mayan culture, the composition moves into arresting masses of boldly colored form. To the left an overall-clad archaeologist excavates, next to him the Mexican artist, Joseph Orozco, works — a picture within a picture, showing a section of that artist's Dartmouth college murals. Jones' painting finally swings into a contemporary subject — the contemporary campaign for venereal disease eradication in the United States. This picture . . . shows a consultation, while a club woman preaches. Actual newspaper clippings are mounted on the wall in this section.⁵⁰

Through evocative words and phrases that reveal a personal bias against the stylistic attributes of Social Realism, the author captures the apparent visual assault conservative viewers experienced while viewing the work. In addition to the prominent inclusion of challenging social imagery, the mural cycle exhibited "forceful color and form," with passages of "almost glaring red" and "arresting masses of boldly colored from."⁵¹

The same article described the CMP as "undismayed by the lack of public appreciation" for their courtroom decoration. Calling attention to the narrative of progress portrayed in the mural scheme, the artists predicted that "public taste will catch up with the murals and people will enjoy them."⁵² Unfortunately for White and the other cooperative artists, the opinion most Iowans

50. Unidentified newspaper clipping [*Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 1937], Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse Papers, Linge Library, Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, Cedar Rapids (hereafter cited as Courthouse Papers, Linge Library).

51. *Ibid.* The apparent difference between local and government opinions emerges in even sharper relief when we consider that White became Iowa's first state director of the WPA's Federal Art Project soon after completing this commission. Contrary to popular belief, the artists behind the TRAP mural were successful and influential leaders in the Iowa arts community throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. Jones supervised the Iowa Index of American Design project and later succeeded White as the Iowa state director of the WPA's Federal Art Project, while Glasell ascended to the assistant directorship of the Sioux City Federal Art Center. In addition to his tenure as state director for the WPA, White held the directorship of the Sioux City Federal Art Center and later worked as a recorder and artist for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), art supervisor for the Navajo Indian Agency, and administrator with WPA's Federal Art Project in Kentucky and Illinois.

52. *Ibid.*

held of the mural project would grow significantly worse before it improved.

Cold War and Cultural Controversy

U.S. participation in the World War II produced a massive cultural and political shift. Despite New Deal efforts to put Americans back to work and restart the economy, it was the exigencies of the war that lifted the country out of the Great Depression. Defense contracts for steel, rubber, and other essential war materials restored corporate capitalism and returned the nation to full employment. As a result, the United States emerged from the global conflict not only victorious but also prosperous.

At the same time, the U.S. government grew increasingly concerned about the spread of Communism. The Soviet Union's successful detonation of its first atomic weapon in 1949 precipitated an arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union that would last nearly a half-century. The successful revolution of the People's Liberation Army in China that same year amplified U.S. fears of Communism creeping across the globe. Over the next decade, the prospect of Communists infiltrating the United States created a tense domestic climate of suspicion and unyielding social conformism. Cold War anxieties about enemy subversives produced an expansive political witch hunt in which the federal government interrogated the loyalties of its own citizens. This campaign of domestic repression, called McCarthyism after Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, issued false accusations of un-American activities and blacklisted suspected Communists from jobs in government, academia, the film industry, and the popular press. The so-called Red Scare especially targeted Americans previously involved in the Popular Front and labeled them Communists.⁵³

The CMP artists' explicit engagement with Social Realism combined with their admiration for Mexican muralism and Popular Front politics supplied a distinctly politicized interpretive

53. Ironically, Senator Joseph McCarthy considered modern (abstract) art symptomatic of "Bolshevism," the revolutionary philosophy underlying the Russian Revolution, and thus suspected contemporary artists of participating in a Communist conspiracy to subvert American values.

framework for the TRAP mural cycle. The leftist political ideals expressed in *Opening of the Midwest* and *Law and Culture* were not accepted universally even at the work's unveiling in 1937, but the conservative postwar political climate rendered the mural untenable as a civic monument. Conveyed visually in the artists' bold color palette, challenging subject matter, and didactic and anecdotal style, the social agitation underlying the New Deal project exacerbated prevailing negative perceptions of the federal courthouse mural cycle and ultimately decided its fate.

In Cedar Rapids the federal court received numerous complaints about the graphic imagery in the TRAP mural cycle. Of particular offense to Cedar Rapids viewers was one of Jeffrey's contributions, "Evolution of Justice." Located on the east wall of the courtroom, directly opposite the jury box, the design includes a detailed portrayal of vigilante justice (fig. 7). A criminal appears on horseback moments before his execution by lynching. His hands are bound, and a noose wraps around his neck. The artist juxtaposed this scene with one depicting the advent of the American court system; however, the majority of viewers experienced a strong emotional response to the lynching scene that overrode its intended historical narrative of judicial progress.

Complicating matters further, many Iowans misunderstood Jeffrey's depiction of police officers restoring order (fig. 8). When the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* reproduced the offending law-themed panels in 1956, the newspaper described the portion to the right of the lynching as another "scene of violence."⁵⁴ As Mel Andringa, a Cedar Rapids artist and cofounder of Legion Arts, recently observed, the protective actions of the state are ambiguously portrayed.⁵⁵ The vignette shows contemporary residents converging on the town square, where a police officer is leading a female criminal in handcuffs toward the courthouse. Several armed police officers, including two on horseback, stand guard among the angry townspeople to observe the prisoner's transport and to maintain order. Rather than reading the police officer's actions as the pri-

54. "Federal Building Courtroom Murals Being Obliterated," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 5/2/1956.

55. "Old Federal Courthouse: Courtroom Mural History, An Interview with Mel Andringa," February 2012, Courthouse Papers, Linge Library. Andringa rightly notes that this scene might be interpreted as an expression of fascist oppression.

mary content of the panel, postwar residents apparently observed the gathering crowd as a threatening image of civil disorder. In particular, they seem to have combined the two scenes in "Evolution of Justice" to form a continuous narrative, one in which menacing throngs of townspeople stand as a precursor to violence. The formation of a lynch mob, seen in the right half of the panel, leads to social lawlessness and murder in the scene to its left.

Not surprisingly, lawyers and judges objected most strongly to the presence of these scenes in the courtroom, arguing that the narrative portrayal of vigilante justice was inappropriate and prejudicial during trial proceedings. Its placement on the east wall exacerbated the issue. Positioned across from the jury box, the lynching scene was "the one most likely to catch [jurors'] attention during the course of a trial."⁵⁶ Defense attorneys, expressing serious concern that the mural cycle would influence jurors' perceptions of the defendant, issued numerous complaints and called for its removal from the courtroom.

In addition to its legible politicized imagery, the Cedar Rapids mural cycle offended mid-century viewers for what was perceived as its inferior, "socialist" painting style. By World War II, the precipitous rise in European and New York abstraction made Depression-era figural styles appear conservative and outdated. Global warfare had left many American artists disillusioned and, as their dreams of New Deal reform dissipated, they eschewed the social and political engagement of 1930s art in favor of emotive personal expression. Postwar artists largely abandoned the formal language associated with Social Realism and the American Scene and embraced instead a self-reflexive, free-form aesthetic that they believed better reflected the modern age.⁵⁷ Critics likewise favored aesthetic experimentation and abstraction over the representational style and regional subject matter that proliferated in New Deal art. With its bold, slashing forms and open-ended meanings, Abstract Expressionism was promoted as the epitome of liberal individualism in a capitalist society. Critics lauded it as the epitome of American identity and independence, which in their view sur-

56. "Federal Building Courtroom Murals Being Obliterated."

57. The untimely death of Grant Wood must have contributed to the declining status of New Deal art, since Regionalism lost its most prominent spokesperson and practitioner with his passing in 1942.

passed European avant-garde experimentation, and they touted New York as the new world art center.⁵⁸ As early as 1949, *Life* magazine posed the question whether Jackson Pollock, a foremost student of Thomas Hart Benton who had repudiated his mentor's style, was "The Greatest Living Painter in the United States."⁵⁹

Political opponents of Roosevelt's social programs had long criticized New Deal art as a waste of public funds and as a propaganda vehicle advocating the federal government's political and social agendas. Conservative congressmen had condemned the federal art programs as a colossal "boondoggle" and campaigned for their dissolution even before the outbreak of World War II.⁶⁰ When the United States entered the war, the cultural example of Germany provoked a vicious backlash against American Scene painting, since its naturalistic and anecdotal qualities paralleled officially sanctioned Nazi art glorifying *die Volk* and *der Vaterland*. As a result, American artists' engagement with figural representation and regional themes appeared equally, and even dangerously, provincial, close-minded, and nationalistic. Avant-garde critics further disparaged American Regionalism as amateurish and sentimental, resembling lowbrow visual production like commercial illustrations and advertisements. Characteristics such as pictorial narrative, formal legibility, and decorativeness came to be viewed as evidence that New Deal murals typified "bad" art.⁶¹

58. New York art critic Clement Greenberg shaped postwar reception of Abstract Expressionism and New Deal art. His influential essay, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," published in 1939, proposed a rigid separation of modern art and mass consumer culture. According to Greenberg, lowbrow or popular imagery was politically dangerous as its narrative style was ideally suited to political propaganda. Only abstraction could rid itself of illegitimate content, whether religious, commercial, or political. In this dichotomous paradigm, Abstract Expressionism symbolized American individualism, freedom, and self-expression whereas figural styles signified its polar opposite: totalitarianism and popular culture. See Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," *Partisan Review* 6 (Fall 1939), 34-49.

59. "Jackson Pollock," *Life*, 8/8/1949, 42-45.

60. In 1938 the Federal Arts Bill, legislation that would have formed the basis for a permanent system of federal patronage, suffered a humiliating defeat in the House of Representatives by a vote of 195 to 35. Midterm elections consolidated and strengthened the conservative anti-New Deal bloc in Congress, which levied repeated attacks and budget cuts against the federal art programs until their official end in 1943.

61. Deteriorating U.S. foreign relations with the Soviet Union exacerbated the declining status of New Deal art. With the advent of the Cold War, American

Shifting attitudes toward New Deal art were evident in Iowa as early as 1946. That year, a large-scale mural painting at the Iowa State Fairgrounds by Howard Johnson and Dan Rhodes, completed under the aegis of the WPA just nine years earlier, was removed, sawed into scrap lumber, and converted into shelving and exhibition booths for the upcoming fair. When asked about his decision to remove a government-sponsored mural, Fair Board Secretary Lloyd B. Cunningham cast aspersions against the New Deal federal art programs and the aesthetic quality of their public works.

The mural wasn't art, it was WPA . . . It was a joke to have that thing on a fairgrounds that's devoted to glorifying the Iowa farmer and his accomplishments. And anyway I'm sure all [of] Iowa wants to forget the WPA. In fact, I hope that the fair board's move in ripping out this monstrosity may point the way for a lot of other libraries, railroad depots, post offices and other public buildings over the state which were saddled with these so-called art pieces.⁶²

The painting, measuring 220 feet by 10 feet, depicted the displacement of Native Americans by white settlers, technological advances in farming equipment, and the cultivation of land. In his portrayal of contemporary life, Johnson featured a group of farmers gathering in front of a community center to discuss their shared agricultural plight. Characteristic of Social Realism of the 1930s, the mural acknowledged and also proposed a potential solution for negative social conditions through popular organization and progressive reform.

The public outcry over *Opening of the Midwest* and *Law and Culture* led Federal District Judge Henry N. Graven (1893–1970) to respond initially with a temporary fix. In 1951 he agreed that

Social Realism was maligned especially for its visual resemblance to Soviet socialist art. In the Soviet Union, Socialist Realism was a representational style dictated by the nation-state, which did not permit any form of aesthetic experimentation or personal expression. Because the critical establishment and popular imagination elided American Social Realism and Soviet Socialist Realism in the postwar era, U.S. cold warriors condemned American paintings in this mode as being, at best, compatible with and, at worst, supportive of an oppressive and corrupt enemy regime.

62. *Des Moines Register*, 6/25/1946. Harry Donald Jones's mural at the Des Moines Public Library nearly suffered a similar fate in 1951. The actions of community art patrons saved the mural.

portions of the mural cycle were “inappropriate for a courtroom” and determined to cover the offending imagery behind temporary curtains. That physical barrier banished the panels from sight but did not remove them from the walls. Less than three years later, in 1954, he ordered the walls of the courtroom to be whitewashed. The judge reportedly knew very little about the mural cycle, since its commission predated the start of his judicial appointment in 1944. Nevertheless, he recognized the paintings as a legacy of New Deal federal art patronage. Having heard that they were painted “as part of a work relief project many years ago,” Graven may have associated the works with Soviet socialism and “bad” art. To be sure, one of the reasons the judge offered in support of his decision was the “realistic detail” in which the offending imagery was portrayed. He sent photographs of the mural to Archibald K. Gardner, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Eighth Circuit, and Henry P. Chandler, director of the administrative office of the U.S. courts, to solicit federal approval. Both endorsed Graven’s view of the controversial imagery and authorized the mural’s removal.⁶³

White and Jones, former leaders of the CMP, probably had no knowledge of the proposed action against the mural cycle until it was too late. The court handed down its decision while White was living in Mexico, where he earned his MFA degree under the GI Bill.⁶⁴ Jones had served in the navy during World War II and then moved to San Francisco, where he enjoyed a successful career as a photographer. Even if the muralists had been in Iowa to witness the unfolding of the mural controversy, they

63. “Federal Building Courtroom Murals Being Obliterated.” Although Graven ultimately supported the removal of the murals, he made some effort to salvage the paintings for posterity. He had hoped that the murals might be sent to the regional GSA office in Kansas City, but he received no response to his appeal before the city of Cedar Rapids began its redecoration of the court quarters two years later. When the contractors commenced painting in early May, Graven concluded that the GSA must have considered the removal of the murals to be “impossible or impractical” and granted permission for the whitewashing to proceed.

