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In This Issue

OMAR VALERIO-JIMÉNEZ, associate professor of history at the University of Texas at San Antonio, interprets the experiences of Mexican immigrants to Iowa in the years from the 1880s to the 1920s. He describes what led the immigrants to choose Iowa as a destination and the kinds of work they did in Iowa. He concludes that white Iowans racialized Mexican immigrants everywhere, but the patterns of that racialization varied from community to community.

DOROTHY HUBBARD SCHWIEDER, now deceased, but formerly professor of history and University Professor Emeritus at Iowa State University, reflects on her career in Iowa history.

ROGER NICHOLS, emeritus professor of history at the University of Arizona, reviews eight recent books about or related to the Black Hawk War.

Front Cover

A diverse immigrant workforce works at sacking machines at the Portland Cement Company in Mason City. Photo, ca. 1910–1920, from Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. For an account of Mexican immigrants to Iowa from the 1880s to the 1920s, see Omar Valerio-Jiménez's article in this issue.

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Racializing Mexican Immigrants in Iowa's Early Mexican Communities

OMAR VALERIO-JIMÉNEZ

IN THE MID-1920s, a U.S. Department of Labor (USDL) official interviewed several local residents of Mason City, Iowa, for a government report on Mexican immigrants in the Midwest. The report identified each of the interviewed white, native-born Iowans by name and occupation and included lengthy passages with their views on immigrants, Americanization efforts, and social relations between immigrants and the dominant society. Among the interviewees were education officials, charity workers, and company managers. Also interviewed were Mexican sugar beet workers, who were not named individually but rather identified as a group of "Mexican beet workers." The omission of individual names contributed to Mexicans' racialization by the USDL official, who undoubtedly was following local convention that treated these workers as an undifferentiated group of "racial others" without individual identities.¹

1. Racialization is a historically specific process in which people create hierarchical categories based on perceived differences in embodied physical characteristics. This racialization often serves to reinforce the unequal distribution of power and to "explain" the supposed superiority of one group over another. Michael Omi and Howard Winant add that racialization is "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group." For a discussion of racialization processes in different contexts, see Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 3rd ed. (New York, 2015), 13, 111, 142; Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), 3, 4-7, 25-26; and Pablo Mitchell, *Coyote Nation: Sexuality, Race, and Conquest in Modernizing New Mexico, 1880-1920* (Chicago, 2005), 20-21, 62-63, 78-79.

Totalling only eight sentences, the summary of the interviewer's interactions with the Mexican workers was the shortest part of the Mason City report. Yet those brief remarks were revealing. Among the 25 families of Mexican immigrants who lived in a "company colony near the factory," four were Protestant, which revealed a degree of acculturation to U.S. society. Several of the families had previously worked in various states across the United States, confirming their translocal connections. The most telling sentences contained the immigrants' views of racial relations: "All report that there is no distinction here but there is in Texas. 'Here one God, in Texas, three, white, black, and Mexican.'"² These immigrants, like many others in the Midwest, had previously lived in Texas and believed that racial relations were better in Iowa than in Texas. More specifically, the last line (which was presumably a quote) alluded to distinct religious services for white, African American, and Mexican churchgoers in Texas, while hinting that these three groups attended non-segregated religious services in Iowa.³

This article describes the experiences of Mexican immigrants in several communities in eastern and north-central Iowa during the first three decades of the twentieth century. I examine these immigrants' employment and the communities they established, as well as the factors that led them to choose Iowa as a destination. Mexican immigrants were attracted to Iowa by various economic opportunities and chose to stay in the state because of the availability of steady work, their social ties to family and friends, and the state's relatively lower racial tensions. In addition to adapting to the state's labor restrictions, Mexicans also adjusted to their racialization as non-white by Iowa residents.

As elsewhere in the Midwest, Iowa's majority white population struggled to locate Mexicans within the ethnoracial order in the United States; Mexicans were simultaneously "non-white"

2. George T. Edson, "Iowa and Wisconsin," George T. Edson Field Reports, 1927, Paul S. Taylor Papers, BANC MSS 84/38c (microfilm 2414), Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (hereafter cited as Edson Field Reports).

3. These immigrants might have been referring to attending Catholic church services with some southern and eastern European immigrants in Mason City. For other immigrants, this reference might have also alluded to attending Protestant church services with white Iowans, European immigrants, or African Americans. See the discussion of Lehigh Row later in this article.

and “non-black” but also “foreign.”⁴ White Iowans placed Mexican immigrants in an in-between status, below recent European immigrants but above African Americans. Because their ethnoracial status was unstable, there was no single pattern of reception for Mexican immigrants in Iowa; it varied by locale and social context. In some towns, Mexicans were grouped with southern and eastern European immigrants, while in other communities they were classified with African Americans.

White Iowans’ racial views were influenced by their reliance on what historian Natalia Molina calls “racial scripts,” that is, “the ways in which we think, talk about, and act toward one racialized group based on our experiences with other groups whose race differs from our own.” Molina argues that racial scripts are influenced by a variety of factors, including location, time period, power relations, material conditions, and specific issues.⁵ In early twentieth-century Iowa, the number of Mexican immigrants in a particular town and those immigrants’ relations with European immigrants and African Americans influenced such racial scripts and shaped white residents’ views of Mexicans.

The Midwest’s demographic context not only influenced how white, native-born Iowans viewed Mexicans, but also shaped Mexican immigrants’ opportunities for interethnic and interracial alliances. Because Mexicans did not have a longstanding presence in the Midwest (compared to the Southwest), white Iowans did not hold rigid views of Mexicans’ ethnoracial status. Moreover, the low number of Mexican immigrants required some of them to ally with non-Mexicans on a daily basis, which was less common in the Southwest, where there were more Mexican immigrants. Throughout the state, Mexicans were more likely to live in the same neighborhoods as southern and eastern European immigrants than with African Americans. Their housing

4. For a similar discussion of Mexicans’ in-between racial status in Chicago, see Lilia Fernandez, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago, 2012), 8–13, 16–17; Gabriela Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916–39* (Urbana, IL, 2008), 38, 58–64; and Michael Innis-Jiménez, *Steel Barrio: The Great Mexican Migration to South Chicago, 1915–1940* (New York, 2013), 26, 53, 71, 89, 94–97.

5. Natalia Molina, “The Power of Racial Scripts: What the History of Mexican Immigration Teaches Us about Relational Notions of Race,” *Latino Studies* 8 (2010), 157.

arrangements, in turn, influenced social and political relations with other minority and immigrant populations. While Mexican immigrants experienced less racial antagonism in Iowa than in Texas, discrimination was not absent in their lives.

TO UNDERSTAND the experience of Mexican Americans in the Midwest, scholars have offered various interpretive models. Some suggest that Mexican immigration shared similarities to European immigration. Historian Arturo Rosales argues against this analogy because Mexicans encountered more racial discrimination than their European American counterparts. According to Rosales, the experience of Mexicans in the Midwest differed from that in the Southwest for two principal reasons: Mexicans in the Midwest did not share a history of conquest, and their regional origins in Mexico were different. Unlike immigrants to the Southwest who originated in Mexico's northern border states, those moving to the Midwest were mostly from states in Mexico's interior. Another difference was that immigrants to the Southwest often had some cultural affinities with the local Mexican American population, while those moving to the Midwest were creating new communities with no prior history of Mexican American settlement. Historian Dennis Valdés identifies additional distinctions: Mexicans in the Midwest looked to Mexico rather than the Southwest as a homeland, and they were mainly an urban population. According to Valdés, to understand the experience of Mexicans in the Midwest, scholars should begin by assuming that the main cultural dichotomy in the Midwest is a black-white one rather than a Mexican-Anglo division. Furthermore, Mexicans have not had a long history within the cultural divisions of the Midwest; neither have they become part of the dominant European American culture.⁶

6. Francisco A. Rosales, "Mexicanos in Indiana Harbor during the 1920s: Prosperity and Depression," *Revista Chicano-Riqueña* 4 (1976), 88-98; Dennis Nodín Valdés, "Region, Nation, and World-System: Perspectives on Midwestern Chicana/o History," in *Voices of a New Chicana/o History*, ed. Refugio I. Rochín and Dennis N. Valdés (East Lansing, MI, 2000), 115-40; Juan R. García, *Mexicans in the Midwest: 1900-1932* (Tucson, AZ, 1996), vii-viii; Dennis Nodín Valdés, "Historical Foundations of Latino Immigration and Community Formation in 20th-Century Michigan and the Midwest," in *Immigration and Ethnic Communities: A Focus on Latinos*, ed. Refugio I. Rochín (East Lansing, MI, 1996), 43.

Several scholars suggest that the experience of Mexicans in the Midwest needs to be studied on its own and not necessarily compared to immigrants' experience in the Southwest.⁷ I agree that we need to study the development of midwestern communities, but I believe that it is useful to make comparisons, not just to the Southwest but also within the Midwest (rural communities, large urban centers, and small towns). Such comparisons illustrate the heterogeneity of the immigrant experience and, more importantly, help us understand the regional particularities that gave rise to diverse receptions from local European Americans, the immigrants' selective acculturation, and the distinct histories through which ethnic enclaves developed.

LATINOS' PRESENCE in Iowa dates to the 1880s, when Mexican immigrants began arriving to work in the state's railroad yards or in its agricultural fields, picking tomatoes and beets. Those laborers, however, were seasonal migrants who moved throughout the Midwest following harvests or working on temporary railroad maintenance projects.⁸ Initially, this temporary labor force consisted of men who had left their families in Mexico. Labor contractors recruited single men (or men without their families) as "sojourners" who would return to Mexico after the beet season or railroad track work ended. This recruitment strategy was designed to depress sojourners' wages and to ease white residents' fears that Mexicans would settle permanently near the fields. The practice of recruiting single men (or men without families) racialized Mexican immigrants as laborers who should not become permanent residents or U.S. citizens.

In the early 1920s, however, the Great Western Sugar Company and other companies, in an effort to promote more workforce stability, began recruiting families to work in the sugar beet fields. The companies undoubtedly understood that recruiting

7. Edward J. Escobar, "The Forging of a Community: The Latino Experience in Northwest Indiana," *Latino Studies Journal* 2 (1991), 38-57; Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (Berkeley, CA, 1993); Fernandez, *Brown in the Windy City; Arredondo, Mexican Chicago*.

8. J. García, *Conócame en Iowa*, cited in Teresa A. García, "Mexican Room: Public Schooling and the Children of Mexican Railroad Workers in Fort Madison, Iowa, 1923-1930" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2008), 51.

families meant that employers would obtain the additional labor of wives and children and that this labor would be underpaid or unpaid. Accustomed to practicing family labor, Mexicans were motivated by declining agricultural wages, forcing family members to labor in the fields.⁹

At approximately the same time, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company (ATSF or Santa Fe) began encouraging Mexican immigrant track workers to bring their families to the United States. According to historian Jeffrey Garcilazo, that recruitment strategy was part of the Santa Fe's effort to implement scientific management techniques that promoted efficiency, productivity, and loyalty. By recruiting families, the ATSF sought to prevent track workers from easily leaving their jobs or engaging in unionization efforts.¹⁰

The recruitment of families led Mexican immigrants to establish permanent settlements. However, some southwestern and midwestern employers denied that reality and instead sought to assure local residents and federal officials that Mexicans would not remain in the United States because their "homing" instinct would motivate them to return to Mexico after the harvests.¹¹

Iowa's low population of Mexicans (29) in the 1900 census was similar to that of other midwestern states in the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹² The number of Mexicans swelled over

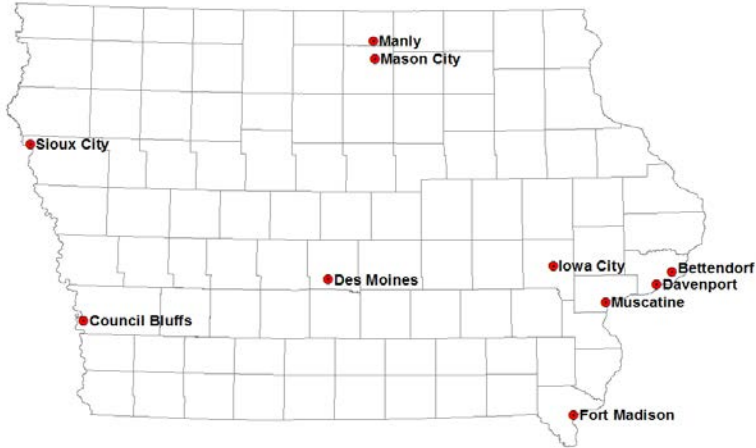
9. Dennis Nodín Valdés, "Settlers, Sojourners, and Proletarians: Social Formation in the Great Plains Sugar Beet Industry, 1890-1940," *Great Plains Quarterly* 10 (1990), 112-13; George T. Edson, "Mexicans in the North Central States," *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies* 2 (1989), 105, 107. In the 1920s industrial and agricultural employers throughout the Midwest initiated concerted recruitment efforts targeting Mexican immigrant workers. See Fernandez, *Brown in the Windy City*, 63-64; Innis-Jiménez, *Steel Barrio*, 34-35; Vargas, 25-26; and Jeffrey Marcos Garcilazo, *Traqueros: Mexican Railroad Workers in the United States, 1870 to 1930* (Denton, TX, 2012), 48, 117.

10. Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 116-18.

11. Kathleen Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny: Migrant Labor, Industrial Agriculture, and Imperial Politics* (Urbana and Champaign, IL, 2009), 148-49; David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley, CA, 1995), 49.

12. Their total numbers were actually likely higher because the 1900 census counted only residents who were born in Mexico, and excluded those born in the United States. Another likely reason for an undercount was immigrants' transitory status as workers who often supplemented industrial jobs with seasonal employment in agriculture. García, *Mexicans in the Midwest*, 18, 26-27.

MAP
IOWA CITIES WITH SIGNIFICANT MEXICAN IMMIGRANT
POPULATION BEFORE 1940



the next two decades as the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) pushed them out of Mexico and increasing employment opportunities created by the United States’ entry into World War I pulled them north. By 1910, more than 500 Mexicans lived in the state, and by 1920, the total reached 2,560.¹³

Other push and pull factors also partly explain Mexican migration to Iowa. The first arrivals had been pushed out of Mexico during the late nineteenth century by Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz’s land policies, which consolidated land among wealthy hacendados, and by the nation’s early industrialization, which displaced skilled artisans. The start of the Mexican Revolution fueled additional outmigration by those seeking refuge from the war’s violence and turmoil.¹⁴ Pulling Mexican immigrants to Iowa were employment opportunities promoted by labor contractors for the state’s railroads and agricultural employers, and subsequently for foundries and cement factories. Mexican immigrants filled a labor need created by the decrease in the availability

13. García, “Mexican Room,” 51; Janet Weaver, “From Barrio to ‘Boicoteo!’: The Emergence of Mexican American Activism in Davenport, 1917–1970,” *Annals of Iowa* 68 (2009), 217.

14. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 44–45.

of southern and eastern European immigrants, who were subject to quotas beginning in the 1920s. Additionally, some European immigrants left during World War I to serve in the military of their home countries.¹⁵

The activities of labor contractors and the gradual development of immigrant social networks better explain the laborers' migration to specific towns in Iowa. Mexican immigrants followed a familiar pattern of chain migration in which family and friends followed the first arrivals, who alerted those left in Mexico of the availability of jobs and of the expected living conditions. Recruited by the Lehigh Cement Company, brothers León and Miguel Vega arrived in Mason City, Iowa, from Salamanca, Guanajuato, in the early 1920s. After saving enough money for transportation costs, León sent for his family, who joined the Vega brothers as residents of Mason City's Lehigh Row community.¹⁶ The Vega family's origins fit the common pattern for Mexican immigrants to the Midwest, who came mostly from the central states of Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Michoacán.¹⁷

Other immigrants intended to travel elsewhere in the Midwest, but ended up in Iowa as a result of unscrupulous labor contractors who tricked them into signing contracts that the immigrants did not understand. *Enganchistas* (contractors) took advantage of immigrants' lack of English-language skills, according to Cesario Hernández. He described the contractors' schemes vividly. "A poor Mexican crosses the border and signs papers that the enganchista gives him, he cannot read English and does not know what he is signing. He is told that he will be shipped to where he wants, given free room and board, and fare back to

15. Edson, "Mexicans in the North Central States," 105; Kathleen Mapes, "'A Special Class of Labor': Mexican (Im)migrants, Immigration Debate, and Industrial Agriculture in the Rural Midwest," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 1 (2004), 66–67; Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 24–25; Jim Norris, *North for the Harvest: Mexican Workers, Growers, and the Sugar Beet Industry* (St. Paul, MN, 2009), 26–27.

16. "Lehigh Row Remembered," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 4/29/1990, in Vega Family Papers, Mujeres Latinas Project, Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City (hereafter cited as MLP-IWA).

17. Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 21; Edson, "Mexicans in the North Central States," 100–101; Sebastián Alvarez interview, 2/3/1990, Iowa Labor History Oral Project, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City (hereafter cited as ILHOP-SHSI); Weaver, "From Barrio to 'Boicoteo!'" 216.

Mexico. They think they are going to work near Chicago and land some place in Iowa.”¹⁸ Not surprisingly, most Mexican immigrants to Iowa settled in towns that offered employment in sugar beets, railroad maintenance, or foundries.

As occurred throughout the Southwest, immigrant social networks funneled numerous immigrants to Iowa through chain migration and eventually made labor contractors superfluous. Initially drawn to the Midwest by temporary railroad and agricultural jobs, Mexicans gradually obtained more stable positions in railroad maintenance, packinghouses, and industrial factories. For those immigrants who had not taken part in employers’ family recruitment strategy, the increased job stability enabled them to bring their wives and children and to provide better housing and educational opportunities for their families. Originally from the central Mexican states of Guanajuato and Zacatecas, the family of Inés García moved to Iowa on the advice of Magdalena Sánchez, her mother’s cousin. Sánchez, who had arrived from Mexico in the 1910s, lived in El Cometa, an ethnic enclave in Fort Madison, and worked for the Santa Fe railroad. He returned to Mexico to bring García’s family and eventually secured railroad jobs for several of the family’s adult males.¹⁹ Other family members arrived in Iowa after an extended process of step migration from Mexico into Texas, Oklahoma, and several midwestern states.²⁰ As more families arrived, urban ethnic enclaves developed. Some were quite ethnically diverse while others remained mostly Mexican.

By the eve of the Great Depression, Iowa’s Mexican population had grown to approximately 2,720. The population was distributed among four principal regions, according to George T. Edson, a Department of Labor official who toured the Midwest in the late 1920s to prepare a report on labor conditions. While in the state, Edson estimated its Mexican population by visiting ethnic enclaves, speaking with immigrant employers, and examining reports prepared by local agencies. His totals undercounted the number of immigrants because he failed to visit several towns

18. Cesario Hernández, quoted in Mapes, “A Special Class of Labor,” 78.

19. Inés García interview, 11/7/1999, MLP-IWA.

20. García, *Mexicans in the Midwest*, 21–24; Dennis Nodín Valdés, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917–1970* (Austin, TX, 1991), 10–18.



Mexican immigrants arrived in Fort Madison, Iowa, after a process of step migration in which they often stopped in several locations between Mexico and Iowa. This studio portrait of the Moralez and Romero families was taken in Lawrence, Kansas, ca. 1920s. Photo from Inés García Papers, Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City.

with Mexican populations (such as Iowa City) and because his survey occurred during the winter before seasonal migration brought additional immigrants to work in agriculture and railroad maintenance in the spring and summer months. The state's central region, including Des Moines and Valley Junction, had the smallest numbers at 471, followed by the north central region with 544 in Manly and Mason City. At least 650 Mexicans lived in the west and northwest region (Council Bluffs and Sioux City), while three eastern towns (Bettendorf, Davenport, and Fort Mad-

ison) were home to the largest concentration of Mexicans (1,055 (see map)).²¹

Employers provided free or rental housing for Mexican immigrants because they, like U.S. government officials, racialized Mexicans as temporary workers. Some midwestern agricultural employers had previously encouraged southern and eastern Europeans to become homeowners by offering them affordable houses, but they did not, according to historian Kathleen Mapes, extend those opportunities to Mexican immigrants, whom they viewed as only temporary laborers and not long-term residents or citizens.²² Immigrant housing consisted mostly of shacks, flats, cottages, and old railroad boxcars. There were few paved streets, so several enclaves, like Cook's Point in Davenport and El Cometa in Fort Madison, were prone to flooding. Living conditions were rudimentary, as most houses lacked electricity and running water.²³ The Bettendorf Company, which manufactured railroad cars, owned the housing and land in Holy City, a mostly Mexican ethnic enclave in Bettendorf located along the Mississippi River. The company began recruiting Mexican immigrants for its foundry in 1918; by the mid-1920s, some of those laborers had settled in Holy City.²⁴

By the mid-1920s, the effects of employers' family recruiting strategies and the immigrants' decisions to settle their families in the state were evident in the composition of the Mexican immigrant population. Women and children made up 50–70 percent of the Mexican population in some towns. In Mason City, a third of the Mexican immigrants were sugar beet workers, and women and children made up close to 70 percent of the Mexican popu-

21. Edson's population estimates were close to the total from the state of Iowa's 1925 census, which listed 2,597 Mexican nationals residing in the state. Edson, "Mexicans in the North Central States," 107–8; García, "Mexican Room," 59–64; "Census of Iowa for the Year 1925," x, xli, from www.iowadatacenter.org/Publications/iowa1925.pdf/view?searchterm=1925%20census. In 1925 Mexicans represented 0.11 percent of the state's population of 2,419,927.

22. Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*, 122–23.

23. Sebastián Alvarez interview; Weaver, "From Barrio to 'Boicoteo!'" 216–18; García, "Mexican Room," 71; Helen R. Karamitros, "Lehigh Row, An Ethnic Experience" (M.A. thesis, Mankato State University, 1998), 43–49.

24. Peter Vega interview; García, "Mexican Room," 63; Weaver, "From Barrio to 'Boicoteo!'" 218.

lation.²⁵ Throughout the Midwest, it was common for the sex ratios among Mexican immigrants to be skewed in industrial settings and more balanced in agricultural communities. In several midwestern cities, adult men composed 80 percent of the Mexican immigrant population. That ratio was a result of differing hiring practices between industrial and agricultural employers; the former recruited individual men while the latter tended to recruit families. Iowa's Mexican communities had a more balanced sex ratio than those in other states, even in the Midwest, because many immigrants participated in agricultural labor. During the winter of 1926-27, adult men made up from 57 to 65 percent of the adult Mexican immigrants in six communities surveyed by labor officials. Towns such as Mason City with a large agricultural base tended to have more even sex ratios than towns such as Fort Madison where most immigrants worked in industrial occupations.²⁶

TO UNDERSTAND the racialization of Mexicans in Iowa, it is necessary to know the historical context in which previous immigrants labored in agriculture and subsequently left for other employment, creating a labor shortage that was filled by Mexicans. During the early twentieth century, Mexican immigrants gradually replaced European immigrant laborers in the Midwest's sugar beet industry as the latter became farmers or industrial laborers. Wage increases in industrial jobs and expanding employment opportunities in cities during World War I had combined to reduce the number of European immigrant agricultural workers in the region. Facing labor shortages, U.S. agricultural employers began viewing Mexico as a convenient labor source because of its proximity and abundance of workers willing to emigrate. Employers, who could easily recruit and transport workers from Mexico and back via the railroads, sought to guarantee that Mexicans did not become permanent local residents because white midwesterners (including Iowans) racialized Mexicans as "non-

25. Edson, "Mexicans in the North Central States," 107-8; García, "Mexican Room," 58, 61.

26. Dionicio Nodín Valdés, *Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century* (Austin, TX, 2000), 52-53; García, "Mexican Room," 55.



