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In This Issue

JENNIFER E. MACK AND DUSTIN S. CLARKE examine how young people experienced the period of adolescence in mid- to late nineteenth-century Dubuque. By drawing richly on census records and a collection of local memoirs and biographies, they illustrate the contested process of transitioning from childhood to adulthood in the American Midwest.

EDITH M. HUNTER explores how involuntary land annexation in Ames transformed a family farm into an urban neighborhood in the mid-twentieth century. Through family histories and local newspapers, she argues that midcentury definitions of progress and governmental support for suburbanization led to the dispossession of rural landholders.

Front Cover

Portrait of Edward and Neva Morris, the owners of Fair View Farm north of Ames, in 1914. By the 1950s, the couple faced increasing threats of annexation by the Ames City Council, which eventually succeeded and led to the development of the Parkview Heights neighborhood in the 1970s. Photo courtesy of the Ames History Museum. For more on midcentury involuntary annexation, see Edith M. Hunter's article in this issue.

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Contents

- 311 Working Hard and Living Out: Adolescence in
Nineteenth-Century Dubuque
Jennifer E. Mack and Dustin S. Clarke
- 343 From Fair View Farm to Parkview Heights:
Involuntary Annexation and the Middle-American
Dream
Edith M. Hunter
- 367 Book Reviews and Notices
- 403 Index
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A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF HISTORY FOUNDED IN 1863
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Book Reviews and Notices

- 367 GREG GRANDIN, *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America*, by Rebekah M.K. Mergenthal
- 369 ANDREW WANKO, *Great River City: How the Mississippi Shaped St. Louis*, by Amahia Mallea
- 371 JASON COLAVITO, *The Mound Builder Myth: Fake History and the Hunt for a "Lost White Race,"* by Mary Wise
- 373 MARK WALCZYNSKI, *The History of Starved Rock*, by Rebecca Conard
- 375 JANE ANN MOORE AND WILLIAM F. MOORE, *Owen Lovejoy and the Coalition for Equality: Clergy, African Americans, and Women United for Abolition*, by Graham A. Peck
- 376 BRENT M.S. CAMPNEY, *Hostile Heartland: Racism, Repression, and Resistance in the Midwest*, by Ashley Howard
- 378 CHRISTOPHER P. LEHMAN, *Slavery's Reach: Southern Slaveholders in the North Star State*, by Jennifer K. Stinson
- 380 GARY CLAYTON ANDERSON, *Massacre in Minnesota: The Dakota War of 1862, the Most Violent Ethnic Conflict in American History*, by Linda Clemmons
- 382 THAVOLIA GLYMPH, *The Women's Fight: The Civil War's Battles for Home, Freedom and Nation*, by Barbara Cutter
- 384 JUDKIN BROWNING AND TIMOTHY SILVER, *An Environmental History of the Civil War*, by Theodore J. Karamanski
- 386 DAN ALLOSSO, *Peppermint Kings: A Rural American History*, by Jeff Bremer
- 388 CHAR MILLER AND CLAY S. JENKINSON, EDs., *Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist in the Arena*, by Gregory A. Wynn
- 390 PAUL HENDRICKSON, *Plagued by Fire: The Dreams and Furies of Frank Lloyd Wright*, by Daniel Naegele
- 391 ROBERT E. WEEMS, *The Merchant Prince of Black Chicago: Anthony Overton and the Building of a Financial Empire*, by Jennifer Delton
- 393 R. ALTON LEE AND STEVEN COX, *When Sunflowers Bloomed Red: Kansas and the Rise of Socialism in America*, by Greg Hall
- 395 RONALD HOWELL, *The Rural Schools of Madison County: A Vanishing Heritage*, by Franklin Yoder
- 396 ANDY OLER, *Old-Fashioned Modernism: Rural Masculinity and Midwestern Literature*, by C. Elizabeth Raymond
- 398 DENNIS M. SPRAGG, *America Ascendant: The Rise of American Exceptionalism*, by Niko Letsos
- 400 KATE C. BOWLER, *The Preacher's Wife: The Precarious Power of Evangelical Women Celebrities*, by Rebecca A. Koerselman

Working Hard and Living Out: Adolescence in Nineteenth-Century Dubuque

JENNIFER E. MACK AND DUSTIN S. CLARKE

ONE OF THE FEW and among the best-known autobiographies from nineteenth-century Dubuque is that of Josiah Konzett, a Swiss immigrant who arrived in Dubuque with his family in 1846. In 1855, fourteen-year-old Josiah left school to work at a general store in Dubuque, where the owner provided on-site lodging and served, to some extent, as a chaperone. At fifteen, Josiah became gravely ill, and his employer sent him back to his family. Upon his recovery over a month later, his parents enrolled him in the Presbyterian college. Uninterested in a career as a preacher, he dropped out after one term, and was subsequently expelled from his family's home for refusing to accede to their wishes. He returned to his former employer, who provided lodging for him at a boarding house. Konzett continued to contribute to his parents' household by furnishing them with goods from the shop. He was promoted to a clerkship at sixteen, and shortly after his twentieth birthday, enlisted in the Union Army over the objections of his employer and family. He married his sweetheart upon returning from the war, when he was twenty-four and she was twenty. They then lived with family for two years before establishing their own home.¹ Konzett's transition from childhood to adulthood was not

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a direct line but a complicated path, which at the time was typical for young men coming of age in the Midwest, far from the long-established communities on the East Coast.

To modern observers, childhood in the early days of the United States might appear contracted. Especially prior to the enactment of laws concerning compulsory school attendance and child labor, childhood may seem to have ended abruptly when boys and girls reached an age at which full-time work was both possible and expected. In western states like Iowa, where legislation did not mandate school attendance until 1902, it is easy to imagine youngsters springing straight from a brief childhood into full adulthood with all of its accompanying responsibilities and freedoms.² However, ample evidence suggests that teenagers in mid- to late nineteenth-century Iowa (1850–80) and—specific to this study—those in Dubuque, experienced an intermediary status for a period of time. While this adolescence bore little resemblance to the protracted, decade-long course of social and educational development of teens in the twenty-first century, it nevertheless provided young people with some increases in freedom and opportunities for gradual immersion in the adult world.

The opinions of the East Coast “Yankee Bourgeoisie,” specifically, the upper- and middle-class reformers of the nineteenth century, dominate the historical record regarding American childhood and adolescence in the nineteenth century. Their publications set standards, which spread to the rest of the United States by the early 1900s.³ The ideals set forth in these pamphlets and advice books did not necessarily reflect the reality of the

1. Josiah Conzett, “My Civil War, Before, During, and After,” 1900, and “My Recollections of Dubuque 1846–1890,” 1905, Captain Bowell River Library, Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium, Dubuque, Iowa.

2. Carroll Engelhardt, “Compulsory Education in Iowa, 1872–1919,” *Annals of Iowa* 49 (1987), 58–59. Though compulsory education was discussed in Iowa beginning in the 1860s, increasing urbanization made the issue a priority when the legislation finally passed in 1902.

3. Jane Eva Baxter, *The Archaeology of American Childhood and Adolescence* (Gainesville, FL, 2019), 22–24; Daniel T. Rogers, “Socializing Middle-Class Children: Institutions, Fables, and Work Values in Nineteenth-Century America,” in *Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective*, eds. N.R. Hawes and J. Hiner (Bridgeport, CT, 1985), 7.

adolescent experience or the regional variations that existed. If, as proposed by Joseph Kett, the concept of adolescence that arose in the mid- to late nineteenth century originated in part from evangelical Protestant ideals regarding spirituality and free will, it follows that children in the majority-Catholic town of Dubuque would have experienced their teenage years a little differently.⁴ Besides religious and cultural beliefs, population size and the maturity of the community also governed the spread and acceptance of new middle-class ideals.⁵ For instance, in the 1840s, while middle-class adolescents in New England used their ample free time for activities such as publishing amateur newspapers, most boys and girls in Dubuque—a community founded only a decade earlier—were occupied with the chores that accompanied pioneer life.⁶

Perhaps one of the clearest indications that life was different for children in Iowa is the fifty-year gap between the first compulsory schooling law in the United States—passed in Massachusetts in 1852—and the passage of such legislation in Iowa. Compulsory education in New England led to the creation of graded public schools, as education reformers believed the development of moral restraint and character required engineered environments. High school enrollment kept older children occupied and living at home during these “dangerous” years of weak judgment and strong impulses. By the end of the nineteenth century, longer school attendance began to afford better job prospects.⁷ However, these changes would not fully affect Iowans until the 1900s. Persistent Catholic opposition to interference in

4. Joseph F. Kett, “Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2, no. 2 (1971), 283–98; Robin M. Lillie and Jennifer E. Mack, *Bioarchaeology and History of Dubuque’s Third Street Cemetery*, 13DB476, *Dubuque County, Iowa*, OSA Research Papers Vol. 37, No. 1 (Iowa City, 2013), 63–64.

5. Baxter, *The Archaeology of American Childhood and Adolescence*, 39–55.

6. Paula Petrik, “The Youngest Fourth Estate: The Novelty Toy Printing Press and Adolescence, 1870–1886,” in *Small Worlds: Children & Adolescents in American, 1850–1950*, eds. Elliott West and Paula Petrik (Lawrence, KS, 1992), 125–27.

7. Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present* (New York, 1977), 112, 127, 152–53.

parental rights, which constituted a significant roadblock to the passage of compulsory education legislation in Iowa, provides some insight into the differences in family dynamics between towns in the Midwest and those in New England.⁸

This article examines the lives of adolescents in nineteenth-century Dubuque through official records, biographical sketches, and memoirs, and it identifies the key differences between these teens and their contemporary eastern counterparts, who enjoyed longer school attendance, but fewer job opportunities as the century progressed. Shorter, sometimes episodic school attendance, followed by (or alternating with) farm or wage work, and the primacy of parental authority characterized adolescence in Dubuque. Despite the emphasis on adolescent contributions to family economies, these teenagers still found time for entertainment and peer interaction, and gradually inched towards adult independence, the achievement of which did not always coincide with the legal age of majority.

WHILE BIOLOGICAL adolescence has been recognized for centuries as the period during which the body grows and changes rapidly, eventually attaining adult size and form, the extent to which societies have regarded these developing individuals as a distinct social group has varied widely.⁹ Mary Lewis described adolescence as the transitional stage between childhood dependency and adult independence, a definition that corresponds well with legal requirements in both colonial and nineteenth-century America.¹⁰ As early as the 1600s, sixteen-year-old males were subject to a poll tax and militia service, but the head of the household bore the responsibility for tax payments and training equipment.¹¹

8. Engelhardt, "Compulsory Education in Iowa, 1872–1919," 58–59, 64–69.

9. Mary E. Lewis, Fiona Shapland, and Rebecca Watts, "On the Threshold of Adulthood: A New Approach for the Use of Maturation Indicators to Assess Puberty in Adolescents from Medieval England," *American Journal of Human Biology* 28 (2016), 48.

10. Lewis, Shapland, and Watts, "On the Threshold of Adulthood," 48.

11. Corinne T. Field, "'If You Have the Right to Vote at 21 Years, Then I Have': Age and Equal Citizenship in the Nineteenth-Century United States" in *Age in*

Through the nineteenth century, males under the age of majority (twenty-one years old) could not legally control their own property.¹² Adolescence was often a period of training, but it was also viewed as the maturation of an investment by the family, in which the long-supported child became a significant contributor to the family economy for a period of time before separating to establish a new family.¹³

Though the word "adolescence" was rarely used in America prior to the early twentieth century, an awareness of the crucial formative period between childhood and adulthood began to emerge in the U.S. in the early 1800s. This new concept is observable in the literature of the time, as biographies began to include episodes from the early lives of subjects and publication of "advice to youths" books flourished.¹⁴ Factors which contributed to the shift in perceptions included a greater understanding of human anatomy and growth and the urbanization of the eastern United States. In a rural environment, where the family was the working unit, divisions between age groups were less critical than they were in an urban setting where the work environment was separated from the home and family.¹⁵ Joseph Kett also credited

America: The Colonial Era to the Present, eds. Corinne T. Field and Nicholas Syrett (New York, 2015), 74.

12. Nicholas L. Syrett, "Statutory Marriage Ages and the Gendered Construction of Adulthood in the Nineteenth Century" in *Age in America*, 112.

13. Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, "Helping Ma and Helping Pa: Iowa's Turn of the Century Farm Children," *Annals of Iowa* 59, No. 2 (2000), 116-17.

14. See, for example, Joel Hawes, *Lectures to Young Men, on the Formation of Character, & c.*, 5th edition (Hartford, CT, 1831). Hawes focused on the ages of fourteen to twenty-one years old, which he claimed "pre-eminently, is the forming, fixing period; the spring season of disposition and habit," 27.

15. Joseph F. Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America;" John Demos and Virginia Demos, "Adolescence in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 31, no. 4 (1969), 632-38. Many recent works have touched on adolescence in early America, including a re-examination of G. Stanley Hall's work and studies of childhood, age consciousness, juvenile penal systems, and family structure. See, for instance, Jeffrey Jensen, "Brilliance and Nonsense" *History of Psychology* 9, No. 3 (2006), 186-97; However, the research most directly focused on the emergence of adolescence as a social age class is that of Kett and Demos and Demos published in the 1960s and 1970s.

the evangelical movement and the Second Great Awakening, which strongly encouraged youthful religious conversions, with the establishment of American adolescence as a distinct social stage characterized by both freedom of choice and emotional instability.¹⁶ In their exploration of the subject, John and Virginia Demos demonstrate that the rise of modern adolescence was a response to fundamental changes in urban American families, including a new age-group discontinuity and the decline of the economic role of young people in an industrial society.¹⁷ By the mid-nineteenth century, age-graded schooling began to spread from the industrialized Northeast to the rest of the country, and the increased scheduling of life transitions at particular ages led to greater age consciousness among Americans altogether.¹⁸

Despite these gradual developments, through most of the nineteenth century in America male social identity continued to be defined by particular activities, such as school attendance, apprenticeship, and wage work rather than chronological age. For boys, therefore, adolescence did not start or end at prescribed ages. Adolescence in girls, on the other hand, was directly tied to the onset of puberty.¹⁹ Thus, the beginning of adolescence for males was recognizable by changes in their daily responsibilities and for females by changes in their physical appearance.

The end of adolescence—or beginning of adulthood—was legally defined for both males and females. The age of majority throughout the United States was fixed at twenty-one, though several states, including Iowa, reduced the age to eighteen for

16. Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America." For further discussions of the perceived emotional instability of "youths" and freedoms granted to them by religious conversion, see Charles W. Burr, "The Insanity of Pubescence," *The American Journal of Insanity* 43 (1887), 328–39; Demos and Demos, "Adolescence in Historical Perspective," 634–35; G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education, Volume II* (New York, 1904); Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 54–57, 62–85; and Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 88.

17. Demos and Demos, "Adolescence in Historical Perspective," 637–38.

18. Howard P. Chudacoff, *How Old Are You? Age Consciousness in American Culture* (Princeton, NJ, 1989).

19. Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America," 294–96.

females.²⁰ Yet as early as the 1840s, health reformers advocated against marriage before both the bride and groom reached twenty-five years old, as puberty was considered a time of physical and psychological development that must not be interrupted for fear of permanent damage.²¹ Such sentiments demonstrate differing perspectives on legal adulthood and the attainment of true adult status.

Whether in the West or East, certain activities, such as school attendance, were reserved for immature persons, and some belonged exclusively to adults, such as voting and marriage.²² High school or college enrollment and formal apprenticeships signaled adolescence, but were not universal; many Americans passed through adolescence without experiencing them. Work outside the home could be undertaken as early as childhood but was understood to signify a transition *towards* adulthood. Residence outside the family home was understood the same way.²³ Though it was common for adults, including married couples, to continue residing in their parental homes, the establishment of one's own household, regardless of marital status, conferred full adulthood.²⁴ The question, then, is whether or not youths in Dubuque reached these transitions within particular age brackets prior to the rise of age-scheduling at the end of the nineteenth century.

Relatively few extant memoirs, journals, and autobiographies address adolescent life in Dubuque in the nineteenth century; however, one of the most popular first-hand accounts of early Dubuque was that of Josiah Conzett. In 1855, at fourteen years

20. Syrett, "Statutory Marriage Ages," 112–14; *Revised Statutes of the Territory of Iowa*, 1843, 304.

21. Charles E. Rosenberg, "Sexuality, Class, and Role in 19th-century America," *American Quarterly* 25, No. 2 (1973), 131–53.

22. Joseph F. Kett, "Discovery and Invention in the History of Adolescence," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 14 (1993), 607.

23. Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America," 294–95.

24. John Modell, Theodore Hershberg, and Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., "Social Change and Transitions to Adulthood in Historical Perspective" in *Philadelphia, Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the Nineteenth Century: Essays Toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City*, ed. Theodore Hershberg (New York, 1981), 314.

old, he left school and went to work. Then, he spent the next decade bouncing between employment, seminary, and the army before he eventually settled down into married life.