64. White did not return to Cedar Rapids until the following year, when he resumed working as an artist preparing stained-glass windows for the National Masonic Library. His presumed silence on the whitewashing issue is based on the lack of archival evidence to the contrary. He may have voiced his dissent in private or maintained silence because it was politically prudent. By 1956, he had moved to Chicago.

likely would have maintained a diplomatic silence. As former members of the AAC and the CMP, the artists found themselves especially vulnerable to red-baiting.⁶⁵ Indeed, the hostile political culture of the Cold War had obliged many painters, including CMP member Howard Johnson, to accept the censorship of New Deal work. Reflecting on the 1949 destruction of his Agriculture Building mural at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, Johnson admitted that he “hated to hear that it had been torn down,” but he reasoned that “it can’t be put back together again, any more than you could put an egg back together.”⁶⁶

Over the course of two days in early May 1956, painting contractors covered *Opening of the Midwest* and *Law and Culture* with base paint. The *Cedar Rapids Gazette* told local residents that the courtroom mural cycle was now “a thing of the past” and explained that its controversial subject matter had “led to its downfall.” To illustrate the point, the newspaper reproduced the portion that Graven had considered “most objectionable for courtroom walls.” The photograph encompassed the lynching scene as well as the mural passage immediately to its right.⁶⁷ Paradoxically, the offending imagery almost certainly reached a broader audience through the local media than it ever had in the courtroom. Nevertheless, its whitewashing carried broad public support and thus temporarily ended the controversy surrounding the mural’s style and content.

65. By the late 1940s, conservative congressmen and their allies were targeting liberal artists as Communist sympathizers. In a speech before the U.S. House of Representatives on March 25, 1949, Representative George Dondero denounced Artists’ Equity, a self-described apolitical artists’ organization with more than 1,500 members residing in 38 states, for having “left-wing connections” and promulgating Communist ideas. In the characteristically inflammatory rhetoric of the day, Dondero described its members as “soldiers of the revolution—in smocks.” In his far-reaching accusation, the congressman did not distinguish between an individual’s involvement in Popular Front bodies such as the AAC and genuine commitment to the CPUSA. See Andrew Hemingway, “Between Zhdanovism and 57th Street: Artists and the CPUSA, 1945–1956,” in *The Social and the Real*, 265–66.

66. George Mills, “Mural Artist Grieved but Philosophical,” *Des Moines Register*, 6/27/1946. “The mural is all sawed to pieces,” Johnson is quoted as saying. “It’s water over the dam. You can’t do anything about it.”

67. “Federal Building Courtroom Murals Being Obliterated.”

Eight years later, the mural cycle again came to public attention when Judge Edward McManus had the overpaint removed and asked art experts to clean and evaluate the work of art. The paintings remained on view only briefly, since McManus determined that the mural imagery was prejudicial to any case being tried in the courtroom. Like his predecessors, McManus objected that jury members faced Jeffrey's graphic portrayal of vigilante justice for the duration of a trial. Furthermore, the hired art experts determined that the mural cycle had no aesthetic merit and little historical value. Specifically, the painting style was deemed inferior to that of other Iowa artists such as Marvin Cone and Edmund Whiting, who followed in the Regionalist mode of Grant Wood.⁶⁸ This professional assessment attests to the lasting effect of the CMP artists' public split from their famed teacher, since the critics no doubt responded to the deliberate figural distortion, spatial disorder, and other common stylistic traits of Social Realism.

In accordance with McManus's decision, the city of Cedar Rapids arranged to have the mural cycle photographed for posterity before painting over it again with gray latex paint. Local officials intended their decision to be permanent, as the use of latex paint indicates, and the censored murals remained fully hidden from public view until four years ago. Their deliberate erasure ushered in a period of cultural amnesia. The mural paintings and the artists behind them were not "worth" remembering, even within the Iowa art community. By the 1970s, when the General Services Administration (GSA) initiated a nationwide survey of New Deal art in government buildings, no one could identify the team of muralists beyond a list of their names.⁶⁹ It is

68. Beverly Duffy, "Art World Detective Story," unidentified clipping [*Des Moines Register*], 6/18/1972, Courthouse Papers, Linge Library. See also Justin Foss, "History Comes with Courthouse," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 11/9/2009.

69. In the early 1970s the GSA launched an inventory project to locate and record all available information about artworks in GSA-maintained facilities. That nationwide survey represented the first stage of a historic preservation program that would evaluate and assign restoration priority to individual works of art. The program earmarked five Iowa New Deal murals for inspection. The state's sole TRAP commission—the fresco cycle at the Cedar Rapids federal courthouse—made the list. Robert Kocher, an art professor at Coe College, carried out the government study to the best of his abilities, considering that the mural had been painted over nearly 20 years before. Since the artwork was not visible for firsthand inspection, Kocher recovered a photographic record of two

hardly surprising, then, that the TRAP mural cycle remained untouched, buried under layers of paint, for decades still to come.

Recovery and Discovery: Iowa's Cultural Tradition and Historical Memory

In the summer of 2008, a record-setting flood besieged much of eastern Iowa. Cedar Rapids was particularly hard hit as heavy rains and flooding closed roads, submerged portions of businesses and homes, and damaged civic infrastructure downtown. Water levels of the Cedar River rose even above the Time Check Levee, erected in the 1930s after the Great Flood of 1929, and crested at 31.12 feet, roughly 19 feet above flood stage, on Friday, June 13. The downtown area of Cedar Rapids, including the government complex on and around May's Island, sustained millions of dollars in damage from the deluge.

The flood devastation in eastern Iowa brought the Cedar Rapids federal courthouse to the attention of congressmen and government officials at the GSA. Discussions regarding the design and construction of a new edifice were already under way when the natural disaster struck, but the extensive damage to the Depression-era building made the project a funding priority. The original federal courthouse suffered substantial structural and mechanical damage during the 2008 flood. Flood waters rose approximately four feet above the first floor, and the basement, which contained most of the building's major mechanical and electrical equipment, was completely under water. When the flood waters subsided, the federal building had no power, no potable water, and no heating system. The federal government responded with a special emergency appropriation to construct a new edifice as well as to clean and repair the historic courthouse.⁷⁰

walls from the archival files at the Cedar Rapids Gazette. Local memory of the CMP had diminished to such an extent that, by 1972, Kocher was unable to identify any of the artists responsible for the courthouse mural project beyond their names. See Beverly Duffy, "Art World Detective Story," unidentified clipping [*Des Moines Register*], 6/18/1972, Courthouse Papers, Linge Library.

70. The circumstances forced the relocation of all federal court operations into a leased space. The GSA had identified a new federal courthouse for Cedar Rapids as a regional priority in a space-needs study completed in 1992; however, the project failed to receive adequate federal funding for more than a decade. In 2002 the city of Cedar Rapids received a disbursement of funds to secure a plot

In the immediate aftermath of the flood, the GSA acted quickly to minimize damage and to restore the Depression-era federal building to its original condition. Government contractors removed several tons of debris and waterlogged materials from the structure, and they cleaned and sanitized remaining structural materials for future occupancy. Water seepage persisted even after the flood subsided, requiring workers to pump more than 64 million gallons of water from the courthouse. The GSA also carefully cleaned and restored original finishes such as stone, wood, decorative metals, and decorative plaster both in the interior and on the external façades of the building. Exterior work involved chemically cleaning and patching stonework, refurbishing the original wood window frames, and new landscaping. Maintenance and preservation efforts for the interior of the building were even more extensive. The government agency repaired the plaster walls and ceiling, refurbished the metallic surface of cast iron vestibules, repainted the interior using the original 1933 color scheme, and reinstalled original doors, window frames, and trim that had been moved previously to storage. The GSA made upgrades to the ruined mechanical and electrical systems and restored the original mailbox system to the structure's former post office lobby.⁷¹

Once structural and mechanical repairs to the federal courthouse were complete, the GSA turned its attention to the white-washed TRAP mural cycle on the third floor of the building. As early as 1993 the federal agency had expressed interest in uncovering and restoring the paintings to their original condition. In a GSA memorandum to Regional Administrator Thomas Walker, Washington official Dale Lanzzone recommended mural conservation but acknowledged the potential for public backlash in response to the project's lynching and syphilis imagery. "If certain parts [of the mural cycle] are found to be objectionable," he wrote,

of land and to begin design considerations for the new structure, but congressional budget cuts repeatedly stalled construction. The GSA began construction on the new federal courthouse in 2009 after the U.S. Congress had approved an emergency appropriations bill during its legislative session the previous fall.

71. Trish Mehaffey, "Courthouse Options Weighed," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 7/26/2008; Adam Belz, "Linn Supervisors Tour Courthouse," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 3/20/2009; "Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse," unpublished manuscript [2010], Courthouse Papers, Linge Library.

“we would like to find another means of keeping them from public view.”⁷² The agency would not act on Lanzone’s recommendation for more than a decade.

In 2006, when federal funding for a new courthouse for Cedar Rapids seemed imminent, the GSA renewed its preservation efforts. It hired Arthur Page of Page Conservation, Inc., to assess the condition of the mural cycle and to prepare a treatment plan and cost estimate for future restoration. That same year, the GSA struck an agreement with the city of Cedar Rapids for the “long-term preservation, public accessibility and stewardship of the Old Courthouse for future generations.” In addition to the Art Deco architectural features of the structure, the GSA made special mention of the courtroom’s site-specific murals, which “were created to enhance the architecture of the building at the time of its construction in 1937.”⁷³ The GSA considered the murals to be part of the historic fabric of the building and stipulated that they must remain in their current location. Moreover, the agency recommended a full restoration of *Opening of the Midwest* and *Law and Culture*.

Unfortunately, the GSA’s conservation plans for the original Cedar Rapids courthouse building suffered the same delays as its proposed new building, as congressional budget cuts stalled both projects until the flood of 2008. In conjunction with the post-flood repairs to the old courthouse building, the federal agency requested a second condition report on the mural cycle, which determined that the paintings had sustained no additional damage as a result of the natural disaster. It then began a series of test-cleanings to determine the feasibility of restoration work. The federal government also signed an agreement with the city of Cedar Rapids to transfer a parcel of city-owned land – the site of the new federal courthouse – in exchange for the renovated Depression-era structure. The official property swap took place in late August

72. Dale Lanzone to Thomas Walker, 6/22/1993, “Iowa, Cedar Rapids, United States Courthouse Papers, White, Robert Francis (Law and Culture),” FA425-B, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as White Papers, FA425-B, GSA).

73. Memorandum of Agreement between the General Services Administration and the City of Cedar Rapids, 3/21/2006, 30-33, “GSA Agreements: GSA Region 6 MOAs and PAs,” Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, www.achp.gov/GSAagreements/GSA%20Region%206%20MOAs%20and%20PAs/index.html.

2010. Although the GSA no longer owned the federal courthouse building, it upheld its contractual obligation to uncover the north wall of the mural cycle, which contained Francis Robert White's contribution, *Opening of the Midwest*. As GSA historic preservation officer Sylvia Rose Augustus explained to a reporter at the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, the federal agency hoped that its restoration of White's painting would stimulate local funding interest and facilitate conservation work on the remaining three walls.⁷⁴

Washington-based Page Conservation, Inc., commenced conservation work on the courtroom's north wall in early 2011.⁷⁵ Water damage, unrelated to the flooding of 2008, had allowed mold to grow on the backside of the painting, and the canvas had separated from the wall in spots. Conservators treated the mold damage and reattached the mural to the wall. The company also cleaned and restored the surface of the artwork, which required gesso to fill in cut lines and in-painting to restore abraded passages and strengthen details and contrast.⁷⁶

Soon after the restoration of the first wall was complete, the federal courtroom began a second life as the City Council chambers. City officials expressed appreciation for the historical and cultural significance of the mural cycle and embraced its restoration as a metaphor for the recent reevaluation of history, openness, and public discourse in civic government.⁷⁷ Local residents likewise praised the conservation project, viewing the CMP's social criticism as an "important historical balance" to the well-known art and ideology of Grant Wood and his followers.⁷⁸ Such attitudes

74. Rick Smith, "Mural to Be Restored in Future C.R. Council Chambers," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 1/23/2011. The U.S. government did not apply Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) funds associated with the building's flood repairs to uncover the north wall. Rather, the GSA undertook the mural restoration project as part of its annual art conservation budget.

75. Rick Smith, "Wall-Length Mural Uncovered at the Cedar Rapids' New Council Chambers," KCRG.com, <http://www.kcrg.com/news/local/Wall-length-Mural-Uncovered-at-the-Cedar-Rapids-New-Council-Chambers-118281134.html>.

76. Page Conservation, Inc., to Kathy Erickson (GSA), 6/13/2011, White Papers, FA425-B, GSA.

77. Rick Smith, "Back in Town," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 4/26/2011; Smith, "Mural to Be Restored."

78. Rick Smith, "City Seeking Federal Grant to Uncover Second Mural in Council Chambers," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 2/27/2012.

reflect a recent groundswell in popular taste for Depression-era art, stimulated by the efforts of scholars who have worked to recover and redeem the history of New Deal public art.⁷⁹

As Washington officials at the GSA had hoped, Cedar Rapids leaders and residents began their own campaign to uncover and preserve the remaining three walls. Working in collaboration with the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, the city pursued a historic preservation grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) that would allow them to remove an overcoat of paint from the courtroom's south wall. The application was successful, and in March 2012 the city of Cedar Rapids received a federal grant covering approximately half of the total cost of restoration. Later that spring, the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation (GCRCF) brokered a deal with the city to help cover the remaining conservation costs. Under that arrangement, the city of Cedar Rapids promised to match private donations raised by the foundation. A combination of community fundraising and city funds thus supplied the remainder of the project's budget, and the city began accepting contract proposals for the south wall's restoration before the end of the year.⁸⁰ Scott M. Haskins, an art conservator at Fine Art Conservation Laboratories, executed the second phase of the conservation project, which involved carefully removing several layers of latex paint, repairing and adhering the canvas to the wall, inpainting damaged and abraded mural surfaces, and applying a protective topcoat of varnish (fig. 10).