A group of farm workers and farmers ride on a truck near Mason City, ca. 1910–1920. Photo from Agricultural and Natural Resources Archive, Colorado State University, Archives and Special Collections, Fort Collins, Colorado.

whites” who were not welcomed as permanent community members. Agricultural employers also sought Mexicans because of their lack of political strength in the Midwest, which made them more susceptible to labor controls and exploitation.

Intent on hiring Mexican immigrants, agricultural employers successfully lobbied U.S. government officials for an exemption from the Immigration Act of 1917.²⁷ In response to growers’ requests, the U.S. Department of Labor waived the Immigration Act’s head tax and literacy requirement for Mexicans. It also allowed for the temporary admission of Mexican laborers and their families for six months as contract agricultural laborers, restricted their employment to farm work, and stipulated that the laborers could not become U.S. citizens. According to historian Kathleen Mapes, the USDL thereby created a “form of racialized and nationalized labor” in a “unilateral guest worker program” that

27. Valdés, *Al Norte*, 8–10; Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*, 123; Norris, *North for the Harvest*, 27; Camille Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900–1939* (New Brunswick, NJ), 44.

“defined Mexicans as workers but not as future neighbors or citizens.”²⁸ The state’s control over Mexican workers included the authority to imprison and deport laborers who were apprehended after deserting their contracts. The need for Mexican agricultural workers increased further in the 1920s with the passage of the so-called quota laws (1921 and 1924), which severely restricted the annual number of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. To fill the resulting labor need, labor recruiters once again sought out Mexican immigrant workers by traveling to Texas and hiring those who had recently arrived there.²⁹

In the Midwest, Mexican immigrant laborers did not become farmers because of their lack of capital, declining agricultural wages, and their pattern of circular migration. Earlier waves of European immigrant workers had purchased farms in Iowa, but no Mexicans had become farmers by the late 1920s. German immigrants had brought some capital that enabled them to purchase farms. Other European immigrants arrived in the Midwest at the turn of the century when agricultural wages had not yet declined precipitously. They were able to accumulate savings from their wages as agricultural laborers and eventually purchase land to become farmers. Still other immigrants moved into industrial occupations. In contrast, Mexican immigrants faced different obstacles and limited opportunities. Unlike earlier European immigrants, Mexican immigrants arrived with little or no capital. Although some Mexican sugar beet laborers expressed an interest in purchasing farms, none were able to own or even rent a farm. Declining wages were the principal factor. Mexican immigrants entered the sugar beet labor force during a period when wages were low after a period of sustained decline. Agricultural wages continued dropping throughout the 1920s and were too low for the laborers to save enough to buy farms or to

28. Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*, 129–30, 142. In 1920 Iowa officials imprisoned some 40 Mexicans (including women and children) in the Polk County jail and subsequently deported them for deserting the beet fields of northern Iowa. *Denison Review*, 9/1/1920. Officials also deported Mexican immigrants who arrived in Fort Dodge but refused to work in the beet fields and sought work elsewhere. *Marshalltown Evening Times-Republican*, 7/27/1920.

29. Paul Spickard, *Almost All Aliens: Immigration, Race, and Colonialism in American History and Identity* (New York, 2007), 277–82; Valdés, *Al Norte*, 10.

purchase equipment as tenant farmers.³⁰ Seasonal wages for adult sugar beet workers in the upper Midwest declined from \$280 in 1920 to \$160 by the late 1920s. Subsequently, agricultural laborers witnessed their wages drop by half during the Great Depression of the 1930s.³¹ Even if they could afford to purchase farms in the Midwest, some Mexican immigrants chose not to do so because they intended to return to Mexico after the agricultural season. This pattern of circular migration led some immigrants to invest their meager savings to support their families back in Mexico or to purchase property there.

Iowa's industrial sector, especially railroad and meatpacking companies, provided additional employment opportunities for Mexican immigrants. In the first decade of the twentieth century, railroad companies began recruiting Mexican immigrant laborers to the Midwest for track maintenance and repair work, which became racialized as labor reserved for Mexicans or African Americans. This recruitment led to the establishment of the first Mexican settlements in the Midwest: boxcar communities on company property. Because railroad work was seasonal, these first labor migrants were mainly unaccompanied men.

Pioneering the use of international labor networks to recruit Mexicans, railroad companies in the late 1910s increased their recruitment efforts to meet wartime demands and to offset the decrease in the availability of European immigrants. Labor agents traveled into Mexico on railroads to enlist laborers, promising them work in the U.S. Southwest and later in the Midwest.³² Most Mexicans labored as maintenance workers for one of ten railroad companies and helped establish immigrant railroad communities in Council Bluffs and Des Moines in the western and central part of the state and in the eastern Iowa communities of Davenport, Bettendorf, and Fort Madison. The significant role of railroad employment for Mexican immigrant communities can be seen in the Quad Cities area, where about 75 percent of Mexican male laborers worked for the railroads. By the mid-1920s, railroad maintenance work had attracted Mexican immigrants to

30. W. H. Baird, Mason City, in Edson, "Iowa and Wisconsin," Edson Field Reports; Valdés, "Settlers, Sojourners, and Proletarians," 111-14.

31. Valdés, *Al Norte*, 18; Valdés, "Settlers, Sojourners, and Proletarians," 114.

32. Valdés, *Barrios Norteños*, 25-28.

new settlement areas in Sioux City, Manly, and Mason City. Mexican men found temporary employment as day laborers or on railroad track maintenance crews, but many railroad workers could count on only seven months of employment as companies instituted seasonal layoffs in winter.³³

Some Mexican immigrants found employment opportunities outside agricultural labor and railroad work. Meatpacking companies such as Armour, Cudahy, and Swift provided employment for Mexicans in Sioux City, Council Bluffs, Mason City, and Des Moines. In Mason City and Des Moines, Mexicans worked in cement factories, foundries, and brick and tile factories, whereas Muscatine offered employment in button manufacturing and at the Heinz food processing plant.³⁴ A few Mexicans established local businesses, such as grocery stores, pool halls, restaurants, and barbershops, in immigrant enclaves. Despite the prevalence and variety of work in the state, the population of Mexican immigrants in Iowa fluctuated sharply as a result of seasonal work in railroad maintenance and in the agricultural sector.³⁵

Mexican women fulfilled critical labor roles within immigrant communities, and they, too, experienced a process of racialization as residents and laborers. They initially worked in agriculture and the informal economy, but they ultimately entered Iowa's industrial labor force. By the late 1920s, several Mexicanas were working at a meatpacking plant in Mason City, while others labored at a cement company in Valley Junction.³⁶ Mostly, though, Mexican women performed agricultural labor as

33. Edson, "Mexicans in the North Central States," 105; Valdés, *Barrios Norteños*, 28–29, 81; García, "Mexican Room," 57–58; Frank Tobias Higbie, "Rural Work, Household Subsistence, and the North American Working Class: A View from the Midwest," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 65 (2004), 54–56.

34. Deborah Fink, *Cutting into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998), 124–25; García, "Mexican Room," 56, 67; Micheal Hutchinson, "River of Steel, River of Sweat: Hispanic Community in Muscatine, Iowa" (M.A. thesis, University of Iowa, 1988), www.immigration-usa.com/new/mexican_american.html.

35. George T. Edson, "Mexicans in Fort Madison, Iowa," Edson Field Reports; George T. Edson, "Mexicans in Davenport, Iowa, and Moline, Illinois," Edson Field Reports; Edson, "Mexicans in the North Central States," 112; García, "Mexican Room," 57.

36. George T. Edson, "Mexicans in Mason City, Iowa," Edson Field Reports; García, "Mexican Room," 67.

part of families employed in the sugar beet industry, and some eventually worked in industrial jobs. While men performed the blocking of sugar beets, women and children were responsible for weeding. Adult women also helped with hoeing and with the topping after the harvest. The labor of women and children was crucial because it allowed immigrant men to sign contracts with farmers for an amount of acreage that required a family (and not just one individual) to block and thin.³⁷

White Iowans racialized Mexican immigrant women as “non-white” and, other than employing them in the fields as part of families, generally refused to hire them except as domestic workers. Because discriminatory practices limited opportunities for wage labor, Mexican women engaged in an informal economy, selling food, sewing, and performing domestic work for white, middle-class families.³⁸ One resident of Fort Madison remembers her female relatives making extra money by selling homemade postcards. “My mom and my aunt Margarita used to make these beautiful postcards. . . . They used to embroider happy birthday or whatever the occasion was and they’d sell ‘em.”³⁹

As elsewhere in the United States, Mexican women in Iowa supplemented their family’s income by operating boarding-houses as well as taking in laundry and doing ironing out of their homes. These services were needed by many of the communities’ single men. In Davenport, for example, Gertrudes Veyna lived with her husband (both were Mexican immigrants) and an infant son in a rented house, which also housed five boarders (four Mexican immigrants and one Mexican American) in 1920.⁴⁰ Commenting on such entrepreneurial women, Inés García recalls, “I know my godmother Romana used to take in washings for the men and wash their clothes, and mend ‘em, and iron ‘em. And they made a little money that way.”⁴¹

37. Edson, “Mexicans in the North Central States,” 107–8.

38. Inés García interview, 11/7/1999, MLP-IWA; García, “Mexican Room,” 100–101; Luz María Gordillo, *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration* (Austin, TX, 2010), 14, 107–8.

39. Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 141; Inés García interview.

40. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Population Schedule, Scott County, Iowa*.

41. Inés García interview; Edson, “Mexicans in the North Central States,” 110.



Mexican immigrant families tended gardens and raised small animals to supplement their food. This photo, taken in Bettendorf, ca. 1923, is from the Estefanía Joyce Rodriguez Papers, Iowa Women's Archives.

Mexican women also tended gardens on land provided by the railroad, cement, and sugar companies. They raised chickens and pigs and grew vegetables as well as herbs and spices used in Mexican dishes. Such activities replicated their customs in Mexico's rural communities. This homegrown food not only sustained the family but also provided a revenue source when surplus eggs, vegetables, and meat were sold.⁴² Beyond providing food, gardens were a source of pride for many boxcar residents who enjoyed

42. Estefanía Rodriguez interview, 8/11/2005, MLP-IWA; Benita Aguirre interview, 10/5/2005, MLP-IWA; Juanita Rodriguez and Ernest Rodriguez interview, 8/6/2005, MLP-IWA; Fink, *Cutting into the Meatpacking Line*, 124-25; Karamitros, "Lehigh Row," 49; García, "Mexican Room," 93; Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 127-28.

growing flowers and potted plants to decorate their humble homes.⁴³ By engaging in an informal economy or earning wages for industrial or agricultural labor, Mexican women gained a degree of autonomy and set an example for their daughters to emulate in seeking future employment.⁴⁴

Mexican women also supplied unpaid reproductive labor that sustained Mexican communities and provided a measure of stability. As wives and daughters, they participated in a gendered division of domestic labor that assigned them the primary responsibility for childcare, food preparation, and other domestic chores. While these domestic roles were not remunerative and were usually unacknowledged by employers, they were essential for Mexican communities to flourish. Many daily household chores were time consuming and difficult as ethnic enclaves often lacked running water, electricity, and other modern conveniences. Several residents recalled the grueling daily task of carrying buckets of water for several blocks. Residents relied on a community faucet to obtain water for bathing, washing, and cooking. Others collected rainwater in barrels, which had to be cleaned often to avoid contamination. Women and children also had to collect firewood and coal for the pot-bellied stoves used for cooking and heating. In the winter, frigid temperatures compounded these tasks as the pipes to the faucets would occasionally freeze. Washing clothes was an arduous daily chore as school children and laborers owned few changes of clothes.⁴⁵

Through friendships, women strengthened family ties to the larger Mexican immigrant community and sustained social networks that fueled chain migration. A male resident of Mason City recalled his mother's significant role as a midwife in a community with strong bonds. "My mother was a midwife. She delivered a lot of babies out there [at Lehigh Row]. Just imagine, the people never went to school. . . . But boy, did they know how to take care of each other and their family."⁴⁶

43. Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 128; Benita Aguirre interview.

44. Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 141–42.

45. María Mercedes Aguilera interview, 9/22/2005, MLP-IWA; Peter Vega interview; Benita Aguirre interview; Sebastián Álvarez interview; Dolores García interview, 9/22/2005, MLP-IWA.

46. Karamitros, "Lehigh Row," 60.

Once women and children moved to Iowa to join immigrant men, families tended to stay in one location, and men opted to remain with the same employer. Cognizant of this stability and of the advantage of family labor, agricultural employers encouraged Mexican immigrant men to give up good jobs in the cities for agricultural labor in the Midwest by offering "free rent, a garden, and milk."⁴⁷ The reference to a garden acknowledged that women often accompanied Mexican men and that access to a garden appealed to families disappointed with urban life. Moreover, contractors admitted to lax enforcement of child labor laws because of their dependence on underage workers. To justify the practice, employers claimed that implementing child labor laws would cause Mexican immigrants to leave agricultural work because their families counted on their children's contribution to the family's labor.⁴⁸

Besides following other family members to Iowa, various economic and social factors attracted Mexican immigrants to Iowa and elsewhere in the Midwest. Jobs were the main attraction, but the prospect of regular, long-term employment with the same employer led some immigrants to settle in Iowa. Regular employment allowed them to avoid constant migration across the Midwest in search of jobs, and to accommodate families who would not have to endure the frequent moves.⁴⁹ Because sugar beet labor was seasonal, paid low wages, and subjected workers to harsh conditions, it was seen as the least desirable work; few laborers returned to it if they had other employment opportunities. Railroad maintenance work paid better and was more stable than agricultural labor. Nevertheless, railroad workers had to travel to repair tracks away from their families, who often lived in boxcar communities with few amenities. Factory work was the most desirable option for its high wages, stable employment, and benefits.

47. Maude Swett, Wisconsin Industrial Commission, Milwaukee, in Edson, "Iowa and Wisconsin," Edson Field Reports; Zaragosa Vargas, "Armies in the Fields and Factories: The Mexican Working Classes in the Midwest in the 1920s," *Mexican Studies / Estudios Mexicanos* 7 (1991), 53, 62; Norris, *North for the Harvest*, 11.

48. Maude Swett, in Edson, "Iowa and Wisconsin."

49. Perry Beeman, "Families Recall Struggle to Survive in Search for Work," *Des Moines Register*, 1/16/1985.

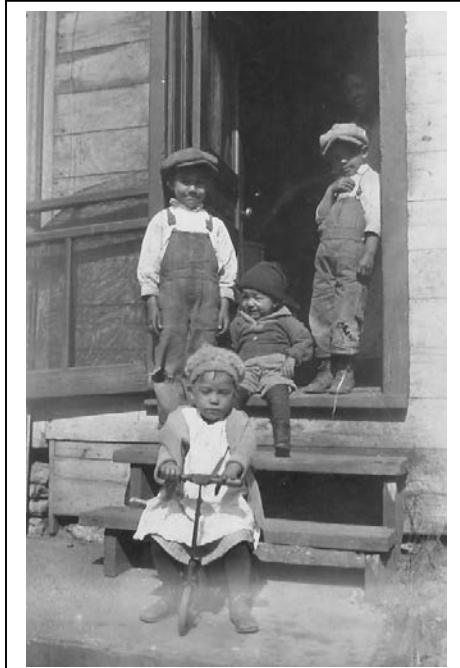
In Iowa, industrial work included manufacturing railroad cars and farm equipment, processing food, and producing cement.⁵⁰

The small-town environment of some Mexican communities undoubtedly appealed to immigrants from rural parts of Mexico who had misgivings about living in congested cities. Mexican immigrants were also attracted to Iowa by the state's lesser racial tensions and better working conditions relative to their experience in midwestern cities or Jim Crow Texas.⁵¹ It was precisely this racial climate to which the Mexican immigrants alluded in this article's opening vignette. While they encountered discrimination in Iowa, it was not as harsh as in large midwestern cities. Finally, while ethnic enclaves had poor housing and minimal services, they provided a sense of community, comfort, and a refuge that led some families to remain in the state.

AT THE BEGINNING of the twentieth century, employers across the Southwest and Midwest began offering rationales, based on racial stereotypes, to explain their increasing recruitment of and dependence on Mexican immigrant laborers. Employers constructed an image of Mexican workers as docile and hard working to explain their hiring and to justify their exploitation. After passing the so-called quota laws, the U.S. Congress continued to debate whether to extend the quotas to Mexicans. Restrictionists, who characterized Mexicans as belonging to a "degenerate race" that would corrupt the U.S. racial stock and undermine "white" laborers by accepting lower wages, argued in favor of severely limiting Mexican immigration. Anti-restrictionists opposed quotas on Mexican immigrants but racialized them nonetheless, arguing that Mexicans were a "racially degraded labor force" and as such were the ideal agricultural workforce because they were physically suited for stoop labor and, perhaps most importantly,

50. Vargas, "Armies in the Fields and Factories," 56-62, Beeman, "Families Recall Struggle to Survive."

51. Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 17-18. To attract Mexican immigrants, sugar companies in Michigan advertised in Spanish-language newspapers in Texas. Among their promises were free housing, free transportation, garden plots, high wages, and "not [any] trouble getting pay." According to historian Kathleen Mapes, these incentives were meant to contrast a more comfortable life in Michigan to a harsher one in Jim Crow Texas. Mapes, "A Special Class of Labor," 77-78; Fink, *Cutting into the Meatpacking Line*, 128.



Estefanía Joyce Rodriguez on tricycle, with brothers Albert (standing, left), Tom (standing, right), and John (sitting on step), Bettendorf, ca. 1925. Photo from Estefanía Joyce Rodriguez Papers, Iowa Women's Archives.

were “homing pigeons” who would “naturally” return to Mexico after the harvests.⁵² The anti-restrictionists’ characterization of Mexicans was intended to appease local white residents who feared that “foreign” workers would become permanent settlers in regions where employers increasingly relied on an immigrant labor force.

Responding to the restrictionists, in 1920 U.S. Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson appointed a special commission to study whether Mexican immigrants were competing with white workers for urban jobs. The commission’s argument about Mexicans’

52. Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*, 145; Mapes, “A Special Class of Labor,” 65–68.

“genetic” disposition to engage in migratory labor epitomized the racialization of these immigrants. According to the commission, “The Mexicans of our day, being descendants of a race in whose veins flow in dominating measure Indian blood, evince the same migratory characteristics that have always been a feature of the Indian race.”⁵³

According to historian David Gutiérrez, employers relied on “Americans’ traditional perceptions of Mexicans as an inherently backward, slow, docile, indolent, and tractable people” to argue that “these characteristics constituted the very virtues that made Mexicans an ideal (and cheap) labor force.”⁵⁴ Reflecting on his company’s recruitment of Mexican laborers, Fred Schwartz, an employment manager in Milwaukee, offered a similar characterization: “Usually the Mexicans are appreciative and submissive.”⁵⁵ Such views were part of a larger pattern in which employers strategically racialized Mexicans as not only “docile” but also “ideally suited” for dangerous work.⁵⁶ Yet these characteristics did not entirely explain the hiring of Mexican immigrants.

Employers racialized Mexican laborers as a separate “race” who could withstand terrible working conditions. Summarizing employers’ reasons for hiring Mexican immigrants, a USDL official reported that employers believed that the immigrants, “although not muscularly as strong as northern Europeans nor as active and big, show a greater endurance at work in extreme heat, disagreeable odors and nerve-wracking noises than most other races.”⁵⁷ Left unmentioned were possible reasons that Mexicans accepted bad working conditions, namely, workers’ undocumented status or other obstacles to securing alternate employment as a result of their racialization as unskilled, undependable, and foreign.

Despite Mexican laborers’ alleged “docility,” employers sought to exert power over these workers by strictly managing

53. Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*, 135–36.

54. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 46.

55. Fred Schwartz, Employment Manager, Milwaukee, in Edson, “Iowa and Wisconsin.”

56. Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 49.

57. Edson, “Mexicans in the North Central States,” 114.

their workplaces and housing. In Iowa and elsewhere in the Midwest, railroad companies specifically recruited Mexican immigrants because they could pay them less than white workers and could exert more control over them by providing the only housing option available to them.⁵⁸ A distinguishing characteristic that set Mexican immigrant workers in rural areas apart from their counterparts in large midwestern cities was the high level of control exerted by their employers.

This control began with strict labor contracts offered during their recruitment. To recruit laborers, labor contractors who supplied workers to beet growers routinely offered potential workers "free transportation" by railroad. Once at their job destination, however, immigrants discovered that their transportation had not been free; instead, employers deducted its cost from their wages. The labor contracts also allowed employers to garnish a portion of a laborer's wages over several months to hold as security money, which was forfeited if the worker abandoned the job before fulfilling the contract.⁵⁹

Some Mexican immigrants were further dependent on their employers for company-owned housing. The Bettendorf Company, for example, constructed rental housing in Holy City for its laborers, while the Lehigh Portland Company did the same for its workers in Mason City. Immigrants who lived in these ethnic enclaves were aware of the need to maintain good relations with their employers (and landlords) because Mexicans, like African Americans, struggled to find landlords willing to rent to them.

The practice of laying off some workers seasonally added to the employers' power because Mexican immigrants in some Iowa towns could not secure alternative employment. Workers for the Bettendorf Company, for example, had difficulty finding jobs during layoffs because most local employers refused to hire Mexicans, whom they racialized as undesirable and unstable workers. Certainly this practice also occurred in larger midwestern cities,

58. Fink, *Cutting into the Meatpacking Line*, 123.

59. Valdés, *Al Norte*, 13–14; García, "Mexican Room," 67; Mapes, "A Special Class of Labor," 77–78. A similar degree of employer control was also found in other agricultural company towns. See José M. Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880–1960* (Urbana, IL, 2006), 30, 39, 54, 58.

but immigrant laborers in small towns had greater difficulty securing jobs during layoffs because employment opportunities were more limited.⁶⁰

Railroad companies used several strategies to exert control over Mexican immigrant laborers. Some companies, such as the Santa Fe railroad, preferred recruiting “fresh hands” directly from Mexico over workers who had been in the United States longer. Like other employers, the railroads assumed that recent immigrants were more pliable and less likely to quit their jobs or press for higher wages than those with extensive experience in the U.S. labor force. According to historian Jeffrey Garcilazo, the railroad companies preferred “greenhorns” without track experience because they were less likely to protest their working conditions or complain about overpriced food and low wages. As W. H. Baird, a sugar factory superintendent in Mason City, opined, “Some Mexicans who stay here too long get spoiled.”⁶¹ Railroad companies racialized Mexican immigrants as “docile” and “ideally suited” for difficult and dangerous work (in which laborers sometimes lost limbs). Some employers also stated that they preferred hiring Mexican immigrants rather than African Americans because the Mexicans were less familiar with their labor rights and were more tractable and more willing to accept lower wages.⁶² Justifying his company’s recruitment of some 350 Mexican immigrants, an employment manager confirmed this assessment: “We had tried colored men earlier but they gave too much trouble. Therefore, we chose the Mexicans.”⁶³

The Santa Fe and other railroad companies exerted additional control over immigrant laborers by providing their principal source of medical care and transportation. With such a degree of control, railroad companies and other employers had several tools at their disposal to punish recalcitrant workers or to quash

60. García, “Mexican Room,” 67, 97–98; Valdés, *Barrios Norteños*, 81; Weaver, “From Barrio to ‘Boicoteo!’ ” 218; Edson, “Mexicans in Davenport and Moline”; Fink, *Cutting into the Meatpacking Line*, 125–26.