At twenty-four and twenty years old, respectively, both Josiah and his bride were well above the threshold of legal adulthood when they married, which fits with the findings of historical marriage studies. A demographic study of Texas in the mid-nineteenth century found that most offspring did not marry until their mid-twenties, while in Missouri the average marriage age for women was nineteen and for men it was twenty-four.²⁵ In her exploration of the lives of pioneer women, Glenda Riley suggested that teen marriages were uncommon, as frontier families were reluctant to part with children just when they began to make adult-level contributions to the household.²⁶ She admitted, however, the need to research further the question of the typical marriage age in Iowa, an issue explored in this project.²⁷

As marriage marked one of the most decisive transitions from adolescence to adulthood in the mid-nineteenth century, determining the average age at nuptials is crucial for understanding this shift in status. Marriage licenses and returns from Dubuque County provided data on first marriage ages for men and women during Dubuque's pioneer (1833–55) and early urban (1856–80) periods.²⁸ Unfortunately, licenses only occasionally

25. Blaine T. Williams, "The Frontier Family: Demographic Fact and Historical Myth," in *Essays on the American West*, ed. Harold M. Hollingsworth (Austin, TX, 1969), 40–65; Michael J. O'Brien, *Grassland, Forest, and Historical Settlement: An Analysis of Dynamics in Northeast Missouri* (Lincoln, NE, 1984), 283.

26. Glenda Riley, *Frontierswomen: The Iowa Experience* (Ames, 1981), 84–85; Glenda Riley, *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains* (Lawrence, KS, 1988), 49; Riney-Kehrberg, "Helping Ma and Helping Pa," 116–117.

27. Riley, *Frontierswomen*, 85.

28. Dubuque genealogist Tom Schlarman transcribed records from 1835 to 1861 and generously shared them with the authors. Women forty-five years old and older and men over fifty years old were eliminated during the present research project because these records likely represent second marriages. Lillie and Mack, *Bioarchaeology and History of Dubuque's Third Street Cemetery*, 23–26.



Figure 1: Graph showing the numbers of brides and grooms of each age married in Dubuque County from 1835–70.

recorded ages from 1835 to 1851 and ceased to include age information at all after the 1850s. As a supplement, this study used federal census records to determine ages for persons married in the year leading up to the June 1 enumerations in 1860 and 1870.²⁹ Figure 1 illustrates the numbers of brides and grooms of each age.

In contrast with the findings of previous researchers, Dubuque's records reveal some particularly young brides, including five fourteen-year-olds and nine fifteen-year-olds. These youthful matches occurred during the early years of Dubuque's settlement, when the documented scarcity of women likely contributed to the necessity of abbreviated adolescence.³⁰ By the time Iowa's population increased sufficiently to achieve statehood in 1846, fourteen-year-olds disappeared from Dubuque's marriage records, and licenses for fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds decreased. By 1870, the youngest bride was seventeen. Though two nineteen-

29. Some individuals recorded in these years may have been one year older than their age at marriage because they may have had a birthday between nuptials and enumeration.

30. Benjamin F. Gue, *History of Iowa from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: Volume I* (New York, 1903) and Franklin T. Oldt, *History of Dubuque: Being a General Survey of Dubuque County History* [. . .] (Chicago, 1911).

year-old grooms appeared on the 1860 census, the remainder recorded were all twenty years old or older.

Despite the outliers seen in Figure 1—the barely pubescent brides from Dubuque’s early days and the older gentlemen perhaps taking second wives—most marriages occurred between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five for women and between twenty-one and thirty for men. These records demonstrate that though some men married before the age of majority (twenty-one) those under twenty were not regarded as adults capable of the responsibilities of wedlock. Though mid-teen brides were not unheard of, records indicate that most families agreed with the conventional thinking that eighteen was the youngest appropriate age for women to be married. Generally speaking, the end of adolescence (and beginning of adulthood) did not occur for men and women before the ages of twenty and eighteen, respectively, with some exceptions.

Additional information from the 1860 federal census of the city of Dubuque—including school attendance, occupation, and residential situation—helps to illuminate how young individuals were regarded by the families who reported them.³¹ This enumeration year both postdates the mid-nineteenth century development of youth culture in New England and predates the Civil War, which altered the population composition of Iowa. A page-by-page review of census returns identified 1,066 girls and 789 boys between the ages of twelve and nineteen, composing a total of 1,855 out of the city’s 12,998 residents.³²

As school enrollment, whether in childhood or teenage years, was strongly associated with dependent status, age-related attendance and non-attendance patterns can illustrate the beginnings of

31. The current study collected the same data as Modell, Hershberg, and Furst-enberg, “Social Change and Transitions to Adulthood.”

32. The disparity in the size of the female and male adolescent populations in the city’s census records was likely due to young men being sent away for apprenticeship, work, or school, thus leaving the Dubuque census with a deceptively low number of male teenagers. The 1860 census totals for Iowa report nearly equal numbers of males and females aged ten to twenty years old, indicating no net loss at the state level from the movement of teenage boys. See Joseph C. G. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860, Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington, DC, 1864), 134.

transitions toward adulthood. Of the 1,855 adolescents listed in the Dubuque census, 594 reportedly attended school during that year. Twelve-year-olds attended school in the highest proportions, with around 55 percent of females and 76 percent of males enrolled. The trend of substantially lower attendance rates for females continued into the older teens, with a dramatic drop for girls after the age of fourteen and a more gradual decline among boys. Only 3 percent of females between the ages of seventeen and nineteen continued their education, and attendance by males in this range, presumably enrolled in high school or one of Dubuque's small colleges, declined steadily from 17 percent to 6 percent.³³ School provided a venue where teenagers could explore interaction with the opposite sex, but such opportunities evidently declined with increasing age.³⁴ The numbers suggest that girls in Dubuque left childhood and began preparations for adult life earlier than boys did. Census records from the city show little evidence of overlapping activities, as just seven boys and no girls were recorded with both an occupation and school attendance in the same year.

The pattern of attendance in rural Dubuque County starkly contrasted that of the city. Out of the 1,481 teenage girls and 1,508 teenage boys recorded in the rural township pages of the 1860 census, 1,551 young people had attended school within the last year. At the ages of twelve and thirteen, enrollment reached around 75 percent for both sexes. Attendance gradually declined, but no real disparity between males and females appeared until the age of eighteen, when 33 percent of boys and only 20 percent of girls went to school. Lower attendance rates within the city

33. By 1860, several small institutions for advanced education existed in the city. The first "college" in Dubuque was Mount St. Bernard seminary founded by Bishop Mathias Loras in 1850; it closed five years later, re-appearing in various iterations until taking its current name, Loras College, in 1939. See Peter B. Hoffman, *A Concise History of Dubuque and Dubuque County, Iowa 1833-1934* (Dubuque, 1936), 68. The Dubuque Female College was founded by 1854, and the Dubuque Commercial College opened in 1858. By 1867, there were six colleges and academies in Dubuque. See Franklin T. Oldt, *History of Dubuque*, 105, 125, 161.

34. Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, *Childhood on the Farm: Work, Play, and Coming of Age in the Midwest* (Lawrence, KS, 2005), 83-84.

might relate to the inability of the poor to forgo the income provided by their older children's labor. Reformers believed the lack of education among urban children and the foreign-born encouraged lawlessness in youths, and cited this as a paramount issue in the push for compulsory school in Iowa later in the century.³⁵ However, higher rural numbers were due, in part, to the pattern of attendance in farming communities and the formulation of the census question, which asked only *if*—not how much—a child attended school in a given year. Since farming families commonly sent older children (particularly boys) to school only in the winter months, when farm work slackened, education could continue into the late teens without affecting the ability of offspring to contribute to the family economy.

The importance of child labor to family farms is clear from Iowa's first compulsory education law, which passed in 1902 only because required attendance was restricted to twelve weeks.³⁶ Rural Dubuque County census records offer evidence of seasonally alternating activities, with 269 adolescents listed with both an occupation and recent school attendance. Because attendance was limited in any given year, the older teens listed as students may have been still finishing basic education rather than attending secondary school.³⁷

By the time of the 1860 census, the majority of Dubuque's youths had access to schools. In 1856, the city's newly appointed Board of Education created a free school system, and by 1858 it had built and furnished three schools to add to the many private and parochial primary schools.³⁸ In the earliest days of Dubuque's settlement, though, many children lacked such opportunities. The memoir of Rufus Rittenhouse, who spent his adolescent years (1838–45) in the countryside just outside the city, states that he ended his education at the age of ten, when his family moved

35. Engelhardt, "Compulsory Education in Iowa, 1872–1919," 62.

36. Engelhardt, "Compulsory Education in Iowa, 1872–1919," 69–70.

37. See Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 18–19, and Riney-Kehrberg, *Childhood on the Farm*, 72–73.

38. Hoffman, *A Concise History of Dubuque*, 58.

to Iowa from New Jersey.³⁹ Wealthy families in the newly settled frontier, however, solved the predicament with boarding schools. In the 1830s, both Clarissa Gear and her older sister were sent away from Galena, Illinois (just over fifteen miles downriver from Dubuque) in their teen years to receive education back East because “schools in those days in the West were crude.”⁴⁰ By 1850, however, the schools available in the city of Dubuque were apparently acceptable to the average family. For instance, Josiah Conzett attended two different private German-language schools from 1850 to 1855, before first leaving education at the age of fourteen.⁴¹

Conzett’s experience appears to have been typical for the time period. The biographical sketches in Franklin T. Oldt’s history of Dubuque County include seventy-seven narratives which provide some details of the adolescent years of Dubuque residents between 1850 and 1880. Of these, the largest number left school at the age of thirteen or fourteen, though attendance up to the age of fifteen or sixteen was not uncommon. Few remained students at seventeen or older. While Oldt’s biographies focus exclusively on well-known businessmen and respected farmers, the variety of their backgrounds—both native and foreign-born; poor, middle class, and wealthy—offers a fairly balanced sample of male adolescent experiences.⁴² The details of these biographies, combined with memoirs and census records, paint a picture of staggered advancement toward adulthood. This advancement began around the age of thirteen or fourteen with a sharp drop-off in school attendance for females and more gradual decline for males, though few members of both sexes persisted in education (dependence) through the age of nineteen.

Like leaving school, the undertaking of employment signaled movement towards adulthood. Most of the biographical

39. Rufus Rittenhouse, *Boyhood Life in Iowa Forty Years Ago, as Found in the Memoirs of Rufus Rittenhouse* (Dubuque, 1880).

40. Clarissa Emely Gear Hobbs, *The Galena Frontier: “Vivid in My Mind”* (Galena, IL, 1974). Galena, Illinois, founded in the decade before Dubuque, shares a similar history, as both towns attracted settlers through the lure of lead mines. Oldt, *History of Dubuque*, 46, *passim*.

41. Conzett, “My Civil War;” Conzett, “My Recollections of Dubuque.”

42. Oldt, *History of Dubuque*, 497–870.

sketches in Oldt's history show young men commencing work—whether on the family farm or out in the world—immediately after leaving school, but the reality is more complicated. Adolescent work often occurred along a spectrum, being part-time or full-time, and rotated with school attendance (especially in rural communities). Furthermore, this work might take the form of an apprenticeship, which was not always acknowledged as a formal occupation. Additionally, census instructions required the reporting of professions only for individuals over fifteen; though fortunately, the jobs of many younger persons were also listed. Thus, the average age at which full-time work began cannot be established with census data.⁴³ Essentially, the perception of the head of household determined whether or not adolescent offspring were reported with an occupation. A father whose fifteen-year-old son was an errand boy at the family grocery might not judge that contribution significant enough to be labeled an occupation, while a family that depended on the meager income provided by a thirteen-year-old daughter's work as a domestic servant would likely report her job. Therefore, while census records may not present an entirely accurate accounting of all children and adolescents involved in paid employment, they provide information about how adolescent workers were viewed within their own families.

The number of teens reported with occupations rose steadily with age (see Table 1). However, employed girls significantly outnumbered employed boys until the age of fifteen, indicating a perception that thirteen- and fourteen-year-old females were closer to adulthood than males of the same age. After reaching sixteen years old, the male employment rate exceeded that of females, and at nineteen, 83 percent of men had occupations, while only 37 percent of women did. Nearly all employed girls under

43. Focused studies of family economic strategies show that a wide range of variables (including birth order, survival of parents, presence of non-nuclear adult relatives in household, literacy of the mother, etc.) determined how likely a child was to participate in labor outside the home. See Claudia Goldin, "Family Strategies and the Family Economy in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Role of Secondary Workers," in *Philadelphia*, ed. Theodore Hershberg (New York, 1981), 277–310.

Age	% of Females with Occupation	% of Males with Occupation
12	1.6	0.8
13	10.0	1.1
14	9.7	2.1
15	15.0	13.0
16	26.8	43.2
17	33.8	62.2
18	35.3	77.6
19	36.8	83.3

Table 1. Percentages of teenagers, divided by age and sex, listed as having an occupation in the 1860 census of the city of Dubuque. Female figures include wives in charge of their own households, in addition to outside professions.

the age of seventeen worked as servants.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, a significant portion of teenage boys and girls overall, 26 percent and 53 percent, respectively, were reported as neither working nor attending school, numbers which may reflect family perceptions rather than actual activities.

Despite the lack of recognition in census records, there is ample evidence that thirteen- and fourteen-year-old boys were engaged in work. Formal apprenticeships declined in the second half of the nineteenth century in America, but similar vocational training arrangements were still common.⁴⁵ Just two of the 404 Dubuque boys aged thirteen to fifteen appeared in the 1860 census as apprentices, but Oldt's biographies include numerous examples. Christian Voelker became a chairmaker's apprentice at thirteen. Fourteen-year-old Jacob Haudenschild trained as a carpenter in the warm months and as a butcher in the winter. From

44. The European tradition of poor families sending female children out to work as domestics, sometimes at a very young age, continued in North America, particularly among immigrant groups. Marilyn Barber, "Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada," *Canada's Ethnic Groups, Booklet No. 16* (Ottawa, ON, 1991), 3–5.

45. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 145–46.

the age of fifteen, Charles Dell trained with a machinist and Herbert Kretschmer learned plumbing.⁴⁶ The scant occupation listings for males of this age show how they were regarded, as boys in training rather than employed youths. Yet in the 1870s, when Dubuque enacted a short-lived curfew law forbidding children to be out in the street after nine o'clock, it exempted those thirteen years old or older, presumably because working teens were understood to have legitimate business in town at night.⁴⁷

Among lower-income families, younger teenage boys were often sent out to work odd jobs without educational aspects.⁴⁸ Until he found work as a full-time errand boy at fourteen, Josiah Conzett, whose father was incapacitated by malaria, earned money for his family by gleaning lead from the backdirt of the mines and rounding up stray pigs.⁴⁹ Rufus Rittenhouse's stepfather began paying his debts to neighbors with his stepson's labor when the boy was around thirteen.⁵⁰ These experiences contrast with those of Peter Hoffman, the son of a middle-class tradesman.⁵¹ Hoffman left school at the age of thirteen and was hired as a bellboy through the connections of a family friend. Finding the work unpleasant, he quit by sneaking out at the end of his first day; the 1870 census shows him as a fifteen-year-old with no occupation.⁵²

Though fifteen years old was the threshold specified for the occupation column of the census, the largest gain in employment for males occurred at sixteen years old. At this age, a greater diversity appears in professions and duties. Though "clerk" was the most common occupation, followed by "day laborer," the list also included shoemakers, blacksmiths, printers, and a sexton, to

46. Oldt, *History of Dubuque*, 576, 638, 825–26, 836.

47. Hoffman, *A Concise History of Dubuque*, 27.

48. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 17–18.

49. Conzett, "My Civil War."

50. Rittenhouse, *Boyhood Life in Iowa Forty Years Ago*, 8–12.

51. Peter Hoffman's father Mathias appeared in the 1860 federal census as a cooper, and on the 1870 federal census records, he was listed as a "car maker" with an estate valued at \$1,400.

52. Hoffman, *A Concise History of Dubuque*, 28–29.

name just a few. Most males aged seventeen to nineteen had jobs, with some young men working as stage drivers and teamsters. The variety of opportunities and responsibilities did not confer full adulthood, however. Even at this age—and up to the age of twenty-one—the money generated by labor outside the home customarily went to the father rather than to the worker him or herself.⁵³ Similarly aged women who were not employed as servants occupied themselves with two types of paid work, either apparel-making (seamstresses, milliners, etc.) or teaching. Twenty-two teenage girls were recorded as wives in charge of their own households, but the majority of those women were nineteen years old.