Community fundraising efforts have continued unabated in hopes of uncovering the remaining two walls of the mural cycle. Last spring, the city of Cedar Rapids and the GCRCF submitted a grant application seeking additional NEA funding to restore

79. The archival research, exhibitions, and publications of Lea Rosson DeLong, Gregg R. Narber, and Kristy Raine have been particularly important contributions to the recovery of Iowa New Deal art. Publications by Erika Doss, Marlene Park, Karal Ann Marling, and Francis O'Connor have brought new perspectives to the history of U.S. federal art programs and helped to generate broad scholarly interest in Depression-era art.

80 Rick Smith, "City Seeking Federal Grant," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 2/27/2012; Rick Smith, "City Hopes to Uncover Second Mural," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 3/1/2012; "Cedar Rapids to Match Donations for Mural Project," *Ames Tribune*, 4/18/2012; Sarah Binder, "Preservation, Restoration Create New Council Home," *Corridor Business Journal*, 12/31/2012.



Figure 10. Inpainting Damage on WPA Mural in City Hall, Cedar Rapids. Courtesy Fine Art Conservation Laboratories, Santa Barbara, California.

the east wall of the mural. Although the city did not receive an award under that program, the NEA encouraged the GCRCF to submit a new proposal for consideration in a separate pool of funding. That alternate strategy was successful, and the city received notification of the grant award in August; however, the award amount of \$20,000 was much smaller than the GCRCF had hoped. A private donor contributed significant funds to help make up the deficit, but the total still fell short of the \$110,000 budget necessary to proceed with conservation work. The city of Cedar Rapids applied for additional assistance through the State Historical Society of Iowa's Historic Resource Development Program, which agreed to provide the remainder of the money.⁸¹

81. The restoration of the mural cycle's east wall is being funded with a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment of the Arts; a \$22,770 grant from the State Historical Society of Iowa's Historic Resource Development Program; and \$62,500 from United Fire Group, Dee Ann McIntyre, and the McIntyre Foundation. See Rick Smith, "Hidden Art: Depression-era Mural to Return to Life in Cedar Rapids City Hall," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 2/27/2015; and "'History Re-

Conservation work on the third wall began in April 2015. Early in the process, conservator Scott Haskins made a surprising and unwelcome discovery about the mural's contentious past. In addition to spending decades beneath layers of latex overcoat, the painting suffered deliberate damage in an attempt to neutralize its offending subject matter. While restoring the far right section of the east wall, Haskins uncovered a glaring omission in Jones's tribute to public health programs. Specifically, the collage-like presentation of newspapers with provocative headlines had been excised from the piece.⁸²

The east wall arguably contained the most controversial imagery of the mural cycle, including Everett Jeffrey's "Evolution of Justice" and Harry Donald Jones's call for the eradication of venereal disease. Even so, the intentional effacement was an unexpected find given the excellent preservation of the other two walls. Photographic documentation of the mural cycle shows the anti-venereal disease campaign intact at the time of its initial whitewashing in 1956, suggesting that the damage to Jones's panel occurred sometime during the paintings' brief period of visibility from 1961 to 1963. Conservators anticipated finding additional damage to the east wall, particularly the long-controversial image of vigilante justice. Fortunately, their predictions have proven unfounded as Jeffrey's infamous lynching scene remains still intact. Cedar Rapids resident Mel Andringa has speculated that court officials may have removed the offensive newspaper imagery to forestall a second whitewashing; however, the actual motivation and details surrounding this event remain murky at best.⁸³

Because the selective removal of the syphilis content caused some residual damage to the physician figure and rendered the female orator floating in blank space, Haskins recommended that his team recreate the missing material. In keeping with con-

stored' City Hall Mural Lecture Series," City of Cedar Rapids, <http://www.cedar-rapids.org/city-news/announcements/pages/history-restored-mural-lecture-series.aspx>.

82. Rick Smith, "Cedar Rapids City Hall Mural's Unveiling Reveals Surprise Absence," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 4/15/2015.

83. Rick Smith, "In City Hall Mural, Hanging Scene Remains Intact," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 4/17/2015.

temporary conservation practice, he proposed to restore the image using a monochromatic palette so that it will complete the scene yet also acknowledge its modern repair. On April 17, the Cedar Rapids Community Development Department approved an amended treatment plan for the mural's restoration. With the assistance of the city's Visual Arts Commission, conservators resumed working to reinstate the CMP's original vision for the east wall.⁸⁴

In conjunction with its official unveiling, Iowa librarians, scholars, curators, and other authorities on the mural cycle led a special lecture series, "History Restored: Law & Culture in City Hall Murals," during the spring months of 2015. Each gathering will host a two- or three-person panel addressing the history of the mural cycle and the lives of its artists.⁸⁵ The community also envisions a permanent interpretive display for visitors to the courtroom. The proposed exhibition would contain photographs and narrative labels to help individuals decipher the myriad artistic and historical threads within the epic mural cycle. The Cedar Rapids Museum of Art also hopes to develop an online exhibition that will include a digital archive of videotaped community conversations and additional materials about the project.⁸⁶

These ongoing efforts help to bring our contemporary lives into contact with the past and to cultivate community identity and memory through a shared appreciation for New Deal art. By fostering public dialogue and sharing archival documents, images

84. Rick Smith, "Section of Cedar Rapids City Hall Mural Recreated," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 4/24/2015.

85. The first event in this series, "The Opening of the Midwest: Six Men and a Mural," took place on March 11, 2015, and featured presentations by Lea Rosson DeLong, guest curator at Iowa State University, and Kristy Raine, archivist at Mount Mercy University. On April 15, 2015, DeLong and Scott Haskins, president of Fine Art Conservation Laboratories, will deliver a lecture titled "A Cultural Inheritance: Cedar Rapids and Beyond—Highlighting the South Wall." The final lecture, "Images of Progress: Advances in Law and Science Depicted on the Newly-Restored East Wall," by Cedar Rapids Museum of Art Executive Director Sean Ulmer, will coincide with the official unveiling of the east wall. A complete lecture calendar, including paper abstracts, may be found on the City of Cedar Rapids website: City of Cedar Rapids, "'History Restored' City Hall Mural Lecture Series," <http://www.cedar-rapids.org/city-news/announcements/pages/history-restored-mural-lecture-series.aspx>.

86. Kristy Raine, e-mail messages to author, 9/10/2014, 3/3/2015, 3/6/2015.

of the mural cycle, and the mural itself with the broadest possible audience, the city of Cedar Rapids and the staff of the GCRCF are engaged in a democratic venture that replicates many of the social aims and educational ideals espoused in *Opening of the Midwest* and *Law and Culture*. Not only does the mutual aid and collaboration of governmental agencies, civic authorities, and local cultural leaders resemble the cooperative spirit of the New Deal federal art programs, but the educational framework surrounding the mural cycle's restoration and future display encourages an active art-viewing experience that, like the paintings themselves, enables the public to consider contemporary society within a broader historical landscape. Faced still with the partial restoration of the CMP's mural cycle, we are sure to contemplate the changing identity and attitudes of Cedar Rapids and Iowa toward local history, social reform, and New Deal art. That encounter offers us an opportunity to glimpse where the community has been, to reflect on the current state of society and our place within it, and, finally, to envision where our collective future might go.

Reconfiguring Protestantism and Minorities: A Review Essay

DOUGLAS FIRTH ANDERSON

Choosing the Jesus Way: American Indian Pentecostals and the Fight for the Indigenous Principle, by Angela Tarango. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. xii, 219 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.95 paperback.

Latino Pentecostals in America: Faith and Politics in Action, by Gastón Espinosa. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014. xi, 505 pp. Photographs, tables, graphs, notes, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

Latino Mennonites: Civil Rights, Faith and Evangelical Culture, by Felipe Hinojosa. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. xvii, 297 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

IOWA IS A MIDDLE PLACE, as Dorothy Schwieder has helped us understand.¹ It is obviously so geographically, but less obviously so socially and culturally. Contemporary Iowa is, for example, neither mostly urban nor mostly rural, mostly Republican nor mostly Democrat; it is, in important ways, both urban and rural and a political swing state. Among other things, being a middle place means that Iowa is and has been a more complicated place than it might seem.

One major area of increasing complication is religion. On the one hand, religious institutions, communities, and believers are and have been important in Iowa since before statehood. (One religious historian has coined the phrase “the Bible Suspender”

1. Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land* (Ames, 1996).

to call attention to the persistently high percentage of religious affiliation in Iowa and the Midwest compared to the more [in]famous Bible Belt.²) On the other hand, the varied currents of religion in Iowa are shifting. Religion in Iowa is being restructured or reconfigured.³ In part, the shifts entail, in the words of religious historian Randall Balmer, a “reconfiguration of Protestantism away from the mainline toward evangelicalism.”⁴ However, the shifts also entail moving from Catholicism or other or no religious traditions to evangelicalism.⁵ (Of course, there are other aspects to the shifts, too, such as moving away from Christian traditions altogether.⁶)

The three volumes reviewed here help highlight some things happening in Protestantism that will only become more significant in Iowa if the state’s current demographic trends continue. Two of the books concern Pentecostalism; the other, Mennonite Anabaptism. In other words, they are about what have until recently been considered minority traditions within Protestantism.

A brief sketch of each of these traditions should help with understanding these books. Pentecostalism is a Protestant movement born in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. It arose largely out of a convergence of Wesleyan and Keswick Holiness traditions. Beyond the classic pietist-evangelical experience of conversion to Christ, these Holiness traditions encouraged believers to seek and manifest a “second blessing” of sanctification or an experience of the “fullness of the Spirit.” Pentecostalism took such convictions a step further. The movement emphasized the continued availability to believers (that is, those

2. Philip Barlow, “A Demographic Portrait: America Writ Small?” in *Religion and Public Life in the Midwest: America’s Common Denominator?* ed. Philip Barlow and Mark Silk (Walnut Creek, CA, 2004), 27.

3. Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton, NJ, 1988).

4. Randall Balmer, “Iowa” in Religion Section, *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard Sisson, Christian Zacher, and Andrew Cayton (Bloomington, IN, 2007), 714.

5. On religion in Iowa and the Midwest, see also the review by Marvin Bergman of two recent volumes by Robert Wuthnow in “Reconsidering the Heartland: A Review Essay,” *Annals of Iowa* 72 (2013), 274–80.

6. See, for instance, Joseph Weber’s study of Fairfield in *Transcendental Meditation in America: How a New Age Movement Remade a Small Town in Iowa* (Iowa City, 2014).

“born again” and “filled with the Spirit”) of the gifts of the Spirit – particularly healing and speaking in tongues – exemplified in the New Testament, most notably at Pentecost. By contrast, Mennonites are part of a Radical or Anabaptist tradition rooted in the Europe of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. Begun by the Dutch ex-priest Menno Simons, Mennonites came to stress a voluntary believers’ church instead of an established church that encompassed all citizens through infant baptism and state sanctions (including “the sword”). Further, they stressed that believers should look to Jesus not just for salvation but for the pattern of life to be lived before his return. This pattern, for them, is perhaps best summarized in Christ’s Sermon on the Mount and his Passion. In the face of prolonged persecution, Mennonites formed disciplined, inward-looking, largely German-speaking agricultural communities, and in the name of the Prince of Peace they refused to exert force either on their own behalf or on behalf of governments.

Angela Tarango’s *Choosing the Jesus Way* is narrower than its subtitle suggests. It is not a study of American Indian Pentecostals overall, but only of those in the Assemblies of God (AG). The denominational focus is understandable, though. The AG has the most extensive American Indian archives of any Pentecostal denomination. Further, it is not only a clearly structured institution, but it also has a well-developed mission theology.

Tarango examines the beginnings and growth of American Indian AG missions, congregations, and leadership from 1918 through 1996. The topics covered are varied and interwoven chronologically. For example, she discusses white AG missionaries to American Indians (in places as diverse as Arizona and the New York-Ontario border region); Native missionaries; Native Pentecostals and healing; the formation and development of an AG Bible School for American Indians (now the American Indian College in Arizona); the developments that led to the formation in 1996 of the Native American Fellowship in the AG; and the importance of the indigenous principle in AG mission theory (and its fitful growth in practice). As suggested by the book’s subtitle, the indigenous principle is central for Tarango. “Christianity should be rooted in the culture of the missionized” (5), she writes, such that a self-perpetuating indigenous church can flourish.

Mindful of the dark side of Christianity's record with Native Americans, Tarango (who self-identifies as Latina Catholic) develops an argument that supports what American Indian AG leaders have stressed: Christian Indians are "real" Indians. "American Indian Pentecostals," she maintains, "and a few liberal-minded white female missionaries took . . . the indigenous principle . . . and gave birth to a new form of religious practice that allowed them to negotiate their own complicated place within the AG" (3).

Overall, she makes her case. AG American Indians have sought ways to be Indian Pentecostals and to manage their affairs as equals with their non-Indian fellow believers. Indigenization included not only growing and sustaining their own congregations but also "reshaping" Pentecostal healing so that it became "a Gospel of healing – not just from illness and alcoholism, but also from the bitterness of past wrongs and hatred of white people" (98).