61. W. H. Baird, superintendent of sugar factory, Mason City, in Edson, “Iowa and Wisconsin.”

62. Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 37, 48–49, 61, 118–19; Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny*, 148–49.

63. Fred Schwartz, Employment Manager, Milwaukee, in Edson, “Iowa and Wisconsin.”

any potential labor organizing by Mexican immigrants.⁶⁴ A labor department official observed the high degree of employee supervision in small Iowa towns versus large midwestern cities and concluded that companies used such supervision specifically to prevent labor organizing.⁶⁵ Employers could retaliate by withholding food or medical care or by raising the immigrants' rent. If such measures were not effective, the employers could fire the laborers, who would lose their transportation home and have difficulty finding another job. In 1907, for example, the Santa Fe railroad company not only rejected demands for a wage increase for striking Mexican immigrants in Fort Madison but also refused to provide free transportation back to Mexico, arguing that the workers had broken their contract.⁶⁶

IN RESPONSE to employers' controls and racialization, Mexican immigrant workers engaged in subversive practices to carve out some freedom from labor restrictions. They participated in slowdowns, pretended to work, refused to cooperate with foremen, spoke Spanish with one another to avoid foremen's eavesdropping, shared information about other job opportunities, and left their jobs.⁶⁷ Such overt and covert "arts of resistance" were not unique to Mexican immigrants, but rather linked them to other laborers who confronted domination.⁶⁸

One strategy of resistance involved using aliases. While visiting Fort Madison in 1927, USDL official George Edson encountered several men who were using aliases that were known to their immigrant acquaintances. According to Edson, "The father of Francisco and Miguel Reyes, is really Sixto Reyes, but he is working for the Santa Fe railroad here under the name of Macario Pérez."⁶⁹ By using an alias, a worker could attempt to find work with higher wages after skipping out on a railroad contract.

64. Fink, *Cutting into the Meatpacking Line*, 123, 125.

65. Edson, "Mexicans in Mason City," 1927.

66. Sebastián Alvarez interview; "Mexican Contract Laborers Came, Worked and Settled," *Fort Madison Daily Democrat*, 5/1/1987.

67. Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 69.

68. James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT, 1990), 4-5, 198-99.

69. Edson, "Mexicans in Fort Madison."

In some cases, immigrants found work with the same employer whose contract they had escaped but at a different location from the one stipulated by the contract.⁷⁰ The use of assumed names by newly arrived immigrants demonstrated advanced planning and the influence of extensive social networks because some immigrants had assumed aliases in Mexico even before obtaining a work contract or before arriving in Iowa. In such cases, their transnational and translocal social networks had informed them while they were still in Mexico of the possibilities that an assumed name could open up.

Mexicans were well aware of other employment opportunities within and outside of Iowa. In addition to obtaining job information from Spanish-language newspapers and from word of mouth, they also received direct offers from potential employers. The Santa Fe aggressively recruited Mexican immigrants in El Paso, Texas, where it maintained a recruiting office. Labor contractors based in Topeka, Kansas, traveled to the border city, where they preferred recruiting Mexican immigrants over Mexican Americans. The labor contractors, who spoke Spanish and had experience hiring Mexican laborers, would then accompany the new hires to their destinations. En route to those destinations, immigrants sometimes discovered new employment opportunities through word of mouth, so their initial use of aliases enabled them to skip their contracts (a common practice throughout the United States).⁷¹ For example, Santiago Salazar, instead of continuing to his contracted destination in Galesburg, Illinois, assumed the alias Santiago Alvarez to abandon his contract in Fort Madison, Iowa, after he encountered friends who informed him of local work with the same railroad company.⁷²

Mexican workers were not always the ones who initiated the ruse. Some employers tried to “poach” employees from other jobs. Steel companies in Chicago, for example, attempted to syphon off railroad workers by distributing Spanish-language circulars that offered higher wages and better working conditions.⁷³

70. García, “Mexican Room,” 66.

71. Edson, “Mexicans in Fort Madison”; Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 50.

72. García, “Mexican Room,” 66.

73. Edson, “Mexicans in Fort Madison”; Innis-Jiménez, *Steel Barrio*, 34–35, 40.

Employers and the public interpreted Mexican immigrants' use of aliases as signs of sketchiness and criminality, another aspect of their racialization. In Fort Madison, one white woman argued that Mexican men used aliases to abandon wives in Mexico and to establish liaisons with other women in the United States.⁷⁴ While some immigrant men might have established such relationships, others had more legitimate reasons for using aliases. Rather than using aliases to hide from their past, Mexican immigrants did so to evade restrictive labor controls in the present. The practice of Mexican contract laborers skipping contracts was widespread throughout the Midwest and the nation as they took active steps to leave unfavorable contracts and destinations.⁷⁵

Mexican immigrants used several other strategies to reclaim some control over their lives from their employers. Unlike immigrants who arrived in the Southwest, newcomers to Iowa in the early twentieth century could not rely on assistance from long-standing Mexican American communities. Most Iowa towns lacked large groups of Mexican Americans with U.S. citizenship, knowledge of local laws and customs, and the ability to speak English. In contrast to cities like Los Angeles, Albuquerque, and San Antonio, Iowa towns had few if any community organizations, newspapers, or churches that catered to Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. This absence left newly arrived immigrants more vulnerable and more dependent on non-Mexican allies to help them navigate their new surroundings.

While their limited English skills might have circumscribed their options, they learned to rely on key allies for assistance. One type of ally was the *padrone*—an intermediary between immigrant laborers and local institutions or residents. Some padrones emerged from within the Mexican community after they learned English and adjusted to life in the United States (usually they had lived in the States longer than most other immigrants). José Prado, who had served as president of a mutual aid society called *Comisión Honorífica*, fulfilled that role in Des Moines.⁷⁶ Elsewhere, Mexicans befriended white residents who spoke Spanish

74. Edson, "Mexicans in Fort Madison"; García, "Mexican Room," 66.

75. García, *Mexicans in the Midwest*, 7–8; Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 37.

76. George T. Edson, "Mexicans in Des Moines, Iowa," Edson Field Reports.

and could provide assistance. In Council Bluffs and Omaha, Mexicans appealed to Mrs. S. F. Secord, who had served as a missionary in Central America and Mexico. She helped immigrants by acting as an interpreter, and she also translated documents for local businesses.⁷⁷

Although some padrones might have exercised power over immigrants because the workers relied on them for various transactions, others had a more complicated relationship with their immigrant allies. In Fort Madison, a local white woman and grocery store owner, Mrs. W. E. Duffy, served as a padrone for Mexican immigrants, securing medical treatment, navigating local services, and dealing with municipal authorities. Duffy had become a padrone after several Mexican men asked her to be their intermediary and taught her Spanish. Mexican immigrants appealed to "Benita," as they called her, "to call the doctor, priest or undertaker, to arrange for births, marriages and funerals, to talk to lawyers, bankers, and policemen."⁷⁸ Through her numerous interactions with immigrants, Duffy learned about illegal activities among immigrants, including serious crimes, but she refused to inform the police because doing so would betray her clients' trust and she would consequently lose her power. According to historian Gunter Peck, Duffy's situation highlighted the workers' "fragile and circumspect" loyalty to her, demonstrating their considerable agency in this padrone relationship.⁷⁹

Mexican immigrants not only depended on transnational social networks to secure employment, but also strengthened such connections through circular migration and remittances. Some employers and local residents preferred that Mexicans return to Mexico after their seasonal employment was complete rather than remain in Iowa as unemployed laborers. These preferences, along with some employers' practice of providing railroad passes for the return trip to Mexico, encouraged the immigrant

77. George T. Edson, "Mexicans in Omaha, Nebraska," Edson Field Reports.

78. Edson, "Mexicans in Fort Madison."

79. Inés García interview; Gunter Peck, "Divided Loyalties: Immigrant Padrones and the Evolution of Industrial Paternalism in North America," *International Labor and Working Class History* 53 (1998), 51, 54; idem, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880-1930* (New York, 2000), 154-55.

pattern of circular migration whereby immigrants returned to their homeland during the winter and journeyed back to Iowa in the spring. Even though the practice of circular migration was encouraged by some employers and white residents, they, in turn, used the practice to racialize Mexicans as “genetically” prone to migration and therefore unreliable as loyal workers.

Some Mexican immigrants left spouses and children back in Mexico. Although the majority of these absent parents were men, some women also entrusted their children to family members back home. Participating in transnational parenthood, these parents had powerful motivations to return to Mexico to visit their children.⁸⁰ In the meantime, they remitted money to their dependent family members. USDL officials estimated that single men allocated approximately 25 percent of their earnings as remittances, while those living with families sent some 10 to 15 percent of their earnings to relatives in Mexico.⁸¹ This transnational flow of people and money between Mexico and the United States strengthened social and economic networks that fostered community and familial links across the international border, which, in turn, would help future immigrants make the journey north.

Like Mexican immigrants elsewhere in the Midwest, those in Iowa also developed extensive translocal connections. Before arriving in Iowa, some immigrants had a variety of work experiences throughout the Midwest and along the East Coast. Friends and family, who informed the immigrants of employment opportunities, influenced their migration in search of work. Others participated in step migration by living and working in Nebraska, Colorado, Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma before arriving in Iowa.⁸² These patterns of migration within the United States demonstrate that some Mexican immigrants did not arrive in Iowa directly from Mexico and that many laborers moved frequently in search of employment.

80. Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila, “‘I’m here, but I’m there’: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood,” *Gender and Society* 11 (1997), 548–71.

81. Edson, “Mexicans in the North Central States,” 112.

82. Edson, “Mexicans in Davenport and Moline”; Edson, “Mexicans in Omaha.”

The practices of labor recruitment companies contributed to the immigrants' prior work experience. One such company sent workers to the state from various midwestern and southern locations such as Kansas City, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Chicago, Moline, Rock Island, and Knoxville. The company would target immigrants who could not find jobs in those cities or who had recently been laid off. Among the enticements labor recruiters used were paid transportation and labor contracts that "guaranteed" a wage and a minimum period of work.⁸³

In turn, when Iowa employers conducted layoffs, Mexican immigrants often left the state to obtain temporary work elsewhere. Some immigrant laborers would "winter" in Chicago to supplement their income during layoffs from railroad work. For example, workers in Council Bluffs asked for railroad passes to Chicago, Kansas City, and other midwestern cities when they were laid off.⁸⁴ A few Spanish-language newspapers aided unemployed workers by identifying companies in the region that were hiring. *El Cosmopolita* of Kansas City and *El Trabajo* of Davenport informed readers of the lack of openings throughout the Midwest to discourage immigrants from spending money to travel to a region where work was scarce.⁸⁵ The practice of seasonal migration into and out of the state created and strengthened workers' translocal networks by providing jobs and living experiences in other midwestern locales. Such experiences allowed immigrants to compare work and housing situations, which would influence their future decisions to settle in Iowa or elsewhere.

THE RACIALIZATION OF MEXICANS varied throughout Iowa according to demography, prior immigrant settlement, and the presence of African Americans in each town. Three communities with varying demographic and settlement patterns and, ultimately, different racialization experiences highlight those various experiences. These Mexican enclaves — Bettendorf and Davenport, located along the Mississippi River; Mason City in north

83. Valdés, *Al Norte*, 12–13.

84 Edson, "Mexicans in Fort Madison"; Edson, "Mexicans in Davenport and Moline"; Edson, "Mexicans in Omaha."

85. García, "Mexican Room," 65.

central Iowa; and Fort Madison in southeast Iowa (see map)—had similar origins: all three began through the efforts of labor recruiters and then grew through social networks and chain migration. And the Mexican residents of those enclaves did share some common background and experiences. Most Mexican immigrants to these places had traveled directly to Iowa or participated in step migration by stopping to work in Texas before traveling to Iowa. Home ownership was rare; most immigrants were renters or lived in free company housing. Among the homeowners living in these ethnic enclaves, most leased the land from their employer or a private landowner. With the exception of U.S.-born children, the adult Mexican residents had been born in Mexico and very few had become naturalized U.S. citizens or spoke English. This pattern was common across the Midwest and the Southwest as many Mexican immigrants shunned naturalization because of their long-range plans to return to Mexico.⁸⁶ Yet how Mexican immigrants experienced racialization in these communities differed in significant ways.

Bettendorf and Davenport make up the Iowa part of the so-called Quad Cities area (actually consisting of five towns, with Rock Island, East Moline, and Moline on the Illinois side). Mexican immigrants were initially drawn to railroad and foundry jobs in Bettendorf and Davenport in the early twentieth century. These laborers lived in two predominantly Mexican enclaves—Holy City in Bettendorf and Cook’s Point in Davenport—and also among the general population. The Bettendorf Company created Holy City as an immigrant residential area in the early 1900s, and Cook’s Point became a Mexican immigrant enclave in the late 1910s. Initially, Greeks, Serbians, and other Europeans lived in Holy City. By the mid-1920s, however, most Holy City residents were Mexican immigrants, with a few Greeks occupying the better cottages and a few African Americans living in shanties.⁸⁷ By the late 1920s, approximately one-third of the Mexican population of Bettendorf and Davenport lived in Holy City, about a quarter lived in Cook’s Point, and the rest resided in

86. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 259n26; George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945* (New York, 1993), 105; Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*, 90–93.

87. Edson, “Mexicans in Davenport and Moline.”

rental housing scattered throughout both towns. The 1930 census identifies the majority of Cook's Point residents as Mexicans, with a few European immigrants (mostly Germans) among them. While some African Americans lived in Bettendorf and Davenport, none lived in Cook's Point. Most of the adult Mexican men worked for a railroad company, foundry, or cement factory.

These residential patterns reflected the relatively recent arrival of Mexican immigrants. All but one of the Mexican families in Holy City and Cook's Point rented their homes; the lone homeowner, Lorenzo Hidalgo, had immigrated to the United States in 1912 (earlier than most fellow Mexican immigrants) and presumably bought a home after working in the area longer than his compatriots. Such ethnic enclaves served as a type of linguistic refuge for these monolingual immigrants even though, unlike ethnic enclaves in larger midwestern cities, Holy City and Cook's Point lacked immigrant-owned businesses such as grocery stores.

The majority of Mexican residents of Bettendorf or Davenport who did not live in one of these ethnic enclaves either rented similar housing or lived in boardinghouses elsewhere. George García was the sole homeowner among those who lived outside the Mexican enclaves. A molder at a local foundry, García was married to a white native Iowan and had a family of nine children, all born in Iowa. Another Mexican immigrant, Walter Hernández, also married a white Iowan, became a naturalized citizen, and worked for the Bettendorf Company manufacturing railway cars.⁸⁸ Mexican laborers who worked in the Bettendorf Company's foundry faced occupational segregation, as they could not find employment with other local industries in the Quad Cities.

In contrast to immigrant settlements in the Quad Cities, Mason City was more ethnically diverse and offered a wider variety of employment opportunities. Drawn to jobs on the railroad or in the area's cement factories, sugar beet fields, meatpacking plant, or brick and tile plants, immigrants from various nations settled in a diverse immigrant enclave called Lehigh Row. Most Mexican immigrants worked in the cement and meatpacking

88. Edson, "Mexicans in the North Central States," 99-114; U.S. Bureau of the Census: Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population Schedule, Scott County, Iowa. Both García and Hernández had stepchildren. Their wives had previously been either widowed or divorced.



The pulp warehouse of the American Beet Sugar Company in Mason City, ca. 1910–1920. Photo from Agricultural and Natural Resources Archive, Colorado State University, Archives and Special Collections.

industries, although some also labored seasonally for the American Beet Sugar Company.

Lehigh Row emerged as an immigrant enclave in 1911 when the Lehigh Portland Company constructed rental housing for its immigrant workforce. Located on the edge of Mason City, directly across from two cement plants, by 1925 Lehigh Row housed some 400 residents in five rows of two-story duplex houses. Lehigh Row consisted of a mix of southern and eastern European immigrants as well as Mexican immigrants. Relative to their Greek and Italian neighbors, Mexican immigrants had low naturalization rates. In the 1930 census, only Flora Guerra, the wife of a sugar beet laborer from Texas, had become naturalized.⁸⁹

The Mexican residents of Lehigh Row experienced more cross-cultural daily interactions than their counterparts in the

89. Edson, "Mexicans in the North Central States," 104; U.S. Bureau of the Census: Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population Schedule, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa; Charles M. Meyers, "The Mexican Problem in Mason City," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 27 (1929), 241–43.



A diverse immigrant workforce worked at sacking machines at the Portland Cement Company in Mason City. Photo, ca. 1910–1920, from Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Quad Cities. The majority of the residents of Lehigh Row in Mason City were Greek and Mexican immigrant families, but the enclave was also home to Hungarians, Italians, Montenegrins, and Poles. A small number of African Americans lived in Mason City, but none resided in Lehigh Row.⁹⁰ Several Mexicans who grew up in Mason City remembered interethnic cooperation among the town's immigrant population. Recalling that Greeks and Mexicans got along very well, Patricia Sánchez believed that the immigrant communities bonded because they lived and attended school together, creating frequent interethnic interactions. In her sociological study of Lehigh Row, Helen Karamitros argues that the poverty and isolation shared among southern and eastern European as well as Mexican immigrants led to a strong interethnic community in Mason City. Italian, Mexican, and Polish immigrant residents also shared a common Catholic

90. Karamitros, "Lehigh Row," 43–49.

religion and attended the same church built near Lehigh Row.⁹¹ And unlike some Iowa towns, such as Fort Madison, which segregated Mexican children in “Americanization rooms,” Mason City’s diverse immigrant population was reflected in its public school classrooms, where recent European immigrants, African Americans, whites, and Mexican immigrants mingled.⁹²

Immigrants of different national origins recall a strong sense of community they ascribed to shared living conditions, occupations, and immigrant backgrounds. According to one resident, “There was camaraderie among us Lehigh people. . . . We played together, shared together, stole together.” Another resident offered, “We were kids growing up and didn’t care what nationality each other were, what you ate, or how you talked.” Many adult immigrants had limited English skills, but they communicated with one another by mixing languages. Referring to this linguistic blending, a Mexican man who grew up in Lehigh Row recalled, “We made up our own language, a mixture of all languages. . . . They murdered the English language . . . [yet] somehow they all understood each other.” According to Peter Vega, immigrant men were more likely to learn English “out of necessity for their jobs,” while immigrant women had fewer opportunities if they did not work outside the home. He also recalled a common pattern of English-speaking immigrant children interpreting for their monolingual parents. Italian, Greek, and Mexican children mixed freely, ate at each other’s house, and eventually dated one another. Not surprisingly, intermarriage became common among the second generation.⁹³

The ethnic diversity of Mason City’s neighborhoods and schools led to shared experiences among the immigrant working-class population. Mexicans and southern and eastern European immigrants often worked and lived together, which could create the impression that, as visiting USDL official George Edson con-

91. Patricia Sánchez interview, 10/26/2006, MLP-IWA; Lupe Dianda interview, 12/9/2006, MLP-IWA; García, “Mexican Room,” 71, 76; Karamitros, “Lehigh Row,” 43–49, 65, 82–85.

92. Karamitros, “Lehigh Row,” 76–85; García, “Mexican Room,” 71.

93. Karamitros, “Lehigh Row,” 66, 57, 75–76; “Lehigh Row Remembered”; Patricia Sánchez interview, 10/26/2006, MLP-IWA; Lupe Dianda interview, 12/9/2006, MLP-IWA.

cluded in the late 1920s, “discrimination is not so noticeable.” Immigrants in Lehigh Row themselves recalled a feeling of camaraderie among fellow immigrants regardless of their background. According to one resident, “Mexicans had their culture, Greeks had theirs, Italian theirs, but it didn’t matter. Because every culture was good and everyone was for the family. . . . We played together, we protected each other. Good values. We all stuck together.”⁹⁴

Yet, despite Mason City’s diverse population, its residents made clear distinctions between recent immigrants and the native-born white population, and those distinctions also contributed to the sense of community among the immigrant groups of southern and eastern Europeans as well as Mexicans. Several residents of Lehigh Row confirmed that native-born white Iowans did not accept southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrants as equals. A second-generation Italian immigrant recalled her experience. “We felt ignored. It affected what I thought of my Italian heritage, when I was younger. . . . The foreign people didn’t have a chance here in Mason City.” Similarly, a Greek immigrant remembered feeling ostracized by her classmates. “Not everyone was tolerant. . . . Some of the girls at Lincoln school tormented me. . . . The message was, ‘You’re not American,’ but damn it all, we *were* American!”⁹⁵ According to historians James Barrett and David Roediger, a sense of common grievances sometimes led southern and eastern Europeans, characterized as “inbetween peoples” (located between white and black people), to ally with non-whites.⁹⁶

94. Edson, “Mexicans in Mason City”; Karamitros, “Lehigh Row,” 66; García, “Mexican Room,” 71.

95. Quotes from Karamitros, “Lehigh Row,” 66, 77. See also García, “Mexican Room,” 71.

96. James R. Barrett and David Roediger, “Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality and the ‘New’ Immigrant Working Class,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16 (1997), 28. During this period, the general U.S. public viewed southern and eastern Europeans as “foreigners,” yet distinguished them from African Americans, Asian immigrants, and Mexicans. Southern and eastern Europeans held an ambiguous racial status. White Americans considered some immigrants (Greeks, Italians, etc.) variously as non-whites, less-than-whites, and “not-yet-white” ethnics. Higbie, “Rural Work, Household Subsistence, and the North American Working Class,” 59; Barrett and Roediger, “Inbetween Peoples,” 7-9. The U.S. public’s views about southern and eastern Europeans led the U.S. Congress to

In addition to the discrimination that all new immigrant groups shared, Mexicans faced additional obstacles. Iowa's white residents racialized Mexican immigrants as inferior non-whites with deficient morals. While discussing ethnic relations, white residents cited several examples of Mexicans intermarrying or "mixing" with southern and eastern European immigrant women or African American women but very rarely with white midwesterners. Several white residents also noted that Mexicans shared housing with and patronized businesses owned by southern and eastern Europeans.

Not surprisingly, white residents tended to distance themselves from American Indians, African Americans, and Mexicans, but did not necessarily rule out intermarriage with southern and eastern Europeans. In contrast, some white residents expressed strong opposition to intermarriage with Mexicans. Such opposition was grounded in a belief in racial hierarchies. "There will surely be intermarriage," concluded a white woman in Mason City, "but the Mexicans are most inferior."⁹⁷

Among the white Iowans who racialized Mexican immigrants were officials who enforced social policies that affected immigrants. "I would hate to see any of my children marry persons with even 1/100 part of Negro, Mexican or Indian blood," argued the superintendent of schools in nearby Britt, Iowa, "and I believe that the community feels the same way."⁹⁸ In voicing their opposition to intermarriage and grouping Mexicans along with American

pass immigration restrictions during the 1920s. Those quotas, however, did not apply to immigrants (including Mexicans) from the Western Hemisphere as a result of vigorous lobbying efforts from agricultural and industrial employers who had grown dependent on Mexican immigrant laborers. White Iowans' views towards immigrants were part of a national discussion on restricting immigration that was based on pseudoscientific ideas about racial hierarchies. Those racial hierarchies placed northern and western Europeans above southern and eastern Europeans, with American Indians, Asian Americans, African Americans, and Latinos at the bottom. Spickard, *Almost All Aliens*, 262-73, 277-89; Barrett and Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples," 4-6.