The onset of the Civil War brought a new employment option for Dubuque's young men. Initially, boys under twenty-one were required to have parental approval to enlist, but written proof was no longer required after September 1862. As a result, several Dubuque residents aged sixteen or younger joined the Union Army, including Frank Mitton, who enlisted at fifteen, likely due to his family's failing fortunes.⁵⁴ Though young soldiers did not necessarily come from poor families, their absence from home during the war often exacerbated their family's economic woes. Russell Johnson's study comparing 1860 and 1870 census records found that households that included at least one returning veteran son fared more poorly than those with non-veteran sons in residence, demonstrating the importance of adolescent labor contributions. The loss of this contribution for a period of months or years during the war, and in some cases the long-term loss of the contributor due to disability or death, had a detrimental effect which lingered long after the end of the conflict.⁵⁵ Whether working on the family farm, helping with housework, doing odd jobs, training as an apprentice, or beginning formal employment, evidence from primary and secondary sources suggests that most boys and girls were engaged in some kind of labor from an early age. That adolescent girls were listed with

53. Riney-Kehrberg, "Helping Ma and Helping Pa," 121.

54. Russell Johnson, *Warriors into Workers: The Civil War and the Formation of the Urban-Industrial Society in a Northern City* (New York, 2003), 115–20.

55. Johnson, *Warriors into Workers*, 302–03.

formal occupations at a younger age than boys demonstrates that, on average, they began the transition towards adulthood about two years earlier than boys.

In nineteenth-century literature, the act of leaving home was highly sentimentalized as a permanent break, but in reality, young men and women sporadically moved away and returned to their parents' households, often a number of times before living on their own.⁵⁶ Whether or not an adolescent remained living in the family home, and for how long, was tied more to the socioeconomic status of the family than the individual's age. Johnson's study of family structures in Dubuque found that households with the highest ratios of sons twelve years old and older still living at home were farm families and households whose head had no occupation.⁵⁷ This was likely because both types of households depended on offspring labor. Businessmen's families kept their sons at home for a shorter period of time, primarily for school and training opportunities. Households headed by unskilled laborers kept sons living at home at a similar rate as the businessmen, so the young men could contribute wages to the family. Families headed by artisans were the least likely to have sons at home, perhaps because they were sent out to apprenticeships, or—as Johnson suggested—because their families were neither dependent on their labor nor interested in supporting them.⁵⁸

Young men being sent away for school or work led to the previously noted disparity between the numbers of male and female teenagers reported in the 1860 census of Dubuque. This representation became increasingly lopsided with adolescent age, with 25 percent fewer thirteen- to fourteen-year-old boys than girls enumerated and 40 percent fewer eighteen- and nineteen-year-old males. Though their absence from the Dubuque census pages prevents their inclusion in generalizations about the lives of average teens, these boys are not invisible in the historical record. Oldt's biographical sketches include a number of young men who left the county or state for occupational and educational

56. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 17.

57. This study included all sons, not just those in their teens.

58. Johnson, *Warriors into Workers*, 52–56.

opportunities.⁵⁹ John Joseph Blake, son of wealthy brickmaker and prominent Catholic John Blake, went away to college in St. Louis in 1870 at the age of nineteen, though he returned in a cast-iron casket just a few weeks later, felled by an unspecified illness.⁶⁰

Even when the population figures are adjusted for the number of boys who likely left town in adolescence (based on the assumption of equal male and female populations), over 60 percent of males aged twelve to nineteen lived in the parental home. In the rural parts of Dubuque County, 85 percent of adolescents, both male and female, still lived at home. While teenagers on the East Coast were fleeing farms and small villages for the city, those in rural Iowa were apparently staying put.⁶¹

Almost 65 percent of teenage females in the city of Dubuque still lived with their parents. The largest portion of girls living away from home worked as servants, while a few were listed with other occupations or were wives in charge of their own households. Girls listed as attending school likely came from rural areas and boarded in town for better access to education. However, the remaining 133 young women living away from their parents are unexplained. Some may have been domestics who were not listed as such; Marilyn Barber noted that American servants sometimes rejected the title, insisting on being called simply “girls” or “help.”⁶² Additionally, older offspring who had grown too expensive to keep at home (often supplanted by younger siblings) were sometimes sent to live with neighbors or relatives as unofficial helping hands.⁶³ Other young women may have lived in households where they received training of a vocational or artistic nature, such as dressmaking or music instruction. In some cases, they may have left home for personal reasons. For instance, Konzett’s memoirs mention that his sweetheart, Nellie, was

59. Oldt, *History of Dubuque*, 497–870.

60. Robin M. Lillie and Jennifer E. Mack, *Dubuque’s Forgotten Cemetery: Excavating a Nineteenth-century Burial Ground in a Twenty-first-century City* (Iowa City, 2015), 127–41.

61. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 86–107.

62. Barber, “Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada,” 4.

63. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 17–18.

“living out” because her stepmother was “harsh and cruel.”⁶⁴ Regardless of the reasons for leaving, Kett noted that as early as the 1820s girls departed the family home at younger ages than boys.⁶⁵

Though many youths left school, began to work, and moved away from home as teenagers, the large number of boys and girls who still lived with their parents and were listed in 1860 with no occupation—over 50 percent—demonstrates that adolescence involved a gradual transition, with ever-increasing responsibilities and hard-won gains in independence. Males became legally culpable at the age of fourteen. They were tried as adults for serious crimes and, in Illinois, could be “bounded out” as involuntary apprentices if found to be vagrant.⁶⁶ Reminiscent of colonial militia requirements, the bylaws of the Dubuque Emigrating Company to California, written in 1852, specified that all males over the age of sixteen must take turns standing guard.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, these individuals were not treated as full adults. Rufus Rittenhouse’s life of adolescent drudgery, laboring for his stepfather and neighbors without pay, began in 1838 at the age of thirteen. Though he attempted to earn money on the side by cutting hay and growing onion seed over the next few years, payment for his entrepreneurial ventures was given directly to his mother or, in one case, simply seized by his stepfather. His parents finally permitted him to leave the family home to work as a mason’s assistant at seventeen. Apprenticeship brought greater freedom, but not true independence. The mason did not pay him (except in room and board), but he did allow Rittenhouse to earn money for himself by cutting wood in his spare time. Fearing he would be put to work again by his stepfather, he visited home infrequently for the next two years. He completed

64. Conzett, “My Civil War.”

65. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 95–96, 247.

66. Joan Gittens, *Poor Relations: The Children of the State of Illinois 1818–1990* (Chicago, 1994), 91–92; Shane Landrum, “From Bibles to Birth Certificates: Young People, Proof of Age, and American Political Cultures, 1820–1915,” in *Age in America*, 127; and James D. Schmidt, “‘Rendered More Useful’: Child Labor and Age Consciousness in the Long Nineteenth Century,” in *Age in America*, 155–56.

67. Lucy Rutledge Cooke, *Covered Wagon Days: Crossing the Plains in 1852* (Quincy, CA, 1980), 18.

his training and began his career as a contractor at the age of twenty.⁶⁸ His narrative demonstrates that while adult responsibilities were sometimes heaped upon young teenagers, the right of self-determination was more elusive. Prior to reaching the age of majority, only by placing physical distance between himself and his family did Rittenhouse break free from their authority. Leaving home did not always provide such a break; Conzett, in contrast, continued to provide support for his family (in the form of dry goods) after his permanent departure from his parents' home.

Census records provide a glimpse not only of the lives of adolescents but also of their deaths, indicating again that adolescents constituted a group distinct from children and adults, with causes of death specific to their physiology and behaviors. The U.S. compiled mortality schedules along with general population information during the four enumerations from 1850 to 1880, recording both age at death and cause of death. However, the number of teenagers reported for these four years is low—just twenty-six—and Dubuque County did not keep official death records prior to 1880. However, burial reports compiled by the city cemetery sexton provide details for 123 adolescents who were buried in Dubuque between 1855 and 1875.⁶⁹ Combined, these sources illustrate the primary factors affecting the health of Dubuque's teenagers, listing over thirty different causes of death. The most frequent causes were tuberculosis (forty-nine cases), accidental drowning (seventeen cases), typhoid fever (seventeen cases), meningitis (twelve cases), and other accidents (nine cases), together accounting for two-thirds of the listed adolescent deaths.

Tuberculosis (TB) was a leading cause of death worldwide at the end of the nineteenth century.⁷⁰ The disease could be fatal at any age, but almost one-third of adolescent deaths in the city cemetery records were attributed to this cause, a higher proportion

68. Rittenhouse, *Boyhood Life in Iowa Forty Years Ago*.

69. Phoenix Project, *City Cemetery, Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa: Burials and Lot Sales 1855–1875*, Know Your Ancestors Series (Dubuque, 2002).

70. Charlotte Roberts and Jane E. Buikstra, *The Bioarchaeology of Tuberculosis: A Global View on a Reemerging Disease* (Gainesville, FL, 2003), 216–18.

than that found in any other age group. Though over 20 percent of adults in the city cemetery also succumbed to TB, the higher rate for adolescents may reflect greater susceptibility and the tendency for secondary TB to emerge in adolescence due to changes in the immune system.⁷¹ A sudden increase in exposure as a result of the variety of social interactions occurring once teenagers began full-time work may also be responsible for the higher death rate among Dubuque's youths. In a parallel with Conzett's life, Rittenhouse was also "sent home to die of consumption" at nineteen.⁷² Eighteen-year-old Clarissa Gear nearly died of cholera instead after returning to Galena from school in Tennessee. At twenty-one, she married the doctor who treated her.⁷³

Around 19 percent of adolescents buried in the city cemetery died in accidents, while fewer than 10 percent of the younger children and adults had accidental causes of death. Only one of the twenty-six adolescents killed in accidents was female, and given the sex bias in occupational status from the age of sixteen years onward, one might conclude that entry into the workforce, particularly in low-level and potentially hazardous positions, posed a significant risk for such deaths. However, if the majority of accidental deaths were work-related, the number of teenagers dying would rise with each year of age, as the employed portion of the adolescent population increased. No such pattern exists among entries for the city cemetery. Furthermore, none of the fatal adolescent accident listings specifies work-related circumstances, and supplementary details found in newspaper articles provide no occupational connections. For instance, eighteen-year-old B. Pragatz accidentally shot himself in the face while duck hunting, and Theodore Bilasch, thirteen, was run over by a train when he rolled onto the tracks while wrestling with another boy.⁷⁴

71. Mary Lewis, *Paleopathology of Children: Identification of Pathological Conditions in the Human Skeletal Remains of Non-Adults* (London, 2018), 155.

72. Rittenhouse, *Boyhood Life in Iowa Forty Years Ago*.

73. Hobbs, *The Galena Frontier*. Clarissa's age at marriage was extrapolated from her entry in the 1850 federal census, Schedule 1, City of Galena, 25.

74. "Severe Accident," *Dubuque Daily Herald*, 10/2/1866; "Shocking Death," *Dubuque Daily Herald*, 6/15/1871.

Drownings constituted the majority of the accidental adolescent deaths, a finding which is not surprising given the proximity of Dubuque to the Mississippi River. Adolescent males in this era regarded swimming as an essential part of their social lives and recreation, with horseplay considered an acceptable expression of rebellion.⁷⁵ A study of nineteenth-century Philadelphia found drownings were generally related to leisure, with men between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five making up most of the cases.⁷⁶ While the economy of Dubuque provided a variety of potentially dangerous jobs on the water, the fact that all seventeen deaths took place between late May and early September suggests recreational circumstances. Newspaper accounts detailing some of the drownings in the city cemetery records include the stories of two brothers and a friend who drowned while swimming and another teenage boy who died while boating home from a picnic.⁷⁷ Peter Hoffman wrote in his memoir about swimming in the slough, the Mississippi River, and even in the aisles of a Dubuque lumberyard during a flood, and commented on the many drownings—and narrow escapes—that occurred.⁷⁸ An article describing the sinking of a rowboat stolen by a fourteen-year-old and two younger friends opens, “The first, for this season, of the annual drowning horrors that visit Dubuque occurred last night,” and ends, “The lesson is sad, but one that is never heeded.”⁷⁹ Clearly, these adolescent drownings were considered preventable deaths caused, in part, by the reckless behavior of the victims.

Though official records demonstrate, to some extent, what teenagers were doing and how they were regarded in the community, they give little sense of the lived experience of adolescence. Few autobiographies (and no available diaries) address

75. Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, *The Nature of Childhood: An Environmental History of Growing Up in America Since 1865* (Lawrence, KS, 2014), 68–69.

76. Roger Lane, *Violent Death in the City: Suicide, Accident, and Murder in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia*. (Cambridge, MA, 1979), 48–49.

77. “More Drowning,” *Dubuque Daily Herald*, 5/21/1872; “The Recent Drowning Cases,” *Dubuque Daily Herald*, 7/7/1870.

78. Hoffman, *A Concise History of Dubuque*.

79. “Death by Drowning,” *Dubuque Daily Herald*, 5/19/1872.

the authors' teenage years in nineteenth-century Dubuque, but the vignettes found in these sources illustrate some aspects of daily life and peer interactions for those coming of age in the town and surrounding countryside. Clarissa Gear, who grew up in Galena, Illinois, spent most of her adolescence at school in Tennessee. In 1846, at the age of seventeen, she returned to her hometown, and her stories from this period reflect the duality of her status, not only in the eyes of others, but in her own perceptions. At her first adult party, she felt insulted when an older gentleman teased her about playing with dolls, as she considered herself quite grown up. Yet the next paragraph of her memoir includes the story of riding her pony up a nearly vertical slope on a dare. She fondly remembered horseback riding, dancing, and boating with others in her youthful social circle. Teenage life had not been quite as carefree for her older sister, Maria, who was around sixteen when their mother died in 1835. Maria filled the maternal role for nearly two years, providing care for the youngest child of the family until leaving for high school in Philadelphia.⁸⁰

Rittenhouse recalled little leisure in his teenage years, aside from "pleasant gatherings" for biweekly religious sermons. He felt that his fine appearance in his dead father's brass-buttoned coat set him above his peers at these meetings, and that mothers considered him "a favorite suitor who might sometime marry one of their girls." Around the age of fourteen, he "converted" at a tent revival, an event which provided one of his few opportunities to mingle with residents of other settlements. After beginning his apprenticeship, he finally obtained a rifle, and took enormous pride in his shooting ability. Yet his dependent status was clear from the fact that when he recklessly test-fired the rifle towards houses in town, the neighbors complained to his master, rather than confronting the young man himself.⁸¹

Like Rittenhouse, Conzett entered the workforce at a young age. Living in the city afforded more opportunities for recreation though, and Conzett recalled attending a circus, performing acrobatic feats, swimming, skating, playing pranks on his friends

80. Hobbs, *The Galena Frontier*.

81. Rittenhouse, *Boyhood Life in Iowa Forty Years Ago*.

(sometimes involving rifles), and donning a fashionable pair of pants to witness a public hanging.⁸² The only Catholic who recorded substantial recollections of his teenage years was Hoffman, who received First Holy Communion at the age of twelve and left Catholic school at thirteen in 1868. Apparently, his only youthful employment was his one-day stint as a bellboy. Instead he wrote about watching stage plays, minstrels, and concerts, as well as swimming and ice skating at the harbor rink, though he mentioned that bolder youths preferred to skate on the river.⁸³

The narratives in these memoirs correspond with the patterns gleaned from the census and other official records. Children from less prosperous families, like Rittenhouse and Conzett, entered the workforce at a younger age and enjoyed fewer amusements than wealthier teens like Gear and Hoffman. Previous studies have asserted that the transformation of adolescence into a period of semi-independence in America arose from the evangelical Protestant belief that religious conversion must be made through free will.⁸⁴ Revivals such as the one where Rittenhouse converted were not restricted to the hinterlands in Dubuque County; even in the majority-Catholic city, evangelical revivals were periodically organized.⁸⁵ However, in Dubuque, the circumstance of religious conversion does not appear to have conferred any additional freedom of choice on teens (certainly not for Rittenhouse). Despite the heavy burden of responsibility sometimes placed on these young people, the right to make independent decisions was generally withheld until the age of twenty.

Disease susceptibility is another aspect of adolescent life illustrated in these biographies. Three of the four autobiographical subjects discussed here were suddenly laid low by life-threatening disease in their teens, demonstrating the continued vulnerability, despite having survived the high-risk periods of infancy and early childhood. The brief life of John Joseph Blake, reconstructed through church records and newspaper articles, also followed

82. Conzett, "My Civil War."

83. Hoffman, *A Concise History of Dubuque*.

84. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 62–85.

85. John C. Holbrook, *Recollections of a Nonagenarian* (Boston, 1897), 86–90.

these patterns. This youngest teenage son of a prominent Catholic family was sent away to college in 1870, though his older brother William, upon reaching adolescence twenty-five years earlier, went to work in the family business. The differential treatment of the boys illustrates the trend towards extended adolescence in the late nineteenth century, as well as the prolonging of dependence in upper-class families, since the Blakes had accumulated more wealth by 1870 than they had in the 1840s when William was a teen. Like the adolescents from the memoirs, John Joseph also suffered a life-threatening illness, one from which he did not recover.⁸⁶

New concepts concerning youth and maturation which arose in the middle classes by the 1880s and 1890s eventually spread to the rest of American society, providing the basis for the modern social definition of adolescence.⁸⁷ Additional data gathered from the 1880 federal census demonstrates how these late nineteenth-century trends affected family dynamics in more westerly towns like Dubuque. In 1880, 2,009 females and 1,668 males aged thirteen to nineteen lived in Dubuque (the city's total population was 22,254).⁸⁸ Just as in 1860, the larger number of females enumerated suggests that Dubuque-born males migrated away from town in adolescence, though the proportion of those who left was lower in 1880, a projected 17 percent as opposed to 26 percent in 1860.⁸⁹

The year 1880 saw a more equitable division of school attendance between males and females in the city of Dubuque (see Figure 2). In fact, sixteen- and eighteen-year-old female students outnumbered their male peers, whose attendance rates from the age of fifteen onward were virtually identical to the 1860 numbers and still well below rural attendance figures, for previously discussed reasons.