Her analysis is not without some weak points, however. Her evidence is thin when she deals with how much of traditional tribal ways were acceptable to Native AG leaders (89–95) and also why some Native evangelists sometimes dressed "like an Indian" in regalia that was, at times, not of their tribe (103–7). The denominational records and interviews of white and American Indian leaders on which Tarango's analysis is based are undeniably important, yet they limit understanding things "from the bottom up." Despite centering her analysis on the indigenous principle, her book provides only glimpses of the "lived experience" of Native Pentecostals beyond the leaders.

Understanding Pentecostalism from the bottom up is less of a problem with Gastón Espinosa's *Latino Pentecostals in America*. Like Tarango, Espinosa focuses on the AG, not all Latino Pentecostals. However, whereas American Indians had 190 congregations in the AG in 2007 (Tarango, 2), Latinos had some 2,665 AG congregations in the early twenty-first century (Espinosa, 3). Espinosa's book is based on massive amounts of archival, survey, and interview materials gathered over some 20 years. While his book is sometimes lacking in sustained analysis, coherence, and liveliness, the work as a whole is stunning in its depth and scope.

Espinosa makes much the same point as Tarango, but without the *indigenous principle* phrase: "Latino Pentecostals have struggled over the past one hundred years to exercise voice,

agency, and leadership in the AG, in Latino Protestantism, and in American public life" (13). As Native AGs maintained that Pentecostal Christian Indians were "real" Indians, so, argues Espinosa, "the Latino AG . . . succeeded in empowering ordinary people to create an international grassroots movement that leveled the playing field for the poor, oppressed, and working class" in ways that should make class-conscious socialists envious (187). He does establish beyond any credible challenge that Latino Pentecostals are not only key to the contemporary growth of the AG but are also finding a place in the public square that does not conform to current political orthodoxies of right or left.

Espinosa establishes that Latinos were among the earliest converts and missionaries at the beginnings of Pentecostalism in Los Angeles in 1906. Latino Pentecostals quickly took the movement to Texas. By the 1920s, the AG in Texas and California had significant numbers of Latino congregations, preachers, and evangelists, including women in the latter two roles. Also by the 1920s, Latinos of the AG were establishing themselves in Puerto Rico and New York City. White leadership could be patronizing, but Latino self-determination within the AG asserted itself such that by 1971 there were four Latino AG districts fully equal with Euro-American districts. Since then, the four have grown to 14. Espinosa also integrates data on Latino Pentecostal social views (he directed or managed six of the eight surveys he uses). He offers solid evidence to support his conclusion that "after a century of living quietly in the shadows and margins of North American religion and society, Latino Assemblies of God leaders and laity are increasingly speaking out about their personal faith in Jesus Christ and the needs of the poor and immigrants" (418).

Latinos are also Mennonites. The Mennonite denomination that most sought Latinos was the "Old" Mennonite Church (MC), and so Felipe Hinojosa's *Latino Mennonites* focuses on them as Tarango and Espinosa focus on the AG. There are far fewer Latino Mennonites than Latinos in the AG, fewer even than Native Americans in the AG. In 2001 the "Old" Mennonite Church joined other groups to form the Mennonite Church USA, which has roughly 80 Latino congregations (214).

Unlike the other two authors, Hinojosa and his family are integral to his analysis.

My parents [from Texas] first met ethnic Mennonites in Archbold, Ohio, where they worked picking tomatoes on Mennonite-owned farms in the 1960s. My grandmother, Manuela Tijerina, liked that Mennonite farmers honored the Lord's day by not working on Sundays and that Mennonite missionaries offered church services in Spanish for migrant farmworkers. Since those days, both the Tijerina and Hinojosa sides of my family have been integrally tied to the Mennonite experience (ix).

Although less exhaustive than Espinosa, and while paralleling Espinosa and Tarango in highlighting the self-determining trajectory of his group, Hinojosa develops his account in a way that complements Espinosa's analysis of the social views of Latino Pentecostals. Latino Mennonites, according to Hinojosa, participate in a Latino "*cultura evangélica*" that ties them to other Latino Protestants as much or more than to "white Mennonites from the rural Midwest" in language, worship style, faith healing, and focusing on the social needs of the community (8-9). Moreover, an alliance of African American and Latino Mennonites in the late 1960s and early 1970s that drew on the larger civil rights movement of the time helped "shape and define ethnic and religious identity for Latinos in the Mennonite Church" (3).

Hinojosa makes his case by tracing Mennonite missions in Chicago and south Texas barrios as far back as the 1920s and 1930s. As the MC moved outward during World War II and after by combining evangelism and social service, Latinos in Puerto Rico as well as the Midwest and Texas began to form Mennonite communities of their own. By 1968, Latinos joined with African American Mennonites in a race conference connected with the MC's Urban Racial Council, which, in turn, became the Minority Ministries Council a year later. Despite unease over African American dominance of the council, Latino Mennonites "resonated even more with the religious and Protestant underpinnings of the black freedom movement and preachers like Martin Luther King Jr." than with Latin American liberation theology (78). Hinojosa shows that the farmworker movement, a cross-cultural youth convention in 1972, and MC women's conferences were each part of the mix that further fostered Latino Mennonites "staking out a political space in the church by drafting policy statements, planting more than 50 congregations, publishing

Mennonite literature in Spanish, and organizing a Bible school” (175). Such developments were important in shaping the new 2001 Mennonite Church USA, which “is today more evangelical, more politically involved, and more urban, and its Latino and African American members . . . more charismatic in their worship styles” (214) than was the “Old” MC.

So what do these three volumes of cutting-edge religious history research have to do with Iowa and the Midwest? Iowa is virtually invisible in each. Further, each book is about a minority group in a minority Protestant denomination. Neither the Assemblies of God nor the Mennonite Church USA has replaced Roman Catholicism, the Lutheran denominations, or the United Methodist Church as one of Iowa’s top religious groups in numbers or influence. Yet. The reconfiguring of American religion continues apace, and it includes evangelicalism. Evangelicalism has always been broader in compass, belief, and practice than its most combative proponents might suggest.⁷ Collectively, the books reviewed here offer strong reasons to avoid, in Hinojosa’s words, “the narrow interpretation of ‘evangelicalism’ as yet another code for white Protestant American identity” (8). African American churches—largely Protestant—have always had an uneasy place within evangelicalism. These three books help show that American Indian and Latino Protestants also do not fully conform to white evangelical notions of doctrinal purity, worship decorum, political conservatism, or individualism.

Further, both the Assemblies of God and the Mennonite Church USA are denominations with midwestern headquarters (in Missouri and Indiana-Kansas, respectively). Denominational web directories indicate that out of 19 Mennonite congregations in Iowa, two are Latino, and that out of 130 AG congregations in Iowa, one is Native American and five are Latino. As Iowa’s population continues to change, these numbers are likely to increase. These three books can help us understand a bit better not just important streams within American evangelicalism but some of Iowa’s present and future religious landscape as well.

7. For a recent study of evangelicalism that seeks to make this point, among others, see Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (New York, 2014).

Book Reviews and Notices

Fresh Water Passages: The Trade and Travels of Peter Pond, by David Chapin. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. xiv, 367 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Claiborne A. Skinner is an instructor at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy in Aurora, Illinois. He is the author of *The Upper Country: French Enterprise in the Colonial Great Lakes* (2008).

It is strange to think that 250 years ago Iowa was not so much the heartland of America as the edge of the known world. To be sure, French traders had pushed up the Missouri and the Arkansas Rivers, and some had reached as far as Sante Fe and Taos. In the north, Pierre Gaultier La Vérendrye had explored west to the upper Missouri River from Lake Winnipeg. But those efforts had not been sustained and, with the Conquest of New France, had halted completely. As the British assumed control of the continent, their grasp of its geography really ended at the west bank of the Mississippi, the Red River of the North, and Lake Winnipeg. The great push to the prairies and the Pacific would fall to a new generation of explorers, including the New Englander Peter Pond.

Born in Connecticut, Pond had served in the French and Indian War. Sizing up his prospects at its conclusion, he had gone west with the fur trade first out of Albany, New York, and then Montreal. Over the next 40 years, he would become a noted trader, explorer, and cartographer. David Chapin has done a remarkable job of bringing this important yet mysterious character to life. In the process, he illuminates the early years of the North West Company. He also does fascinating work tying Pond's famous maps to a global quest for knowledge. The man was not simply a fur trader with a talent for maps. He kept abreast of exploration in general and tried to tie his work to what was being learned about the contemporary Pacific.

For me, the most fascinating part of the book is how Pond dealt with the Revolutionary War. His relatives in Connecticut became staunch patriots while he hewed to the British side in his pursuit of the fur trade. After the war, he returned home but, concluding that the Confederation Congress was unlikely to fund his plans for western exploration, returned to Montreal in pursuit of backers. From the evidence presented, it does not appear that he held strong Loyalist sympathies; he was simply a man who followed the fur trade, and Canada and the British Empire

afforded him the best opportunity of doing so. Moreover, his family and old neighbors appear to have held no grudge against him for it. In perhaps the most touching episode in the book, Pond returns home to Connecticut dressed in the finery of a *bourgeois gentilhomme* of Montreal. He was thought odd by the sober Calvinist merchants of the town, but there was no hostility to him as a Loyalist. It would seem that by the late 1780s the passions of war had dissipated and the world had moved on.

Chapin is to be congratulated for the research that went into this book. He has gone back to the primary documents to address a number of controversial previously reported incidents in Pond's career and found that they probably never happened. He has also cleared up a number of details of where Pond was when. I suspect that this will be the definitive biography of the man for a long time to come. The impressive detail sometimes comes at a price, however. The author's quest to nail down the details of Pond's career sometimes makes for heavy going for lay readers. A more serious complaint relates to the book's maps. Most of Pond's career was in the far northwest, and his geographical insights were largely associated with that region. It is unfamiliar territory for most of us, and the maps reproduced or interpreted in the text are too small to provide much help to a reader seeking to keep track of Pond's vast travels.

Conflicted Mission: Faith, Disputes and Deception on the Dakota Frontier, by Linda M. Clemmons. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2014. 274 pp. Map, illustrations, graphs, notes, bibliography, index. \$22.95 paperback; \$15.99 e-book.

Reviewer Michael Knock is assistant professor of history at Clarke University. His Ph.D. dissertation (University of Notre Dame, 1996) was "'Alone with Sitting Bull's People': The Dakota Indian Mission of the Congregational Church, 1870-1937."

Conflict is at the heart of many cultural interactions, especially where religion is involved. That is not news. What is news are the conflicts that missionaries often have with one another, their spouses, and their parent organization. In some cases it is these conflicts that pose the greatest challenge to mission work. That is the idea behind Linda M. Clemmons's *Conflicted Mission: Faith, Disputes and Deception on the Dakota Frontier*. The book furthers our understanding of the sometimes turbulent relationships that characterized the work of missionaries who represented the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) on the Minnesota frontier in the decades prior to the Dakota War of 1862.

The expected conflicts are here. For example, the missionaries often clashed with the Native peoples they hoped to convert and “civilize.” Many of those problems can be linked to the attitudes that the missionaries carried with them. The Dakotas’ religious beliefs, Samuel Pond wrote, “were a strange medley of silly whims and abominable falsehoods; and their superstitious practices were a compound of ludicrous follies and disgusting absurdities” (31). The Dakota often responded to the missionaries’ cultural bias with a show of resistance. For example, when Stephen Riggs spoke out against a war party against the Ojibwe, a group of Dakota killed two of the mission’s cows at Lac qui Parle. One of the Dakota also removed his daughter from the mission school (70).

Less obvious—and therefore fascinating—conflicts are those that occurred within the mission and with the ABCFM. Clemmons tells the story of the missionaries’ growing appreciation for the richness and complexity of the Dakota language, for example, and the problems that change in attitude caused. Missionaries new to the frontier brought with them the bias that Dakota was a primitive language that would be easy to learn. Experience, however, taught them the complexity of the language. Some even claimed that Dakota was the equal of English and that its speakers deserved Minnesota citizenship. White settlers disagreed, putting the mission in conflict with its white neighbors.

The missionaries’ changing perceptions of the Dakota led to the kinds of deception referred to in the subtitle of Clemmons’s book, as the missionaries “consciously attempted to hide, or at least obscure, the reality of their work among the Dakota. They deliberately omitted information from their letters and reports. At times, they included information that they specified was not to be published” (216).

It is the little conflicts that are the most interesting. The missionaries’ struggle to balance maintaining a mission with learning the Dakota language and raising a family overwhelmed their initial evangelical zeal. As Mary Riggs wrote to her brother, “There is little romance in our circumstances” (118). Indeed, according to Clemmons, female missionaries were especially taxed. This is obvious in another letter written by Mary Riggs, who reported, “Agitation of spirits has unfitted me for writing, and even now, notwithstanding all my efforts to the contrary, I fear that mental depression arising from a variety of causes will weigh me down” (60). Ultimately, the stress over inadequate salaries and a lack of domestic help drove a number of missionaries from the field.

The stories that Clemmons tells are interesting, but her manner of telling them sometimes proves problematic. Because each chapter begins with a thorough summary of the main points to come, the bulk of the chapter in which the author fleshes them out seems redundant.

Nor does Clemmons tell the story of conflict from the perspective of the Dakota. She is up front with the reader about this in her introduction. This is primarily a story of white Americans told from the perspective of white Americans.

Still, *Conflicted Mission* is an excellent resource for those interested in studying the challenges of mission work on the Minnesota frontier. It also offers an interesting take on mission work. As Clemmons writes in her introduction, "Antebellum missionaries were not supposed to change; indeed, the very nature of missionary work in the early nineteenth century was designed to be unidirectional, with superior missionaries ministering to and changing supposedly inferior heathens" (3). *Conflicted Mission* confronts that stereotype by showing a dynamic mission that was constantly in flux much to the surprise of the ABCFM, the government, and certainly the missionaries themselves.