97. Eva Gibbs, County Charities, Mason City, quoted in Edson, "Iowa and Wisconsin."

98. C. E. Cooper, Superintendent of Schools, Britt, Iowa, quoted in Edson, "Iowa and Wisconsin." That same school superintendent labeled Mexican school children as "retarded" because absences caused them to fall behind in school, and he noted that most Mexican students were not expected to continue into high school.

Indians and African Americans as racial others, white residents revealed their racialization of Mexicans as “non-whites.”⁹⁹

Other officials added harsh characterizations to the racialization of Mexicans. Eva Gibbs, a Mason City charity worker, addressed the supposed lower values and inferiority of Mexicans in blunt language. She complained that Mexican immigrants did not know how to live in a cold climate, had poor diets, were infected with syphilis, and lived in overcrowded conditions (without acknowledging their poverty or the local community’s restrictions on Mexicans). She alleged that Mexican parents chose to buy new Ford vehicles with their earnings while their children attended school barefoot. Alluding to the 1920s quota laws, Gibbs asked, “Why should we prevent good [Russian-]German or Greek women from coming to this country? They are better than the miserable, dirty, [and] nasty Mexicans as they are many times.” She acknowledged that very little charity was offered to Mexicans (less than \$150 for the entire winter) and that they were not referred to the hospital because “we don’t like to fill up our state hospital with Mexicans.” Finally, she noted that the “Americanization” of Mexicans was failing because the county did not devote enough resources to the task. Not surprisingly, she also criminalized Mexicans by associating them with “bootlegging.” Gibbs’s views were shared by some employers, merchants, and journalists who not only criminalized Mexicans but also blamed them for spreading infectious diseases.¹⁰⁰

99. Natalia Molina, “‘In a Race All Their Own’: The Quest to Make Mexicans Ineligible for U.S. Citizenship,” *Pacific Historical Review* 79 (2010), 168–69.

100. Eva Gibbs, County Charities, Mason City, in Edson, “Iowa and Wisconsin.” Among white midwesterners, it was common to associate Mexicans with various types of criminal activity. Local newspapers helped shape white residents’ views, and their coverage of Mexican communities was often limited to details of crimes, industrial accidents, or infectious diseases involving Mexican immigrants. See Valdes, *Barrios Norteños*, 59. Examples of newspaper coverage of crimes involving Mexicans include *Marshalltown Evening Times-Republican*, 8/17/1916, 9/22/1917; *The Bystander*, 3/2/1917; and *Keokuk Daily Gate City and Constitution-Democrat*, 1/29/1919. On fears that Mexican immigrants might have introduced typhus to Iowa, see *Marshalltown Evening Times-Republican*, 11/20/1916 and 12/6/1916. Some northern Iowa residents portrayed Mexicans as marijuana users, bootleggers, and drunks, while local merchants characterized them as shoplifters. Residents also accused Mexicans of being prone to violence. Meyers, “The Mexican Problem in Mason City,” 238, 240–41; Edson, “Mexicans in the North Central States,” 114.

As a charity worker, Gibbs was undoubtedly aware of immigrants' needs and of white residents' reactions to their plight. She was one of several white residents who characterized Mexicans as inferior racial others who were less desirable than southern and eastern Europeans. Ultimately, the negative views held by education and social service officials created significant obstacles for Mexican immigrants as they attempted to adjust to life in Iowa.

The Mexican immigrant communities in Fort Madison offered a third pattern of employment opportunities, cross-cultural interactions, and racialization. Drawn to jobs with the Santa Fe railroad, Mexican immigrants established three settlements on land owned by the railroad.¹⁰¹ By the late 1910s, three "barrios" (Mexican ethnic enclaves) — La Yarda, El Istafiate, and El Cometa — existed in the unincorporated land known as Shopton. Like other ethnic enclaves, these three barrios were located near the immigrants' workplace, which included the Santa Fe roundhouse and maintenance yards. Immigrants lived in boxcars or shanties constructed from discarded railroad materials. In the mid-1920s, some 500 Mexican immigrants lived in Fort Madison. Non-Mexicans rarely visited these three barrios, one of which was described as a "jungle village," "a place where few outsiders ventured." Such racialization of barrios characterized the settlements as dangerous and unkempt places inhabited by "foreigners."¹⁰²

In 1926 a flood resulted in the closing of El Cometa after residents were informed that they could no longer live in the flood-prone area. Some displaced residents found housing in the other two barrios, but a group of 76 immigrants sought to purchase land elsewhere in Fort Madison. After locating a landowner willing to sell two blocks of land, the group of displaced immigrants ran into a problem when a mob of white residents, who lived near the property for sale threatened the landowner. The mob, organized by white women, told the landowner that "if he sold to the Mexicans and they built homes there, they would stone them out or burn their houses." Faced with such strident opposition, the Mexican families declined to buy the two-block parcel. They eventually purchased two separate lots in Fort Madison, where they

101. Benita Aguirre interview; Inés García interview.

102. Edson, "Mexicans in Fort Madison."

built a range of houses, including small huts costing \$75, larger homes valued at over \$800, and a few stores.¹⁰³

The outright hostility exhibited in this case was but one example of a harsher pattern of segregation in Fort Madison than in other eastern Iowa settlements. In Fort Madison, whites' racialization of Mexicans included portraying them as unwanted neighbors. Not surprisingly, Lucy Prado and Inés García, who grew up in Fort Madison, recalled few interactions with whites outside of school.¹⁰⁴

The type of jobs typically held by Mexican laborers in Fort Madison contributed to their isolation. Industrial employers used segregated work gangs, composed exclusively of Mexicans, to undermine unionization efforts, depress wages, and increase productivity through competition.¹⁰⁵ Sebastián Alvarez, who lived in Fort Madison, recalls segregated railroad crews (Mexicans, whites, and African Americans) in which supervisors were occasionally white but the rest of the crew were Mexicans. According to Alvarez, "On a section they were all Mexican people. You couldn't see a white guy hardly, maybe the foreman was white, or the second in command. But all of 'em were Mexican." The men who worked in segregated railroad gangs were given the lowest-paid and most dangerous work assignments.¹⁰⁶ Employers and foremen racialized dangerous railroad work as labor for Mexicans or African Americans. Like African American railroad workers, Mexicans were initially not allowed to join unions.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, despite years of service, railroad workers often witnessed less-skilled white counterparts receive promotions over Mexican immigrants. Living in company-owned housing populated almost exclusively by fellow compatriots further segregated some workers. But the isolation of living in ethnic enclaves was most pronounced for those women who did not work outside the home and who lived in predominantly Mexican communities.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.; Inés García interview; Lucy Prado interview, 12/22/2005, MLP-IWA.

105. Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 32–33; Barrett and Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples," 16.

106. Sebastián Alvarez interview; García, "Mexican Room," 97–98.

107. Fink, *Cutting into the Meatpacking Line*, 125–26. According to Sebastián Alvarez, he joined a railroad union in 1940. Sebastián Alvarez interview.

Mexican immigrants in Fort Madison experienced other forms of discrimination in addition to residential and workplace segregation. Mexicans had to sit in the back of the local Catholic church and receive mass in the basement of a Catholic school.¹⁰⁸ That school basement was also the setting for several Mexican immigrant weddings because couples were not allowed to marry in the main sanctuary. At local movie theaters, residents expected Mexicans to sit in the back seats of the balcony. Benita Aguirre remembers that local residents “were very prejudiced” and cast disapproving looks at Mexican children who strayed from local conventions regarding seating in the theater. “You couldn’t go anywhere to eat,” recalled Aguirre. “They wouldn’t allow you.” Sebastián Alvarez agreed that Mexican immigrants faced considerable discrimination in Fort Madison, where local restaurants, taverns, and barbershops refused to serve them. But perhaps the most lasting form of segregation took place in the public schools, where Mexican schoolchildren were placed in “Americanization rooms,” also called “Mexican rooms.” In the early 1920s the Richardson public school began segregating Mexican children into a separate room, and in 1930, in response to protests from white parents, that school created a separate building for Mexican schoolchildren. Even Iowans elsewhere noted in 1920 that Fort Madison had a “real Mexican problem” and that it wanted to get rid of Mexican immigrants who had been recruited by the Santa Fe railroad during World War I.¹⁰⁹

While Mexicans in Fort Madison had few interactions with white residents, they seem to have had more alliances with African Americans than their compatriots in other Iowa towns did. By the mid-1920s, several Mexican men had intermarried with African American women in Fort Madison. Longtime Mexican residents recalled living next door to African Americans, sharing food as neighbors, and generally having friendly interactions in the 1920s and 1930s.¹¹⁰ In the Quad Cities area, some Mexicans

108. Lucy Prado interview.

109. Benita Aguirre interview; Sebastián Alvarez interview; García, “Mexican Room,” 97–100; *Denison Review*, 2/18/1920.

110. A few Mexican men also married white women, but it is unclear if these women were originally from Fort Madison. Edson, “Mexicans in Fort Madison”; Inés García interview; Sebastián Alvarez interview.

and African Americans were neighbors and shared similar labor experiences, but none intermarried. Edson, the visiting USDL official, observed that Mexicans in Davenport felt some ostracism from southern and eastern European immigrants; he believed that experience might have led them to feel an affinity with African Americans. In turn, Mexicans' alliances and friendships with African Americans might have reinforced the racialization of both groups by Fort Madison's white residents. Friendships between Mexican immigrants and African Americans were less common elsewhere in the state. For example, Mexican immigrants in Manly appear to have made a conscious effort to prevent African Americans from becoming their neighbors. Like Mexican immigrants in Chicago during the same period, the Mexicans in Manly attempted to separate themselves from African Americans to avoid being marked as "black" in a society where such a racial position was a big disadvantage.¹¹¹

To confront their racialization, Mexicans developed several strategies that varied by location. In Fort Madison, one of the most significant alliances developed between the Mexican community and Harry Harper, an African American doctor. Harper provided medical services to Mexicans, learned fluent Spanish to serve them better, and in the process developed a strong affinity for their struggles. That relationship was mutually beneficial as Mexican immigrants obtained medical care, while Harper secured patients (albeit poor ones) in a town in which initially landlords refused to rent him office space, the white medical community offered him limited acceptance, and white residents avoided visiting an African American doctor. As he did for African American residents, Harper assisted Mexicans struggling against local discriminatory practices. At the request of Mexican parents in 1930, he became involved in opposing a Fort Madison school board plan to segregate Mexican and African American schoolchildren. Despite these efforts, the school board eventually built a separate building to house the "Americanization room" or "Mexican room," where some Mexican children received instruction.¹¹²

111. Edson, "Mexicans in Davenport and Moline"; George T. Edson, "Mexicans in Manly, Iowa," Edson Field Reports; Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*, 76-79.

112. Steven Berry, M.D., and Erin Herndon, M.D., "Healing Hands, Questing Hearts: African-American Physicians in Iowa," in *Outside In: African American*



Gregorio Díaz sits in front of the Magdaleno movie theatre in El Cometa neighborhood in Fort Madison, ca. 1921. Photo from Inés García Papers, Iowa Women's Archives.

In addition to enforcing segregated public facilities, Fort Madison's white residents also appear to have shared a view of the expected occupations for African American and Mexican women. Several Mexican American women recalled not securing office and restaurant jobs to which they applied but instead being offered work as domestics in white residents' homes. School officials also limited Mexicans' occupational prospects. After several students from Fort Madison High School applied for internships at Sheaffer Pen Company, the positions were given to white students while the Mexican students were offered jobs involving baby-sitting, washing windows, or ironing clothes in

History in Iowa, 1838-2000, ed. Bill Silag (Des Moines, 2001), 256; García, "Mexican Room," 98-99.

white residents' homes.¹¹³ The reactions and views of these white residents were undoubtedly influenced by Mexicans' interactions and alliances with African Americans. Their previous experience with and views of African Americans shaped the racial scripts that whites then used to categorize and interact with Mexican immigrants, who were relative newcomers to the state. Not surprisingly, white Iowans racialized domestic and service work as labor limited to Mexicans and African Americans.

MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS in northern and eastern Iowa experienced different racialization processes than those in other mid-western locations or in the American Southwest. Historian Dennis Valdés summarizes studies of Mexicans in the Midwest by listing several general characteristics: laborers first visited the region as sojourners but began settling in the Midwest during the 1910s and 1920s; most were unskilled workers who found employment in agriculture and in the railroad and cement industries; and the immigrants looked to Mexico rather than the American Southwest as a homeland.¹¹⁴ These patterns accurately describe Iowa's Mexican immigrants.

Valdés also argues that a black-white cultural dichotomy rather than a Mexican-Anglo division shaped Mexican immigrants' racial experience in the Midwest.¹¹⁵ That might hold true in Minneapolis, Chicago, and Detroit, but it does not apply to cities and towns in Iowa with much smaller African American populations. In Iowa, Mexicans' racial experience was most often influenced by the local population's previous perception of and interactions with southern and eastern Europeans who often labored alongside the Mexican newcomers. One clear exception was Fort Madison, where white residents tended to group Mexicans and African Americans together as racial others. White Iowans used the racial scripts they had created for southern and eastern Europeans as well as for African Americans to racialize Mexican immigrants, with whom whites had less experience. White Iowans' use of racial scripts was part of a larger national pattern during

113. Inés García interview; García, "Mexican Room," 100-101.

114. Valdés, *Barrios Norteños*, 22-27.

115. *Ibid.*, 19-20

the 1920s in which white Americans frequently compared Mexicans to other racialized groups.¹¹⁶ Geography, local power relations, and Mexican immigrants' interethnic interactions with other non-dominant populations shaped these racial scripts. Finally, the degree of employers' control over Mexican immigrant laborers in Iowa also distinguished their experience from that of their counterparts in larger midwestern cities.

The small population of Mexican immigrants in Iowa partly explains their distinctive experience. Their ethnic enclaves functioned less as sites of cultural renewal than as communities that offered refuge from the dominant society. Mexicans' relatively low population numbers motivated some to create cross-cultural alliances with southern and eastern European immigrants or with African Americans (in towns such as Fort Madison), who also had low population numbers in the state. Because many Mexican immigrants lived in ethnic enclaves relatively isolated from the state's other residents and because the Mexican population remained small, white residents did not perceive them as much of a threat. These factors might explain why Iowa's response during the Great Depression differed from neighboring states that launched forced repatriation campaigns directed at Mexican newcomers. Although unemployment and the general scarcity of the Great Depression motivated some to voluntarily return to Mexico, Mexican immigrants in Iowa were not subject to official deportation efforts.¹¹⁷ Mexican immigrants' dependence on cross-cultural interactions distinguished their experiences in Iowa from those of their counterparts in the American Southwest and in larger midwestern cities.

116. Molina, "The Power of Racial Scripts," 163-69.

117. Valdés, *Barrios Norteños*, 87-100; Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*, 100; Weaver, "From Barrio to 'Boicoteo!,'" 220; García, "Mexican Room," 102. According to Norris, *North for the Harvest*, 43, "Some evidence suggests that sugar beet companies throughout the Midwest and Great Lakes tried to shield their workers [from official deportation campaigns]."

“It All Started with the Amish”: Reflections on a Career in Iowa History

DOROTHY HUBBARD SCHWIEDER

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION: It is the rare historian who can claim to have rediscovered and reinvigorated an entire field of history. Dorothy Hubbard Schwieder (November 28, 1933–August 13, 2014) was one of those scholars. Frequently lauded as the “dean of Iowa history,” she revitalized a long-declining field, making it lively and relevant and adding a fresh emphasis on social history. Her contributions also extended far beyond her own work – a colleague once further christened her the “den mother” of Iowa history for her generous efforts to support colleagues in the field and nurture future generations of Iowa history scholars.

Dr. Schwieder accomplished this from her position in the History Department at Iowa State University (ISU), where she began as a part-time instructor in 1966 and retired as University Professor in 2000. She was the first woman to hold a faculty position in the department and the first to achieve the rank of full professor. She remains the only member of the history faculty to be named a University Professor, an uncommon honor reserved for long-time faculty members who have acted as agents of significant change at ISU. The quintessential “complete academic,” Schwieder earned this title in all phases of the professor’s role: she was a prolific and award-winning scholar; a rigorous, popular teacher; and she served the people of Iowa through radio and television appearances, work on boards and commissions, and speeches and presentations throughout the state.

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What follows is her presentation for the spring 2013 annual banquet of ISU's Phi Alpha Theta history honors society. The History Department chose that occasion to designate the Dorothy Hubbard Schwieder Seminar Room in recognition of her nearly 50 years of accomplishments and contributions to the field, the department, and Iowa State University.

— Pamela Riney-Kehrberg and David W. Schwieder

THANK YOU for inviting me to speak to you this evening. I'm honored to be here. I think the best part of the invitation was: "We would like you to talk about your research, past and present." In other words, talk about your own work! It doesn't get any better than that. I would like to share with you a little about my own professional history and, in the process, tell something about the history of the ISU History Department. I will focus on three of the most important research projects I undertook, and then I'd like to conclude with some reflections on all of this.

OVER A DECADE has gone by since I retired from Iowa State, though it doesn't seem that long. I consider it a privilege to have been a part of the history faculty here for 34 years. But, as one often hears, "things were a bit different back then." In many ways, academia was less formal and less structured. It probably seems odd to hear this today, when careers are such an institutionalized affair, but much of my own career came about by accident or just plain serendipity.

I started at Iowa State in the mid-1960s as a graduate student in the history master's degree program. Iowa State hadn't yet experienced the tremendous academic growth of the 1960s, and the fields of history, government, and philosophy were combined into one department. Our wonderful secretary, Carole Kennedy, was from Oklahoma, and at first it took some time for her to say, "History, Government, and Philosophy." But she quickly shortened that!

The department was located on the third floor of Beardshear Hall then—with no elevator at that time. The graduate students' desks—as well as several faculty offices—were actually up another flight in an area with no windows and no air conditioning.

After Ross Hall was completed in 1973, the fourth floor of Beardshear was taken over by the Psychology Department's experimental lab. That included experiments with rats. Air conditioning was then added for those delicate little creatures—apparently historians were presumed to be a hardier breed.

During that time, I was very fortunate in that the department often needed someone to teach a course or two on a part-time basis. Since I was the oldest graduate student, I was approached to do that. At first, I taught a course in American economic history and then, for a few years, I taught sections of the introductory U.S. history survey course. At that time, Iowa State was on the quarter system, and so national foundations, national expansion and internal conflict, and national consolidation and world power constituted a yearly sequence. The first course was my favorite and the last was my least favorite.

After I finished my master's degree, I stayed on, and my first few years in the department were spent as a part-time, temporary instructor. I never knew from quarter to quarter if I would have a teaching position. Despite my temporary status, the chair, Louis Geiger, had taken a personal interest in me and had decided that Dorothy Schwieder needed to begin work on a Ph.D. The catch: I would have to go somewhere else for the degree, as our department did not offer doctoral study in the 1970s. So, the pressure began: "Dorothy, you need to apply for a faculty improvement leave so you can go somewhere for a Ph.D." Then he would add, "We need to find out how good you are." I was always tempted to ask: "Well, can't you tell?" But I decided on the University of Iowa, and I was awarded the leave in 1977. It was a 145-mile commute to Iowa City, one way, for two years. I started in 1977 and received the doctoral degree in 1981, studying with the formidable and distinguished Linda Kerber. For much of that time I was still teaching full time in the ISU history department.

During my time in the department, I taught many different courses: American economic history, history of American women, nineteenth-century American social history, two graduate seminars in the Agricultural and Rural Studies program, both sections of the American history survey, and Iowa history. The latter course, Iowa history, became my mainstay. It was the course that I taught most frequently and the area in which I ultimately did most of my research.



Dorothy Schwieder addresses a community group. Photo courtesy David W. Schwieder.

I INITIATED THE COURSE in Iowa history in the spring of 1970. Being interested in communitarian societies—I had done my master's thesis on the Hutterites, a communal group in South Dakota—I had started researching the Old Order Amish in Iowa and, in the process, began to read about Iowa's early history. It made for interesting reading.

One day the idea struck me: What about a course in Iowa history? As far as I knew, the course had never been taught at Iowa State. But since ISU was a land-grant school, a course in state history seemed appropriate. I headed off to talk to the chair of the department. The chair by that time was Walter Rundell, a Texan. As a Texan, Rundell believed that state history was important. He suggested that I put together a statement of how I would approach the class and what resources were available. That was on a Monday. On Friday afternoon I was back in his office. He looked at the prospectus and said, "How soon can you start?"

This, I think, is an example of the serendipity that I referred to earlier. As a proud Texan (is there any other kind?), Walter Rundell was well aware of Texas's unique history, and it was self-evident to him that state history mattered. But I think it's far less likely that someone from a more self-effacing state or region like Iowa or the Midwest would have seen the value of such a course. However, a few of my colleagues did have a less positive reaction. After all, as everyone knew then, state history had little value for professionals. State history was only for untrained historians who enjoyed researching local and minor topics with little broader importance.

Once the Iowa history class was in the course listings for spring quarter, 1970, I started promoting it. I think I must have been the first person to do that at ISU. I was teaching several sections of survey and mentioned it in those classes. I went around to a number of advisers outside of history, telling them why I felt the class would have value for their students. I think it's fair to say I really pounded the pavement, and while many were surprised, the visits created considerable interest in the course.

I quickly discovered that ISU students enjoyed learning about the history of their state. My classes always had a few students from out of state, but the great, great majority were Iowans. From the beginning of the course, my family and I—husband Elmer and two small children—traveled around Iowa to see many sites and attend various events: the Harvest Festival at Living History Farms; Nordic Fest in Decorah; the State Historical Museum in Des Moines; and various Mississippi River communities. We met people from all over Iowa, and I began to gain a better understanding of the culture of the state.

It didn't take long to begin to see the research possibilities. Iowa had a fine tradition of strong state history publications, including the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, the *Annals of Iowa*, and the *Palimpsest*. It was one of the few states that had three separate state history journals. And there were many series such as the Iowa Biography series, the Applied History series, and the Iowa Economic History series. Two multi-volume histories of Iowa also existed. There was obviously no shortage of scholarly literature, but most of it was political and economic history. There simply wasn't much on the history of women or ethnicity and

immigration or on communities. There was material on railroad development, steamboating on the Mississippi River, and major industries like meatpacking. It probably sounds a bit odd now, but at that time the subjects that would form the core of the “new social history” were little apparent.

Fortunately, that began to change, although slowly. I still remember what a pleasure it was to get a copy, in 1974, of Glenda Riley’s book, *Iowa Frontierwomen*. Another helpful book was Clarence Andrews’s *Literary History of Iowa*. So, the research started. I was fortunate that the state library and archives were only 30 miles away in Des Moines. The state and federal censuses and the state’s newspaper archives were both housed there. This was an important point, sometimes overlooked; research materials were close at hand. I had a husband and two young children. I couldn’t travel to the Roosevelt Library or the Huntington Library. But I could get my children ready for school, spend five hours in Des Moines, and return to Ames before they arrived home. This is a part of the story of women in the fifties and sixties that is often overlooked.

THE FIRST MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT was one of the most memorable of my entire professional career. In 1965 there had been a controversy in Iowa over the state’s educational policies for the Old Order Amish. At the time, the Amish had two large settlements in eastern Iowa. Since my master’s thesis had been on the Hutterites, I thought it would be interesting to do a comparative study of the two groups. I quickly discovered that there was little or no scholarly material on the Amish in Iowa. There was the federal census and one book on the Iowa Mennonites (which included limited material on the Amish) published in 1939.