86. Lillie and Mack, *Dubuque's Forgotten Cemetery*, 127–41.

87. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 215.

88. Twelve-year-olds were not included in the 1880 count, as 1860 census data demonstrated the minimum age of social adolescence was thirteen. The total population figure was taken from John A.T. Hull, *Census for Iowa for 1880* (Des Moines, 1883), 474.

89. These figures assume that 50 percent of the children born and/or raised in Dubuque were male.

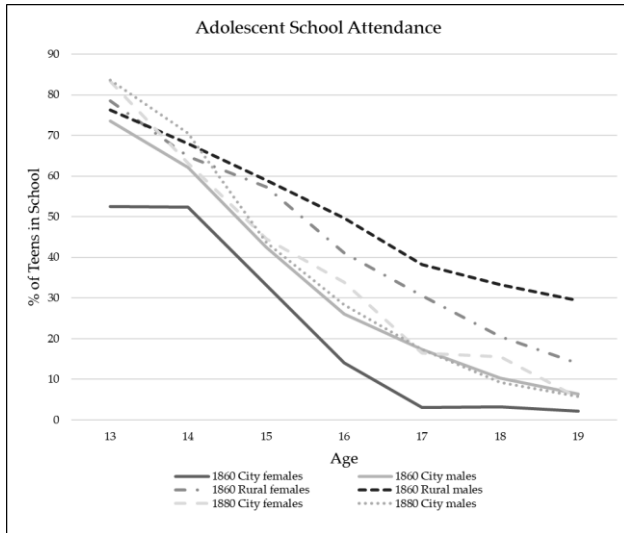


Figure 2. Graph showing the percentage of adolescents, separated by age and sex, attending school according to census enumerations of the city of Dubuque in 1860 and 1880 and of the rural townships of Dubuque County in 1860.

The census records also reveal overall higher rates of employment among adolescents in 1880, as well as a shift in the earliest employment age. As seen in Table 2, the portion of girls entering servitude at the age of thirteen dropped by half, with a larger percentage of girls working at fourteen. Meanwhile, male employment appears to have started at an earlier age on average in 1880, with a significant jump in the number of boys having jobs at fourteen. As discussed, these higher numbers may reflect greater recognition of employment, rather than an increase in the number of boys actually involved in work.

Though the number of formal apprentices reported in the census records remained low—just 3 percent of Dubuque's teenage boys—it represents a significant increase over the 0.5 percent reported in 1860. This growing body of apprentices—and employed youths in general—represents a trend that was moving in the opposite direction from labor patterns in the eastern United States, where the introduction of machines eliminated the need for true apprenticeships. While the demand for cheap youth labor,

Age	% of Females with Occupation		% of Males with Occupation	
	1860	1880	1860	1880
13	10.0	5.0	1.1	7.9
14	9.7	13.8	2.1	19.0
15	15.0	20.3	13.0	36.0
16	26.8	29.6	43.2	54.7
17	33.8	44.0	62.2	68.6
18	35.3	44.2	77.6	82.4
19	36.8	58.1	83.3	86.1

Table 2. Percentages of teenagers, divided by age and sex, listed as having an occupation in the 1860 and 1880 census enumerations of the city of Dubuque. Female figures include wives in charge of their own households, in addition to outside professions.

without any educative component, initially rose with mechanized factory production, union regulations and the availability of inexpensive adult immigrant labor gradually reduced the number of adolescents in the workforce in states like New York.⁹⁰

By the 1880s, the sense that early employment left young men stuck in dead-end factory jobs led families who could afford the luxury to keep their sons in school until the age of sixteen or eighteen.⁹¹ Evidently this trend had not yet reached towns like Dubuque, where craftsmen still provided a substantial share of local employment, and ninety of the adolescent boys were listed in census records as performing work in factories. This enumeration also saw an increase in female work listings, with more than half of nineteen-year-old girls reported as employed or managing their own households. In addition to the traditional professions of domestic service, education, and apparel-making, young women were listed as clerks, hotel staff, and factory workers, as well as one artist and a printing compositor.

In 1880, adolescent females were more likely to continue living at home, with only 21 percent living away from their parents, as opposed to 35 percent in 1860. The vast majority of those who

90. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 144–52.

91. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 144–52.



Iowa City High School class picture, 1886. Photo courtesy State Historical Society of Iowa.

had left home in 1880 were working or running their own households. Over 60 percent of adolescent females lived at home and had no occupation, and of those, just over half attended school. Around 40 percent of males lived with their parents and did not work, but 73 percent of those boys were enrolled in school. These numbers suggest that despite high teen employment rates the East Coast trend towards an extended adolescence—with longer periods of school attendance and family residence—had started to affect Dubuque.

THOUGH SOCIETAL ATTITUDES were gradually changing across the country by 1880, for most of the nineteenth century adolescence was an ill-defined period of transition, rather than a distinct developmental stage. The timing of its onset was influenced by a number of factors including the nature and location of the community (urban vs. rural, East Coast vs. the Midwest and the western frontier), the socioeconomic status of the family, and the sex of the individual. The marriages of fourteen-year-old girls in the pioneer days of Dubuque indicate a brief adolescence that was extended as the community grew and urbanized. The practice of impoverished families sending their thirteen- and fourteen-year-old girls away as servants forced on them adult-like responsibilities not experienced by the sons and daughters

of middle-class and wealthy families at that age.⁹² However, among all classes, females started their transition towards adulthood at a younger age than males, likely coinciding with the onset of menarche, which occurred as early as thirteen or fourteen years old.⁹³ Meanwhile, males reached their transitional stage at around fifteen years old, by which age most boys had finished school and started working. By the late nineteenth century, however, the age of fourteen marked the average beginning of the transition period for both girls and boys.

Though females were empowered to marry without consent at the age of eighteen, the low numbers of such women who lived independently with their husbands suggests they had not quite attained the status of adulthood. Most eighteen-year-old women were unmarried and many still attended some type of school, especially as the century progressed and the extended education of daughters became a symbol of prestige.⁹⁴ By nineteen, though, many women in Dubuque managed their own households, and this is also the age of the youngest recorded nuns.⁹⁵ The range of ages, then, which might be considered a transitional period of adolescence for females in mid- to late nineteenth-century Dubuque is thirteen to eighteen years old. Males, who began the transition a little later, also achieved adulthood later. Though the age of majority was twenty-one, some men married at twenty and established their own households or even started their own businesses, like Rufus Rittenhouse. The range of adolescence for males, then, is fifteen to nineteen years old, with a shift down to fourteen years old in the later part of the century.

92. Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 75–76.

93. "The Age of First Menstruation in the United States. Excerpt from the Proceedings of the 26th Meeting of the American Gynecological Society," *Medical News* 78 (1901), 1001.

94. Especially in cities where public high schools provided tuition-free education, girls tended to stay in school longer than their brothers because their labor was less vital to family economy. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 129–38.

95. A thirteen-year-old recorded as a Sister of Charity on the 1860 census of Dubuque may have been a novice or a mistaken entry, as her name appears at the transition between the list of nuns and the list of students.

Adolescents in mid- to late nineteenth-century Dubuque experienced some circumstances similar to those of their counterparts on the East Coast—including an increase in average marriage age and in female school attendance in the second half of the century—with a few key differences. Compulsory schooling legislation, which produced graded public schools in the East, led to the concentration of adolescents in classes with their peers.⁹⁶ These conditions did not yet exist in Iowa. The sentiment that created opposition to the legislation—objection to infringement on parental rights—appears to have pervaded the adolescent experience in Dubuque.

The majority of teenagers portrayed in the autobiographical narratives and Oldt's biographical sketches could not choose their life courses without family approval. Most older teens were expected to work, often in the same profession as a parent, or one chosen by their parents, and their earnings were usually not their own, even when no longer residing in the parental home.⁹⁷ The recurring theme of life-threatening illness in adolescence illustrates teenage vulnerability to infectious diseases—particularly TB—likely due to exposure in the workplace. The types and frequency of leisure activities depended on a teen's socioeconomic status and parental permission. Water recreation, which was plentiful and largely free, brought risk as well as entertainment, and mortality was strongly skewed towards boys, who were more prone to reckless behavior. Though real independence was not granted until adolescents reached nineteen or twenty years old, the small freedoms made possible by working in adult settings and living away from home—cutting wood for pocket money, performing in a circus act, flirting with peers of the opposite sex—offset the heavy responsibilities sometimes carried on those young shoulders.

96. Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 123–27,

97. W. Norton Grubb, "Preparing Youth for Work: The Dilemmas of Education and Training Programs," in *Adolescence and Work: Influences of Social Structure, Labor Markets, and Culture*, eds. David Stern and Dorothy Eichorn (Hillsdale, NJ, 1989), 13–45.

From Fair View Farm to Parkview Heights: Involuntary Annexation and the Middle-American Dream

EDITH M. HUNTER

“THE FINER THINGS IN LIFE are worth striving for,” read a 1970 real estate ad from the *Ames (Iowa) Daily Tribune*,¹ and this four bedroom two story home is sure to please.”¹ Located in the new neighborhood of Parkview Heights and priced “at only \$33,500,” it was one of nearly 1.25 million new single family houses built that year in the United States.² As the postwar years brought the Baby Boom and economic prosperity, builders worked around the clock to meet the demand for new housing. The need for land led to massive development on the fringe of cities, towns, and villages across America.

Roughly a century after settlers transformed Iowa’s tallgrass prairie into fertile farmland, Neva Morris, the owner of one of Story County, Iowa’s most prominent farms, watched her land transform into Ames’s Parkview Heights neighborhood. Over the latter half of the twentieth century, Fair View Farm—first established by Morris’ family in 1902—passed from rural farmers to the urban middle class in what was considered “inexorable progress.”³ Federal, state, and local legislation cooperated to provide the land needed to meet new economic and social demands.

1. *Ames Daily Tribune*, 2/11/1970.

2. \$223,708 in 2020 or 3.4 times the median family income; “20th Century Statistics,” U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1999, 884.

3. This terminology was used to frame the debate about this annexation issue by those in Ames who favored annexation. See “From Our Point of View: On Annexation,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 12/27/1958.

Private ownership of real property is considered a basic element of independence in the United States. From the establishment of the colonies to the closing of the frontier west, Americans traditionally considered the ownership of land as essential to independence, and historian Robert Beauregard even argued, “control over property is a way to avoid the intrusion of government.”⁴ But during the postwar twentieth century when federal, state, and local government policies encouraged the outward growth of single-family developments, rural farmers’ ownership of their own property did little to slow intrusive annexation plans. Farms on the outskirts of urban areas were absorbed into cities and suburbs, often by intrusive means that were far from democratic.

Research into urban expansion and suburbia is extensive but few studies include the acquisition of the land needed for this expansion.⁵ Frequently the issue is glossed over or described in a way that gives the impression that rural landowners willingly sold their property to developers without voicing any opposition. This was often not the case. Where opposition occurred, changes in postwar definitions of progress and power, and who had the privilege of defining those terms, were often why that opposition failed. A cultural misunderstanding about what was developed and undeveloped land resulted in the loss of land from agricultural use to industry and housing for the growing American middle class that continues to the present day.

In the Cold War battle for cultural superiority, mass consumption and the suburban tract house became the embodiment of the American Dream and annexation became a reliable method deployed by local governments in order to realize that aspiration. The Cold War stakes came into stark relief at the famous

4. Robert A. Beauregard, *When America Became Suburban* (Minneapolis, 2006), 92.

5 See, for example, Beauregard, *When America Became Suburban*; Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York, 2001); and Heather B. Barrow, *Henry Ford’s Plan for the American Suburb: Dearborn and Detroit* (Dekalb, IL, 2015). Furthermore, Kenneth T. Jackson’s *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, 1985) devotes an entire chapter, “Suburbs into Neighborhoods: The Rise and Fall of Municipal Annexation,” to the topic, but focuses on the annexation of existing small communities into larger cities.

“kitchen debate” between then Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in 1959.⁶ Unlike drab Communist state-owned apartment blocks, Americans resided in owner-occupied single family homes. To meet the demand for these low-density detached houses, voluntary and involuntary annexation became a method used by local governments to incorporate land. It was a losing battle for those who protested. Property owners who resisted “inexorable progress” were suspect and when urban communities required land for expansion, consideration of the greater good outweighed the traditional independence of small land holders.⁷

Rural landholders were not the only ones who did not benefit from government-supported suburbanization and urban expansion. Race-based discrimination made a large number of new developments available only to white Americans, and the high cost of new homes made them unobtainable to anyone below the middle class. Home ownership was the basis for the creation of family wealth, and by denying minorities and the poor access to the postwar housing boom, the gap widened between rich and poor. Insulated in their racially and economically homogeneous neighborhoods, suburbanites immersed themselves in conformity and mass consumption, and could ignore the problems of the urban core. As expansion became sprawl, decisions regarding the “greater good” became centered on personal concerns of increased property taxes and threatened property values.⁸

As the ad in the *Ames Daily Tribune* makes clear, suburbanization and urban expansion were not just East and West Coast phenomena; they occurred in the Middle West as well. The urban population of the United States surpassed that of its rural neighbors in 1920, but it took the state of Iowa an additional fifty years to reach parity. Iowa’s changing demographics threatened

6. Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design*, (Minneapolis, 2010), xi.

7. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 174.

8. See Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*; Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York, 2017); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, 2007).

agriculture's economic and political power in the state as lawmakers struggled to balance rural concerns with the needs of growing urban areas.⁹ One of the rural-urban issues to be contested was property ownership, as municipalities worked to supply land needed for new housing developments.

Parkview Heights in Ames, Iowa, was one of these housing developments, and where there is now a neighborhood, Neva Morris' Fair View Farm once stood. In the shadow of the kitchen debate, a second-generation farm was lost to the prosperity of "the short American century" (1948 to 1974).¹⁰ As the twentieth century progressed, each year a territory roughly the size of Rhode Island was bulldozed for urban development.¹¹ During this period, government policies created conditions that forced Story County residents Edward and Neva Morris and their neighbors from the land. Following the national trend, Parkview Heights became part of Iowa's transformation as the state moved from a predominantly rural population to an urban majority in 1970.¹² For the Morris family, rural depopulation occurred not when they went to the city, but when the city came to them, and demanded the subdivision of their family-owned farm into 495 middle-class, single-family homes.

Fair View Farm

The Morris farm first appeared on the Story County Franklin Township map in 1902. Neva's future father-in-law, Walter Morris, purchased part of the farm after marrying Gertrude Rutheford in 1889 and the remainder in 1902. Totaling 239 acres, it was 61 percent larger than the average farm in America at the time, and the 1911 *History of Story County, Iowa* records that "the place is known as the Fair View Farm and its name is well deserved. Everything about the place is kept in excellent condition and indicates the careful supervision and practical methods of a

9. Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land* (Iowa City, 1996), 297.

10. Beauregard, *When America Became Suburban*, 15.

11. Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*, 8.

12. "20th Century Statistics," U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1999*, 878.

progressive owner."¹³ The family cultivated grain crops and bred shorthorn cattle and Duroc hogs. As was typical for a successful farmer, Walter Morris was involved in the Story County Fair Association and the Breeders Association of Story County, in addition to various fraternal and service organizations. The family appeared in a 1912 *Ames Daily Intelligencer* story when Fair View Farm hosted a Fourth of July celebration for members of the North Star Rural Club with \$500 worth of fireworks.¹⁴

Walter Morris and his Fair View Farm prospered and the family led Story County's rural middle class. In 1914, Walter and Gertrude's son, Edward, enrolled at Iowa State College and married Neva Freed, the daughter of a local farmer. Three years later, Walter died and farm operations passed to young Edward and Neva. Edward continued his father's progressive practices and adopted mechanized agriculture. In fact, a 1921 article in *Tractor and Gas Engine Review* featured Fair View Farm and noted that Edward Morris "not only owned a tractor, but kept an accurate set of farm accounts." During the debate between horse power versus horsepower, it quoted Edward as praising the reliability and practicality of his machine, which he said allowed him to "keep three horses less than I did before I got the tractor."¹⁵

Mechanized farming not only reduced the need for draft animals, it also reduced the need for farm labor, which allowed the couple to make a short-lived move into the urban middle class.¹⁶ Although Edward spent his entire life on the farm, he was one of only 3.3 percent of Americans to have a college degree in the World War I Era, and he was ready to strike out on his own.¹⁷ In

13. "20th Century Statistics," 886; *Ames Tribune* Photo Archive, Ames History Museum.