Race and Rights: Fighting Slavery and Prejudice in the Old Northwest, 1830–1870, by Dana Elizabeth Weiner. Early American Places Series. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2013. xii, 327 pp. Maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$38.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Kristen Anderson is assistant professor of history at Webster University in St. Louis. She is working on a book manuscript tentatively titled "Abolitionizing Missouri: German Immigrants and Racial Ideology in Nineteenth-Century America."

In *Race and Rights: Fighting Slavery and Prejudice in the Old Northwest, 1830–1870*, Dana Weiner examines the struggles of abolitionists and black rights advocates in the Old Northwest states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois. Her goal is to expand our understanding of the antislavery movement by examining it in this relatively understudied region. She maintains that, although historians of abolition have generally focused on abolitionist activities in cities in the Northeast, many antislavery activists considered the Old Northwest region vital to the struggle against slavery; they thought that the future of the country lay in the West and wanted to influence its development.

In particular, Weiner argues that understanding the debate over race and slavery in the Old Northwest is necessary if we are to build a complete understanding of the evolution of racial politics in the United States during the nineteenth century. She argues that black rights were even more restricted in the Old Northwest than in other parts of the North. Officially outlawing slavery in the Northwest Ordinance did not remove issues of slavery or race from the region; slavery continued to exist in modified forms, and racial distinctions were written directly

into the laws. As a result, the struggle against slavery in the region also became part of a larger struggle for black rights that attempted to overturn laws limiting the lives of blacks in the area or attempting to keep them from even moving there. Weiner argues that abolitionists incorporated this struggle for black rights into their larger struggle against slavery, as they argued that the black codes of the Old Northwest states were examples of how the power of the slaveholding states affected even what was done in supposedly free states. She further argues that these antislavery activists expressed ideas about civil liberties that helped shift the ways Americans thought about and talked about rights.

The book is organized both thematically and chronologically. Two opening chapters provide background on black rights in the Old Northwest and on the origins of antislavery activism there. The book continues with three thematic chapters, each devoted to one of the rights that activists struggled for and utilized in the course of their fight against slavery: freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech. Weiner details the ways antiabolition forces in the Old Northwest contested all three of these rights. Antiabolitionists denied that abolitionists had a right to write or speak publicly against slavery or in favor of black rights on the grounds that doing so challenged widely held community norms and threatened the peace of the region and nation. As a result, white and black abolitionists not only had to make a case against slavery, but even had to convince their communities that they had a right to do so. The book concludes with two chapters on the immediate pre-Civil War period and the persistence of racism in the region after emancipation.

Weiner's book represents a useful expansion of the literature on the abolitionist movement. Although much of the story will be familiar to those conversant with that literature, Weiner demonstrates how a focus on the Old Northwest adds depth. In addition to demonstrating the inseparable link between abolitionism and the struggle for black rights in the region, she also examines abolition in a rural setting of small communities rather than in the large cities of the Northeast. She argues that the experience she describes here might actually be the more typical one, given that most Americans lived in communities that looked more like the small towns and dispersed rural communities of Ohio than they did like Boston or Philadelphia.

The book will be of interest to those interested in the history of the Midwest more generally, as it is an excellent study of race relations and the struggle over slavery in that region. Weiner demonstrates clearly that the Midwest was not removed from the struggle over slavery but rather was very much involved in and divided by it. The book is a good

example of a regional study that is also very local in its focus. Weiner does talk about the region in general but often focuses on certain specific communities in some detail, providing a good example of how to link the local, regional, and national in a scholarly study.

Soldiering for Freedom: How the Union Army Recruited, Trained, and Deployed the U.S. Colored Troops, by Bob Luke and John David Smith. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. How Things Worked series. x, 131 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$39.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer David Brodnax Sr. is professor of history at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois. He is the author of "'Will They Fight? Ask the Enemy': Iowa's African American Regiment in the Civil War" (*Annals of Iowa*, 2007).

Early in the Civil War, Iowa Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood rejected a proposal to place a company of black men into a white regiment, but by 1863 he supported the creation of a separate black regiment, declaring, "When this war is over & we have summed up the entire loss of life it has imposed on the country I shall not have any regrets if it is found that a part of the dead are *niggers* and that *all* are not white men" (quoted in Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom's Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War* [1998], 86). Such mixed and changing attitudes held by many government officials about whether and eventually how to use black troops is the subject of this short monograph by historians Bob Luke and John David Smith. Published as part of Johns Hopkins University Press's How Things Worked series, *Soldiering for Freedom* employs a wide array of secondary sources and some published military documents and other primary sources to summarize the process by which African Americans joined and served in the Union Army during the Civil War.

In the first two years of the war, Luke and Smith argue, Northern blacks who attempted to join the military were turned away, while a handful of officers in the South who tried to recruit blacks were thwarted by government resistance and by their own strong-arm tactics. After the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect in 1863, the government massively expanded recruitment into the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Here Luke and Smith give special attention to the efforts of Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas, who played an important role in the formation of Iowa's 60th U.S. Colored Infantry. The authors next focus on the white officers who led USCT regiments, describing their varying motives for seeking such positions and how they were chosen and trained; there is also a brief description of the largely unsuccessful efforts

of African Americans to gain appointments as officers. Another chapter describes the process of initiating thousands of former slaves and free blacks into the military. Including details such as what black soldiers carried in their mess kits and how they were taught to fire rifles as well as the fundraising efforts of black women on the homefront, Luke and Smith provide a vivid description of army life. The book concludes with the USCT's combat history, including the Battle of Milliken's Bend, where black troops fought alongside the 23rd Iowa Volunteer Regiment. Hindered by the desire of many white officers to use them simply as laborers, by a lack of proper training and weaponry, and by Confederate policy of murdering those who tried to surrender, the troops had a mixed record under fire but nonetheless fought bravely.

As the subtitle suggests, *Soldiering for Freedom* focuses on the actions of white government and military officials. Successful efforts by recruiters, for instance, are explained by their respectful engagement with blacks and government cooperation, while black agency is not an important factor. The murder of a white USCT recruiter by Confederate sympathizers is highlighted; the dangers faced by African Americans who fled from slavery to enlist and by the family members they left behind are not. There is thus a discrepancy between the book's stated goal and what it actually does. Otherwise, the monograph is a concise and informative overview, best suited for middle and high school courses and perhaps introductory college courses. There is also an exhaustive and useful list of suggested readings for those interested in learning more about this pivotal time in American history.

Lincoln and the Military, by John F. Marszalek. The Concise Lincoln Library. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014. xiv, 139 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$24.95 hardcover.

Lincoln and the War's End, by John C. Waugh. The Concise Lincoln Library. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014. ix, 136 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 hardcover.

Lincoln's Assassination, by Edward Steers Jr. The Concise Lincoln Library. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014. 155 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$24.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Patricia Ann Owens, now retired, lives in Lawrenceville, Illinois. She has written extensively about Abraham Lincoln and the Lincoln Administration.

For decades "Get right with Lincoln" has been the mantra for many historians, writers, and politicians. A slew of new books hit the already sagging shelf of Lincoln books during the bicentennial of his birth; now,

with the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, even more volumes have been written about the sixteenth president and his handling of the war. One might ask, do we need more books about Lincoln? The answer: of course we do. Books that offer new interpretations and new scholarship are welcomed by professional historians and laypersons alike. The three books reviewed here are examples. Southern Illinois University Press has undertaken to publish a Concise Lincoln Library: short, focused books about Lincoln's life, his times, and his legacy. Written for all audiences, this collection is a tour de force.

John Marszalek traces the evolution of Lincoln's military knowledge and his application of it during the Civil War. As a young man living in New Salem, Illinois, Lincoln served in the Black Hawk War. He never saw any action, but he did gain rudimentary military skills and, most importantly, learned what it was like to be a common soldier, something that served him well as commander-in-chief.

In nine chapters, each titled with a Lincoln quote, Marszalek presents a brief history of the Civil War, focusing mainly on Lincoln and the qualities that made him a great leader and president. Lincoln was a man of courage and a man with a capacity to learn. During the early years of his presidency, Lincoln relied on the advice of his top military commanders, including Winfield Scott, who had served in the army since the War of 1812. A succession of generals would lead the Union Army before Lincoln appointed Ulysses S. Grant as supreme commander. He, along with Sherman and Sheridan, engaged in total war—what some have called a scorched-earth policy. Lincoln's evolution as a military tactician and strategist led him to conclude that this was the way to achieve victory.

The tenets of the Declaration of Independence and the powers granted by the Constitution shepherded Lincoln through the Civil War. Not only did Lincoln's military knowledge increase as the war progressed; so, too, did his understanding that a Union victory was tied to the abolition of slavery. As Marszalek writes, "The winner in war is the individual who approaches the inevitable chaos of the battlefield and the politics of the nation's capital with determination and an open mind" (113). That is why Lincoln remains America's greatest military president.

In *Lincoln and the War's End*, John C. Waugh writes about Lincoln's role in the final five months of the Civil War. Waugh reminds readers that Lincoln's reelection in 1864 was a "watershed in American history" (1). No president had been reelected to a second term since Andrew Jackson in 1832. Most importantly, Lincoln's election came in the midst of a civil war: the Constitution worked. The battle and military information in the book's 12 chapters is concise and succinctly presented.

The focus is on the working relationship between Lincoln and Grant, Sherman's march through the Carolinas, the defeat of the Army of Northern Virginia, and the Union capture of Petersburg and Richmond. Also included are key political events such as Lincoln's Second Inaugural, passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, and Lincoln's visit to Richmond.

Preeminent Lincoln assassination scholar Edward Steers Jr. tenders a fast-paced overview of the assassination, including John Wilkes Booth's original plan to capture President Lincoln and deliver him to the Confederacy, the decision to kill Lincoln, information concerning the background of the conspirators (especially Mary Surratt and Dr. Samuel Mudd), the pursuit of Booth after his escape from Washington, and Booth's death. In 13 chapters Steers cuts through the myths surrounding the assassination, focusing on the people involved and explaining the event that so captivates students of history.

Many books have been written about Lincoln's assassination. Most focus on the "what" — facts and details. Steers writes about the "why." Why did Booth assassinate President Lincoln? Key to answering this question, and to understanding the assassination, is slavery. Lincoln was dedicated to emancipation. As the war progressed, he realized that a Union victory was tied to the abolition of slavery. Booth was a dedicated white supremacist and totally supported the institution of slavery. Steers writes, "Booth believed that, like Julius Caesar, Lincoln was a tyrant usurping civil liberties while at the same time destroying Southern culture, requiring his removal by any means possible" (3).

A highlight of all three books is the authors' use of primary sources, especially the words of Lincoln. Each book is well documented. Waugh's volume includes a valuable bibliography of cited sources.

Lincoln was a product of the western frontier, what is now the Midwest. He possessed qualities of honesty and friendliness. As current residents of that region, we are proud to say that we, too, retain those same qualities. Lincoln spent three days in Iowa; like people everywhere across this nation, we want to know this man and claim him as one of our own. These volumes help us do that and help us "get right with Lincoln."

Lincoln's Bishop: A President, A Priest, and the Fate of 300 Dakota Sioux Warriors, by Gustav Niebuhr. New York: HarperOne, 2014. xi, 210 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.99 hardcover.

Reviewer Linda Clemmons is associate professor of history at Illinois State University. She is the author of *Conflicted Mission: Faith, Disputes, and Deception on the Dakota Frontier* (2014).

Gustav Niebuhr, an associate professor of newspaper and online journalism, argues that Episcopal Bishop Henry Whipple was "a one-man

movement seeking respect and protection for American Indians" (xii). To support that statement, Niebuhr focuses on Whipple's involvement in the Dakota War of 1862, which culminated in the hanging of 38 Dakota men and the exile of the remaining Dakota from Minnesota. According to Niebuhr, the number hanged would have been much higher (over 300) without the involvement of Whipple, who pleaded the Dakotas' case to President Lincoln through letters, personal contacts, and a meeting with Lincoln in September 1862.

Lincoln's Bishop is not a complete biography of Henry Whipple. Rather, Niebuhr focuses on events that influenced Whipple to lobby for Indian reform. In the early chapters of the book, Niebuhr discusses important figures in Whipple's childhood who drew him to Indian reform. His religious training as an Episcopal priest also influenced his later missionary work. Whipple headed churches in Rome, New York, and Chicago before his appointment as the first Episcopal bishop of Minnesota. Niebuhr highlights Whipple's growing conviction, at each stage in his career, that federal Indian policy was corrupt and harmed native peoples.

In August 1862, shortly after Whipple moved to Minnesota, war broke out on the Lower Dakota Reservation. The war lasted six weeks and was deadly for settlers as well as Dakotas. Following the war, Dakota men were imprisoned, received hasty trials, and more than 300 were sentenced to be hanged. After the trials, most Minnesotans demanded vengeance: they insisted that all of the convicted men must be hanged and the rest of the Dakotas exterminated or removed entirely from Minnesota.

Niebuhr argues that Whipple was one of the few voices urging restraint during and after the war. While most Minnesotans attributed the war to the Dakotas' "savage" nature, Whipple placed blame on the federal government's "venality in running a dangerously corrupt Indian affairs system" (41). Across Minnesota and during a trip east he pleaded his case for reforming Indian affairs; he also wrote to Lincoln asking him to reexamine the sentences of the 300 men who were sentenced to hang. Niebuhr admits that historians cannot know for sure whether Whipple influenced Lincoln's decision to reduce the number to 38, but "it is difficult to imagine that Whipple's visit did not count in the president's decision" (185).

Niebuhr's background in journalism is apparent in *Lincoln's Bishop*; his prose is accessible and his story is engaging. Additional historical context, however, would have complicated Niebuhr's contention that Whipple "placed Christianity above race and ethnicity—specifically focusing on Native Americans—at a time when few whites, clergy or otherwise, did likewise" (xiii-xiii). Historians of antebellum missions

have argued that missionaries of the era placed “grace” above “race.” Far from being a lone voice, Whipple’s belief that Native Americans could adopt Christianity and become “civilized” was common among evangelical Protestant missionaries of the time.