So, how to find information about the Old Order Amish? There seemed to be only one way: Go to the source itself and visit the Amish communities. First, there was the matter of gaining access to the Amish community. Fortunately, ISU has a Cooperative Extension Service, and the county agent for Washington County – which contained the largest Amish community – was very helpful. The agent, Jim Frier, didn’t know any of the Amish, but like a good Extension person, he did know his community resources. So, he knew the people who did know the Amish.

Also, he was feeling a bit guilty that he had not really made contact with any Amish residents, so he asked a local person to set up some interviews. Marie Jackson, a bank employee, knew the Amish well. She drove out to their farms to inquire about a meeting; the result was four appointments with Amish families.

By that time, my husband, Elmer, an ISU faculty member and sociologist, had also become interested in the Amish, so we were able to team up on this endeavor. On a beautiful spring day, Elmer and I drove to Kalona and spent a full day, along with Marie Jackson and Jim Frier, visiting four Amish farmsteads. What an interesting experience! We met Amish men, women, and children. Each family had some food waiting for us. Although not outgoing by "English" standards, none were reluctant to answer our questions and tell us about their farming methods, their religious views, and their social lives.

We knew that the Amish would not appreciate the use of modern contrivances like tape recorders or cameras, and even notes seemed a bit obtrusive in that setting. So, we listened carefully to their comments. As we left one farm, the farmer commented, almost casually, "Oh, you might like to meet my brother who lives down the road. He's a bishop." The door was swinging open, and we made many, many more visits to the Kalona area, as well to as Buchanan County, and also to a new Amish settlement near Milton. Each time was the same: We listened intently, and as soon as we were in the car heading home, Elmer drove as I scribbled down everything we could remember.

Several experiences particularly stand out from these visits. One of the Amish families we spent much time with was headed by Toby Miller and his wife, Ruth. Toby was the perfect image of the Amish patriarch—distinguished manner and long, flowing, white beard. They were always welcoming. We soon learned that Toby and Ruth had ten sons—no daughters! One day, Elmer asked, "Ruth, how many grandchildren do you have?" "Fifty-eight." My husband, who could be quite irreverent, muttered to me, "I'd have to give them numbers."

In some ways, the Amish seemed as interested in us as we were in them. The Amish are very traditional people, and they were a little confused when Elmer, the male, asked about family roles, and I asked about agricultural acreages and practices.

The Old Order Amish project really marked the beginning of a long career doing oral history. In fact, the research with the Amish came before *oral history* was a common term. Along with social history, this methodological innovation awaited development in the future. From that point on, oral history was a part of almost all of my research projects.

WHILE THE AMISH PROJECT extended over a number of years, eventually culminating in the first history of Iowa's Old Order Amish, *A Peculiar People*, other research interests also began to arise. Another project first originated in my dissertation, which focused on coal mining in Iowa. The state had a rich history in this area; driven by the need to service the railroad industry and its steam engines, Iowa had enjoyed a thriving mining industry.

During the course of that work, I had happened to meet the state mine inspector, Dean Aubrey. I was teaching Iowa history and was asking him some questions about coal mining history. He knew he was about to retire, and he desperately wanted someone to begin working on the history of Iowa's coal mining industry. When I met him that day and started asking questions about coal mining, he thought he had a real live one. For the next several years, he and the assistant mine inspector, Marv Ross, kept sending me names of former coal miners with a note: "You should really interview this person." If nothing else, the ethnicity of the miners intrigued me as much as the industry itself.

The methodology was predictable: Here again, oral history was indispensable, along with state mine inspectors' reports; newspapers from coal mining communities such as Albia; data from both state and federal censuses; photographs and location maps of mines (all available in Des Moines). Many of the interviews were memorable. Patterns quickly emerged. Men loved to talk about strikes and violence, and they remembered clearly the mine layouts, mining processes, and the daily work routine. The strikes and violence also were usually covered in the newspapers and mine inspectors' reports. Interviewing the women was an entirely different matter. First, whenever I wrote to a wife of a retired coal miner, the man automatically assumed that I wanted to interview him. I learned to carefully state that I was interested in the domestic side of their lives, what went on in the home,

what work the wives had to do. Still, the man often greeted me at the door by asking, "Well, what do you want to know?"

One of my favorite memories was my interview with Katy DeGard. She was second-generation Italian American and had married John DeGard, a coal miner. Katy's father had been what was called the social boss in the Seymour community. The social boss was just that. He helped other immigrants find work in the mines; he helped them apply for citizenship; and he sometimes helped them find a wife. When I arrived at their house, I had two things to do: First, convince John that although I knew he had a great deal of information and I would love to talk to him another time, I really wanted to interview Katy. Second, I had to convince Katy that she had something to say. Her initial response had been typical of many of the women: "Well, I didn't do anything that was important."

By then I had discovered a good question to get things started: "Tell me about your day. Starting first thing in the morning, what did you do?" Very quickly the women could see that their role had been indispensable. Their stories recited a tremendous amount of work—meal preparation (baking bread several times a week), tending a large garden, washing clothes (including greasy pit pants) on a scrub board, caring for children. In addition, many took in boarders. These men had to be fed, had to have lunches to take to the mines, and had to have their clothes laundered. Because many of the boarders were also from Italy, they were often treated like family.

The interview with Katy DeGard was wonderful, and she obviously enjoyed it. I was using a tape recorder for these sessions, and I had to plug it into the light that hung from the ceiling. The tape recorder was placed on a chair in the middle of the room. At first, Katy had her chair pulled back a ways, but as the interview progressed, she inched closer and closer to the microphone. Sometime near the end of the interview, the phone rang. John DeGard—who was not going to miss any of this—was sitting around the corner in the kitchen. The phone rang several times and John said, "Well, aren't you going to answer it?" It was obvious that that was Katy's job. But by this time, Katy was well into her story and feeling good about the whole thing. "Answer it yourself," she said—and her very surprised husband did! All

told, I interviewed 45 families or individuals, and transcribed all 45 interviews myself.

For the dissertation, census data proved invaluable: days worked, number of children in family, number of boarders in family, place of birth, place of birth of parents, and so on. Processing the census data was another matter. I had never had a course in statistics or anything like SPSS. But one of my committee members believed it would be a good idea. He himself had never done any type of quantitative work, so he couldn't help either. I was really flying blind, and so the frustration began. Fortunately I got a great deal of help from John Kolp, a friend from ISU who was later head of the political science statistics lab at the University of Iowa. Somehow I managed to blunder my way through the whole process and ended up with a chapter using census data. I must admit, however, that my dissertation (and the book that eventually came out of it) were much the better for this. So, just a note for graduate students: sometimes it is worthwhile to follow your adviser's advice!

By that point—the early 1980s—oral history was becoming more respectable. However all my sources proved indispensable—in particular, the other sources provided a way to check on the veracity of memory in the oral histories. The study included material on the mining process itself, a chapter on the history of the United Mine Workers, a chapter on the social life of mining families, and the census data chapter. Finally, I have to mention one more perk of this research effort—a trip down into a working coal mine.

THE THIRD PROJECT I would like to talk about was the study of Buxton. About the time I was finishing my dissertation, there was an opportunity to be involved in a research project on a highly unusual coal mining community called Buxton, located in southern Iowa. Owned by the Chicago and North Western Railroad, Buxton was a company town built to provide coal for the railroad's locomotives. During the town's heyday—circa 1910—over half the population (of 5,000 people) were African Americans. This was highly unusual for Iowa, but even more unusual was the fact that black businesspeople and professionals enjoyed an unusual degree of autonomy and respect.

This project followed the same approach as my previous works but was set up very differently. ISU had the opportunity to apply for a federal grant to do historical and archaeological research on a coal mining community – Buxton – and this project involved myself, a sociologist, and an anthropologist. The grant was awarded in 1980, and I served as project administrator. At the time, Buxton had been defunct for some 55 years. Finding sources proved a challenge. Unfortunately, we could not locate any company records or any correspondence on administration in Buxton. The State Historical Society of Iowa did have a major collection of photos of the town and the people who lived there, but the historical record was still rather sparse.

What we did have were the names of a number of people who had lived in Buxton or nearby. So, one more time, it was oral history to the rescue. In total, we located 75 people who had lived in Buxton or nearby. A few of the interviews were sketchy, but most were invaluable. Some of the transcripts ran to 25 pages.

When we finished recording the interviews, gathering newspaper data, reviewing the state mine inspectors' reports, processing census data, and examining various other material, I felt that we really had recreated the town of Buxton. We knew who lived there. We knew the street layouts. Given the interviews and plat maps, we could pinpoint the addresses for some of them; we could lay out the business district and the store owners. We had photos of the interior of the company store.

Beyond the basics already mentioned, Buxton was a highly unusual community in many other ways. The company did not prohibit individuals from creating privately owned businesses, and Buxton was a place where there seemed to be a high degree of racial harmony. The United Mine Workers deserved a great deal of credit for this unusual situation, as did the Consolidation Coal Company.

As with my other projects, this one produced many memorable stories and experiences. Here again, oral history was the key. But, a word of caution. Oral histories were not the only sources that were needed. Census data almost always played a big part in the projects. That was a laborious process. All the material had to be copied by hand, translated to the right numbers, and put in the right columns. Newspapers were also important. Equally laborious was the large amount of reading through reels and reels

of microfilm. I had the feeling I was spending half of my life in the archives room at the State Historical Society of Iowa. And, once again, my dissertation experience with SPSS and statistics was crucial to the way we approached the Buxton project.

AFTER I RETIRED in 2000, I continued to write. In 2003, my book *Growing Up with the Town: Family and Community on the Great Plains* was published by the University of Iowa Press. Writing about the small town where my family lived and I and my siblings grew up was tremendously special to me. I also co-edited the book *Tradition and Transformation: A Sesquicentennial History of Iowa State University*, which was published in 2007.

In reflecting on my research and writing and my time at ISU, several themes persisted: the emergence of oral history and social history, the role of luck and serendipity, and a lot of just hard work. I realize, also, that in many ways I have been very fortunate. I came of age, so to speak, when the new social history was just getting under way. And that was my forte. I also enjoyed strong institutional support. I was granted three faculty improvement leaves and also had strong backing—including release time—for another project: the history of the ISU Cooperative Extension Service. That really was equal to a faculty improvement leave.

I would also have to include the fact that the state's archives were only 30 miles away. In other words, that key resource was readily accessible. And I was tremendously fortunate to have a husband who was very proud of me and always supported my work—that was something women of my age could not always take for granted.

And, sometimes, good projects just fell into my lap. Such was the case when I received a packet of about 250 letters written by a farmer in northwest Iowa. A minister in Alaska had heard that someone at ISU was doing Iowa history. So Jim Campbell bundled up the letters—which had been written by his uncle, and mailed them to:

History Department
Iowa State University

The letters had been written in the 1920s and included a good bit of information about farm life in that era. But most significant

was that this farmer had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan in the northwest Iowa community of Marathon. He had written often to his girlfriend in another community, and almost every letter contained something about the Klan. Sometimes the letters contained a good bit of information about the Klan. Things rarely went well with the Marathon Klan: there was constant bickering; members always seemed to be getting angry and leaving the group; plans to hold rallies rarely panned out. In many ways, it was a study in frustration or a comedy of errors. But perhaps the most important scholarly result was that the letters revealed a little-known perspective on American history; for this farmer, the KKK really served as a social organization.

There were always — always — a great variety of good topics to research. The search for significant topics in Iowa history is like the state itself. Just as the seemingly featureless expanses of prairies contain spots of great beauty — river valleys, patches of crown vetch — so, too, does the expanse of a state contain many good, researchable topics of broader significance. Diligent attention can reveal them. I must add that, through the years, Iowa history became increasingly “mainstream.” More professionals were writing about Iowa politics, communities, and industries. Most noticeably, graduate students were choosing Iowa topics for their theses and dissertations.

As with any endeavor, of course, there also were obstacles. There was the near-dismissive attitude held by many historians toward the value of state history. One colleague referred to teaching Iowa history as “telling nice little stories.” Another asked whether students were “breaking my door down” to take Iowa history. Well, after the first few semesters, he never asked that question again. And then there was another colleague who informed me that since he didn’t do oral history, he was a better historian than I. I wanted to point out that — judging by his publication record — he didn’t do much history of any kind. However, I demurred.

Looking back, what a wonderful career I have had! Perhaps most of all, I remember the people I met: Cliff Carlson, a sculptor carving a replica of the Cardiff Giant out of a huge block of Fort Dodge gypsum. The former grad student whose writing was so messy he literally couldn’t tell the top of his handwritten test

paper from the bottom. Miners and their wives. The Amish. George C. Christensen, the ISU administrator who intervened for me at a crucial time in my career. Brother Gerard, the Trappist monk with the most delightful giggle. I have been privileged to see the way state history has come of age. To be in a field where the research possibilities are endless and the research material is usually close at hand. To work in an area that provides such a personal association with history. To teach a course where students can see so clearly the way their families and their communities fit into the larger context of social and economic history. I am profoundly grateful to Ames and Iowa State University for the personal and professional lives they have given me.

Black Hawk and the Historians: A Review Essay

ROGER L. NICHOLS

Wilderness Journey: The Life of William Clark, by William E. Foley. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004. 326 pp. Illustration, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paperback and e-book.

William Clark and the Shaping of the West, by Landon Y. Jones. New York: Hill and Wang, 2004. 394 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paperback.

William Clark: Indian Diplomat, by Jay H. Buckley. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. 306 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paperback.

Mr. Jefferson's Hammer: William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy, by Robert M. Owens. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. 311 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Black Hawk and the Battle for the Heart of America, by Kerry A. Trask. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$21.99 paperback.

Black Hawk and the War of 1832: Removal in the North, by John P. Bowes. New York: Chelsea House, 2007. 131 pp. Illustrations, map, chronology, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 hardback.

The Black Hawk War of 1832, by Patrick J. Jung. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. 275 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Uncommon Defense: Indian Allies in the Black Hawk War, by John W. Hall. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009. Maps, notes, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

IN APRIL 1832 some 1,500–1,800 Sauk and Meskwaki Indians belonging to the so-called British Band crossed the Mississippi River from Iowa into Illinois. As they moved east and north up the Rock River, their “invasion” sent waves of panic through the frontier settlements in northern Illinois, triggering the Black Hawk

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War of that summer. At first glance this mostly local war seems to have been only a minor incident in the process of American frontier settlement. However, when looked at in the context of nineteenth-century Indian wars, it had an important part in clearing native people from the upper Mississippi River valley. During that conflict about 70 whites and nearly 1,000 Indians died. About 2,500 frontiersmen served in the militia, joining the nearly 1,000 U.S. regular troops sent to defeat the Indians. Together, the force of soldiers and militiamen numbered about five times the size of George Armstrong Custer's Seventh Cavalry that fought at the Battle of the Little Bighorn two generations later.

Few twenty-first-century readers are likely to know much about this long-past chapter in midwestern history, yet it has captured the imagination of historians ever since it took place. From 1833, when Black Hawk dictated his autobiography to a local journalist, until 1992, when my brief study of his life was published, at least eight authors published books, and others added articles or reminiscences about war. Together, they examine the conflict from all sides, while describing, criticizing, or praising the army, the militia, the Indians, and the government.¹

1. For much of the nineteenth century, accounts of the war came from participants or those who interviewed them. They begin chronologically with Black Hawk's account in John B. Patterson, ed., *Life of Ma-Ka-Tia-Me-She-Kia-Kiak or Black Hawk* (Cincinnati, 1833). The next year John A. Wakefield, *History of the War Between the United States and the Sac and Fox Nations of Indians* (Jacksonville, IL, 1834), gave a militiaman's view of the war. Benjamin Drake, *The Life and Adventures of Black Hawk* (Cincinnati, 1838), was based on interviews with men who knew Black Hawk or had some role in the events. Ninian Wirt Edwards, *History of Illinois from 1778 to 1833; and Life and Times of Ninian Edwards* (Springfield, IL, 1870), gives his father's role as governor during the 1820s. John Reynolds, governor during the conflict, gave an anti-Indian account in *Reynolds' History of Illinois, My Own Times: Embracing also the History of My Life* (Chicago, 1879). Cyrenus Cole, *I Am a Man: The Indian Black Hawk* (Iowa City, 1938), has the first even-handed history of the war. William T. Hagan, *The Sac and Fox Indians* (Norman, OK, 1958), put those events in the context of American territorial expansion. The most careful analysis appears in Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Prelude to Disaster: The Course of Indian-White Relations Which Led to the Black Hawk War of 1832," in *The Black Hawk War, 1831-1832*, ed. Ellen M. Whitney, 2 vols. (Springfield, IL, 1970-1978), 1:1-51. Cecil Eby, "*That Disgraceful Affair*": *The Black Hawk War* (New York, 1973), uses a Vietnam-era antiwar slant. Roger L. Nichols, *Black Hawk and the Warrior's Path* (Arlington Heights, IL, 1992), was the first modern biography before the works discussed in this essay.

So much has been written about the Black Hawk War that one might think more ink was spilled over it than blood was shed in the real event. And since the beginning of the twenty-first century, scholars have continued to find the events on a midwestern frontier important in regional and national history. Eight recent books tell at least part of the story.

The renewed interest began as an offshoot of the activities marking the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804–1806) and at first focused on William Clark's life. After the famous expedition ended, Clark held federal offices in Missouri, and from 1822 until his death in 1838 he served as Superintendent of Indian Affairs there. In that position he oversaw relations with the Sauk and Meskwaki people before, during, and after the Black Hawk War. Although Clark's biographers do not focus on it, that conflict was among the most serious frontier challenges he faced as a federal official, so three recent biographies of Clark deserve some attention here.

The first, *Wilderness Journey* by William Foley, represents years of research in Missouri history. Foley devotes nearly half of his biography to the famous expedition Clark undertook with Meriwether Lewis. Indian affairs get only some modest attention in parts of the last two chapters, where Foley discusses treaty negotiations, the hosting of tribal delegations at Clark's St. Louis home, and his role in supervising aspects of the fur trade. Within that context Foley shows how Clark had a central role in American dispossession of the Mississippi valley tribes. He and Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory negotiated land cessions and intertribal agreements as they tried to force the tribal people to act as Americans thought they should. Foley briefly questions Clark's competence in dealing with events leading to the Black Hawk War but says little about his lack of effort to prevent or help prosecute it.

In *William Clark and the Shaping of the West*, Landon Jones gives a more balanced narrative with closer attention to Indian affairs, although his ideas differ only a little from Foley's. His interestingly written narrative traces Clark's acts as a frontier soldier, Missouri political leader, and frontier federal administrator.

In the last two chapters, he shows that by the 1830s Clark's failing health and family disasters led him to depend on subordinates for much of his dealings with the Indians. As the federal removal policy pushed increasing numbers of Indians west of the Mississippi, those newcomers suffered from shortages of food, clothing, and shelter while being robbed and beaten by lawless frontiersmen. Jones shows that Clark and other federal officials lacked the authority to help the tribes much or to protect them from the pioneers. He demonstrates that Clark had little understanding of Black Hawk's motivations, assuming that the war leader looked to British traders to cause trouble in Illinois.

The third study of Clark shows less interest in the 1804 expedition and more in historians' increasing focus on Indian affairs in the new century. Jay Buckley devotes about half of his book, *William Clark: Indian Diplomat*, to Clark's dealings with the Indians. Buckley shows how Clark's paternalistic approach to his tribal charges failed to protect the Indians and in the long run helped the United States push them west. In Buckley's view, Clark, although generally competent as an administrator, failed to recognize the pioneers' increasingly aggressive and racist views of Indians. As a leading negotiator of regional treaties, he angered Black Hawk and other tribal leaders and helped shape the events leading to the 1832 war. Working to enforce earlier treaties, Clark ordered his subordinates to urge the Sauk and Meskwaki to move west of the Mississippi in 1829 when the federal government opened their Rock River lands in western Illinois for sale. When the combined efforts of frontier officials failed to persuade Black Hawk and his followers to stay in Iowa, the natives' recrossing of the Mississippi brought war. Buckley's treatment of Clark is more sympathetic than he deserves but does show how federal policies and their implementation created the situation leading to war.

These biographies of William Clark give a broad background of U.S. Indian policies during the early nineteenth century. As interest in celebrating the Lewis and Clark Expedition faded, historians shifted their focus. Between 2006 and 2009 five new books discussing aspects of the Black Hawk War appeared. The first,

Mr. Jefferson's Hammer, by Robert Owens, analyzes William Henry Harrison's efforts to negotiate treaties with many tribes in the Old Northwest before the War of 1812. As governor of Indiana Territory, he served as the president's front man in getting midwestern tribes to surrender their homelands. Owens spells out clearly how the governor dealt dishonestly with a small Sauk-Meskwaki delegation in 1804, when he persuaded them to sign a treaty ceding their Illinois lands to the United States. Because the tribal negotiators lacked authority to sign any agreement with the government, Sauk leaders rejected the agreement's validity. At the same time, American officials, including William Clark, expected the tribe to follow the treaty. Shortly after the 1804 signing, disputes over the treaty brought sharp divisions among Sauk leaders and between the Indians and American frontier officials, leading directly to the events that caused the war. Owens's study clearly places the Black Hawk War directly in the center of historians' understandings of early nineteenth-century Indian affairs.

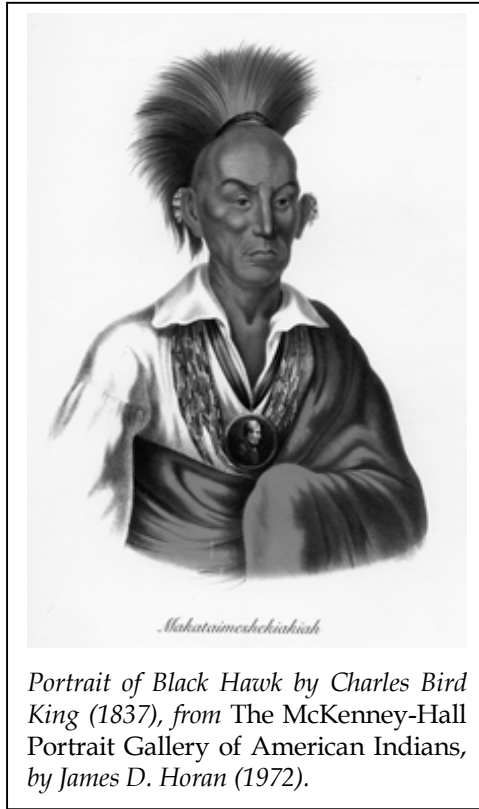
In 2006 the first of four books focusing directly on the Black Hawk War appeared. In *Black Hawk and the Battle for the Heart of America*, Kerry Trask builds on existing ideas about Indian-white relations as he narrates the conflict. His central thesis is that the war resulted from a "tragically redundant pattern" (7) of white-Indian violence that recurred on nearly all of America's frontiers during the nineteenth century. He sees this as resulting from rapid social changes in American life and ideas as pioneers flooded the region between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River. During that era earlier controls on personal actions disintegrated, frontier settlers seized Indian lands, and violence and hatred grew sharply. According to Trask, these factors created situations leading directly to war.

In the first half of the book, he presents a thoughtful and carefully documented account of Sauk and Meskwaki life in the region, with emphasis on their ideas, social practices, and self-identity. That allows him to show how tribal customs shaped how the villagers dealt with other Indians but did not work effectively when facing white pioneers or their government. In fact, the analysis

emphasizes how white demands and expectations ignored or rejected tribal ideas. For example, under the 1825 treaty of Prairie du Chien, the Indians of the upper Mississippi valley agreed to stop raiding each other, to stay out of each other's hunting territories, and to depend on federal officers to settle intertribal disputes. This latter provision rejected the basic Indian custom of clan revenge against outsiders who harmed the villagers or their property, and tribal leaders had no authority to enforce it on their people. The narrative clarifies how that brought a cycle of violence rather than ending it, keeping the area in turmoil for years.