14. "North Star Celebrate," *Ames Daily Intelligencer*, 6/26/1912.

15. Harry M. McGuire, "Two Sides to the Tractor Question," *Tractor and Gas Engine Review*, vol. 14, no. 11 (November 1921), 34.

16. "Urban and Rural Population, and by State," US Census 2000, 1.

17. "20th Century Statistics," U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1999, 877.



*Portrait of Edward and Neva Morris in 1914.
Photo courtesy of the Ames History Museum.*

the early 1920s, Edward and Neva rented the farm out and moved to Chicago where Edward found work as an engineer for a building contractor. By the late 1920s, after passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1916 funded a burst of road construction, Edward became a road engineer for the Iowa Highway Commission based in Ames. But when his position disappeared during the Great Depression, the family returned to Fair View Farm.¹⁸

By that time, Edward and Neva had four children who provided much of the labor needed to run the farm. According to their youngest son, Walter L. Morris, “my father didn’t really care for farming, but felt this was best for the family to live through the Depression years. These were hard times, but farm families could eek [sic] out a living and have food on the table.”¹⁹ Times were not quite so hard for the Morris family, however, and in 1939 Edward Morris built a new two-story, four-bedroom house at Fair View, and at 2,282 square feet, it was one of the largest residences in rural Story County.²⁰

18. Walter Morris, “Letter to Nik Neville,” 6/24/2006, Morris Family File, Ames History Museum.

19. Morris, “Letter to Nik Neville.”

20. Section 34, Township 84, Range 24, NE 1/2 NW 1/4 Parcel A CFN 13-242 Ames Deed Book, 1996-06050, Story County Assessor.

Despite the agricultural depression of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s, the population of Ames doubled from 6,270 residents to 12,555 residents between 1920 and 1940.²¹ The city's need for housing to accommodate that growth led to the drive for land that directly affected the Morris family. World War II also brought profound changes to both the town and the Morris family. Factories in Ames operated at full capacity to meet the demand of government production contracts, and Iowa State's various science departments contributed to new technologies in warfare, such as the Manhattan Project. As draft-aged men entered the military, women entered the workforce in record numbers. Wartime labor shortages also allowed Edward to return to an engineering position at the Iowa Highway Commission and running of the farm fell to the rest of the family.

According to the family's history, "Neva worked hard taking care of chickens, hogs and dairy cattle. Leslee, the oldest son, and his two sisters, Betty Lee and Mary Jane, delivered milk daily to the Iowa State College Dairy Industries Building driving an old black Chevy coup[e] loaded with two 10-gallon milk cans in the trunk."²² As young Walter L. recalled years later, "my brother, some 14 years older than I, loved farming. He completed his education at Iowa State College and, after returning from 4½ years in the U.S. Army Air Corp [sic], came back and farmed both the Freed farm southwest of Ames and the Morris farm north of Ames."²³

The Morris family strived to keep their farm prosperous during this period, but the nation's definition of "progress" shifted to a new urban identity. Mass production and adoption of the automobile during the 1920s increased the distance that workers could live from their place of employment. Programs such as Henry Ford's Five-Dollar Day, which increased Ford's employees' pay to five dollars a day in order to stabilize his workforce and encourage consumerism, transformed factory laborers into

21. "Total Population for Iowa's Incorporated Places: 1850-2000," State Data Center Program, State Library of Iowa.

22. Morris Family History, "Residents," Ames History Museum.

23. Morris, "Letter to Nik Neville."



Photo of Edward and Neva's home on Fair View Farm at Christmas in 1948. Photo courtesy of the Ames History Museum.

consumers with increasing expectations of what a higher income could provide. Additionally, this was the period when industry began decentralizing from major urban centers.²⁴ This combination put pressure on municipalities to adapt to these changing needs or face diminishing tax revenues as industry and housing left their city limits. To remain competitive, state and local governments needed to attract high paying employers and provide desirable housing alternatives to this growing urban middle class.

The postwar years brought these changes to the community of Ames, and the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 brought thousands of veterans to the halls of Iowa State College, adding pressure on the city to expand to accommodate new residents. The city's population nearly doubled again between 1940 and 1950 to 22,898 residents. To meet this need, the city initiated a modest annexation in 1950, but it proved to be insufficient to meet the demand for housing, especially affordable housing for lower-earning residents. After visiting Ames in 1957, a visitor reported to her husband's employer that "there appeared to be a shortage of lower-cost housing. One small development [is] occupied almost entirely by students and college staff, and there is a high turnover. . . . Apartments are very scarce in Ames. There are some duplex houses in the older section of Ames which are

24. Barrow, *Henry Ford's Plan for the American Suburb*, 128–29.

in heavy demand. An average two-bedroom apartment rents for \$100 per month."²⁵ At a time when the federal minimum wage was \$1.00 an hour, the postwar years' housing demand outpaced supply, and Ames not only needed additional housing, but it specifically needed affordable housing options.

While other communities in Story County stagnated or experienced decline in population in the postwar era, Ames exploded by attracting highly skilled, highly paying public sector jobs. Between 1950 and 1970, the population of Ames increased by another 72 percent to a new total of 39,505 residents. Some of this growth was due to annexation, but more occurred due to the expansion of Ames' largest employers. Iowa State College received the designation of University in 1959. In 1961, the federal government built the National Animal Disease Laboratory, a major research facility that employed a growing number of scientists, technicians, and other white-collar staff. And, the Iowa Highway Commission, long based in Ames, became part of the Iowa Department of Transportation in 1974. The demand for housing fueled by the high salaries of these public sector employees gave builders, tradespeople, and realtors in Ames all the work they could handle. Capital, supplies, and labor were readily available, but land on which to build was in short supply. When the modest 1950 annexation proved to be insufficient, the city launched the largest annexation since 1910.²⁶

In the fall of 1958, the Ames City Council announced an ambitious plan to annex four areas, one on each side of Ames, which would nearly double the size of the city. The proposed areas would incorporate the future site of the National Animal Disease Laboratory to the east, the municipal airport to the south, and the unincorporated community of Ontario to the west, each of which guaranteed ample tax revenue for the city. The area to the north would incorporate the recently selected site of the new Ames

25. "Your Stories, Nancy Ross," Archives and Collections, Ames History Museum.

26. Ames was far from the only city in Iowa using involuntary annexation to increase municipal territory. Des Moines, Dubuque, Waterloo, Sioux City and Cedar Rapids were also involved in legal disputes over urban expansion in the late 1950s.

High School and the farmland beyond it, including Fair View Farm. Located on some of the highest ground near Ames, safe from the annual flooding of the Skunk River or Squaw Creek, this area was ideally suited for residential housing.²⁷

Citizens living in the unincorporated areas under discussion had only limited means to fight the city's plan. At the Ames City Council meeting of October 21, 1958, nearly 100 concerned property owners turned out to protest the proposed annexation. Edward Morris joined them. He argued that his property was a farm, that his land was zoned by the county for agriculture, that he would not benefit in any way from city services, and that he, in fact, "could not continue his operation if it were brought into the city."²⁸ After hearing from several like-minded property owners, the council deferred action until a later meeting.²⁹ In November, they decided to turn the controversial proposal over to a public vote, set for January 6, 1959. However, under the Code of Iowa the vote would only be open to residents of the city of Ames.³⁰ Residents in these unincorporated areas were not allowed to vote, a move that clearly favored the urban population at the expense of their rural counterparts.

In the few weeks between the announcement and the vote, the *Ames Daily Tribune* weighed in on the side of annexation. In an editorial on December 27, 1958, the editors appeared to express the feelings of many who desired "progress" for the city. With echoes of nineteenth-century Manifest Destiny, the editorial explained that the 1950 annexation proved insufficient as "it was discovered that the homebuilding industry in Ames had, during the last eight years, converted many of the barren acres into housing subdivisions." Regarding Edward Morris and his neighbors, the editors wrote: "we can sympathize with the

27. Due to renewed awareness of the term's offensive connotation, local officials began the process of changing "Squaw Creek" to "Ioway Creek" in 2019. Robbie Sequeira, "Ames City Council to Recommend Ioway Creek Name for Proposed Squaw Creek Name Change," *Ames Tribune*, 1/30/2020.

28. "Objections to City Annexation Heard," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 10/22/1958.

29. Ames Council Meeting Minutes, 10/21/1958.

30. "To Vote Jan. 6 On Annexation," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 11/19/1958. Code of Iowa § 362.26 (1958).

feelings of these people, especially those who built outside the city to provide adequate living space for their families. But Progress is inexorable."³¹

The editors' rhetoric set the terms of the annexation debate. Describing farmland as "barren" and suburbanization as "progress" served their argument by undercutting the value of how farmers used the land and how farmers were making their own kind of progress in the twentieth century. The misinterpretation of what was developed and undeveloped land signaled the loss of rural political power. As such, the newspaper spread a message favored by municipal officials and downtown merchants. Adding "inexorable" to this urban definition of progress also signaled the city's determination to annex the proposed territory.

Despite assurances from the city that farmers could continue their operations if annexed, Edward Morris and his neighbors remained suspicious that the city's true intent for the annexation was ultimately to end farming on the land that they inherited from their fathers and mothers and that they hoped to pass on to their children. In the days before the vote, the city attempted to placate farmers' concerns that annexation would increase their property taxes, arguing that by using agricultural tax credits, farm owners would see a decrease in their tax levy. But the vote proposal, Resolution 3170, began with:

WHEREAS, there is not only a lack of available facilities within the City limits of the City of Ames, Iowa to properly house the inhabitants thereof, but also a lack of available vacant lots and tracts of land upon which housing facilities can be erected."³²

The farmers' cleared, level, and well-drained cropland was ideal for constructing new housing developments.

The city also assured its citizens that the increase in expenditures to expand services to the annexed areas would be spread over the increased number of properties, resulting in an overall decrease in the tax levy. But a group of Ames citizens called the Taxpayer's Committee distributed pamphlets and bought ad space in the *Tribune* to publicly spread their counterargument

31. "From Our Point of View: On Annexation," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 12/27/1958.

32. Ames City Council Meeting Minutes, 11/18/1958.

that the annexation plan was overly ambitious, would increase the tax levy, and result in the loss of individual control in the proposed annexation areas. An ad paid for by the Taxpayer's Committee condemned the plan with alarmist statements such as "With annexation your taxes will skyrocket!" and "Your taxes can double!"³³ A pro-annexation ad featured "FACTS ABOUT ANNEXATION" and promised a "yes" vote would "allow Ames to grow in a desirable orderly planned manner."³⁴ Historian Kenneth Jackson noted the significance of such language. In his analysis, such postwar appeals for orderliness and efficiency were "a mask for the desire to exploit and to control, it might be termed the local or downtown branch of urban imperialism."³⁵ Jackson's observation aptly describes the events that unfolded in Ames where power had clearly shifted to the city.

Edward Morris made his final plea to the citizens of Ames in a letter to the editor on January 3, 1959, under the title "He Can't Vote."

Some 183 years ago, in the year 1776, this nation was born from the idea of individual rights. To a great extent, this was brought about because the colonies were being taxed without a voice in the governing body. . . . Next week when the citizens of Ames vote on the issue of annexation, a group of people will have lost the right to cast their ballot. . . . Whether the law denying them the right to vote is right or wrong, the people in this area may be annexed into a city and governed by a city government without having any voice in the matter. . . . So when you, the citizens of Ames, go to the polls next week give some thought to the subject at hand. You must vote for me. I can't vote.³⁶

Beauregard's argument that ownership of private property protected one from government intrusion is clearly contradicted by the experiences of Morris and his neighbors. Finding his situation un-American, Morris anchored his appeal in the nation's fundamental principles of liberty, freedom, and franchise. In the

33. "Vote 'No' to Annexation," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 1/5/1959.

34. "Facts About Annexation," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 1/5/1959.

35. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 145.

36. "He Can't Vote," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 1/3/1959.

fight to prevent his farm from being incorporated into the city of Ames, he was personally powerless and could only appeal to those enfranchised citizens.

On January 6, 1959, the residents of Ames defeated the resolution by a margin of 5 to 3. The 3,216-voter turnout set a record for a single-purpose vote in Ames. For city officials, the defeat was disappointing. The *Tribune* quoted one councilman as saying that they merely failed to “get our message across” and suggested that “a new study probably will be made” to resolve the city’s need for expansion.³⁷ On the other side, the Taxpayer’s Committee treasurer told the paper that the vote was a victory for the “freedom fighters” who although “outnumbered [and] out-shouted by a hostile press and radio . . . brought home the issues crystal clear to the voters.”³⁸ Despite their disenfranchisement, the citizens of Ames voted in favor of the rural landowners.

If Edward Morris and the Taxpayer’s Committee were relieved by the defeat of the annexation plan, their relief would be short lived. By September 1959, a group of private business owners called Ames Industrial Development, Inc. (AID, Inc.) presented a petition to the city council asking that another proposal be put to public vote. The Ames League of Women Voters supplied the new annexation study, which reduced the targeted land area from nine to four and a half square miles. The Ames Chamber of Commerce presented the revised proposal to the city council for action. Giving themselves ample time to campaign, in February the council began the process of setting another vote for September 8, 1960.³⁹

On the evening of May 19, 1960, the council chambers filled with approximately 140 property owners once again protesting their inclusion in the annexation plan. Representatives from AID, Inc., the League, and the Chamber spoke in favor, but over a two and a half hour period, dozens of opponents petitioned the council and again questioned the rationale behind the plan.⁴⁰ The

37. “Voters Turn Down Annexation Plan,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 1/7/1959.

38. “Simple Solution is Seen,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 1/10/1959.

39. “Ask Vote on Annexation Proposal,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 1/20/1960.

40. “On Annexation: Air Benefits, Opposition,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 5/18/1960.

arguments in favor and against had not changed; however, the tactics did. Both sides harangued voters in the press and by pamphlet, mail, radio, and even in a broadcast on Iowa State University-owned WOI-TV. But on September 8, 1960, the involuntary annexation plan passed in the second election, this time by a margin of 2 to 1 and with a turnout exceeding the last election by over 400 voters.⁴¹

The vote, however, did not end the matter. Per the Code of Iowa, involuntary annexation required the city to file a lawsuit in district court on behalf of the annexed property owners, with the city of Ames acting as plaintiff.⁴² The city was then burdened to prove it could provide “substantial benefits,” such as police and fire protection, water and sewer services, and paved and maintained streets, to the annexed areas.⁴³ Over the next two years, the city filed paperwork on behalf of the landowners, who in turn also sued the city, claiming that their constitutional rights had been violated when they were unable to vote on the resolution affecting their property.⁴⁴ The case went up to the Iowa Supreme Court in 1962, which cited the precedent of a U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of the city of Cedar Rapids after a five-year involuntary annexation battle there. The Court remanded the decision back to Story County where district court Judge John M. Schaupp decided the case in favor of the city on November 26, 1962.⁴⁵ The portion of Fair View Farm east of the Chicago and North Western railroad officially became part of the city of Ames and “benefited” from all it had to offer. The coordinated power of city officials, downtown merchants, and the nation’s judicial system resulted in defeat for disenfranchised residents in the annexed areas.

41. “Four-Area City Annexation Proposal OK’d,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 9/9/1960.

42. For annexation procedures, Code of Iowa § 362.26 and 362.27 (1958). For incorporation procedure, Code of Iowa § 362.1 to 362.9 (1958).

43. “To Assuage Growing Pains Orderly Development Urged,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 10/10/1959.

44. Dan Garcia, “Annexation Hearing is June 28,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 6/25/1962.

45. Dan Garcia, “Ames Annexation Ok’d; City Gets Go-Ahead,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 11/26/1962.

Edward Morris' battle to save his farm ended just two months after the September 1960 annexation vote when he died suddenly at the age of sixty-four. At the time of his death, Edward's estate was valued at \$50,386.58. His will left the farm to Neva and their four adult children, who then signed an agreement among themselves allowing Neva to "receive and enjoy, during the remaining years of her life, the use and income from said real estate."⁴⁶

As the consequences of the annexation vote began to take effect, Neva continued to live in the big house while her oldest son, Leslee, lived in another smaller home on the property and ran the farm. One of the first "benefits" the family received from the city was a \$9,716.72 tax assessment for the installation of sanitary sewer lines during the paving of 24th Street, which ran along the south end of the farm.⁴⁷ The family promptly filed suit against the city to stop the assessment. When the city planned to build a second sanitary sewer line along the northern half of the property in 1964, the family again filed suit to stop the plan. Their complaint asserted "that the preliminary plans and specifications, assessments, inclusion of plaintiff's land are arbitrary, confiscatory . . . and contrary to Iowa law." They continued, "all of the land involved will receive no special benefits from the sewer system since it will be used for agricultural purposes for an indefinite number of years."⁴⁸ After the court rejected both cases, Neva Morris, land rich but cash poor, had to sell Fair View Farm.