Lincoln’s Bishop also underplays the importance of other Protestant missionaries in Minnesota. Missionaries affiliated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had worked among the Dakota since 1835, predating the Episcopalians by almost three decades. Niebuhr makes the case that Whipple was tenacious in his desire to reform Indian affairs and was adept at promoting his ideas, but he was not the only voice for reform on the Minnesota frontier. It is also important to examine how the Dakota responded to Whipple’s assimilationist program, which demanded that they change their culture and religion.

Niebuhr introduces the public to Bishop Whipple, who played a key role in antebellum debates over federal Indian policy. He also discusses the Dakota War of 1862, which is often lost in the larger history of the Civil War. While Niebuhr successfully shows that Whipple demanded reform, he does not acknowledge that the bishop’s efforts were only part of a larger evangelical critique of U.S. Indian policy.

Laura Ingalls Wilder: American Writer on the Prairie, by Sallie Ketcham. New York: Routledge, 2015. Routledge Historical Americans. x, 169 pp. Notes, documents, bibliography, index. \$155.00 hardcover, \$34.95 paperback.

Reviewer John J. Fry is professor of history at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois. An authority on the life and works of Laura Ingalls Wilder, he is also the editor of *Almost Pioneers: One Couple’s Homesteading Adventure in the West* (2013).

The life and works of Laura Ingalls Wilder have an enduring fascination for Americans. The eight Little House books have sold millions of copies since their first publication during the 1930s and 1940s. Year after year, books about Wilder are enjoyed by both an enthusiastic core of fans and a broader group of interested readers.

Sallie Ketcham’s book is in a series titled Historical Americans meant to be purchased by academic libraries or used in college or university history courses. Each book includes a section of primary source documents; in this volume, documents by and about Wilder take up about 40 of the book’s 160 pages of text. Each book in the series also has a companion website that includes images, additional documentary sources, and links to video.

The six chapters of the book proceed chronologically. The first three chapters address the years described in the Little House books: the late 1860s, the 1870s, and the early 1880s. Laura married Almanzo Wilder in 1885. Chapter 4 describes the couple's early marriage and family life until Laura began writing during the 1910s. Chapter 5 shows how her writing career developed from columns in farm newspapers to autobiographical children's fiction, and ends with her death. A brief sixth chapter assesses Wilder's legacy.

Ketcham draws on some previous biographies of Wilder and makes use of archival documents by and about Wilder, including Wilder's unpublished memoir, *Pioneer Girl*. (That memoir has since been published by the South Dakota State Historical Society in 2014; the small publisher has struggled to keep up with demand, with 125,000 copies in print by early May 2015.) Ketcham provides background to the Ingalls and Wilder families' lives and sets many of the events from the Little House books in historical context. The last chapter considers debates within Wilder scholarship and the broader academic community, including how much Wilder's daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, contributed to the Little House books and the books' depiction of Native Americans.

All in all, the book provides many details about Wilder's life and work. Unfortunately, there is not a firm narrative thread or theme to tie the material in the book together. The book's subtitle describes Wilder as a writer on the prairie, and the chapter titles situate Wilder in the American West, but there is no overarching thesis for the book as a whole or for the individual chapters. Some themes do recur throughout the book, including the expectations of late nineteenth-century women; Laura's love for nature and the western landscape; and her disappointment that she could not pursue an education. Within each chapter, however, it is completely unclear why particular topics are pursued or why particular details are given. At several points, the author gives excellent descriptions of extant photographs of Laura and her family; the publisher should have published those photographs in the book or on the website.

Laura Ingalls Wilder: American Writer on the Prairie may be profitably read as an introduction to and an appreciation of the life and works of Wilder. It might be suitable for college courses on the American West or rural history. Those looking for clearer biographies would be better served by William Anderson's *Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Biography* (1992) for younger readers; John Miller's *Becoming Laura Ingalls Wilder* (1998), the most complete and scholarly biography to date; or Pamela Smith Hill's *Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Writer's Life* (2007), a briefer, argumentative work.

Iowa Historic Schools Highlighting Victorian Influence: Photo Study of Architecture, by Sandra Kessler Host. Council Bluffs: Sandra Kessler Host, 2014. 126 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, bibliography. \$27.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Lucy Townsend is professor emerita at Northern Illinois University, past president of the Country School Association of America, and editor of the *Country School Journal*.

The seeds of Sandra Kessler Host's historical study were sown while she was participating in a community project to restore Willow Tree/Richland #1 School, built in 1883 near Odebolt, Iowa. To ensure the authenticity of the restored rural school, the group consulted a restoration architect who identified Victorian features in the school's original structure. That revelation led Host—curator for the Iowa Rural Schools Museum of Odebolt, descendant of a pioneer family, and an alumna of the school—to embark on a three-year study to uncover an answer to this question: How common were Victorian features in Iowa rural schools built in the Victorian era (1860–1900)? Host set out to find, examine, and photograph all standing historic country schools in Iowa's 99 counties. She photographed ornate features considered to be Victorian and explained why later generations ignored or effaced them. She assigned photos to categories to illustrate different architectural features as the schools evolved. She also included other matter, such as photos of Victorian clothing styles, the Willow Tree restoration process, and maps. In addition, she explored Iowa's history during the late 1800s to place the schools in a broader context.

The result is a coffee-table book divided into an introduction and preface, three chapters, a conclusion, and four appendixes. The first chapter explores Victorian influences on Iowa rural schools built between 1860 and 1900. The second includes current photos of rural schools that have remnants of Victorian features. The third contains current photos of 220 Iowa historic schools placed in six categories: schools built during the settlement years (before 1870); town schools; historic religious/private schools; maintained first-generation rural schools (built before 1910); second-generation rural schools (built after 1910); and consolidated rural township schools built in the early 1900s.

In the conclusion, Host answers her initial research question by asserting that about 3,787 (30 percent) of rural schools built in Iowa during the nineteenth century had Victorian features. She also concludes that the restored Willow Tree/Richland #1 School is an excellent example of country schools having Victorian features. She explains farmers' ability to adorn these schools by asserting that more than a million farm settlers had the skills and financial resources to build schools with Victorian influences.

Over 25 percent of the book is devoted to appendixes. Appendix A identifies Iowa's standing historic schools by county. Appendix B lists Iowa's historic schools on the National Register of Historic Places. Appendix C contains a narrative of Iowa's rural settlement and the role of rural schools in that story. Appendix D includes a bibliography and suggested readings.

Host's book is a treasure trove of more than 400 beautiful photographs and accompanying text. Like most coffee-table books, it is oversized, hard covered, and ideal for display on a table. Unlike most coffee-table books, it includes long prose passages, definitions of terms, and historical analysis based on original research. Thus, it would be a valuable resource for anyone studying or restoring country schools.

The book has two weaknesses, however. First, its organization is sometimes confusing. For example, the research question (repeated often) concerns schools built between 1860 and 1900. Yet later the dates are 1860 to 1910. Host does not clearly explain that difference. A second weakness is the book's sprawling organization. For example, the table of contents lists six categories of current photos of Iowa historic schools, but Host later tacks on two more: unmaintained one-room rural schools and rural schools repurposed for other uses. Despite such weaknesses, Host's book would be a valuable resource for those who attended one-room schools, state and local historical societies, and libraries in Iowa's towns, cities, and universities.

County Capitols: The Courthouses of South Dakota, by Arthur L. Rusch, with an introductory essay by Jason Haug. Historical Preservation Series 5. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2014. vi, 170 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paperback.

Reviewer Wesley I. Shank is professor emeritus of architecture at Iowa State University. He is the author of "The Demise of the County Courthouse Tower in Iowa: A Study of Early 20th-Century Cultural and Architectural Change" (*Annals of Iowa*, 1992).

County Capitols is a historical encyclopedia of South Dakota county courthouses. For the building now serving each county, Arthur Rusch provides a concise entry with a photograph and caption listing address, construction dates, architect, contractor, and cost. He includes a historical sketch of the county and of the construction of its previous and present courthouses, a detailed architectural description of the present courthouse, and occasionally photographs of earlier ones. Notes identify sources.

A South Dakota native, the author is a lawyer with long experience as both attorney and judge trying cases in many of these very courthouses. In the introduction he tells how, as he came to realize their significance as a record of local history and historic architecture, he began researching their history and photographing them. With the encouragement and assistance of others in the legal profession, his careful work led to the South Dakota State Historical Society's publishing of the book in its Historical Preservation Series. Former State Historic Preservation Officer Jason Haug wrote an introductory essay, "Where History and Architecture Meet: The Legacies of South Dakota Courthouses."

The systematic organization of *County Capitols* makes the basic data for researching South Dakota county history and historic courthouses readily available for general readers, preservationists, and historians and facilitates comparisons among midwestern states. For example, comparing the South Dakota and Iowa courthouses built from 1901 to 1929, I found that many follow the same variations of the Classical Revival architectural style. Often the same architects designed them. In South Dakota, with fewer counties, smaller population, and shorter period of non-Indian settlement, over half of its present courthouses date from this period.

Publications about historic Middle American county courthouses are few. Recent books tend to be detailed photographic records; examples are Susan W. Thrane, *County Courthouses of Ohio* (2000); Mary Logue and Doug Ohman, *Courthouses of Minnesota* (2006); and Michael P. Harker, *Harker's [Iowa] Courthouses: Visions of an Icon* (2009). These will attract general readers. Older publications are valuable for historical and architectural background. Paul Goeldner, "Temples of Justice: Nineteenth Century County Courthouses in the Midwest and Texas" (1970), sets the highest standard of historical documentation, but stops at 1900 and, as an unpublished doctoral dissertation, must be read on microfilm. Richard Pare, editor, *Court House: A Photographic Document* (1978) addresses the whole country from colonial to modern times. Its photographs, its data, and its background chapters are excellent, but unfortunately it is out of print. An excellent historic and architectural study is Mark Hufstetler and Lon Johnson, "County Courthouses of South Dakota" (1992), a National Register Multiple Property Documentation that is accessible online. Much of it is applicable to Middle American county courthouses in general. For Iowa, LeRoy G. Pratt's *Counties and Courthouses of Iowa* (1977) provides the most complete factual data, including the history of each county and of its successive courthouse buildings, with photographs both recent and historical. Many gaps mar the data, it needs updating, and some of the photographs are poor.

South Dakota is fortunate to have *County Capitols*. Iowa, with its longer history and larger number of county courthouses, has an even greater need for a similar publication.

Americans Recaptured: Progressive Era Memory of Frontier Captivity, by Molly K. Varley. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. ix, 230 pp. Appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Greg Olson is curator of exhibits and special projects at the Missouri State Archives. He is the author of "Tragedy, Tourism and the Log Cabin: How Abigail Gardner Sharp and Charlotte Kirchner Butler Preserved and Promoted the Past" (*Iowa Heritage Illustrated*, 2001).

As a literary genre, captivity narratives are deceptively simple. On the face of it, the facts that make up these stories of European Americans — usually women — who were taken captive by Native people, seem standardized and straightforward. Hostile Indians attack a frontier settlement, kill settlers, and take hostages. After living for some time in captivity and away from "civilization," the captives are released. Upon their release, many relay the story of their captivity to a curious audience.

Yet, as several historians and literary critics have pointed out over the years, these narratives are not only nuanced, but they have also proven to be surprisingly malleable as each new generation of Americans molds them to suit their needs and ideals. Early Puritans tended to see captivity narratives as religious parables of faith and redemption. In the nineteenth century, the stories evolved into sensational melodramas written to satisfy the prurient interests of readers hungry for romance and action.

Now, in *Americans Recaptured*, Molly K. Varley looks at the role captivity narratives played during the Progressive Era (1890–1916). That period is largely uncharted territory for students of the genre primarily because, by 1890, the so-called Indian wars were over and Native people no longer constituted a physical threat to the dominant society. Captivities had ceased, and America's frontier period had ended. As Varley points out, the closing of the American frontier and the rise of urban industrialization led to an identity crisis for a young nation that had always taken pride in being a place where character was shaped by hardship, perseverance, and struggle. If Americans were no longer a people who had to fight with nature (and an indigenous population) to domesticate a vast continent, who were they? City dwellers? Factory workers? Wage earners? How would immigrants who had not experienced the frontier become Americans? To many, the prospects seemed troubling.

In *Americans Recaptured*, Varley argues that, during the Progressive Era, captivity narratives played an important role in forming a new national identity as Americans, eager to maintain a connection with their pioneer past, repurposed the tales for a new age. To support her argument, Varley looks at captivity narratives that were republished or revised after 1890. She also examines monuments and memorials that Americans dedicated to captives during that same period. Although she mentions more cases, Varley looks most closely at the narratives of captives Mary Jenison, Francis Slocum, and Abigail Gardner Sharp. Iowans, of course, will be most familiar with the case of Sharp, one of two survivors of the incident commonly known as the Spirit Lake Massacre, which took place in March 1857.

According to Varley, these women served as both role models and metaphors for the process of transformation that every European immigrant had to undergo in order to become a true American. In fact, the author calls captives like Sharp “quintessential Americans” (89) because they had experienced “Indianness” firsthand during their captivities and had returned to white civilization. As scholars like Phillip DeLoria have pointed out, we have long idealized Indianness and have made that ideal an important part of our national identity. Yet, ironically, we have never been able to fully accept Indianness in Native Americans. Instead, we celebrated and commemorated it in these captives because they understood the importance of the ideal as it applied to white America.