Trask provides a clear narrative of the war itself. He traces the motivations and movements of Black Hawk's followers, the British Band, from their entry into Illinois in April 1832 to the crushing defeat and slaughter at the Battle of Bad Axe four months later. Trask clearly presents the varied roles of Neapope, the Winnebago Prophet, and bands of nearby Indians in the negotiations, raiding, and conduct of the war. He gives General Henry Atkinson credit for having a solid grasp of the situation, but chides him for two mistakes: his inflammatory letters to Governor John Reynolds, and the failure to keep Major Isaiah Stillman's command with his own, which would have prevented the unexpected fight with the Sauk and might have allowed negotiations rather than war. The narrative presents these events clearly and readably, employing Trask's central theme that, given ideas at the time, much of the violence was unavoidable.

Just a year after Trask's book came out, John P. Bowes's *Black Hawk and the War of 1832* appeared. It makes no pretense of being an academic study. Rather, it is designed for use by students and aimed at the general reading public instead of scholars. It offers a brief, clear narrative, excellent maps, quotes from contemporary people, and plenty of illustrations. At the same time, the author has done his research carefully, so the narrative rests on a solid scholarly base of published primary items and recent studies of related issues. Bowes locates the 1832 war in the context of the evolving American policy during the era after national independence.



Portrait of Black Hawk by Charles Bird King (1837), from The McKenney-Hall Portrait Gallery of American Indians, by James D. Horan (1972).

He writes that the new federal government and its citizens came to agree that dealing with the Indians included three basic ideas: the need to keep peace, the recognition that land ownership and use was a central area of dispute, and the assumption that Anglo-Americans and their government knew what was best for the tribal people. Using thumbnail sketches, Bowes shows how expanding frontier settlement brought ever more pressure on the government to manage Indian relations peacefully while opening ever more land for the pioneers. By 1830 this resulted in what became known as Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Policy, and that, in turn, focused attention on tribes in the upper Mississippi valley. Under the terms of a questionable treaty signed in 1804, the Sauk and Meskwaki people in northern Illinois had to move west. When a portion of those tribes returned to Illinois in

1832, their actions led to the Black Hawk War. While this book adds little to the story, its analysis is clear and the scholarship is up to date. The result is an attractive, brief, and readable account of the conflict.

In *The Black Hawk War of 1832*, Patrick Jung takes a distinctly different approach. He offers a detailed scholarly analysis of the conflict. His narrative connects with several others discussed above, showing how federal negotiators worked to clear the native villagers out of areas the encroaching whites wanted. As with most of the other accounts, he shows how William Henry Harrison's 1804 treaty took Sauk and Meskwaki land east of the Mississippi without the tribal negotiators realizing what had happened, at least for a time. He traces the growing divisions within the tribal leadership and the more than decade-long competition between Black Hawk and Keokuk for influence within the Sauk villages. Related to those tensions within the tribes, the narrative also depicts how ongoing rivalries and disputes with the nearby Sioux, Ho-Chunk [Winnebago], and Menominee kept tensions in the region near the surface.

Recognizing that this war has been studied frequently, Jung shifts the focus from a straight narrative of the events to emphasizing the roles of the neighboring tribes in the conflict. He discusses tensions between the encroaching lead miners in the Dubuque's Mines area in Iowa, as well as near Galena, Illinois, and in southwestern Wisconsin. Then he traces the continuing intertribal violence based on clan revenge customs for settling intertribal disputes. The book offers a clear view of difficulties facing American frontier commanders when they had to integrate untrained pioneer militiamen into forces of army regulars. Jung presents the conflicting goals and actions of frontier politicians, the desires of the local white inhabitants, and the actions of federal officials dealing with Indian affairs.

He is particularly effective in describing and analyzing the military actions during the war. He uses the existing multitribal competition and conflicts as part of the background and of the war, too. His narrative demonstrates the variety of tribal re-

sponses. At least one band of Kickapoo joined Black Hawk's followers. While some Ho-Chunk [Winnebago] remained neutral, others fought for or against the Sauk. The Potawatomi used the war to settle old grudges against individual pioneers, but both the Sioux and the Menominee sought revenge against the Sauk for earlier raids. The narrative traces troop movements throughout the summer of 1832, comments on General Atkinson's effectiveness, and describes the decimation of most of the 1,500 or more Indians caught in the disaster. For the Indians, things became even worse when the fighting ended. At that point, the United States demanded that they surrender their claims to much of eastern Iowa, setting the stage for their forced removal from the state.

John Hall's *Uncommon Defense* is the most recent study of the war. While it traces many of the same developments leading to the strife as do the other books reviewed here, Hall's study moves beyond them. He broadens the focus, shifting the emphasis from an Indian-white conflict to one that included Indian-on-Indian violence. Clearly aware that during the generations of interracial fighting, natives fought alongside whites against their tribal enemies in virtually every "Indian war," Hall shapes his discussion accordingly. The book's central contribution to a full understanding of the Black Hawk War, then, is its emphasis on the varied and shifting roles of the neighboring tribes as they tried to use the fighting to attain their own objectives. Hall's thesis is that the violence resulted when two separate conflicts—white-Indian and Indian-Indian—came together.

He examines the long-term rivalries that resulted from generations of tribal migrations, fur trade competition, and shifting Indian-European alliances in the upper Mississippi valley. Gradually, those rivalries created a situation in which well-armed young hunters of the competing groups raided each other for several generations. That violence helped young men to achieve warrior status while meeting their clan obligations to seek revenge for violence against their relatives. Once American pioneers began filtering into the region after the War of 1812, federal officials worked to end the raiding, but that only increased Indian distrust of and

anger toward the newcomers. Despite a series of treaties in 1816, 1825, and 1830, intertribal competition and conflicts continued.

Hall's analysis demonstrates how leadership quarrels among the Sauk and Meskwaki led to the development of the British Band, which followed Black Hawk. Then he examines the relations between that group and the nearby Ho-Chunk [Winnebago], Dakota Sioux, Menominee, and Potawatomi. The Ho-Chunk had complicated relations with the British Band as differing bands fought on their side, aided the whites, or stayed neutral. The Sioux and Menominee joined the whites, fighting against Black Hawk's followers to avenge past raids. The Potawatomi used the confused situation to attack some intruding pioneers, and then tried to remain neutral. This narrative explains clearly what motivated each of the tribes and shows how the acts of some Métis leaders shaped events, too. Hall suggests that while the tribes used the war to gain their own short-term goals, their actions weakened any chance they had to resist forced removal beyond the Mississippi.

Placing the Black Hawk War into a shifting and complex context, Hall uses knowledge of the tribal communities and their goals effectively. His focus on Indian motivations and diplomatic maneuvers offers a model that can help better understand many of the nineteenth-century Indian wars, because native allies took part in virtually every Indian war. Hall's book combines the latest scholarship with fine writing and excellent maps. Coming at the end of nearly a decade of research related to the Black Hawk War, the analysis combines the best elements of recent scholarship. It seems to me highly unlikely that much more is needed on the topic for at least a generation, or until historians begin to ask new questions about the past.

Book Reviews and Notices

Re-Collecting Black Hawk: Landscape, Memory, and Power in the American Midwest, by Nicholas A. Brown and Sarah E. Kanouse. Culture, Politics, and the Built Environment Series. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015. xi, 270 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Jane Simonsen is associate professor of history at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. She is the author of *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860–1919* (2006) and “Descendants of Black Hawk: Generations of Identity in Sauk Portraits” (*American Quarterly*, 2011).

The premise undergirding Nicholas A. Brown and Sarah E. Kanouse’s book-length photo essay is long overdue: how countless midwestern locales that use the name of the Sauk leader Black Hawk to invoke an aura of historical authenticity participate in an ongoing assertion of settler-colonialism. Commemoration—whether a roadside historical marker or a commercialized image—renders the route of the so-called Black Hawk War of 1832 as a landscape of nostalgia and “casual racism” (15). The book holds relatively prosaic photos of vernacular landscapes in tension with texts that jolt readers into recognizing the dissonance between the self-assurance of yet another “Blackhawk Avenue” and the present political vitality of indigenous nations.

Sections devoted to Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois are interspersed with interviews with tribal officers, including George Thurman of the Sac and Fox Tribe of Oklahoma; historic preservationists Johnathan Buffalo (Meskwaki) and Sandra Massey (Sauk); and former language preservation officer Yolanda Pushetonequa (Sauk). These interviews, alongside essays by Michif artist Dylan Miner and Dakota activist Waziyatawin, explore the ongoing significance of indigenous history and politics and powerfully negate the “narrative of disappearance” (15) recorded in the photographs. Both Buffalo and Massey expose the nomenclature of *war* as applied to Black Hawk’s struggle as a foundational myth that has, since 1832, allowed midwesterners to characterize Black Hawk as a dangerous but eventually cowed enemy and the Sauk and Meskwaki as conquered people. They describe the ongoing political and cultural work of these communities, including repatriation, protests against “Indian” mascots, and state and local projects to

ensure the vitality of tribal identities. Miner argues for the importance of undoing the work of the endless iterations of “Black Hawk” by listening—especially for the collective memories of indigenous nations.

The book includes some 170 black-and-white photographs, most taken by the authors. Their impact lies primarily in repetition. Black Hawk’s name and sometimes his countenance appear on retirement community signs, auto repair shops, schools, business centers, parks, engineering firms, and fitness centers. Seeming tributes become insistent evasions, and signs that encourage park visitors to “help Black Hawk recycle” (25) or to “take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints” (63) profoundly erase history. Sometimes the passages—excerpted from texts such as newspapers, pamphlets, history books, and visitors’ guides—clearly counter the photographs they accompany. A photograph of a streetside mural featuring a poorly rendered version of Black Hawk—with the insignias of various civic organizations pocking his torso like bullet holes—pairs with indigenous anthropologist Audra Simpson’s assertion that “there are still Indians. . . . This failure to kill, to disappear entirely, is Indigenous life, in the face of what was to be bodily and structural death” (173). The pattern of text as “presence” to the photograph’s “disappearance” doesn’t always hold true. In an excerpt from Cecil Eby’s 1973 history of the Black Hawk War, for example, Eby condemns the practice of “capitalizing” on Black Hawk’s name yet describes an annual Labor Day powwow as an occasion when “warriors and squaws” “shuffle and jump” in “inauthentic garb” (202)—thus passing judgment on the “authenticity” of a newer sort of presence.

Readers get little guidance in deciphering the dialogue between text and image. The authors’ introduction, which relies on somewhat inaccessible theoretical language, explains that the pairings, meant to unsettle, invite readers to ask questions about historic commemoration and contemporary politics and, ultimately, to ask, “What is to be done?” (6). While possible answers are embedded in some of the texts, they are not always easy to evaluate. To what extent have Wisconsin’s 2011 “Protocols on Working with Tribes” been successful? How can the Violence Against Women Act best address the needs of indigenous women? What do responsible commemorative practices look like?

These questions might be difficult for the beginning student of indigenous or public history to answer, but they are indeed worth asking. The book, not necessarily best read straight through, might work better outside the classroom in museum shops or even on coffee tables, where browsing readers might be provoked into questioning the way they apprehend the landscapes around them. Clearly about the Mid-

west, *Re-Collecting Black Hawk* has the potential to provoke similar revisionings in other American places. Part of the problem, indeed, is that Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa are not alone in their projects of forgetting, nor are the Sauk and Meskwaki alone in their continuing vitality. The book should prove foundational for re-assessing similar practices across the nation.

The Inspirationists, 1714–1932, edited by Peter A. Hoehnle. American Communal Societies Series. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2015. 3 volumes. xxxiv, 1,072 pages. Notes, bibliography, index. \$495.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Lanny Haldy is executive director of the Amana Heritage Society.

Throughout its history, Iowa has been an attractive place to settle for alternative religious and social groups. That such experiments do not play a larger role in our state's story is in part because most were relatively small, short-lived, and left few written records. The Inspirationists' communal settlement of Amana, however, is one of the largest and longest lived in the United States. Amana retains a place in Iowa life today. Furthermore, because of its communal structure and meticulous community record keeping, Amana is perhaps one of the best documented communities in the Midwest.

However, the historiography of Amana, from its religious origins as the Community of True Inspiration in eighteenth-century Germany to the present, but especially its communal period in Iowa (1855–1932), has had little development. (This is in contrast to the interpretation of the Inspirationists' German experience, which German scholars have placed squarely in the context of German radical pietism, a religious tradition also not well understood in America.) The obvious barrier to an American scholar interested in Amana history is that the sources are in the German language, compounded by the fact that manuscripts are in an archaic German script. Not only has this limited their use, but it has also obscured the richness and breadth of the resources held by the Amana Church and the Amana Heritage Society. Thus many historical accounts rely on the same old secondary sources, rounding up the usual suspects: Bertha Shambaugh, Charles Nordhof, and William Rufus Perkins and Barthinius Wick, to name a few. As a result, communal Amana is rarely interpreted in the context of Iowa history.

This extensive three-volume set lays the groundwork for correcting this oversight and deepening our understanding of the Amana experience. The editor knows the sources. Peter Hoehnle is well versed in the Inspirationist faith both as an elder of the Amana Church and as an accomplished scholar of its history. Here he has collected and as-

sembled some 100 documents that had not previously been printed or translated into English, presenting a roughly chronological record from the earliest years of the movement in Germany (1714) to the end of the communal period (1932). The documents include personal diaries, letters, memoirs, and historical accounts. Representative examples of two defining genres of the Inspirationists, inspired testimonies and hymns, are also included. (It should be noted that one major document that is promised in the publisher's promotional materials, the diary of Christian Metz, is not in fact included.)

These three volumes contain essential documents that help address fundamental issues in the history of the community, such as the origins and development of the communal system, the community's relationship with its Iowa neighbors, and the evolution of the faith. The editorial introductions to the individual selections and the notes within them put the documents nicely into context. That editorial input is a major strength of the collection. The general introduction is an excellent overview of the history of the Community of True Inspiration, but it might have better explained the selection choices and overall organizational rationale of the set. Why, for example, does the collection exclude the post-communal Inspirationist Amana Church, given that it purports to encompass "the full scope of Inspirationist history" (xxii)?

Another strength of the collection is that while the contents are based largely on what was available in manuscript English translation, the editor was aware of gaps in the story and solicited transcriptions and translations of important documents to help fill those gaps. Even those few items that have already been published—for example, the community letters previously published in the *Amana Society Bulletin*—are now more accessible and are illuminated by the editor. While the focus of the series is American communal societies, this set also makes the European religious origins and fundamental beliefs of the Community of True Inspiration more accessible to English readers (including present-day church members).

The work includes a bibliography and an index, but their usefulness is limited. The bibliography is an abbreviated mix of primary and secondary sources, with half of the listings consisting of the 58 volumes of the Christian Metz and Barbara Landmann testimonies, which could have been cited as a single source. The bibliography reflects neither the state of Amana scholarship today nor the extent of Inspirationist publications in Europe and America. The index is also quite short, referencing primarily people and places.

This work provides an entirely new corpus of research material for English-language scholars so that we can begin to put Amana more

firmly into an Iowa and American context. Use of these documents by scholars will undoubtedly advance the interpretation of Amana and Iowa history. Furthermore, this work hints at the vastness and richness of the archival resources still undiscovered in the Amana Church and Amana Heritage Society collections. As a shining tip of the iceberg, these volumes also should stimulate other researchers to look further beneath the surface.

Finally, given the vastness and value of this collection, the publisher's choice of distribution and price is lamentable. Apparently targeting a specialized market of big-budget research libraries, it offers no wholesale price and retails the set at \$495. Some online sellers have taken this price as wholesale and offer it at a cool \$900, though some vendors now list it at just over \$400. (We can wonder whether books as a vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge to the general public are a thing of the past.) The recent acquisition of Pickering and Chatto by Routledge further obscures this title. Ironically, although these sources are now available, they might not be any more accessible. We can only hope that this marvelous collection does not turn out to be the Inspirationists' best-kept secret.

Across the Deep Blue Sea: The Saga of Early Norwegian Immigrants, by Odd S. Lovoll. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2015. 211 pp. Maps, tables, illustrations, notes, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer Daron W. Olson is assistant professor of history at Indiana University East. He is the author of *Vikings across the Atlantic: Emigration and the Building of a Greater Norway, 1860–1945* (2013).

Much has been written on the subject of Norwegian immigration to the United States, but the story of Norwegian migration into Canada remains an understudied one. Odd S. Lovoll's latest study addresses that imbalance by seeking "to include aspects of the overseas exodus frequently overlooked in historical accounts; it treats the growth of a transportation system of sailing ships, the impact on coastal communities, and the composition and experience of the crew, including crew members who abandoned ship" (5). As Lovoll notes, the shift from restrictive trade to free trade provided the opportunity for Norwegian sailing ships to engage in the lucrative transport of timber from Canada to ports on the British Isles. In turn, the focus of early Norwegian immigration to North America shifted as Quebec City and other seaports in the Quebec province replaced New York as the point of entry for Norwegian immigrants from 1850 until the late 1860s. Competition

from steamships proved the undoing of the sailing ships as transporters of emigrants. Ultimately, they reestablished New York as the port of entry for immigrants from Norway.

Because the primary mission of the sailing ships was to transport cargo, not passenger traffic, these transatlantic voyages, often lasting from six to eight weeks, involved an ordeal for the immigrants, as the steerage conditions were primitive and cramped. Lovoll is careful to point out that the causes of immigration can be found in macro dimensions, but one must not “disregard the human factor and the many individual motives and circumstances that influenced people to seek their fortunes outside the homeland” (50). Yet in general he observes that the districts of Norway that had new industry and livelihoods or those that had possibilities for income in other regions within Norway had relatively small numbers of emigrants, which suggests that economic privation was a major factor in the emigration during that time frame. The desire among many Norwegians to cross the Atlantic permanently created an additional opportunity for the sailing ship industry. Ship owners and captains took an active role in recruiting passengers, often employing Norwegian immigrants to recruit for them in Norway. Furthermore, many Norwegians who took positions on board the sailing ships ultimately deserted, using their brief employment as a means to emigrate to North America (124).

Canada, though, did not profit greatly from promoting immigration, because most immigrants aimed to settle in the United States. By the mid-1850s, however, Canada’s recruitment efforts became more aggressive. The results meant that the province of Quebec had two Norwegian immigrant communities. The first was the Bury Settlement. Lovoll describes how the first 90 settlers arrived there in 1853 and 1854. For the most part, the settlement was a failure, as most of the settlers moved on to the United States or to Canada’s western provinces. A better-known Norwegian colony arose along the Gaspé Peninsula. The Canadian government set aside three townships there exclusively for Norwegian settlement. The colony depended on fishing for livelihood, yet the three townships did not have water access, which proved a long-term hindrance to greater development.

In the long run, Canada, and especially Quebec, was a stepping stone in the history of Norwegian immigration to North America. The United States remained the ultimate destination for most immigrants during this early period. Only later in the nineteenth century, when the vast Canadian prairie provinces were opened up to settlement, would large numbers of Norwegians see Canada as a destination rather than a transition point. Yet without Quebec—“the Gateway,” as

Lovoll stresses—Norwegian settlement of the upper American Midwest would not have played out as it did.

Therein lies the significance of Lovoll's work. Most histories of Norwegian immigration have focused almost exclusively on the final destination. While important, there were other aspects to the process. For instance, I have argued for paying greater attention to the homeland when writing the history of Norwegian immigration. Now Lovoll, the sage historian of Norwegian immigration, has pointed to another neglected aspect of that history: the stepping stones or transition points along the way. Moreover, he has shown how a confluence of factors—the development of the Canadian timber trade, Norway's expertise in sailing ships, the motivation among Norwegian farmers and laborers to emigrate, and recruitment efforts by U.S. states in the upper Midwest—created a unique window of opportunity for about 20 years, which helps to explain why the American upper Midwest ultimately became such a haven for Norwegian settlers.

Across the Deep Blue Sea is thus another valuable contribution to our understanding of Norwegian immigration history. The book has delved into a hitherto largely unexplored side of that history, and it invites further exploration of this fascinating history.

Defining Duty in the Civil War: Personal Choice, Popular Culture, and the Union Home Front, by J. Matthew Gallman. Civil War America Series. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 336 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Wallace Hettle is professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of *Stonewall Jackson: A Civil War Hero in History and Memory* (2011) and *The Peculiar Democracy: Southern Democrats in Peace and War* (2001).

In *Defining Duty in the Civil War*, J. Matthew Gallman provides a lavishly illustrated, persuasively argued treatment of Northern popular culture during the Civil War. He focuses on how Americans shaped expectations of citizens' duties during the war through print culture. On the home front, Americans built a sense of community and responsibility based on a shared set of principles.

Gallman draws on the abundant print culture of the North during the war. He examined leading magazines such as *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*, and *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* and also consulted popular novels, local and national newspapers, soldiers' letters, and abolitionist newspapers such as *The Liberator*.

The book is organized thematically around a variety of appeals to duty on the part of Union citizens. It begins with satire, as patriots

mocked men who failed to volunteer for the cause and others who feigned patriotic sentiments while pursuing their own private interests at home. Authors and illustrators directed jokes and jabs at ostensibly loyal citizens, especially the so-called "aristocracy" who profited from the war.

Next, Gallman discusses how influential publications defined *duty* to the cause and the country. Publications provided personal advice derived from prewar guides to urban life and etiquette aimed at young people. In a rapidly changing society, loyal citizens faced new circumstances. Wartime publishers needed to focus not only on how to succeed as an individual but also on how one could contribute to the war effort.

Gallman portrays a culture focused less on bravery or cowardice than one would think. He describes a debate over republican citizenship crafted around a contrast between "virtue" and hypocrisy. Republican virtues, intertwined with notions about manhood, intensified with the advent of conscription in 1863.

Popular pamphlets, novels, and magazines described the patriotic role that loyal women were supposed to play. Some women, such as Louisa May Alcott, served as nurses. Typically, though, the chief role of women as portrayed in popular culture was to voice patriotism and freely give up their men for the cause.

Lastly, Gallman examines black Northerners as they grappled with their role in a country that had rejected them as citizens. Here the sources are thinner than in earlier chapters, both because white periodicals downplayed issues of concern to African Americans and because blacks were a relatively small group in the North during the war. Therefore, Gallman leans heavily on the abolitionist periodical *The Liberator*.

I cannot think of a historical monograph that uses visual evidence more effectively than this book. Extraordinary illustrations, some of them found in obscure publications, are abundant. I learned as much from the illustrations and Gallman's concise interpretations as I did from the rest of this very fine book. The cartoons and other engravings testify to the industry of the author and the generosity of the publisher.

Because the Civil War-era publishing industry was concentrated in the Northeast, the evidence necessarily has a regional bias. The author did, however, gamely consult a variety of newspapers to gauge local opinion outside the urban centers. Still, one is left to wonder whether Gallman's generalizations would apply to citizens in Iowa and the Old Northwest.

Making Photography Matter: A Viewer's History from the Civil War to the Great Depression, by Cara A. Finnegan. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2015. xiii, 240 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 hardcover.

Reviewer John Raeburn is professor emeritus of English and American studies at the University of Iowa. His books include *Ben Shahn's American Scene: Photographs 1938* (2010) and *A Staggering Revolution: A Cultural History of Thirties Photography* (2006).