It would take the combined effort of three of Ames' largest development firms, Friedrich and Sons Construction, Buck Construction, Inc., and H and F Builders, to create the city's largest housing development—Parkview Heights. On April 28, 1966, the partnership contracted with Neva Morris to pay \$3,000 per acre with the option to buy additional land in units of 40 continuous

46. Abstract of Title, No. 32187, Lot 5, Twentieth Addition to Parkview Heights, Subdivision to the City of Ames, Iowa.

47. \$82,275 in 2020; "Seek to Prevent Tax Collection," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 6/6/1964.

48. "Jury Term of Court Opens," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 9/15/1964.

acres, with price adjustments, through January 1, 1976.⁴⁹ Neva Morris retained ownership of the two-story house and just over one acre of land surrounding it and her son Leslee purchased the remaining portion of Fair View Farm outside of the city limits.

The fate of Fair View Farm illustrates the shift of power from rural to urban in the late twentieth century, even in the traditionally agriculturally dominated state of Iowa. To diversify its economy, the state passed legislation to help municipalities acquire the land needed for industry and housing, which would entice higher paying jobs and thus increase the state's tax base and revenues. If the Morris family had the means to pay the storm sewer assessment, it is probable that the city would have started enforcing ordinances against keeping livestock or operating farm equipment on paved roads within the city limits. The Morris family found, as the age-old saying goes, "you can't fight City Hall." "Undeveloped" land that had taken nearly a century to transform from tallgrass prairie into fertile farmland would now be developed into Parkview Heights over the next three decades.

Parkview Heights

The Friedrich partnership's plan for the new neighborhood mitigated mistakes made by early postwar suburban developments. In the twenty years since its creation, the flaws of New York's Levittown had become apparent. Criticism of its identically mass-produced houses on vast flattened expanses of land changed the American public's perception of suburbia. Homes in these early developments were served by wells and septic tanks and lacked other public services such as sidewalks, schools, and playgrounds. In particular, the lack of green space was of special concern. Squeezing profit from every square acre of land, some developers argued that each lot became its own "park" once the trees matured.⁵⁰ Historian Christopher Sellers argued that in the wake of the emerging environmental movement "mass

49. \$23,991 in 2020; Abstract of Title, No. 32187.

50. In *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*, Adam Rome states that Levitt's house building system eventually rivaled that of Henry Ford's assembly line, with "a new one finished every 15 minutes;" Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*, 122.



Aerial photo of Ames's Roosevelt neighborhood in the mid-1940s, featuring Fair View Farm located in the upper left corner. Photo courtesy of Ames History Museum.

suburbia no longer dramatized heroic builders' flourish, but instead, how a countryside had been razed."⁵¹ But in Parkview Heights the streets were paved, its houses connected to city services, and because it was built after Lyndon Johnson's Conference of Natural Beauty in 1965, ample green space for play and recreation was set aside for neighborhood children.⁵²

Despite the continued need for affordable housing in Ames, Parkview Heights, and its sister developments of Northwood and Westwood, would be unattainable for most residents other than businessmen, professors, scientists, and other professionals. Parkview Heights derives its name from its unique platting, with approximately fourteen acres set aside for a public park fronting not the street, but set behind the lots, where backyards blended seamlessly with the green space. Rather than from the developer, the directive for the design came from the city of Ames. With a recently passed city ordinance requiring new lots in an R-1 zoned subdivision to average 10,000 square feet and burdened to provide land for a public park, the cost of lots excluded all but the most affluent buyers. Reinhard Friedrich Sr., the founder of Friedrich and Sons Construction, appeared at the March 15, 1966, city

51. Christopher Sellers, *Crabgrass Crucible: Suburban Nature and the Rise of Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, 2012), 248.

52. Sellers, *Crabgrass Crucible*, 291.

council meeting to protest the placement of the park, arguing “that lots in the area are already too expensive and acceptance of the plan if the developer were liable for providing the park area would naturally increase the cost of the lots still more.”⁵³ First-time buyers only benefited by a “trickle-down” phenomenon as Parkview Heights buyers sold their older homes in other areas of Ames.⁵⁴

Analysis from the 1968 *Ames City Directory* affirms the consequences of these higher lot prices. Of the first twenty-four owners to build in Parkview Heights, 62 percent of the households derived their income from the public sector with fifteen employed at Iowa State, the Iowa Department of Transportation, the National Animal Disease Laboratory, and one as a municipal court judge. Six others were self-employed business owners and the last three were white collar professionals employed by private businesses. Six married women in Parkview Heights were either co-owners of their family’s business firms or employed outside the home. Records also listed two single men cohabitating and no single women in the neighborhood.⁵⁵ This reveals that rural farmers were displaced in order to make way not just for more housing, but to create more housing for a particular class of citizens in Ames.

Beyond class, housing discrimination was always an issue for minorities in Ames. For example, although George Washington Carver enrolled at Iowa State College in 1891, he was required to reside in a cabin outside the city limits, far from the campus. Archie and Nancy Martin, prominent African American residents of Ames, housed black students attending Iowa State College in the 1930s and 1940s in their home because no other accommodations were made available to them.⁵⁶ By 1964, an *Ames Daily Tribune* article estimated there were only “27 Negro households in Ames and two or three other non-white households [and] this ratio has

53. Ames City Council Meeting Minutes, 3/15/1966.

54. Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (New York, 1981), 244.

55. *Polk’s Ames City Directory 1968*, Ames History Museum.

56. “Archie and Nancy Martin,” Residents Collection, Ames History Museum.

not changed much in the past 30 years."⁵⁷ No evidence suggests that Parkview Heights was an exception to this history.

As Parkview Heights was beginning to take shape during the Civil Rights Era, however, this small population of racial minorities voiced its frustration to the Ames City Council. In 1963, the *Ames Daily Tribune* reported one such incident from the Mayor's Committee on Fair Housing involving a man identified only as "Captain M," an engineering student at Iowa State University and a graduate of West Point, along with his young family. Because Captain M's \$6,000 annual income exceeded Iowa State's threshold to qualify for married student housing, he was required to find off-campus housing.⁵⁸ After Ames landlords became aware of his race, they turned the family away from every rental inquiry Captain M made. With the intervention of the city, Captain M was able to rent a house outside of the city limits from a "native of India," who was himself being threatened by "a neighbor who has made it clear he does not want any 'colored' people in the 'deluxe' development."⁵⁹ Race did not come up in the debates about involuntary annexation of Fair View Farm, the development of rural spaces, or the construction of new homes, and its absence, particularly in the wake of the experiences of Captain M, reveals that like the rest of Ames, housing integration was not even a topic of consideration for the new affluent neighborhood.

After hearing of such incidents, the Ames City Council passed a Fair Housing Ordinance in 1966 and later appointed Reinhard Friedrich Jr.—the son of the man who helped spearhead the Parkview Heights development—to chair the Fair Housing Commission in 1969. *The Tribune* pointed out that although the ordinance lacked any enforcement or penalty provision, city leaders hoped that "the threat of public exposure would be sufficient to curb any practitioners of discriminatory

57. Joyce Manchester, "Rights Group Ok's Five-Part Purpose," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 3/12/1964.

58. \$50,804 in 2020.

59. "Find Feeling Against Negro Neighbors Here," *Ames Daily Tribune*, 7/12/1963.

practices” and called it “a milestone in the history of this city’s progress.”⁶⁰

Although racially based discrimination became illegal in 1968, discrimination based on economic status remained and often carried racial consequences along with it. In his critique of suburbanization, historian Kenneth Jackson wrote that the “most important characteristic of the postwar suburb was economic and racial homogeneity.”⁶¹ This pattern became an issue in Parkview Heights when the last three houses on what had been Fair View Farm were built in 2001. That year the undeveloped far southeastern corner of the farm, once occupied by North Star School and later by a municipal water tower, was sold to the Story County Land Trust, which intended to build homes for needy residents with the cooperation of Habitat for Humanity.

When the plan was publicized, nearby Parkview Heights neighbors protested. Homeowners adjacent to the Water Tower Place development demanded that the proposed homes conform to Parkview Heights’s standard: an 1,800 square foot house with an attached two-car garage on a 10,000 square foot lot. While some expressed “benevolent” concern whether “their new neighbors would keep their property maintained,” another more bluntly stated “I would like a look—I don’t know if I want to say ‘richer’—but more in keeping with the neighborhood” and not something that would “take down the value of our homes.”⁶² In the end, designs for three affordable 1,000 square foot homes, each with an attached single-car garage on a 6,000 square foot lot were accepted by the neighbors. But Habitat for Humanity homes were not a long-term affordable housing solution, since once the mortgage had been paid in full the house became the legal property of the owners who were free to sell on the open market. The Habitat project did not offer any provision for future buyers to gain similar access to affordable housing.

60. “Laugh after Laugh,” *Ames Daily Tribune*, 8/18/1966.

61. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 241

62. David Grebe, “Housing Advocates, Parkview Residents Express Concerns,” *Ames Tribune*, 6/13/2001; David Grebe, “Council Moves Forward on Hubbell Subdivision,” *Ames Tribune*, 10/24/2001.

In the spring of 2005, the city made another attempt to bring affordable housing to the former Fair View Farm land, proposing to build a 130-unit owner-occupied development on the triangular portion west of the railroad tracks. The land Leslee Morris purchased from Neva in 1966 was eventually sold to the Ames Community School District, which intended to erect a school there to accommodate the anticipated growth in family size. However, those projections proved overly ambitious as enrollment in the city decreased in the 1990s. With that parcel still available, city officials presented the school board with the proposition for affordable housing. They suggested that if the board donated the land, the city would use \$900,000 in federal grants to install necessary services for a new subdivision targeted to those who earned 80 percent or less of the Story County median income.⁶³

Local developers, including Reinhard Friedrich Sr.'s grandsons Bob Jr. and Kurt Friedrich, met with city officials to begin plotting the twenty-six-acre site, but residents in Parkview Heights expressed the same concerns as they had with the Habitat houses in Water Tower Place. At an April 15, 2005, neighborhood meeting, approximately fifty property owners confronted city officials. Neighborhood concerns of increased traffic, noise, lot sizes, home designs, and decreased property values were now joined by outrage that the school district would donate the land. A budget shortfall earlier that year forced the district to close two elementary schools at the same time as the plan was proposed. Angry citizens demanded that the land be sold, not donated, to alleviate the financial crunch.⁶⁴ If the city was required to purchase the land, the units would no longer be affordable for targeted buyers. "In order to succeed, it is essential that we have the support of the City Council, school board, private developers, surrounding residents and non-profit agencies," the Ames city manager wrote in an announcement abandoning the project in

63. Chuck Hackenmiller, "Board Approves Affordable Housing Proposal," *Ames Tribune*, 3/18/2005.

64. Jason Kristufek, "Proposed Subdivision Near Somerset Draws Criticism," *Ames Tribune*, 4/16/2005.

August 2005.⁶⁵ The land remained undeveloped until 2015, when the Ames school district built a new \$10 million school administration building and sports complex on the site.

The middle-class residents of Parkview Heights nearly derailed the Habitat project and successfully thwarted the 2005 development, demonstrating their power to influence the use of the land. Control appeared to be shifting from the city, which had pushed through the annexation plan in 1960, to the affluent tax and voting base that now made up the neighborhood. While the protestations of the rural residents at meetings in the 1950s failed to stop annexation, Parkview Heights' new residents managed to use their voices, votes, and money to control the use of land in their neighborhood. This power was successfully exercised again, and this time used to police which class would be allowed to live on what was formerly Fair View Farm.

Conclusion

Like a corn-belt Tara incongruously surrounded by ranch houses, the big white farmhouse Edward and Neva Morris built in 1939 still stands on Hoover Avenue in Ames, Iowa's Parkview Heights neighborhood. One of her longtime neighbors was prominent Ames developer Reinhard Friedrich Jr., whose family had been instrumental in transforming Neva's farm. Neva finally left her home in 1996 at the age of 99½. When she died in 2010 at the age of 114, she was the oldest person in the United States of America.

When Iowa caught up with national trends, as Iowa historian Dorothy Schwieder emphasized, "perhaps of greatest importance between 1945 and 1960 was the transition toward a more urban orientation; this trend rested on several major changes, particularly a population shift toward the cities and a major increase in industrial operations."⁶⁶ Up to the postwar period, it was desirable and advantageous for a farm to be located near markets and transportation, but following World War II government policies created conditions that favored single

65. Jeff Raasch, "City Abandons Housing Project," *Ames Tribune*, 8/17/2005.

66. Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, 294.



Photo of Edward and Neva's home in 2019, now situated squarely in Parkview Heights. Photo courtesy of the Edith M. Hunter.

family homes, spurring suburbanization and urban expansion. As Beauregard explained, these programs increased the need for land “by subsidizing home ownership, building highways to connect suburbs to downtowns, underwriting the cost of operating an automobile, underfunding mass transit, and subsidizing the building of infrastructure.”⁶⁷ Unlike other industrialized nations, growth in the United States would be *out*, not *up*. Funding for these programs then trickled down to the local level, transforming at least one sleepy college town into a small city.⁶⁸

From the federal government’s perspective, expansion of home ownership was a means to strengthen democracy during the Cold War. During the Great Depression, New Deal legislation, like that which created the Federal Housing Administration, was intended to stimulate construction and employment. At the same time, such programs promised to create a “release valve” against revolutionary socialist radicalism.⁶⁹ Likewise, it was not only the involuntary annexation of land by local governments, but the GI Bill of Rights, the Interstate Highway Act, and dozens of other federal government policies such as home mortgage deductions and subsidies “the equivalent of a Marshall Plan every year” that also contributed to the creation of new single

67. Beauregard, *When America Became Suburban*, 83.

68. Ironically, Ames hosted a “Save the Farm” rally in 1986.

69. Kathryn Olmstead, *Right Out of California: The 1930s and the Big Business Roots of Modern Conservatism*, (New York, 2015), 25.

family housing developments in the postwar period.⁷⁰ A greater portion of Thomas Jefferson's landless mob, "prone to authoritarianism and posing a threat to democracy," could now have access to their own piece of the American Dream.⁷¹ Expanding access to private homeownership brought more Americans into the political mainstream. As the well-known postwar developer William Levitt proclaimed, "no man who owns his own house and lot can be a Communist. He has too much to do!"⁷²

In 1977, Neva's long-time neighbor, Mildred Dodd Taylor, wrote a presentation titled "The Past One Hundred Years on 24th Street" for the local chapter of a national women's club. In it she reflected upon her childhood on the family farm, shared stories about her neighbors, including the Morrises, and told of the changes she witnessed over the decades. At the end of her essay, she wrote with pride of having received a Century Farm plaque from the Iowa Department of Agriculture the year before and implored:

When annexation comes up again, please don't vote our farm into the city to be destroyed as such with homes, shopping centers, wide highways, industries, etc. The day will come when children in this area will wonder what an Iowa farm was like and why there isn't more food, for the good black ground will have been covered by cement.⁷³

Despite her pleas, Mildred Dodd Taylor's family farm was converted in 2002 into the Friedrich-developed "village" of Somerset, another addition to Ames' "inexorable progress."

70. Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820–2000*, (New York, 2003), 231.

71. Beauregard, *When America Became Suburban*, 73.

72. Beauregard, *When America Became Suburban*, 156.

73. Mildred Dodd Taylor, "The Past One Hundred Years on 24th Street," Reference Collection, Ames History Museum.

Book Reviews and Notices

The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America, by Greg Grandin. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2019. 369 pp. Notes, index. \$30 hardcover, \$18 paperback.

Rebekah M.K. Mergenthal is associate professor of history at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. An environmental historian, she is an expert on the history of U.S. westward expansion, frontiers, and borderlands.

Greg Grandin's *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* insightfully considers how an "expansionist imperative" shapes the United States (2). A winner of the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction and a finalist in the History category, Grandin's book has rightfully garnered extensive praise. While Iowa is not considered in detail, this book should still be of immense interest to *Annals of Iowa* readers as it re-contextualizes the meaning of expansion from the pre-Revolutionary period to today.

Grandin contends that to understand the United States, we must see the link between the frontier myth that has animated much of American history and "America's new myth" of the southern border wall (9). A key connection is the central role, historic and ongoing, of race-based violence. From the "removal" of Native Americans to the Minuteman Project and the Border Patrol, Grandin explores vigilante and state-sponsored brutality. Additionally, while the U.S. border moved "as a quality of its being," this "didn't haunt the United States" but "animated it, giving life to its history as an exceptional nation" (31). This view was encapsulated in Frederick Jackson Turner's idea of the frontier's crucial role in creating and recreating American democracy and liberty. Even as physical expansion was curtailed, politicians like Ronald Reagan still used the rhetoric of limitlessness. By focusing outwardly, whether in land-taking or military and market expansion, the United States avoided confronting its own social problems and saw itself as a moral force for good. Currently, Grandin argues, the Mexico-U.S. border has become the "repository of the racism and the brutality that the frontier was said . . . to leave behind through forward motion" (166), even as it is a kind of rejection of the previous sense of limitlessness.