This small book is dense with many more facets of the case Varley has laid out than I can fully examine here. Suffice it to say that she explores the importance of local histories, Theodore Roosevelt, Prairie Madonnas (which Varley refers to as Manly Mothers), memory, and historic preservation in connecting Progressive Era Americans to their pioneer roots. Sometimes her writing is somewhat unclear and not as well organized as I would have liked, but I appreciate what Varley has undertaken here. I was especially intrigued to see the way she reframed the case of Abigail Gardner Sharp. Historians have sometimes dismissed Sharp as an anomaly because her captivity took place late in the period of westward expansion and the first edition of her memoir (*The Spirit Lake Massacre*) did not appear until 1885. By linking Sharp with the concerns of the Progressive Era, Varley offers us a new and compelling vantage point from which to view her post-captivity life and crusade. It is one that future scholars considering Sharp’s legacy would do well to consider.

Seasons of Change: Labor, Treaty Rights, and Ojibwe Nationhood, by Chantel Norrgard. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. xii, 201 pp. Illustrations, map, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paperback.

My Grandfather's Knocking Sticks: Ojibwe Family Life and Labor on the Reservation, by Brenda J. Child. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2014. 241 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer Eric Steven Zimmer is a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Iowa. He is working on a dissertation titled "Red Earth Nation: Environment and Sovereignty in Modern Meskwaki History."

Seldom are readers of American Indian history treated to the nearly simultaneous release of two books examining neighboring tribal communities over roughly the same period of time and through similar methodological lenses. Yet 2014 brought both Chantel Norrgard's *Seasons of Change* and Brenda J. Child's *My Grandfather's Knocking Sticks*, each of which explores how Ojibwe peoples relied on and adapted their labor systems to navigate the shifting economic and political landscapes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Both works are framed around the ways Ojibwes have used labor to endure the advance of American colonialism. Norrgard surveys the period between the 1870s and the 1930s to "trace the role that labor played as a historically shifting dynamic shaped by Ojibwe struggles with colonialism" (2). While focusing most closely on four reservations — the Bad River and Red Cliff reservations in Wisconsin and Fond du Lac and Grand Portage in Minnesota — Norrgard draws examples from myriad Ojibwe communities. Thus, the overarching history related in *Seasons of Change* is widely applicable across the Lake Superior region. Norrgard intervenes in the latest scholarship and successfully deploys her Ojibwe case studies to firmly implant Native work in the broader paradigm of American labor history. Child, on the other hand, looks at the first half of the twentieth century and emphasizes her home community, the Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota. She tells the story of her people from their own perspective but follows the historian Jeffrey Ostler by critiquing efforts to highlight Native agency when it obscures the fact that, despite their best efforts, Native peoples remained less powerful than their non-Native neighbors. She is careful not to downplay the harsh realities of Indian life, showing that, for all their effort, her ancestors and their peers still endured "the loss of essential freedoms on reservations during the first half of the twentieth century" (5).

Each scholar approaches the Ojibwe past on slightly different terms. Norrgard assembles her story from an impressive variety of holdings, including three branches of the National Archives; collections of the New

York, Wisconsin, and Minnesota historical societies; and online collections. She expertly integrates these documents with a bevy of published primary sources, more than a dozen regional newspapers, and various governmental reports and legislation passed by states and the federal government. Child similarly builds *Knocking Sticks* from materials held at federal and state archives, but she incorporates a handful of oral history interviews and relates stories passed down within her own family. The result is a delicately balanced and very personal account that paves new paths for understanding Ojibwe labor and family life but does not shy away from the less appealing aspects of her community's past.

Both books are divided into two parts. Norrgard's first section entails three chapters, each in turn exploring how berry picking, hunting and fishing, and commercial fishing made up the Ojibwe economy in the treaty era of the late nineteenth century. Her second part begins around the turn of the twentieth century, as tribal members turned to wage labor to compensate for the dispossession of lands and resources brought on by the depletion of timber, game, and other essential components of nineteenth-century Ojibwe life. Most compelling among these chapters is Norrgard's interpretation of the Ojibwe encounter with "tourist colonialism" (108). She applies that concept to illustrate how, following the nearly total depletion of land and water in the nineteenth century, state and federal efforts to redevelop the Wisconsin and Minnesota wilderness for recreational use "led to further restrictions on Ojibwe rights to hunt, fish, and gather" (108). Finally, a conclusion reveals how early twentieth-century Ojibwe activism laid the foundation upon which later generations would proctor the so-called Walleye Wars for hunting and fishing rights in the 1970s and 1980s.

In *Knocking Sticks*, Child emphasizes the importance of family life and casts a wider net that includes activities such as ceremonial healing and working available welfare programs alongside rice gathering and hunting as part of the labor Red Lakers had to perform to cope with their lack of regular employment. The book's opening chapters, examining the life and marriage of Child's grandparents, describe the changes under way in matters of family life. The final three chapters show how global events like World War I, the 1918 influenza epidemic, and the Great Depression engendered significant shifts in Ojibwe life and labor. Child's discoveries about particular labor practices that she and others long considered traditional stand out. Among them are the titular knocking sticks—long cedar canes her grandfather used to knock *manoomin*, or wild rice, into his canoe. Before the Great Depression, men would not have collected rice. But, as with work of all kinds, gendered systems of labor shifted dramatically in the twentieth century, leading

Ojibwe men to join women in rice collecting as all sought to survive the Depression economy.

Norrsgard's *Seasons of Change* is deeply researched, tightly written, highly analytical, and packed with fresh and useful information. But the work is best suited for academic specialists. It also bears a surprising number of typographical errors, which at times distract from the arguments at hand. This is, of course, a minor critique; the mere fact that some shaky copyediting is perhaps the work's greatest downfall stands as a testament to its quality as a piece of scholarship. Child's *Knocking Sticks* matches Norrsgard in analytical strength but is more accessibly written. Indeed, Child's fluid prose and moving narrative will entice and engage scholars and general readers alike. Of particular significance is Child's direct incorporation of entire primary sources, transcribed and typed onto her pages. In these instances, she lets the documents tell their own stories. Such passages are followed by in-depth discussions of how Child approached her sources, what questions they raised, and what research avenues they either opened or closed, thus making her work especially well suited to any college classroom.

Taken together, these two books reaffirm some important points about the history of the Native Midwest. While neither deals directly with Iowa, *Annals of Iowa* readers interested in the recent scholarly energy surrounding the study of the midwestern past will find in these works a compelling rebuttal to recent calls for a return to master narratives once prescribed—and now, in some circles, revived—by influential thinkers like Frederick Jackson Turner. Indeed, *Seasons of Change* and *Knocking Sticks* remind us that long after removal, the creation of the reservation system, and the closure of the frontier, progress for some continued to be built upon the dispossession of land and resources belonging to others. Ojibwes and other Native peoples were left with little to depend upon aside from each other and the intricate labor systems they built and adapted to in their struggle to survive. Well into the twentieth century, state and federal governments took aim at Ojibwe lands and livelihoods. That Native peoples persevered in such conditions should be noted and celebrated. But, as Child so poignantly reminds us, “survival” in the American heartland—as elsewhere—“rarely felt like freedom or sovereignty to Indigenous people” (3).

Degrees of Allegiance: Harassment and Loyalty in Missouri's German-American Community during World War I, by Petra DeWitt. Law, Society and Politics in the Midwest Series. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012. x, 257 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 hardcover.

Reviewer H. Glenn Penny is professor of history at the University of Iowa. He is the author of *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800* (2013).

Degrees of Allegiance makes a number of interventions into the extensive literature on the decimation of German American communities during World War I. Most importantly, DeWitt argues that the fates of German Americans in Missouri unsettle our general narratives about the fate of German Americans in the United States—especially in the Midwest. There was, for example, much less violence against German Americans in Missouri than in other midwestern states. The reactions to state and federal mandates as well as the reception of anti-German propaganda were also quite varied within the state. Indeed, broader discourses about Germans and Germanness circulating in the United States before and during the war were refracted by multiple local contexts (even within counties). That produced a variety of results when it came to federal and state efforts to promote anti-German sentiment and to limit the use of the German language in churches, schools, other civil institutions, and many public places. In part, this was because German communities in Missouri were themselves highly varied: many were rural, some were quite isolated, and some were united by religious beliefs that were steeped in German culture and language and thus resisted their eradication. Yet that resistance was also facilitated by a more general characteristic within the state. Because German and non-German Missourians shared a pointed opposition to any local intervention from the state and federal governments, many local communities in Missouri often failed to implement governmental decrees and ignored more than a few laws. Consequently, there was less persecution of German Americans in Missouri than in other states and much less in rural communities than in St. Louis. Many of Missouri's German American communities "were able to preserve aspects of their ethnic culture despite the war"—and despite the failure of similar communities to do the same in other parts of the United States (3).

DeWitt argues that because much of the scholarship on German Americans during the war has been based on urban studies, it has reified the histories of rural areas. That insight, based on her willingness to work closely with local records across the state, is one of DeWitt's most important contributions. Her research at the local level, for example, makes it clear that *German* and *German American* were hardly unitary categories in Missouri. There was great variation stemming from these German Americans' places of origin, their respective German dialects, and their confessional differences. Significant differences also developed between the communities that took shape in urban settings, in individual towns, and even within many counties. Understanding the

conglomerate character of Missouri's German Americans proved quite useful. It has helped DeWitt explain why German culture was so easily undermined in some parts of the state and preserved in others.

There is much in this book to interest historians of Missouri and the Midwest. DeWitt does an excellent job of detailing the state's appeal to German immigrants during the nineteenth century and tracing the different chains of migration that led to the tapestry of Germanophone communities across the state. She also offers a compelling portrait of German communities in St. Louis, where German immigrants made up 20 percent of the city's population by 1910. Here, too, she explains, there were concentrations of German speakers in particular wards, as there were in particular counties or within areas of different counties across the state.

Indeed, one of her most compelling insights is that political boundaries within the state, not just those between the states, can easily obscure the diversification of German American communities. They can also obscure the ways German American families gained land, expanded their holdings, drew other Germanophone families to them, and developed communities that often shared regional origins, dialects, and faiths. Many of those rural German American communities constructed distinct German identities that did not conflict with being American. They also often created a kind of institutional completeness that made it unnecessary for them to go outside their communities for essential services. That gave them great independence and helps account for their resilience during the war.

There is also much in this book that will interest historians focused on Germanophone settlements in other parts of the United States and in other parts of the world. Despite all the distinctions and differences DeWitt identifies in Missouri's hinterlands, many consistencies ran across these German American communities that they shared with similar communities in other states: the important role of drinking in German culture (especially on Sundays); the many conflicts they had with temperance movements; the lack of a clear political block for German voters; the importance of German Americans in labor movements; the ubiquitous German social organizations; the many German-language newspapers, which covered the political spectrum; the ways those papers preserved Germanness even as they promoted assimilation. Even the fractured character of Missouri's German American communities and the lack of class solidarity within them are consistent across many of the German communities that developed outside of Europe during the nineteenth century. So, too, were the many tensions that could exist under the surface of peaceful integration, which accounted for many of

the most radical actions against German Americans and the German language during the war.

What will most interest scholars focused on other parts of the United States, however, is DeWitt's success in reading widely across the state's records. That has allowed her to demonstrate, for example, that not all English-language newspapers were equally opposed to these communities. Nor did the English- or German-language papers react consistently to events leading up to and during the war. While there were general trends in the attacks and condemnations, not everyone followed suit; thus one finds denouncements of British aggressions in many of Missouri's English-language newspapers, calls for loyalty in many of the German-language ones, and a striking absence of much war coverage and anti-German propaganda in both. Those observations provide us with valuable insights into the complexities behind the rather pat narratives about the rise and fall of German America. It is safe to assume that scholars could easily build upon them if they took up DeWitt's call to pursue similar rural studies in other states.

Rows of Memory: Journeys of a Migrant Sugar-Beet Worker, by Saúl Sánchez. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014. xxviii, 210 pp. Illustrations, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$21.00 paperback.

Reviewer Brian D. Behnken is associate professor of history and U.S. Latino/a Studies at Iowa State University. He is the author of *Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas* (2011).

For generations Mexican and Mexican American agricultural workers cyclically traversed the United States to perform a variety of functions on American farms. Much has been written on states such as California and Texas, but the role of the Mexican farm worker in the Northwest and Midwest is less well understood. Saúl Sánchez's *Rows of Memory* expands our knowledge of Mexican Americans in the Northwest and Midwest, and Iowa in particular. Complementing scholarly accounts such as Juan Garcia's *Mexicans in the Midwest*, Kathleen Mapes's *Sweet Tyranny*, and Jim Norris's *North for the Harvest* as well as autobiographical accounts such as Elva Treviño Hart's *Barefoot Heart*, it provides a complex and deeply inspiring story of one man's journey from migrant worker to college professor. *Rows of Memory* also includes an excellent introductory essay by University of Iowa history professor Omar Valerio-Jiménez.

Like other migrant workers, the Sánchez family began work in the spinach fields of Texas's winter garden region, their home base in many ways. When young Saúl was a child, his parents decided to travel for

sugar beet work in the Northwest and Midwest. Sánchez's father, a hard-nosed, hard-working man, was soon able to time out growing seasons with perfect accuracy. The family would help plant onions in Minnesota and beets in Iowa in the spring; the beets would then be thinned and blocked in May or June. While the beets matured, the family would venture back to Minnesota to harvest onions, returning to Iowa to harvest beets in the late summer. The family also worked in Washington, California, and a host of other states. One of their more profitable ventures came on a visit to Iowa when they befriended a tomato farmer near Muscatine. That chance meeting led to a long working relationship with that Iowa family.