What historical viewers made of photographs publicly displayed—how they interpreted and then assimilated them to their own experiences and belief systems—is the daunting topic explored by Cara Finnegan in *Making Photography Matter*. Much is known about individual photographers and their ambitions, a fair amount about the institutional structures that expedited and displayed their work, but practically nothing about responses by the vast number of individuals who, since the medium's invention in 1839, have viewed photographs in books, periodicals, and exhibitions. The reason for this deficit is simple enough: typically, few discursive traces of those viewing experiences remain. In contrast to other expressive arts such as drama or painting, moreover, until recently photography has not even elicited a rich vein of professional criticism that could at least hint at the public reception of specific bodies of work.

Finnegan's subtitle, *A Viewer's History from the Civil War to the Great Depression*, was likely inscribed at the publisher's insistence because her introduction explicitly disavows such a comprehensive historical ambition. Instead, she develops four case studies of photographic reception, two from the nineteenth century centered on Civil War photographs and a Lincoln portrait, and two from the twentieth featuring pictures of child labor and Depression-era poverty; in each case, the photographic corpus elicited a textual response that has survived. That residue is essential to Finnegan's method of deploying rhetorical analysis of those texts to reconstruct how viewers understood the photographs and what contemporary cultural concerns their responses addressed. This method allows her to demonstrate that, far from being passive ciphers as often supposed, viewers actively engaged in complex acts of interpretation. Her analysis thereby "recover[s] the viewer as a key participant in the event of photography" (170).

Only relatively few viewers would have seen photographs shot on Civil War battlefields, most by Mathew Brady's staff, because the technique for reproducing them in printed matter did not yet exist. More commonly, audiences encountered verbal renditions of the photographs and magazine engravings based on them. Finnegan argues

persuasively that, from these encounters and the interpretive work they encouraged, audiences imbibed a sense of “presence” that helped them negotiate the war’s uncertainties.

In 1895 *McClure’s* magazine reproduced a daguerreotype of a thirtyish Abraham Lincoln to accompany an installment of Ida Tarbell’s biography of Lincoln; the photograph had not been displayed publicly before and is still Lincoln’s earliest surviving portrait. It stimulated a vigorous discourse that subsequently filled several of the magazine’s pages with letters offering interpretations of it. Most writers, representatives of the white male elite, pronounced on how the portrait embedded the future president’s character, drawing heavily on the popular pseudoscientific discourses of phrenology and physiognomy. Their interpretations made the young Lincoln represent a new ideal in the nation’s character development, forged by his frontier upbringing. The urgency with which this interpretation was advanced, says Finnegan, was attributable to the racial and class anxieties that undergirded it.

In 1912 T. R. Dawley, a former inspector for the U.S. Bureau of Labor, used Lewis Hine’s photographs to illustrate his book-length polemic *against* child labor reformers such as Hine. Factory work, Dawley argued, benefited southern children who would otherwise languish in abysmally ignorant poverty. Finnegan’s circumstantial account of Dawley’s project amply unpacks a crucial paradox of photography: that its apparently unimpeachable representation of some concrete fact can without image tampering be appropriated to serve a contrasting and even antithetical purpose.

In 1938 government photographers of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) exhibited about 75 of their pictures of Depression-era scenes at a massive, week-long photographic exhibition in New York’s Grand Central Palace; a fair number of them have since become iconic. The agency invited viewers to submit written comments about the pictures, and 540 did so. Remarkably, for all the subsequent attention to FSA photography, no one until Finnegan had investigated those responses. Her training in rhetorical theory made her ideal for the task. Her nuanced analysis reveals how viewers interpreted what they had seen and “insert[ed] themselves as active agents in the stories the photographs had to tell” (168).

Largely because it depends on such a richly qualitative and quantitative sample of audience response, the FSA case study is the book’s strongest and provides a fine model for future reception studies. The archives of state historical societies and local institutions hold numerous photographic collections that possibly have accompanying textual

evidence that has been neglected or perhaps not even recognized. Discovering whether they do could productively amplify the “viewer’s history” Finnegan has begun.

Carnival in the Countryside: The History of the Iowa State Fair, by Chris Rasmussen. Iowa and the Midwest Experience Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015. vii, 206 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$27.50 paperback.

Reviewer Tom Morain is director of government relations at Graceland University and former administrator of the State Historical Society of Iowa. He has taught Iowa history at several institutions and online and has been active in public history projects around the state.

Good histories spark curiosity on questions that their audiences may never have considered. On that scale, Chris Rasmussen plows new ground in his *Carnival in the Countryside: The History of the Iowa State Fair*. It is a good guess that among the record 1,117,398 visitors who passed through the gates at the 2015 fair, very few have ever given even passing consideration to the enormous complexities its production entails and fewer still to the philosophy behind its rise to become such an iconic tradition. Rasmussen, an American cultural and intellectual historian, is an Iowa native who earned a B.A. at Grinnell College and a Ph.D. at Rutgers. His passion for the fair is genetic. His father raced stock cars at the Iowa State Fair, he writes in his acknowledgments, and his mother “went for the country music.”

The book takes a chronological approach. The fair’s earliest advocates were local agricultural societies whose mission was to promote better farming by displaying the results of superior methods: bigger ears of corn, fatter hogs, bigger and faster horses. Through the rest of the year, the societies promoted “book farming” through lectures and papers, but the fair was where they put their products into competition to prove their superiority.

But their high-minded motives for agricultural exhibitions had to contend with the stubborn reality that the public wanted something else, or at least something more. Fair visitors wanted entertainment. A day spent looking at longer carrots or the latest cream separators just didn’t do it, especially for mom and the kids. Rasmussen documents the continuing struggle between those who promoted the fair as an educational experience and those who looked to entertainments to increase gate receipts that would pay the bills. Vendors and performers of every variety also coveted the dollars that fairgoers brought with them. At one time, vendors, tent shows, and games of chance were

kept outside the fence, but gradually, fair organizers allowed those they deemed wholesome and worthy inside, "midway" between the undesirable elements and the educational exhibits. Policing the "midway" added one more responsibility to the fair board's task. Fair officials found themselves challenged to protect the public from rigged games of chance and salacious sideshows while at the same time inviting those that could draw the crowds to provide the necessary revenue.

Rasmussen does a good job of explaining how the fair reflected the concerns of rural Iowa and the larger context of Iowa and midwestern culture. Economic hard times almost forced the state fair to close at times. Fair organizers wanted the fair to be a platform to proclaim the virtues of rural life. Anxieties in the early twentieth century occasioned by the growing perception of the disparities between the farm and the city were reflected in attention to the roles of farm women and youth. Art displays and healthy baby contests further broadened the scope of the agenda. The creation of the state extension service and its 4-H provided a strong source of educational programming and a reliable audience for the state fair that continues today. Unfortunately, the book stops its in-depth coverage of fair issues with the 1940s and provides only a few general comments in its final chapter about the entire last half-century.

The advent of movies and radio in the 1920s and '30s required fair organizers to get creative in its grandstand entertainments. Rasmussen brings to life the fascinating story of elaborately staged historical spectacles (using the term *historical* loosely) like the Trojan War or Cortez's conquest of the Aztecs. For example, Rasmussen records that, in 1916, "The Last Days of Pompeii" treated its grandstand audience to "gladiatorial combats, races, games, Egyptian dancers and other forms of merrymaking" before, as midwestern values required, Vesuvius erupted as divine retribution on such moral depravity (125). In 1932 grandstand visitors witnessed an Iowa State Fair classic: a staged collision between two speeding locomotives, the *Roosevelt* racing in from the left and the *Hoover* charging from the right. (The State Historical Society of Iowa has a video of the event.)

Rasmussen devotes a chapter to how the arts have been incorporated into the fair and how, in turn, the fair has been depicted in literature, painting, and movies. When painters were invited to enter their works for ribbons and prizes, the fair judges became cultural arbiters of what the standards of "Iowa" works should be. In the 1930s this pitted regionalists like Grant Wood, famous for depicting Iowa themes, against modernists who felt bound by no such restrictions, an argument that was playing out in larger art circles. The selection of judges be-

came a critical issue, and the fair finally allowed the artists themselves to vote on who would critique their work.

In 1932 Phil Stong's novel *State Fair* became a bestseller. It traced the experiences of the Frake family—father, mother, son, and daughter—as they spent a week at the Iowa State Fair. Ignoring the rural desperation of the Great Depression, the novel painted a bucolic vision of farm life even as the two grown children entered into romantic liaisons on the fairgrounds and in downtown Des Moines. The movie, starring Will Rogers and Janet Gaynor as parents, became a box office hit that, according to Rasmussen, “rescued Fox studio from bankruptcy.” Rasmussen omits mention of the 1962 *State Fair* remake starring Pat Boone and Ann-Margaret that moved the whole episode to Texas.

A viewpoint of the fair visitors themselves is one the book often fails to explore. The minutes of fair board meetings are available; first-hand accounts of the exhibits, food stands, or entertainments are not. What would the visitor to the 1880 fair see? What was behind the tent flaps the barkers were so vigorously extolling? Some of the most engaging sections of *Carnival* are its descriptions of the grandstand shows and 4-H demonstrations. For those, Rasmussen gives us front-row seats. Nevertheless, anyone who reads *Carnival in the Countryside* will never walk down the main concourse with the Varied Industries Building to the right and the raucous midway to the left and not begin to wonder again how it all came to be. Ours is indeed a great state fair. Don't miss it; don't even be late.

American Capitals: A Historical Geography, by Christian Montès. University of Chicago Geography Research Paper Number 247. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. 394 pp. Map, tables, charts, illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$65.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Timothy R. Mahoney is professor of history at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. He is the author of *Provincial Lives: Middle-Class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West* (1999); *River Towns in the Great West: The Structure of Provincial Urbanization in the American Midwest, 1820–1870* (1990); and the forthcoming *From Hometown to Battlefield in the Civil War Era: Middle Class Life in Midwest America*.

In this intriguing and demanding book, Christian Montès relentlessly employs social-scientific analysis and model building to try to understand the character of American state capitals. Among Americans cities, state capitals are some of the most familiar and well known but hard to define and understand. The book begins with an informed commentary on the usual explanations. The author questions the traditional explanation that the location and scale of state capitals reflect

the desire to decentralize power in American democracy and separate political power from economic power. Nor is he satisfied with noting that their character is shaped mostly by their symbolic power. As “temples of democracy” that symbolically present the state “ritual of governance,” and thus American federalism, state capitol buildings form the center of a public and monumental space that anchors state history, projects its future, and fosters state identity. Awareness of this symbolic role has affected their naming patterns, the architecture and physical locations of most capitol buildings—mostly classical-style buildings on hills or high ground—various efforts at city planning and beautification, and relations between state and municipal governments. As “places of condensation” where “individual and collective experiences take place” (57), they connect citizens to both state and American identity. Yet after a general overview of the unstable, often corrupt, and speculative history that involved the regular moving of state capitals, Montès notes that “selecting a capital was part of building a state and reflected . . . multiple factors at work” (82); any “simple model seems therefore out of reach” (83).

Undaunted, he aggressively launches an impressive effort—rooted in the methods of historical geography—to construct a “global explanatory model” for state capitals. He scientifically builds a database drawn from extensive research, most of it from secondary sources, from all 50 state capitals in the United States. The analysis for an “initial explanatory model” is supported by four impressive pages of charts that lay out the data, followed by three pages of pie charts that portray those data plotted according to eight factors—anti-large city, economy, religion, defense, entry point, centrality, politics, and provisional—accompanied by extensive short examples from the histories of various state capitals.

The evidence indicates that although state capitals began as entry point cities in the East, as more capitals were established to the west their histories were shaped more by economic forces, boosterism, and urban competition, though, as the urban system became more fixed by the late nineteenth century, relocation efforts declined and state capitals became more permanent. Montès argues that the scientific model suggests that politics, the spoils system, urban boosterism, and capitalist speculation prevailed, especially in the West. Morality and purity, republican ideals, or the “small-town ideal” (105) played much less of a role. Hence, the history and development of state capitals reflect a complex balance of powers and factors that results in a new model with “centrality, intertwined with compromise” at its “heart” surrounded by a variety of political and economic forces (157)—a state-

ment backed up by a flow chart. Noting that “case studies illustrate and modulate the model by applying it to specific times and places” (130), the author then takes readers on a wild ride through stories of border manipulations, “Neanderthal politics” (185), and the varying influences of the locational choices of railroads and industry that shaped their histories. The general result was a “developmental delay” (203) that relegated most state capitals to middling places in the urban hierarchy. They became quiet administrative towns and “forgotten cities” (205) and acquired a negative image in the mid-twentieth century.

Since the 1950s, revitalized and expanding state governments with increasing state employment, new constitutions, political systems that limited corruption, and more access to federal grants helped dispel that image. Service businesses and high-tech industries followed, giving the cities a more professional, white-collar look. Even so, tourism remains underdeveloped, and most state capitals today remain in the middle of the urban hierarchy. Montès groups them into three types: modern state capitals, “seemingly unchanged capitals” (247) (including Des Moines), and second-rank capitals. After all this model building, the author again “validates” the model with three brief, fairly general, case studies of Columbus, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; and Frankfort, Kentucky. The model shows that although each city is unique, their histories indicate that each was integrated into and thus compelled to navigate the shifting patterns of national political, economic, and social development. A quick review of the efforts of former state capitals to find a niche in heritage and “small-town” tourism or another source of economic growth near a metropolis, seems to confirm this view. Iowa City, for example, became the home of the state university and in the 1970s restored its old state capitol as a historic site. And yet, in spite of the importance of economics and politics in explaining state capitals, the fact that state capitals maintain such a special place in American life suggests to the author that the “cultural approach” still matters. Careful and diligent readers will come away with a new and enhanced understanding of state capitals.

Inspiration and Innovation: Religion in the American West, by Todd M. Kerstetter. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015. xi, 275 pp. Map, illustrations, suggested reading lists, index. \$81.95 hardcover, \$26.95 paperback.

Reviewer Douglas Firth Anderson is professor emeritus of history at Northwestern College (Iowa) and coauthor of *Orange City* (2014).

Religion and Iowa have been intertwined since before Iowa became a state. Being “west” was also a part of Iowa’s identity for a while, al-

though not as long as religion has been. Of course, Iowa's religion and region have been dynamic and contested over time. Iowans' religious assumptions, sensibilities, activities, and institutions have cycled in expansion, contraction, and/or collision. Where Iowa was/is has also been in either or both of at least two places: West (of Old Man River), and the Middle West.

Todd M. Kerstetter's new history of religion in the American West, then, promises some perspective on and for Iowa's placement and religiosity. Kerstetter is a historian at Texas Christian University who has published before on religion in the American West. The book is the fourth volume in the publisher's Western History Series, a collection intended as college textbooks that are also more generally accessible. The prose in this volume is jargon-free, and the scholarly apparatus is minimized (the footnotes are few, and instead of a general bibliography, limited suggested readings—almost exclusively books—follow each chapter).

In a brief introduction the author concisely sets an interpretive framework for the volume. The book's subject is "the religious history of the trans-Mississippi United States" (1). Religion "inspired" the residents in and immigrants to the West, while "the region's historical development shaped religious innovations" (3). Kerstetter then tackles his subject in chronologically ordered chapters that critically narrate topics such as indigenous religions, European missions (Spain, France, and Russia), and Roman Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, Jewish, Asian, and other religious perspectives, developments, and institutions in the West. Contemporary material includes not only Branch Davidians but also megachurches, Hare Krishna (ISKCON), polygamous Mormons, the sanctuary movement, and the Native American Church.

The book is solidly done. Kerstetter provides an accessible narrative of the history of religion in the West that is filled with examples of the importance of religion in western lives as well as in social and cultural developments. Yet various things about the book undercut its potential. The publisher chose a cover illustration that is puzzling: George Caleb Bingham's *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap*. Although Kerstetter does discuss the painting (90) as evidence of the intertwining of Manifest Destiny thinking and classic depictions of the Holy Family, it is neither of the trans-Mississippi West nor overtly religious. More substantively, Kerstetter inconsistently engages what the West as region encompasses. He says the book's region is the trans-Mississippi West, but he confesses that he does not feel he is in the West until he is somewhere well into Nebraska (2). While he recognizes that regional boundaries are fluid and that what

is “west” entails an “eastern” perspective, he nowhere engages with the Midwest region—does it overlap with the West? The recently rejuvenated Midwest studies movement was probably too recent for Kerstetter to take account of, but, there is no sign of his having read, for example, Philip Barlow’s case for a Midwest “Bible Suspender” of religious affiliation. (Indeed, it is puzzling that he did not seem to consult any of the five trans- or straddling-the-Mississippi volumes of AltaMira Press’s Religion by Region series, in one of which Barlow’s case appears. See “A Demographic Portrait: America Writ Small?” in *Religion and Public Life in the Midwest: America’s Common Denominator*, ed. Philip Barlow and Mark Silk [2004].)

Iowa makes no appearance in Kerstetter’s volume. He could have brought it in, say, with his discussion of Presbyterian home missionary Sheldon Jackson. He treats the important role Jackson played in territorial Alaska (116–17), but he could have noted the 1869 Sioux City Presbytery of Missouri River, which provided Jackson with the authority for his church-planting work around the West. Or, he might have considered discussing the Iowa-Oregon-California Quaker roots of Herbert Hoover. Or, he could have discussed Transcendental Meditation and its headquartering in Fairfield.

There are other problems. In coverage, his section “Modernism, Fundamentalism, and the Spirit of the West” (172–77) has no western examples of modernism. Also absent are the role of Judaism in Hollywood and Las Vegas and the importance of religion in the West in the rise of environmentalism (there is no mention of John Muir). In analysis, the theme of inspiration and innovation at times becomes a cookie-cutter “interpretation” in place of more nuanced reflection.

Kerstetter’s book, then, does not fully live up to its promise for western or Iowa religion. Still, the author has accomplished a great deal in synthesizing important developments and examples of religion in the American West.

Guaranteed Pure: The Moody Bible Institute, Business, and the Making of Modern Evangelicalism, by Timothy E. W. Gloege. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. xv, 307 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Bill R. Douglas recently retired from his role as a downtown carrier for the *Des Moines Register*, freeing him to concentrate on studying Iowa’s religious history.

Guaranteed Pure, along with Kevin Kruse’s *One Nation Under God*, may spark a new trend in American religious studies, combining business

and religious history. In pointing out the trend, I'm not denigrating it; most trends add significantly to our understanding and also speak to our present situation. And trends can create synergy, redefining or refining our perceptions.

This book challenges the reviewer's word limits, as it ranges from Protestant evangelical divergences in the late nineteenth century to Chicago labor history to the rise of corporate and advertising dominance over the economy—and, as Gloege argues, over swaths of American religion as well.

The book divides neatly into two eras: In the late nineteenth century, evangelicalism was dominant and, for successful revivalists like Dwight Moody, undifferentiated. But despite Moody's success as an evangelist in places like Chicago, higher criticism liberals, social gospel advocates, and dispensationalists all would play their part in derauling Moody's hoped-for consensus. (I question Gloege's reluctance to use Holiness as a category—Moody's problematic protégé Reuben Torrey was in that subset, as was the Keswick movement that the Moody Institute would embrace and the Pentecostal revolution it would shun.) But Moody did preach individual rather than social salvation—effectively embracing robber baron capitalism and rejecting radical alternatives to it.

Moody always seemed ambivalent about the Moody Bible Institute, but after his death came more certitude. Henry Crowell took over the institute, remaking it in his own image. Crowell had made his fortune consolidating the oat mill industry and using advertising to corner the market (that Quakers were not consulted in naming Quaker Oats did not faze Crowell; "pure" read the scroll of the iconic figure, hinting that other oatmeals were not). If the first half of the story is Moody searching for an elusive evangelical consensus, the twentieth-century half is Crowell seeking a Moody Institute brand that would be safely middle class, dispensationalist without being Pentecostal, and with a "product" that would gain dominant market share in the target demographic.

According to dispensationalist guru and Moody ally C. I. Scofield, interpreting the Bible meant dividing biblical history into seven dispensations, with the world currently in the sixth, or church, phase. Gloege gleefully describes how Scofield interpreted this to mean that only the Pauline epistles were relevant for contemporary Christians. Pentecostals accepted the dispensationalist schema, but jolted it forward: in the seventh, Kingdom era, passages less comfortable to the status quo like the Sermon on the Mount and the Book of Acts were in play. (On that point, non-dispensationalist social gospelers would agree.)

The Pentecostal interpretation was anathema to businessmen like Crowell.

Gloege also deftly describes how The Fundamentals project, which sought a new American Protestant orthodoxy, was funded by West Coast oil baron Lyman Stewart but largely framed and controlled by Crowell. Gloege is particularly good at showing the ways this “old-time religion” was not only not old but also ever shifting; how direct-mail marketing begat fundamentalism; and how capitalists like Crowell, whose success was based on retail sales and advertising, thought differently from speculators like Stewart. The contrast between Stewart’s obsession with end-time prophecy and Crowell’s careful cultivation of middle-class respectability, Gloege suggests, had roots in their divergent business paths.

Moody Bible Institute entered the 1920s thinking itself poised to be dominant in American religion but instead was hemmed in by a more militant fundamentalism (largely of its own creation) on the right and the Moody family’s dissatisfaction with its appropriation of Moody’s name for dispensationalist purposes in the center. Wary of fundamentalism while preaching dispensationalism, it did manage to influence the neoevangelicalism that emerged in the 1950s.

Gloege is not quite as sure-footed in dealing with the labor movement; he makes the tired, redundant mistake of identifying the IWW as “International” (rather than Industrial) Workers of the World. He does not fully explore religious connections with the Haymarket riot or the revolutionary potential of early Pentecostalism. Gloege also just hints at the funding and ideological ties that modernism had with capitalists like Rockefeller. But maybe all that is just opening the door for more of the trend.

Sacred Land: Sherwood Anderson, Midwestern Modernism, and the Sacramental Vision of Nature, by Mark Buechsel. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2014. xii, 371 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$65.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Thomas K. Dean is senior presidential writer/editor and adjunct assistant professor at the University of Iowa. His extensive writings about the importance of place include *Under a Midland Sky* (2008).

With *Sacred Land*, Mark Buechsel seeks to bring a new understanding of modernist midwestern literature through the lens of “sacramentalism.” For Buechsel, a “sacramental worldview” is “one in which the physical realities of Creation—such as food, sex, other people, our human selves, all of nature—are not merely material realities but realities containing and conferring spiritual . . . presence” (13) Buechsel

posits that the Midwest's nineteenth-century pastoral vision failed because its New England Calvinistic Protestant grounding philosophy inherently carried an "abstract, deadening, systematicity" (34), which inevitably led to the "stifling literalism and spiritual narrowness" of a practical, industrial, capitalist culture (35) that "no longer allowed for any complexity or ambiguity" (24). According to Buechsel, modernist midwestern writers tapped into the "exuberant fertility and sensuous lushness" (30) of the region's land, its "powerful, sensually mystical presence" (22), and its "mysterious cosmic life forces that are larger than human beings" (31). The endgame for these writers was to portray the land "as a sacramental source of spiritual guidance and inspiration" that "would facilitate a spiritual rejuvenation of Midwestern culture and eliminate the stultifying intellectualist and industrialist New England spirit" (31). This midwestern sacramental literary vision of the land would also "reenvision from its unique historical and geographical vantage point all of modern culture," providing "the regional literary tradition's contribution to the modernist quest for a new cultural wholeness" (43). Unfortunately, this very premise casts doubt on Buechsel's analysis before it even begins.