In fewer than 300 pages of regular text, Grandin masterfully covers much geographic and conceptual ground. He attends to comparative and linked developments, especially in other parts of North and South America. Chapter 2, for example, juxtaposes Thomas Jefferson's and Simón Bolívar's conceptions of territorial expansion. Chapter 9 clarifies both Mexico's and the U.S.'s strategies to shape the early twentieth century border, while Chapter 14 gives similar context around NAFTA. Grandin's story is richer because he provides a history of the United States that is attuned to the broader global context.

As the subtitle ("the Mind of America") indicates, Grandin's purview is intellectual history, but this book is also grounded in concern for how ideas and myths affect people's lives. Grandin additionally counters the popular conception that expansion within what would become the United States is separate from the later military and economic expansion that was most often "overseas." This is a crucial contribution because by illuminating the conceptual and practical connections between these efforts he shows that the process of expansion was not simply natural or inevitable. Yet, even as Grandin links the "internal" and "external," he also focuses on the edge of the expansion at any given time, which means he deemphasizes stories once people were brought or forced inside of the U.S. This is seen in the coverage of Native Americans, so central to early chapters but who rather recede in the later ones, even though Native stories and struggles are ongoing. Thus, Grandin does not show the full extent of the cost of American expansion. While Grandin does not endorse Turner's rosy exceptionalism, he does work within Turner's frame, which argues that the edge is the place most worthy of attention to understand how America is constituted. It is also worth noting that the southern U.S. border is of primary interest to Grandin. Given his thoughtful work with comparisons overall, hearing more about how it compares and contrasts to the northern one would have been additionally illuminating.

Grandin's engaging prose guides the reader to understand the ongoing impact of the "country's founding paradox: the promise of political freedom and the reality of racial subjugation" (138). He draws on a vast array of primary and secondary sources, including evocative use of literary texts, to show the development of these stories over time. However, through editing errors, unfortunately there are some gaps in his citations (examples on pages 90, 103, and 159).

Overall, *The End of the Myth* is both thoughtful and thought provoking. Grandin helps his readers confront the realities of our country's past because he wants us to see how the great social project that is the United States can best move into the future. As Grandin notes in the

Epilogue, in accepting there are limits to growth, building a wall is not the only option. Instead, Grandin suggests we pick up a social democratic thread from the past, one that was evidenced in the Freedmen's Bureau and the New Deal, in order to move into the future with more justice for all.

Great River City: How the Mississippi Shaped St. Louis, by Andrew Wanko. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2019. 308 pp. Images, maps, bibliography, index \$35.00 paperback.

Amahia Mallea is associate professor of history at Drake University in Iowa. She is an environmental historian and the author of *A River in a City of Fountains: An Environmental History of Kansas City and the Missouri River* (2018).

In this beautiful and affordable coffee table book, public historian Andrew Wanko puts the Mississippi River where it belongs: at the heart of the history of St. Louis. This book is a “remedy,” Wanko states, because St. Louisans “don’t spend much time pondering how the Mississippi River seeps into our daily lives” (7). The book’s origins are in a museum exhibit; the layout of big, colorful images alongside succinct text keeps it feeling like a browsable exhibit full of historical eye candy. In over fifty short chapters containing hundreds of images—maps, photographs, art, documents, and material culture—Wanko spans centuries to broadly tell this river city’s social, cultural, economic and environmental history.

Readers realize that a lot has disappeared. The first city to thrive at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers was Cahokia, the crown jewel of the Mississippian mound builders. Though Cahokia was abandoned by the fourteenth century, St. Louisans of the eighteenth century integrated the mounds into their city. These elevated earthworks became landmarks and one hosted the city’s first waterworks. Mound removal required reverse engineering—hauling dirt away with human and animal power—in order to flatten the landscape. In one poignant set of photographs, a half-domed Big Mound overlooks its own dismantling for a railroad passage (12–13).

Growth and manipulation erased caves, sinkholes and islands from the landscape. The sandy isle of Bloody Island was used for dueling contests, and Quarantine Island hosted the infected during the 1849 cholera epidemic. That same year, a disastrous fire destroyed ships and buildings alike, but within a decade, the rebuilt city hosted up to five

miles of boats, chockablock along the levee. Lastly, so many boats sank into watery graves. Readers will delight in the details and be amazed by the images.

The book develops the nineteenth century well, owing to the available materials and the central place of the river in transportation and commerce. The river's edge teemed with social and economic activity. The fur trade had made St. Louis a key city in North America, even before it became a gateway city for U.S. expansionism. After the Civil War, industrialization brought European immigrants and freed blacks, including Exodusters—on their way to farm in Kansas—who were welcomed and supported in their travels by black people living in St. Louis.

In the late nineteenth century, railroads replaced the liquid highway, and Mark Twain lamented the loss of the old river and its culture. Steamboats now hosted the well-to-do with restaurants and upper-deck roller skating rinks, while below-deck roustabouts loaded and unloaded cargo. In 1874 the engineering marvel Eads Bridge opened, abruptly changing the city's relationship to the river. The thriving ferry business declined. Riverside real estate no longer held the same value. Despite the connection made by bridges, East St. Louis remained "over there" (132). One of the nation's worst race riots occurred on the east side of the river in 1917. Other chilling shadows of racism include officials closing the Eads Bridge in 1987 to prevent African Americans from attending a riverside festival. The river offers a unique lens for examining class and race issues.

In the twentieth century, infrastructure and technology distanced the city from the river, though drinking water and waste removal remained essential uses. The idea of turning the wharf into parkland appeared as early as 1907. Increasingly, residents associated the river with recreation, as evidenced by the entertainment cruises like the Streckfus-owned SS *Admiral* at mid-century. Not until 1935 did Congress approve funds for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. The empty wharf and demolition of forty historic blocks created a "blank canvas" that would be filled by architect Aero Saarinen's winning design (239). Images of passed-over designs impress, as do those showing the construction of the Gateway Arch, officially opened in 1965. Today, Laclede's Landing is the only part of the old riverfront city remaining. Although the riverside has evolved dramatically, it is still the city's "welcome mat" (284).

Many readers may expect flooding to be a common topic, but Wanko does not fully introduce it until a chapter on the 1993 Flood, a disaster exacerbated by over a century of river engineering. In the last two decades, rivers have rightly received more attention as historical

agents, especially in cities. The river has “shaped” and been a “stage” for St. Louis’s “triumphs, embarrassments, joys and tragedies,” Wanko writes (7). Some of Iowa’s Mississippi River towns are within the orbit of St. Louis, and this story has similarities to those of the Quad Cities or Dubuque, albeit on a smaller scale. I hope this book inspires more river-city exhibits and books.

The Mound Builder Myth: Fake History and the Hunt for a “Lost White Race,” by Jason Colavito. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020. vii, 386. Illustrations, notes, index. \$24.95 paperback.

Reviewer Mary Wise is a PhD candidate in history at the University of Iowa. Her research focuses on the Iowa effigy mounds and the establishment of Effigy Mounds National Monument in northeastern Iowa.

Jason Colavito’s timely work is not the first that historicizes the origin of the Mound Builder myth, but it is one that is incredibly accessible and serves as a one-stop-shop for all those interested in understanding the development, spread, and persistence of the “Lost Race” myth. According to Colavito, the Mound Builder myth alleged that a lost white race had built the massive earthworks found throughout the American Southeast and Midwest.

The work’s first two chapters chronicle the foundation of American archaeology and the rise of the Mound Builder myth. The third and fourth chapters explore how a fascination with ancient India intersected with early speculation about the identity of the mound builders. In the fourth chapter, Colavito identifies previously marginalized literary figures who worked diligently to expand the “Lost Race” mythology. Caleb Atwater’s biography features prominently here alongside several minor literary figures, like Solomon Spalding and Constantine Samuel Rafinesque, who worked to expand the mound builder mythology beyond high circulating popular magazines.

Colavito turns his attention to Mormonism and the relationship between Joseph Smith and the mythic lost race theory in the fifth and sixth chapters. His background as a blog writer is best put to use in these two chapters. It would be easy to get lost among the notable authors, theologians, and politicians who theorized about the identity of the mound builders, suggesting that ancient Phoenicians, shipwrecked ancient Israelites, or a lost group of Nordic explorers built the massive earthworks; but Colavito’s sense of humor strikes an effective balance and keeps the reader grounded.

Colavito's seventh and eighth chapters explore the relationship between the lost race myth and federal Indian policy. He explains how Andrew Jackson appropriated the main tenets of the Mound Builder myth to justify Indian Removal. Colavito describes Jackson's belief that Native Americans, like the Creek and Cherokee, descended from the "savage" and "ruthless" people who exterminated a civilized white race. This thinking represented an evolution of the "Lost Race" theory as it entered the political arena. Chapters nine through twelve focus on twentieth-century evolutions of the Mound Builder myth and lost race theory. Again, Colavito's background as a cultural critic and writer are well utilized in these last three chapters. His conclusion which recounts the development of HP Lovecraft's fascination with American Indians is particularly compelling.

Readers eager to learn about the effigy mounds in northeastern Iowa will be disappointed; the Hawkeye state is not mentioned despite its role in dispelling the Mound Builder myth. For those interested in Iowa's archaeological history, Bill Whittaker, Lance Foster, Marshall McKusik, and Lynn Marie Alex, among others, have written excellent works that investigate the mound builder controversy in Iowa while simultaneously exploring Iowa's rich Indian history and culture.

At times, Colavito's work speculates too much, and one laments the missed opportunities to engage with a rich and nuanced characterization of early American leaders. In the second chapter, for example, Colavito says that Hector Saint John de Crèvecoeur "would have understood" that colonists' belief that the mounds were built by the lost tribes of Israel was intellectual baggage brought over from England (41–42). His work would be stronger if he had used these pages to historicize early modern conceptions of race rather than speculate about what Crèvecoeur knew or did not know.

There are also moments in his work that leave the reader longing for deeper engagement with relevant literature. First, Colavito's work does not engage with recent Native American Studies literature nor are current Indigenous voices woven into the text. Although his prologue beautifully weaves Indigenous perspectives into the text by using imperial Spanish records, the next five chapters focus almost exclusively on settler colonial ideas about earthworks. More seriously, Colavito's characterizations of the founding fathers are quite flat. No better example is provided than in Colavito's discussion of Thomas Jefferson. *The Mound Builder Myth* asserts that Jefferson truly sought a peaceful and just solution to the "Indian Problem" (118–19). Perhaps Colavito should have looked to references to the Cherokee in Jefferson's 1776 correspondence, "Nothing will reduce those wretches so soon as pushing the

war into the heart of their country. . . . I would never cease pursuing them while one of them remained on this side of the Mississippi" (*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 1950, 485–87).

Colavito's greatest contribution in this work is that he adds new historical figures who spread the "Lost Race" myth. The biographical approach used in the first half of the work introduces a rich literary and intellectual landscape that explains why the myth of a lost white race of mound builders persisted. As a general introduction, this is a particularly compelling work that should be read alongside scholarship from Indigenous Studies like Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*.

The History of Starved Rock, by Mark Walczynski. Ithaca and London: Northern Illinois University Press, an imprint of Cornell University Press, 2020. 242 pp. Illustrations, timeline, notes, bibliography, index. \$17.95 paperback.

Reviewer Rebecca Conard is professor of history emeritus at Middle Tennessee State University. She is the author of numerous books, including *Places of Quiet Beauty: Parks, Preserves, and Environmentalism* (1997) and most recently, *Iowa State Parks: A Century of Stewardship, 1920–2020* (2020).

Mark Walczynski has written "the" history of Starved Rock, which became Illinois' first state park in 1911, not "a" history of this place. The distinction is worth noting because the author has produced an exhaustively researched history—hence a bibliography as well as endnotes—and because he takes care to distinguish the past as informed by the historical record from the body of lore associated with Starved Rock. As the park historian at Starved Rock State Park, Walczynski is well qualified to know the difference.

Called Le Rocher or Le Roché by the French, this prominent sandstone outcropping on the Illinois River in northwestern Illinois was a landmark for early explorers. In the larger context of European settlement and the concomitant displacement of native peoples in the Great Lakes region, the Mississippi Valley, and the Ohio Valley, it is but one notable landmark, but the author explicitly set out to "view historical events from the perspective of Starved Rock, tracing history as it unfolds on and around the famous site" (4). While one does not need to know the larger historical context in order to follow events, there are passages where more backstory on the Intercolonial Wars between the French and British would be helpful. Similarly, strategically placed

maps would aid the reader's ability to follow the movements of French explorers and traders and to comprehend fully the complicated mix of indigenous groups in the interior region. Unfortunately, there is not even a basic map locating Starved Rock in relation to present-day geography.

The History of Starved Rock is primarily a chronicle. The chapters flow in precise chronological order, divided into three parts: Part I covers 1673 to 1691, Part II, 1692 to 1776, and Part III, 1777 to 1911. Part I opens with the first known recorded observation of the sandstone bluffs along the Illinois River, made by Louis Joliet and Fr. Jacques Marquette in 1673, a date that generally marks the advent of European-Native American contact in the Mississippi Valley. Parts I and II detail the steadily increasing French presence on and around Le Rocher, and the advance of the British in the eighteenth century. The strength of focusing on historical events associated with one place is that it allows the author to illuminate how native peoples were caught up in bickering among French authorities as well as hostile competition between French and British colonizers and the stress this placed on intertribal relations among native peoples in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Several tribes and subtribes used Le Rocher at one time or another, but the Peoria band of the Illinois was the principal group. To underscore the role that Native Americans played in the history of Le Rocher, Walczynski complements each chapter title with a subtitle in the Illinois tongue, and the Illinois words for many nouns occur regularly throughout the text.

The American Revolution opens Part III, with 1787 as the most consequential date, when Le Rocher became part of the Northwest Territory of the United States. From that point on, the federal government systematically took Native American territory to open up western lands for American settlement. The name "Starved Rock" came into usage around 1835 in association with a fictional legend. In that same year, the site also became privately owned. For 55 years, the land around Starved Rock was farmed. Then, in 1890 a Chicago businessman purchased the promontory plus an additional 100 acres and developed a summer resort. In about 1905, the possibility of further commercial exploitation to this scenic area prompted "citizens with political clout and politicians across the state" (182) to mount a campaign to save Starved Rock as a state park, which succeeded in 1911. Thus was Illinois' first state park created.

Overall, *The History of Starved Rock* speaks to the wealth of cultural history that is often embedded with natural history in state and national parks. Not all parks have a history as rich as Starved Rock's, but there

are some in Iowa that come close—Mines of Spain along the Mississippi River in northeast Iowa comes immediately to mind. Walczyski's well-researched book hints at the number parks with as-yet-untold fascinating histories.

Owen Lovejoy and the Coalition for Equality: Clergy, African Americans, and Women United for Abolition, by Jane Ann Moore and William F. Moore. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2020. ix, 254 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$99.00 hardcover. \$20.00 paperback.

Graham A. Peck is the Wepner Distinguished Professor of Lincoln Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield. He is an expert on the political history of antebellum America and is the author of *Making an Antislavery Nation: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Battle over Freedom* (2017).

Owen Lovejoy of Illinois was one of the North's most important abolitionists. His hatred of slavery initially came courtesy of his brother's blood. In 1837, a proslavery mob in Alton, Illinois, murdered his brother, Elijah Lovejoy, who had been the editor of the abolitionist *Alton Observer*. Devastated but defiant, Owen committed his life to abolitionism while kneeling next to his brother's bleeding body. Over the next three decades he made good on his vow, first as a minister and then as a politician. Beginning in 1838, he spearheaded a multiracial and mixed gender antislavery coalition that transformed Illinoisans' attitudes toward slavery, sustained Illinois' antislavery political parties, and supported Abraham Lincoln's antislavery career. In 1856 the coalition helped elect Lovejoy to Congress, where he eventually became one of the foremost architects of emancipation.

Lovejoy's inspiring story is told by historians Jane Ann and William Moore. Although not historians by profession, they decided decades ago to resuscitate Lovejoy's memory by reinterpreting his role in slavery's abolition. Passionate and dedicated, they plunged into archival research. The yield has been bountiful. They published a scholarly edition of Lovejoy's writings in 2004 and returned in 2014 with a book that explained how Lincoln and Lovejoy collaborated to promote emancipation. Now they have completed a trilogy by unveiling the important relationships between Lovejoy and his radical allies.

The book celebrates Lovejoy's role in the "coalition for equality" that united clergymen, free blacks, and activist women into a phalanx for abolition. The coalition was a loose one. The three groups did not work in perfect lockstep, and at times their priorities differed. Radical

politicians like Lovejoy had to trim their sails in order to get elected, while black leaders unhesitatingly urged abolition and racial equality. Likewise, some women advocated for women's rights, while others demurred, considering abolitionism sufficiently radical. But all parts of the coalition labored in the trenches for decades. Black leaders like John Jones of Chicago organized Illinois' African American community to promote abolition and demand repeal of the infamous Black Laws. Female reformers contributed both behind-the-scenes and publicly to the intersecting movements for abolition, antislavery politics, black rights, and gender equality. Meanwhile, white clergy like Lovejoy worked in tandem with African Americans and women. Each group leaned on and learned from the others, and equality was the watchword. At the core was abolition, with ministers using their influence to promote antislavery politics, an initially controversial practice that became commonplace by the 1850s. By then the coalition had helped prepare the ground for the Republican Party, and Lovejoy's crowning work was passing abolitionist legislation during the Civil War, a task in keeping with his vow. When he died in 1864, Abraham Lincoln memorably wrote that Lovejoy would have a monument "in the hearts of those who love liberty, unselfishly, for all men" (CWAL, 7:367). He will also live on in the hearts of those who, like Jane Ann and William Moore, love equality, unselfishly, for all.