Besides the agricultural work, which the author captures nicely, Sánchez also explains some of the educational issues he and his siblings dealt with in local schools. Like other migrant children, they frequently started school late in the year and suffered from segregation or perceptions of social or cultural difference from their Anglo classmates. Nevertheless, he writes, "we were obedient students. For us to progress meant just that: to faithfully do our homework and attend to whatever schoolwork our teachers assigned." Sánchez also noted what was for him and many Mexican-origin people an uncomfortable truth: "What we were faced with was no less than the ugly truth of being the descendants of a defeated people: to survive we had to obey" (112). It could be argued that this obedience served Sánchez well, as he excelled at school and eventually went on to graduate from college, where the book concludes.

This is an excellent account of a farm laborer's experiences and the struggle children sometimes encounter within their families when they desire to do something more than farm work. There are many poignant and beautifully written passages in the book. Take, for example, an account of the family moving their belongings into the housing provided by Iowa farmers (in this case a converted pigsty). Sánchez notes that of their possessions the "crowning jewel" was a two-burner kerosene stove upon which his mother cooked up about 400 handmade tortillas a week for the family. Reflecting on this memory, Sánchez reconsiders what he had written previously and notes, "The real jewel was my mother" (167-68). The community they and other migrant workers built, their innate sense of grace and kindness, and the dogged determination that kept this and other similar families together is a beautiful story, one that Sánchez richly tells.

Banking on the Body: The Market in Blood, Milk, and Sperm in Modern America, by Kara W. Swanson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014. 333 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Philip L. Frana is associate professor of interdisciplinary liberal studies at James Madison University. He is working on a book manuscript tentatively titled "Calculating Care: Evidence, Computers, and Medicine in the Twentieth Century."

The self is a legal construct that operates under a civil social contract. We have personhood as an artifact of that contract and the expectation of obedience to the rule of law. You cannot sell your eye. You can use your body for sex but cannot sell your body for sex. You can give and sell blood but not most other organs. There is a national shortage of organs available for transplantation, but monetary compensation to donors is banned everywhere except in Iran.

And yet there is legal precedence for the body as commodity, beginning with *Hawkins v. McGee* (1929). Curiously absent from Kara Swanson's monograph, *Hawkins* (known in casebooks as the "Hairy Hand Case") is one of the first disputes law students encounter. It is about how the body has property and value. George Hawkins's arrangement with his doctor for a restored "perfect" hand is little more than a bargain to replace a broken mechanism. (As the casebook title implies, he didn't get what was promised.)

Selling two kidneys is a death wish. But the value of the body is not depreciated by production of blood, milk, or sperm. Humans aren't just collections of parts; they are general-purpose bodies for the potential production of goods and services, or, as Swanson asserts, factories that stamp parts for later use. Do individuals, she wants to know, own those factories? Would it be better if we considered outputs as gifts or saleable commodities? Are they products or services?

Swanson explores these tensions through the complex interdisciplinary lens of the history of American medicine and law and the metaphor of "banked" inventories of life-sustaining human fluids. The banking metaphor, an invention of Chicago physician Bernard Fantus, encouraged donors and recipients to think about blood supply as existing in dynamic equilibrium, where deposits and withdrawals are managed like Keynesian economic theory. It encouraged people to bank ahead for a surgical rainy day but also to run deficits and borrow from family and friends ("replacement donors").

The banking metaphor, Swanson shows, came under attack in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Mass appeals to emotion and patriotism, which inspired gifts of blood to the Red Cross during World War II and the Cold War, undermined free markets. The powerful

American Medical Association (AMA) considered such selfless generosity a form of socialized medicine. The alternative—a for-profit, individual “professional donor”—suggested the need for a medical authority. The AMA wanted to replace locally controlled banks—which they viewed as interlopers—with medical supervision. Finally, state courts began asserting that patients harmed by “bad blood”—infected, for example, by hepatitis—might be permitted to plead strict liability under product liability law. Such reasoning triggered a reaction against banked blood as a commodity. State blood shield laws recast the bank as a financial service.

Hepatitis (and eventually HIV) screening, scandals involving expired blood, and the miscegenation bombast of civil rights opponents who feared blood purchased from racial minorities all played havoc with shield law. By the 1970s, public stereotypes marked gift blood as pure blood and bought blood as contaminated. Public confidence drained away, stemmed only by President Nixon’s unveiling in 1973 of a Federal Blood Policy, which promoted a paradox familiar to students of college football: unpaid donor-producers and a network of distributors and surgical team-captains reimbursed profitably by insurers.

Swanson devotes fewer pages to the history of human milk and sperm supply chains, largely because they represented much less controversial industries. While the banking metaphor applied to breast milk, the AMA refrained from asserting market control. The reasons for this included its feminine and intimate expression, easy preservation and stockpiling, and the popularity of formula. Sperm banking, pioneered by University of Iowa graduate student Jerome Sherman and urology professor Raymond Bunge in the 1950s, required “donor differentiation” (199) so that the offspring of assisted reproduction interventions shared physiognomies with adoptive fathers. A better analogy, Swanson concludes, is the safe deposit box.

Swanson suggests that body products be reinterpreted as “civic property” in a pluralistic Kingdom of Ends. This is important because in the twentieth century bodies were voraciously commoditized for use by those artificial persons called corporations. Natural persons were left to live with the incongruent wreckage: *Moore v. University of California* (1990), rejecting the claim that people have a property interest in their own body parts; *Kane v. Hecht* (1995) validating the custody of frozen sperm willed by lover to girlfriend over the objection of the lover’s parents; and tax courts upholding claims on business expenses related to the sale of rare AB blood.

The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses, and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution, by Walter Isaacson. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014. xiv, 543 pp. Illustrated timeline, photographs, notes, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Bill Silag, a former editor-in-chief at Iowa State University Press and a former editor of the *Palimpsest*, the State Historical Society of Iowa's popular history magazine, wrote the entries for John Vincent Atanasoff and his assistant Clifford Berry in *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa* (2008).

"There are thousands of books celebrating people we biographers portray, or mythologize, as lone inventors," writes author Walter Isaacson in his introduction to *The Innovators*, "but we have far fewer tales of collaborative creativity, which is actually more important in understanding how today's technology revolution was fashioned" (1). Thus *The Innovators* focuses particularly on the men and women involved in the key innovations of the digital age, with an eye to identifying the well-springs of their creative leaps; the skills that proved most useful to them in achieving their goals; and the reasons why some innovators succeeded while others failed.

Ten of the book's twelve chapters are devoted to explications of specific innovations—the computer, programming, the transistor, the microchip, video games, the Internet, the personal computer, software, email and other online services, and the World Wide Web—along with consideration of the incentives driving their originators and the implications of their respective achievements for the field as a whole. The first and last chapters address major conceptual issues that have informed the processes of discovery and invention that constitute the digital paradigm as it has evolved over the past two centuries. Isaacson's lucid prose is a hallmark of *The Innovators* from start to finish, as are his even-handed characterizations of the alliances, feuds, and lawsuits among the principals involved in the development of one digital innovation or another.

Two scientists with Iowa connections figure prominently among the scores of inventive men and women profiled in the course of Isaacson's 500-page narrative—Iowa State College (ISC) physics professor John Vincent Atanasoff (1903–1995), a pioneer in the application of digital electronics to computing, and Intel founder Robert Noyce (1927–1990), an inventor of the microchip, who was born in Iowa and educated at Grinnell and M.I.T. To Isaacson, Atanasoff and Noyce represent distinctly different cultures of innovation. In the early 1940s, Atanasoff and his assistant Clifford Berry had designed and were building a prototype computing device at ISC, but interest in the project was scant among their faculty colleagues and college administrators. Atanasoff

was basically on his own at ISC, says Isaacson, and progress was slow. "He could come up with fresh ideas, but he did not have around him people to serve as sounding boards or to help him overcome theoretical or engineering challenges. Unlike most innovators of the digital age he was a lone inventor" (56). A generation younger than Atanasoff, Robert Noyce was by contrast a gregarious team leader who gathered diverse perspectives—and necessary resources, financial and otherwise—when addressing the challenges of innovation. In the early years at Intel, Noyce's own desk sat in the middle of a large, noisy room containing the desks of everyone else working at the company; there he could draw on ideas and inspiration from all team members regardless of academic credentials or position in a table of organization. Until his death in 1990, Noyce's innovations represented the epitome of the "collaborative creativity" that Isaacson celebrates throughout *The Innovators*.

As for the computer project at ISC, in 1942 Atanasoff and Berry went off to serve in the war effort. At the time they left Iowa, a model of their computer had been built and work had begun on constructing a prototype. Their project material was put in storage at the college, no patent application was ever filed, and neither Atanasoff nor anyone else ever worked on the project again. After the war both Atanasoff and Berry went on to successful private-sector engineering careers. Later, in the mid-1960s, a federal court agreed to hear testimony regarding patent claims on the digital electronics used in computing devices. A ten-year legal battle ensued, ending with the court's 1973 ruling that the technology at issue was the creation of John Atanasoff, and that he should be recognized as the inventor of the electronic digital computer. Isaacson questions the court's decision on several grounds. Atanasoff's computer, he points out, was not fully electronic; nor was it designed to do anything but solve linear equations. Most importantly, the computer at ISC was never fully operational. Isaacson points instead to the computer built with federal funding at the University of Pennsylvania during World War II by John Mauchly and Presper Eckert, co-claimants demanding copyright protection in the court case involving Atanasoff's computer. "Mauchly and Eckert should be at the top of the list of people who deserve credit for inventing the computer, not because the ideas were all their own, but because they had the ability to draw ideas from multiple sources, add their own innovations, execute their vision by building a computer team, and have the most influence on the course of subsequent developments" (84). The sequence of skills thus identified by Isaacson was essential to the success of Noyce at Intel and to many of his corporate neighbors in Silicon Valley, and that approach has since become standard practice in the industry.

Transcendental Meditation in America: How a New Age Movement Remade a Small Town in Iowa, by Joseph Weber. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014. viii, 221 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$18.00 paperback.

Reviewer Shawn Francis Peters is a lecturer in the Integrated Liberal Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is the author of *The Catsville Nine: A Story of Faith and Resistance in the Vietnam Era* (2012); *The Yoder Case: Religious Freedom, Education, and Parental Rights* (2003); and *Judging Jehovah's Witnesses: Religious Persecution and the Dawn of the Rights Revolution* (2000).

Anyone who views Iowa as being culturally homogenous should take a close look at the extraordinarily diverse spiritual and religious life that has taken root in the eastern half of the state over the past century. Cedar Rapids boasts the longest-standing Muslim mosque in North America (erected in 1934); Hasidic Jews flocked to Postville and built a formidable, if controversial, kosher meatpacking empire; and buggies belonging to the Old Order Amish clatter along the thoroughfares in and around Kalona. And, of course, there is Fairfield, the unlikely Jefferson County home of Maharishi University of Management (MUM) and an epicenter for the Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement in the United States. The story of TM's tumultuous presence in Fairfield is the subject of Joseph Weber's *Transcendental Meditation in America: How a New Age Movement Remade a Small Town in Iowa*.

In this original, concise, and generally engaging account, Weber does not purport to offer a thorough history of TM and its antecedents. Nor does he claim to furnish a comprehensive biography of the movement's founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (who achieved global fame in the late 1960s after several celebrities, most notably the members of the Beatles, came under his tutelage). Rather, his aim is to chronicle the myriad tensions that have beset Fairfield since the TM movement took over the campus of the bankrupt Parsons College in 1975.

As Weber tells it, the changeover from Parsons to MUM failed to precipitate the usual assortment of "town versus gown" problems found in many municipalities that feature an academic institution. The TM-based school banned drinking and attracted clean-cut students and faculty who were sincerely interested in achieving enlightenment. (If anything, MUM attracted a more straight-laced crowd than Parsons, which had been a notorious "party school.") But locals wondered about the newcomers—vegetarians who meditated twice daily and followed an Indian guru. Put simply, some feared that the newcomers were religious crackpots. After all, they promised a path toward world peace and touted something called the "Maharishi Effect," the notion that there would be measurable improvements in everyone's quality of life

if just one percent of the population practiced TM. Some of them even endeavored to practice “Yogic Flying” (which was as implausible as it sounds).

Just how much would the quirky beliefs and practices of these interlopers fundamentally alter the character of the town? The heart of Weber’s book is his chronicle of the still-evolving changes wrought in Fairfield by TM: the appearance of Indian restaurants, the emergence of TM practitioners as candidates for political office, the alteration of landmark buildings on the former Parsons campus. For the most part, Weber writes efficiently and even-handedly, in a concise reportorial style that renders the book accessible to a broad audience. (Weber was a journalist for many years before taking up a teaching post at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and that training is apparent in the breezy prose style employed here.) We see a Fairfield in flux – not necessarily better or worse than it was before the arrival of TM, but undeniably different. And we also see a town where practitioners of TM remain somewhat aloof, even four decades after they started arriving. In one of the book’s most telling passages, a local religious leader tells Weber that Fairfield is made up of “two groups that go our separate ways” (39) – TM devotees, and everyone else.

Books about spirituality inevitably have to grapple with questions of legitimacy and veracity, particularly when groups make grandiose claims, as TM’s exponents often do. Weber, to his credit, does this deftly, charting TM’s successes as well as its failures. He reports that while TM-based programs have produced positive results in primary and secondary schools, the benefits of meditation were not enough to help a MUM student who stabbed and killed a classmate on campus in 2004. Weber offers no verdict on TM’s ultimate truth, but he clearly is not naive about some of the wilder assertions made to promote it.

While admirably fair, Weber’s narrative approach has some drawbacks. The book lacks a clear narrative focus; no single compelling story or character jumps from the pages to bring the story to life in especially vivid or memorable terms. Anecdotes and individuals come and go as Weber recounts how TM practitioners have reshaped Fairfield. Moreover, some extraneous or obscure details probably do not add much to the overall account, and some facts are repeated in several different places.

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The State Historical Society of Iowa

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