While it may be reasonable to claim that Protestant ethics and philosophy failed to cultivate a unique, vital midwestern culture, Buechsel's leap to European Catholic sacramentalism is, at best, across a huge critical chasm and, at worst, very thinly founded. Buechsel claims that "in formulating their vision of cultural wholesomeness, these authors tend to pit Catholic spirituality against Protestantism and medieval values and perspectives against the beliefs and sensibilities of modernity" (10).

Sherwood Anderson is the primary subject of the book, and the sweeping premise above is based on some comments Anderson made in his autobiographical *A Story Teller's Story* (1922) about the beauty, vastness, divinity, and otherness of France's Cathedral of Chartres. But Anderson was neither Catholic nor particularly informed about medieval European Catholicism (which Buechsel freely admits). Nor were the other authors analyzed in the book with the possible exception of the nonpracticing Fitzgerald. So to base an entire argument on such a source for these writers' literary vision of a renewed regional and spiritual culture seems stretched to the breaking point.

Buechsel returns to the tradition of close reading, and certainly the finely detailed analysis of Anderson's work comprehensively catalogs the early modernist's characters, who were seeking more than a narrow, rationalistic, capitalistic, industrial life in the palpable mystery of nature. Absent the questionable "sacramental" premise, however, the

argument loses originality. Others have analyzed regionalist writers and other artists through their relationship with the fertile land of the Midwest—for example, E. Bradford Burns's succinct and skillful *Kinship with the Land: Regionalist Thought in Iowa, 1894–1942* (1996).

Buechsel's argument suffers from other weaknesses as well. It is difficult to parse any analysis of modernism when the author mostly does not define *modernism*—not a simple idea—other than as a general ideological or thematic movement away from the Protestant ethic.

Four chapters are devoted to a thorough analysis of Sherwood Anderson's works, but then each of four other chapters is devoted to another midwestern author (Willa Cather, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ruth Suckow, and, anachronistically, Jane Smiley). Such a collection suggests more random choice than comprehensive literary scope. The organization and, at times, the analysis itself reveal the book's origins as a doctoral dissertation and, for me, its ultimate inability to rise above that form's limitations. Those with a particular interest in Iowa literary history can certainly gain some value from the close readings of Suckow's *The Folks* and Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*, but Cather and Fitzgerald, of course, have been treated much more extensively (and adeptly) elsewhere.

Finally, in this era of ecocriticism, with its rich and diverse new understandings of writing and the natural world, the book's monolithic conception of "nature" itself remains overly simplistic and ultimately opaque; agricultural fields, woods, backyards, and so forth all constitute an undifferentiated "land" or "nature." Bringing new understandings of nature to bear on modernism's regionalists would no doubt provide more insight into midwestern relationships with the land than medieval European spirituality does.

Democratic Art: The New Deal's Influence on American Culture, by Sharon Ann Musher. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. 293 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Victoria M. Grieve is associate professor of history at Utah State University. She is the author of *The Federal Art Project and the Creation of Middlebrow Culture* (2009).

This engagingly written account of New Deal arts funding quickly put to rest my concerns about whether we need yet another book about the New Deal art projects. Although there is not much new information for scholars in Musher's account, the thematic organization of the material and her excellent use of biographies and key examples make it a useful book for both students and experts in the field. The

author's deft handling of all of the arts projects and the coexistence of a variety of approaches to the arts does justice to a complex time and a complicated subject. The thousands of New Deal art projects were many things to many people; Musher provides a well-balanced and readable account of these many experiences.

In chapter one she offers a comprehensive overview of national and international intellectual influences and models for federal involvement in the arts in the early decades of the twentieth century. Following that survey, Musher dedicates a chapter to each of four "visions" of the arts that informed the New Deal: art as grandeur, enrichment, weapon, and experience. Finally, in a chapter titled "Art as Subversion," she discusses the conservative attacks and the breakdown of the Left that ended government sponsorship of the arts by 1943.

Unlike many other scholars of New Deal art projects, Musher does not concentrate on one of the arts projects but analyzes all of the projects through these thematic lenses and biographies of notable participants. For example, Charles Moore, the head of the Commission of Fine Arts, and the 1938 controversy surrounding the design of the Jefferson Memorial demonstrate how the nineteenth-century ideal of "art as grandeur" was in decline. Critics of the proposed structure ranged from those who condemned the design as derivative and imitative—more related to the dead hand of Greece and Rome than to modern America—to those who saw it as overly fussy and impractical. Others suggested that a democratic national design competition would have inspired more innovative ideas and more inclusive participation.

Chapter three will be of particular interest to Iowa readers, as Musher makes regionalism central to her discussion of "art as enrichment." Advocates of this vision of the arts agreed with "art as grandeur" proponents that art should uplift viewers. Using George Biddle's mural *Society Freed through Justice* (1936) as an example, Musher discusses American Scene painting as a celebratory art that was meant to inspire national resilience through depictions of the forgotten man as a national hero, as well as depictions of local history, legends, and heroes. Although subject to criticism from academic artists on the right and social viewpoint artists on the left, Musher judges the Treasury Program a largely successful government experiment in the arts.

In chapter four Musher analyzes how various administrators and programs used "art as a weapon" to expose racial and class inequality and other social ills that plagued American society. Musher sees these attempts largely as failures: Iowa native Hallie Flanagan's unapologetic use of the theater as a political weapon resulted in the early demise of the Federal Theatre Project. Black leaders of the Federal Writers' Proj-

ect failed to alter white depictions of southern states in the federal guides. Further, overtly political art provided grist for conservative attacks on the art projects specifically, and against the New Deal more broadly. Finally, Musher judges the “art as experience” approach as the most successful because the sense of public ownership of the arts outlasted the New Deal in the form of community art centers, the popularization of folk cultures, and progressive art education.

Musher applies her history of New Deal arts funding to contemporary questions of arts funding. Warning of the political implications of using art as a weapon, and lamenting the purely economic justifications used by recent supporters of federal art funding, Musher argues that advocates should take a lesson from the 1930s art-as-experience activists who argued that, beyond creating jobs and stimulating the economy, the arts “make us more thoughtful, satisfied, and engaged citizens” (218).

Winning the War for Democracy: The March on Washington Movement, 1941–1946, by David Lucander. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2014. xi, 320 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00 hardcover.

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

Although history textbooks mention the threatened March on Washington in 1941 for jobs and freedom, most Americans are unfamiliar with the March on Washington Movement (MOWM) that took place during World War II. In fact, A. Philip Randolph initiated a national movement that proved most successful at the local level. In *Winning the War for Democracy*, David Lucander goes beyond the activities surrounding Randolph to explore the MOWM in St. Louis, Missouri. Lucander sees the St. Louis chapter as the most dynamic and successful of the 37 branches (73). These local activists shared a commitment to the Double V campaign announced by the *Philadelphia Courier* in 1942. World War II provided a unique opportunity for African Americans to express their patriotism by helping to defeat fascism abroad and racism at home. While black men fought foreign enemies, those African Americans remaining on the home front worked to make democracy real in their communities. The all-black organization saw employment as a route to a better life, so local chapters focused on increasing African Americans’ access first to defense industry jobs and later to skilled

work in private companies and public utilities. They also protested segregation in public accommodations.

MOWM evolved from a one-time march intended to force the federal government to live up to the promise of Executive Order 8802, issued in June 1941, which barred discrimination by industries receiving federal funds. The order also established the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) to investigate complaints of racial bias by defense contractors. Given little money or manpower, the FEPC relied on local chapters of the MOWM to investigate complaints of discrimination. Members of MOWM chapters also used nonviolent direct action to pressure businesses to comply with the executive order. Working primarily through mass meetings, marches, and picket lines, local activists threatened federal intervention if industries failed to democratize their hiring practices. The St. Louis group targeted two defense industries: Carter Carburetor and U.S. Cartridge. They also pressured Southwestern Bell Telephone to open up professional positions as switchboard operators to black women. Finally, the St. Louis MOWM undertook a campaign to integrate department store lunch counters using sit-ins during the summer of 1944.

David Lucander effectively situates this study in relation to the historiography of the struggle for black equality. By discussing both the national MOWM and the St. Louis chapter, he explores the interplay between a national organization and its grassroots branches. He confirms that local chapters both relied upon national infrastructure and acted independently. He demonstrates the localism of the chapter by charting the collaboration across organizations that occurred in St. Louis throughout the war, while at the same time the national offices of the NAACP and Urban League refused to collaborate with A. Philip Randolph's upstart movement. Lucander also documents the differentiation between male and female roles in the MOWM. While males served in all public leadership roles, females constituted the bulk of the grassroots membership and labored extensively to achieve the group's goals. Finally, he situates the activism as part of "the long movement." Although today we see their efforts as a precursor to the civil rights movement, they saw their actions as a continuation of progressivism and the New Deal.

Winning the War for Democracy presents the argument that a mid-western community offered the most significant fight against racism during World War II. Lucander succeeds in conveying the centrality of this small group of people in St. Louis to extending the influence of the aborted March on Washington and Executive Order 8802. He also humanizes and individualizes the movement by providing detailed

discussion of the local people who make movements happen. Two of the MOWM's particularly powerful driving forces were their belief in the psychological importance of an all-black movement and the centrality of respectability. To prove racists wrong, MOWM insisted on African Americans conducting themselves with dignity and refinement. The St. Louis MOWM also emphasized collaboration across class lines and affiliations. Lucander especially excels at exploring the network created by reformers who labored against racism during World War II. If judged by its eight-point program, MOWM cannot be judged successful. But Lucander sees it as a success: "MOWM served as a conduit, introducing and refining techniques that would ultimately overthrow de jure racial segregation in the United States within the next two decades" (176). The organization also fostered leadership skills in its members, and some of these "individuals would use their experiences of fighting racism in World War II to jump-start a lifetime of activism" (192).

The Crops Look Good: News from a Midwestern Family Farm, by Sara DeLuca. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2015. ix, 254 pp. Map, illustrations, family tree, source notes, index. \$17.95 paperback.

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

Poet and writer Sara DeLuca grew up in Polk County, Wisconsin. *The Crops Look Good: News from a Midwestern Family Farm* is the story of her parents and grandparents, told through family letters, local newspapers, and family lore, including oral histories. The family was large. As the parents' nine children left home and made their way to farms, jobs, and marriages, they wrote to their mother about their new experiences, and she, in turn, wrote to them about life at home on the farm. Woven through all of this are bits and pieces of local and national news. There's a lot going on in this story, with cows being milked, school being taught, and babies being born. It's a particular family's story, but one that will seem familiar to those with roots in the nation's rural midsection.

There is much that this book does right. It is well written and engaging and successfully takes readers to an earlier era of family farming in the upper Midwest. One problem with the writing, however, is that the author has written in the present tense, which is a bit of a jolt in a family history. Once the reader adjusts to that, however, it be-

comes a much better read. The interweaving of local and national news with family stories helps readers understand the interplay between these larger and smaller worlds, and how lives went on, in spite of the massive changes occurring during those years.

Unfortunately, the reader (or at least this reader) comes away wanting unresolved issues resolved and wondering about how it all turned out. Probably because of the availability of family documents, it becomes mostly the story of DeLuca's mother, Helen, and less the story of the larger family. In particular, I wanted to know in greater detail how things turned out for Adele. Did she ever divorce her problematic husband? What about her son, with all of his many physical challenges? What happened to him? Details are thin on the changes ahead for the rest of the family as well. DeLuca comments in the epilogue that her generation no longer lives on the farm, but how, when, and why did that transition occur?

These are not the only mysteries in the book, and some are quite sensitive. One presented itself with Adele's letter of January 15, 1935. What she described would seem to be her seeking out and having an abortion in response to a pregnancy coming too soon after the birth of her disabled son. Is that, in fact, what she was describing? More discussion (any discussion) would help to shed light on a very important Great Depression story about the problems of obtaining effective contraception and the troubles families faced when trying to deal with a child's disabilities. This is a place where readers should not be left wondering what happened. The same might be said of the family's struggles with mental illness, with one son committing suicide and a second suffering to an extent requiring hospitalization at least once. Was Donny able to deal successfully with his illness and live a reasonably happy life in spite of the limits of effective treatment at mid-century? This good book would be made better with just a little more attention to these and the other issues mentioned above.

Seventh Generation Earth Ethics: Native Voices of Wisconsin, by Patty Loew. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2014. ix, 230 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$22.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Patrick Nunnally is coordinator of the River Life Program, part of the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Minnesota. His Ph.D. dissertation (University of Iowa, 1990) was "Visions of Sustainable Place: Voice, Land, and Culture in Rural America."

This collection of twelve interviews with Native American leaders from Wisconsin delivers exactly what the title promises, distinctive voices

that, collectively, portray a broad and deep ethic that is grounded in the earth, in community, and in relationships among people. Most of these men and women made their contributions in the twentieth century, a period of tremendous though uneven change across Wisconsin's indigenous communities. Representing all of Wisconsin's American Indian communities, the people here speak to issues such as environmental protection, treaty rights, education, and the maintenance of culture.

The stories and voices heard through this book are important in their own right. All struggle in one way or another with the second-class status allotted to Native Americans during this period, and all surmount the particular challenges they face in distinctive ways. Hilary Waukau, from the Menominee Nation, began his career as an activist for treaty rights by working against "termination" of Menominee sovereignty in the 1950s. By the 1990s, he was an international leader in global efforts to preserve indigenous rights. By contrast, Thomas Ste. Germaine served the Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe community as an attorney after a career that took him to law school after several stints in professional football.

Some particular events and themes recur. The "Walleye Wars," a series of confrontations in the 1990s that arose from the exercise of treaty rights to fish northern Wisconsin lakes, were part of Waukau's story, as well as formative in the career of Lac Courte Oreilles' James Schlender. Treaty rights activism is central to the lives and careers of five of the twelve individuals profiled. Water is another important motif, whether in the artistic work of Truman Lowe or the life and work of Frances Van Zile, who is profiled as "Keeper of the Water."

The book is written in a manner that makes it accessible to a wide audience, which it richly deserves. Scholars of environmental history, of the varied and complex histories of American Indian people, and of gender will find much of interest here. Nonscholars who have professional commitments in these areas will find these lives interesting as well, as will people interested more generally in the history of the Midwest.

That said, it should be noted that author Patty Loew does not provide much analysis or scholarly context herself for these stories. The lived experience of remarkable people takes center stage, and it is up to readers to add their own perspectives on issues such as the history of Indian boarding schools, for example. Readers without that breadth of contextual knowledge will still find much of value here, as will readers looking for regional perspectives. The histories told here of Wisconsin are replayed with variations in Iowa, Minnesota, and across the Midwest.

Perhaps the book's greatest contribution is its eloquent reminder that Indian people are still here, that despite all odds they were not all driven away by the seemingly unstoppable forces of colonization, western expansion, disease, and racism. The region's indigenous people have always been, and remain, important parts of the region's demographics, culture, and history. Their stories should be foundational to the human history of this place.

Equal Before the Law: How Iowa Led Americans to Marriage Equality, by Tom Witosky and Marc Hansen. Iowa and the Midwest Experience Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015. xiii, 236 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer John W. Johnson is professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. His books include *Affirmative Action* (2009); *Griswold v. Connecticut: Birth Control and the Constitutional Right of Privacy* (2005); and *The Struggle for Student Rights: Tinker v. Des Moines and the 1960s* (1997).

Equal Before the Law was published in June 2015, within days of the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark same-sex marriage decision, *Obergefell v. Hodges*. The timing was fortuitous. *Varnum v. Brien*, the 2009 Iowa Supreme Court decision examined in *Equal Before the Law*, was an important link in the chain of state and federal legal precedents that led to the nationalization of same-sex marriage by the nation's highest court. The story of the road to same-sex marriage in Iowa needed to be told. It is a saga populated with intriguing personalities, complicated by rapidly changing legal issues, shot through with partisan politics, and contested as a high-profile skirmish in the culture wars.

Various individuals could conceivably have written a book on the *Varnum* case. An activist in the LGBT community, for example, could have prepared an impassioned apologia for same-sex marriage. Or a litigant or lawyer in the Iowa case could have crafted a riveting day-by-day account. Or a political scientist or constitutional historian might have produced a book replete with legal ruminations and lengthy footnotes. But none of these categories of writers were first off the line. Instead, *Equal Before the Law* is the work of two accomplished Iowa journalists.

Tom Witosky and Marc Hansen, both formerly of the *Des Moines Register*, begin their treatment of same-sex marriage in Iowa in the late 1990s. Iowa was then one of the vast majority of American states with statutory bans on same-sex marriage. In addition, the country was under the sway of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which forbade states from according full faith and credit to a same-sex mar-

riage granted in any other state. In the 1990s closeted gay Iowa lawmakers were so intimidated that they sided with conservative Republicans to defend “traditional marriage” whenever the matter came before the state legislature.

After a look backward at Iowa’s generally progressive history of protecting individual rights, the authors introduce readers to the six same-sex couples who were carefully selected by Lambda Legal, a gay rights litigation group, to be the plaintiffs in a challenge to the Iowa statute restricting marriage to people of opposite sexes. Each couple has a story of how Iowa’s traditional marriage law adversely affected them. For example, Jen and Dawn BarbouRoske of Iowa City struggled to explain to teachers and school administrators that their precocious daughter has two mothers. Larry Hoch and David Twombly, retired schoolteachers living in Des Moines, alerted the Iowa populace to the particular concerns of older gay men. The authors also profile the lawyers for the plaintiffs and the county officials defending Iowa’s traditional marriage statute.

Among the most interesting sections of *Equal Before the Law* are the portions of the book containing profiles of the judges and justices called upon to adjudicate *Varnum v. Brien*. In applying the sections of the U.S. Constitution and the Iowa Constitution mandating equality before the law, the courts ultimately found in favor of the same-sex litigants. And, perhaps remarkably, the final Iowa Supreme Court decision, written by Justice Mark Cady, was unanimous. Witosky and Hansen were permitted remarkable access to the Iowa jurists, eliciting from them revealing insights into their individual thoughts and court deliberations. The authors were also successful in convincing Iowa legislators to open up about their views on same-sex marriage in the legislative process. Informed Iowans, especially those who have lived in the state for two decades or more, will recognize—and may even be acquainted with—some of the key players in the drama.

As most Iowans recall, the final ruling in *Varnum v. Brien* was far from the last word on same-sex marriage in the state. Public opinion polls at the time of the 2009 decision revealed that Iowans’ attitudes toward same-sex marriage were sharply divided. Taking advantage of the mixed public sentiment, religious conservatives in the state, led by Bob Vander Plaats, president of a group called the The FAMiLY Leader, sought to unseat members of the Supreme Court majority in *Varnum* who were up for a retention vote by the electorate in 2010. The three targeted justices, having ethical concerns that possible campaign donors might later bring cases to the Iowa Supreme Court, refused to campaign or raise money to keep their jobs. As a result, all three failed

to receive enough votes for retention. Two years later, by contrast, another justice from the *Varnum* majority did conduct a campaign in his own behalf and did receive enough votes to stay on the court.

As a book intended for a wide readership, *Equal Before the Law* is understandably light on the parsing of legal doctrine. *Varnum v. Brien* is just one of a long string of privacy and equal protection precedents in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, culminating in the federal Supreme Court's 2015 *Obergefell* decision. Witosky and Hansen do not make any serious technical legal errors in their treatment of the case, but readers desiring more probing and detailed legal analyses will need to peruse law journals.

The authors of *Equal Before the Law* write in a simple, breezy style that moves the narrative along smartly. Occasionally, however, the prose is a little too precious. Take this sentence: "Much of the time, it [Iowa] is a purple-clad political cross-dresser."

On balance, Witosky and Hansen have fashioned a worthy contribution to the ever growing list of titles on major American court cases. Iowans who care about recent state history or the civil liberties of its people should definitely not miss *Equal Before the Law*.

Announcements

THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA (SHSI) announces a grant program for the 2016/2017 academic year. SHSI will award up to ten stipends of \$1,000 each to support original research and interpretive writing related to the history of Iowa or Iowa and the Midwest. Preference will be given to applicants proposing to pursue previously neglected topics or new approaches to or interpretations of previously treated topics. SHSI invites applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including academic and public historians, graduate students, and independent researchers and writers. Applications will be judged on the basis of their potential for producing work appropriate for publication in *The Annals of Iowa*. Grant recipients will be expected to produce an annotated manuscript targeted for *The Annals of Iowa*, SHSI's scholarly journal.

Applications for the 2016/2017 awards must be postmarked by April 15, 2016. Download application guidelines from our website (www.iowahistory.org/publications/the-annals-of-iowa/research-grants-for-authors.html) or request guidelines or further information from:

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THE IOWA HISTORY CENTER at Simpson College seeks nominations for its award for the outstanding master's thesis in Iowa history for 2016. Selection will be based on contribution to the knowledge of Iowa history; originality of the subject matter or methodology; use of sources; and written expression. Nominees

must have completed their master's degree between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016.

Three copies of the thesis and a brief letter of nomination from the thesis advisor, which includes contact information for the nominee, should be submitted to Bill Friedrichs, Director, Iowa History Center, Simpson College, 701 North C Street, Indianola, IA 50125. Application deadline is June 30, 2016.

The winner will be announced in the fall of 2016 and receive a \$1,000 cash prize and an award plaque.

For further information, please contact Linda Sinclair, (515) 961-1528 or linda.sinclair@simpson.edu.

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Contributors

ROGER L. NICHOLS is emeritus professor of history at the University of Arizona. He earned his Ph.D. in American history at the University of Wisconsin. He has held four Fulbright appointments and received three NEH awards. He is completing a new edition of *Black Hawk and the Warrior's Path*. The most recent of his 11 books are *Natives and Strangers* (2015) and *American Indians in US History* (2014).

PAMELA RINEY-KEHRBERG is professor of history at Iowa State University, where she teaches and researches in the areas of rural and agricultural history, the history of children and the family, and the history of the United States from 1870 to the present. She is coordinator for the doctoral program in Rural, Agricultural, Technological and Environmental History.

DOROTHY HUBBARD SCHWIEDER was professor of history and University Professor Emeritus at Iowa State University. A leading authority on the history of Iowa, she authored, edited, or collaborated on nine books and dozens of other works. Her myriad contributions garnered numerous honors, including induction into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame and awards and recognition from the State of Iowa, the State of South Dakota, the Iowa Humanities Board, the State Historical Society of Iowa, and the Midwestern History Association, among others.

DAVID SCHWIEDER is the political science librarian and liaison to the Political Science Department for the Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He and Dorothy Schwieder coauthored the article, "The Power of Prickliness: Iowa's H. R. Gross in the U.S. House of Representatives," in the *Annals of Iowa* (2006).

OMAR VALERIO-JIMÉNEZ is associate professor of history at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is author of *River of Hope: Forging Identity and Nation in the Rio Grande Borderlands* (2013), co-editor of *Major Problems in Latina/o History* (2014), and coeditor of *The Latina/o Midwest Reader* (forthcoming, 2016). His current project is a transnational study of the U.S.-Mexican War that examines memory, identity, and civil rights.

The State Historical Society of Iowa

The Annals of Iowa is published quarterly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Historical Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs of the State of Iowa. The society operates from two centers, Des Moines and Iowa City. A museum, research library, state archives, special collections, community programming, historic preservation, and membership programs are located at 600 East Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50319, phone 515-281-5111. Publications, a research library, and special collections are located at 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240, phone 319-335-3916. The society also operates several historic sites across the state.

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