Hostile Heartland: Racism, Repression, and Resistance in the Midwest, by Brent M. S. Campney. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2019. vii, 240 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$27.95 paper.

Reviewer Ashley Howard is an assistant professor of African American history at the University of Iowa. Her research focuses on African Americans in the Midwest; the intersection of race, gender, and class; and the global history of racial violence.

Brent Campney's *Hostile Heartland: Racism, Repression, and Resistance in the Midwest* is an excellent and much needed historical account. While most Americans are comfortable with a narrative that imagines racist violence as a solely southern problem, Campney intervenes by challenging the "deep-rooted assumptions about the Midwest as a pastoral meritocracy antithetical to the systemic racist practices" (2). Beyond this regional intervention, he also broadens conceptions of lynching to include non-lethal forms of terrorism. As he writes "the study of *racist violence* should involve the entire spectrum of violence, encompassing

exceptional events like lynching and riots and more routine ones like homicides, beatings, floggings, sexual assaults, killings by police, and house burning" (emphasis original, 3). The delivery and depth of his investigation not only contribute greatly to the extant field, but also have larger implications for the regional consideration of racial violence today.

Campney, in eight tight chapters, successfully maneuvers between community and regional analysis over the broad temporal span of 1835 to 1945. By employing Bernard Bailyn's satellite metaphor, Campney documents multiple instances of racist violence from the microlevel, such as the terror exacted on the Godley family, to larger regional considerations of interstate collaboration to maintain sundown towns. While the focus on the Old Northwest (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio) and lower midwestern states of Kansas and Missouri demonstrates these regional alliances, it is not a complete engagement with the Midwest. While undoubtedly a geographically and temporally expansive project to begin with, a deeper engagement with racist violence in other portions of the Midwest, namely the Great Plains, would provide additional regional complexity. In no way does this limit the efficacy of the book; rather, it demonstrates the need for more histories like this one.

In each chapter Campney makes significant interventions into the field demonstrating both the centrality and ubiquity of racial violence in the Midwest. The first two chapters challenge the temporality of lynching as a phenomenon, centering his story in the antebellum era and highlighting black resistance. In the next two chapters, Campney lays out the most innovative arguments of his book. Drawing from Charles Payne's concept of movement families, Chapter 3 argues that white supremacists disproportionately targeted certain black families, conspiring with local media and law enforcement to justify this violence. Chapter 4 demonstrates that midwestern mob members were "eager to foist their own racist sins on white southern scapegoats," maintaining their own delusions of superior race relations (68). The remaining chapters investigate how midwestern communities employed non-lethal lynching, sundown towns, and police to maintain racial control. The final chapter in particular conceptualizes a late lynching period in the region, advancing the concept of "underground lynchings," and that with the passing of anti-mob legislation, "police forces in such cities had developed their own methods of racial control, exercised under the auspices of the law by killing or otherwise abusing the blacks who they had sworn to protect" (175).

By expanding both the definition of lynching as well as the traditional temporal frames, Campney challenges scholars to think deeper

about how racial terrorism has influenced the Midwest, particularly its formation and identity. In so doing, he disrupts the neat narratives scholars and local people have come to rely on to exonerate the certainly guilty, demonstrating that “under the auspices of white supremacy . . . whites were motivated to act violently against blacks for very specific reasons, real or imagined” (189). Well-written and succinct, this book powerfully documents an oft-forgotten practice in the Midwest, decentering the South as the only region with a very long history with anti-black violence.

Slavery’s Reach: Southern Slaveholders in the North Star State, by Christopher P. Lehman. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2019. 244 pp. \$18.95 paperback.

Jennifer K. Stinson is associate professor of history at Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan. She is working on a book on African American, African-French, Ojibwe-African, and African-southeastern Indian families in the nineteenth-century rural Midwest.

Slavery’s Reach is especially important at a time when Minnesotans and Americans everywhere work to end racial violence in the present while reckoning with midwestern racism in the past. Minnesota’s status as a territory and a state overlapped with less than two decades of legal slavery in the U.S., and bondage did not essentially define its development. But from its territorial beginnings through the Thirteenth Amendment’s passage, white Minnesotans knowingly embraced or unwittingly reaped slavery’s rewards. Postbellum generations then erased bondage from their past. Thanks to Christopher Lehman, however, we know that the “peculiar institution” was not so peculiar in Minnesota.

Lehman traces chronological and thematic arcs from the 1820s through the 1860s that reveal Minnesota’s widespread participation in slavery. Slaveholders of all stripes—French fur traders, U.S. officials, permanent southern transplants, and commuting or vacationing southerners—fill the book’s first five chapters. The sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters demonstrate how networks of Minnesotans, southerners, and southern institutions—congressmen, trade agents, plantation owners, banks, and insurance companies—advanced Minnesota’s growth. The ninth and tenth chapters address how slavery’s reach—into the tourism industry, for example—receded after Minnesota’s 1858 entrance into the Union as a free state and during the Civil War.

Slavery’s Reach joins a rich scholarship that follows the money—via wills, deeds, and probate records—to show bondage’s economic

entrenchment in the North, while revealing the political and ideological compromises of antislavery advocates and other white northerners. The book contributes a midwestern twist on these phenomena. Lehman explains how cash shortages made early settlers particularly receptive to enslavers' investments. This occurred not only in the Twin Cities, but also in central Minnesota and in smaller communities, such as Stillwater. Taking an approach that privileges neither Dred and Harriet Scott's story nor Minnesota's statehood in its analysis of slavery's political significance, Lehman rightly emphasizes Democratic presidents' territorial appointments. Some appointees reinforced slavery's legitimacy by bringing bondspeople with them to Minnesota; James Buchanan's appointees secured Democratic proslavery support in far-flung territorial locales. Lehman also demonstrates how, like officials elsewhere in the Midwest, Henry Rice and Sylvanus Lowry furthered their political careers through financial dealings with slaveholding southerners.

African Americans' struggles come to life in Lehman's pages, despite his argument that the relative invisibility of enslaved people and the abstraction of slavery often undergirded Minnesotans' acceptance of it. That argument provides a compelling counterpoint to histories that assert the need to acknowledge Black visibility in the Midwest. Indeed, it is worth noting, as Lehman does, that most bondspeople whose masters invested slavery's profits into Minnesota never saw the place. But those whose enslavers did drive them north faced, in midwestern bondage, "a different kind of cruelty" than in the South (73). For enslaved people who served their masters when they summered at Minnesota hotels, as Lehman astutely recognizes, pained leave-takings from kin and grim realizations that transport to Minnesota did not endow freedom comprised a significant seasonal ritual. Obstacles abounded for freedom-seekers in Minnesota, such as Henry Sparks and Eliza Winston. It was a slave territory from 1857 to 1858, neither state nor territorial law offered clear petition processes for freedom, white journalists and officials split over whether to decry re-enslavement of escapees, and fledgling free communities of color were ill-equipped to aid others' transitions out of bondage.

Lehman ably relates Minnesota's relationship to slavery to familiar dramas of westward expansion in ways that invite further regional connections and comparisons. It was, ironically, Minnesota's free state status and relative stability, in contrast to the popular sovereignty contests that wracked Kansas, that attracted southern slaveholders. Such analysis suggests valuable comparison of Minnesota to Illinois, where bondage and debates about it also shaped territorial and state development. Scholars could explore, too, how geographical proximity to nascent free

communities of color in Wisconsin, Illinois, or Iowa influenced freedom-seekers near Minnesota's borders. Lehman wisely contextualizes Minnesota slavery within settler colonialism, noting that the land booms that enslavers' investments supported arose out of the 1851 treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota; these robbed the Dakota of their homelands. He leaves it to other historians, however, to illuminate Indigenous perspectives and to address fully the entanglement of Native American dispossession and African diasporic enslavement in the Midwest.

Although academically oriented, this book will be accessible to anyone seeking a provocative take on the historical processes of profit, complicity, and erasure that have long denigrated Black midwesterners and fueled racial tensions. Lehman's conclusion traces these matters into the modern day. It reveals the streets, counties, and institutions that still bear the names, funds, and legacies of slaveholders and other beneficiaries of bondage—all without historical markers to commemorate enslaved people's suffering. Overall, Lehman's claim that "Minnesota was not a distant land, far from the turmoil of 1850s U.S. politics" but instead at the "front lines of the prewar battle over slavery" (6) serves as a relevant, even galvanizing reminder of a twenty-first century truth: Minnesota and the Midwest still stand centerstage in contests to achieve racial justice in the U.S.

Massacre in Minnesota: The Dakota War of 1862, the Most Violent Ethnic Conflict in American History, by Gary Clayton Anderson. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019. vii, 366 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$32.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Linda Clemmons is professor of history at Illinois State University. She is the author of *Dakota Exile: The Forgotten Stories of Captives in the Aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War* (2019) and *Conflicted Mission: Faith, Disputes, and Deception on the Dakota Frontier* (2014).

Gary Clayton Anderson correctly notes in his preface to this book that the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 "is as controversial today as it was a century and a half ago" (xii). In *Massacre in Minnesota*, Anderson aims to provide a definitive account of the war; more importantly, he wants to settle many of the "perplexing arguments regarding the war" (xi-xii). This book can be seen as the culmination of a long career researching and writing about the Dakota nation and the 1862 war, with publications including *Kinsmen of Another Kind* (1984), a biography of the war

leader Little Crow (1986), and *Through Dakota Eyes* (1988), a primary source compilation of Dakota sources related to the war. Parts of these previous books' arguments and biographical materials are woven throughout *Massacre in Minnesota*. The book is clearly written and organized, and it covers the main events leading up to and through the war in detail.

Anderson organizes his book chronologically, beginning with the decades prior to the war and ending with the execution of 38 Dakota men in Mankato and a brief mention of the Dakota's subsequent exile from Minnesota. Within this traditional chronology, the author also adds in several controversial interpretations. Chapters 1–4 provide a summary of events that eventually led to the war, including the familiar causes of land loss, unfair treaties in 1837, 1851, and 1858, government corruption, economic problems, and the arrival of settlers following Minnesota's territorial status in 1849. Chapters 5–7 provide a detailed military history of the six-week war, especially focusing on the number of settlers killed. Anderson argues that the term "massacre" correctly describes the actions of Dakota warriors during the war, equating the death of the Minnesota settlers with the massacre of native peoples at Bear River, Sand Creek, and Wounded Knee; indeed, he calls the deaths of the settlers an attempt at "ethnic cleansing in reverse" (xi; 99). Chapters 8–10 deal with the aftermath of the war, including the unfair trials and subsequent execution of 38 Dakota men. Anderson devotes much space in his last chapters to the issue of whether the "massive rape" of settler women occurred during the war (191). While most historians have argued that rape was uncommon (indeed, Lincoln's review of the trial records found two cases), Anderson argues the opposite: that most female captives experienced "forced marriage and rape" (190).

Anderson is certainly correct to note that the U.S.-Dakota War was violent and that hundreds of Minnesota settlers died over the course of the six-week war. However, when researching and describing these deaths, as well as the rape of captive women, Anderson mainly relies on settler narratives. The author notes that these narratives often contained "gross exaggerations" and that it is difficult to "separate fact from fiction" (90–91). At the same time Anderson problematizes these narratives, he also implicitly adopts their language and point of view; for example, outside of quotations, he refers to the warriors as "erratic," as experiencing "great jubilation" at the settlers' deaths, as hunting human "prey," and as spreading "mayhem" (85–95). This vocabulary echoed the language of those settlers at the time who viewed the warriors as "demonic" (108). The use of settler narratives mirrors Anderson's choice of sources in general; while his primary source list is extensive

(over five pages of archival collections are listed in his index), he mainly relies on non-Dakota sources from military officials, government workers, missionaries, and traders. The book's cover art illustrates his focus on settler images and stories, reproducing *The Siege of New Ulm*, by H. August Schwabe (1902).

Massacre in Minnesota is mostly a traditional narrative of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 that covers in extensive detail the main events leading up to and through the war based on written documents. Within his event-centered chronology, Anderson also offers several controversial interpretations of the war, including whether terms such as "massacre" and "ethnic cleansing" apply to the actions of the Dakota warriors, as well as whether settler women were raped in large numbers. Certainly, these debates build on Anderson's previous work—especially *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime that Should Haunt America* (2014)—which argued that U.S. Indian policy should be characterized not as genocide, but as ethnic cleansing. In his concluding paragraphs, Anderson correctly calls the 1862 war "tragic" for both the Dakota nation and Minnesota settlers. At the same time, he also notes that "those who suffered the most were innocent settlers" (284–85). While Anderson hopes that his book will provide a definitive and objective account of the war, his controversial treatment of several topics keeps him from achieving this goal.

The Women's Fight: The Civil War's Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation, by Thavolia Glymph. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2020. 384 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Barbara Cutter is associate professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. She is the author of *Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels: The Radicalism of American Womanhood, 1830–1865* (2003).

As Thavolia Glymph notes, scholarship in the last 30 years "has transformed our understanding of the home front, the impact of the Civil War on American women, and the active roles women played in the war" (3). Yet, as Glymph's new book, *The Women's Fight: The Civil War's Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation*, points out, there is still room for more transformation of our understanding of women in the war and of the Civil War as a whole.

The Women's Fight is an ambitious project; it brings together the experiences of American women of different class backgrounds: North

and South, black and white, enslaved and free. It also juxtaposes the experiences of diverse groups of American women in order to tell a general story of "the women's fight." Based on extensive primary research, it includes sources from several southern and northeastern states, and some from the Midwest, including the unpublished Civil War reminiscences of Cyrus Bussey, housed at Iowa State University. Glymph explicitly chooses not to focus on the war in the Far West.

While scholars have complicated the battlefield/home front boundary, the North/South divide, and a few have highlighted the agency of enslaved people in the war effort, Glymph takes these ideas further. Even newer scholarship generally treats northern and southern women separately, based on the dominant scholarly understanding that the North/South divide corresponded with "the political divides over the question of slavery" (8). Glymph suggests that this approach, by blurring all southern women and all northern women together, obscures differences among women of the same region. In the South, for example, it hides differences between non-slaveholding white women and elite white women, and contributes to the assumption that southern black women were not actively involved in the war. But for Glymph, "the women's fight" was not a fight just between North and South; it was also a fight "among and between women and with the men who sought to control how they could fight" (15).

Glymph emphasizes that the women's war was fought everywhere: not just on or near battlefields or when women interacted with soldiers. It was fought inside homes, even when no men were present. It was fought in Union-run refugee camps housing black people (mostly women and children) who had escaped from slavery. Those refugees were frequently attacked by Confederate soldiers or southern "civilian" men living in nearby towns, and they also faced danger from pro-slavery Union officers in some camps. It was fought when poor white women in southern mountain towns tried to keep elite white women out of their communities as they fled Union-occupied areas. It was fought when elite southern women and enslaved women negotiated terms of employment within southern households, as the system of slavery was weakened by war. And, it was fought when some elite northern women who joined their husbands in the Union-occupied South tried to play the mistress with the southern black women they hired to work in their homes. The women's war took place in all of these spaces. Thus, Glymph argues that the Civil War was a total war from as early as 1862; the total war did not begin with Sherman's March to the Sea. In addition, she argues, it was not the nation's first total war. Many Civil War Era

women's expectations had been shaped by stories of the American Revolution passed down from mothers and grandmothers.

The major strength of this book is how Glymph creates a new narrative about women in the war—across race, class and regional boundaries—by challenging the battlefield/home front divide. This strategy is particularly useful in bringing to the forefront the experiences of enslaved southern black women in the war, who have rarely been depicted as playing an active role in the war effort. Glymph's argument is strongest in relation to the experiences of women in the South. This may be because the fluidity between home and battlefield is easier to see in areas under occupation or threat of occupation (which happened only in small portions of the North). It may also be because the book focuses more on the experiences of (southern and northern) women in the South, rather than women in the North. Overall, this book is a vital contribution to the scholarship on the Civil War because it does not merely illuminate the experiences of diverse groups of women; it also uses that evidence to transform our understanding of the Civil War (and perhaps war) itself.

An Environmental History of the Civil War, by Judkin Browning and Timothy Silver. Civil War America Series. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2020. 260 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$30.00 hardcover.

Theodore J. Karamanski is Professor of History and Public History Director at Loyola University Chicago. He is the author of numerous books including *Civil War Chicago: Eyewitness to History* with Eileen M. McMahon (2015) and most recently, *Mastering the Inland Seas: How Lighthouses, Navigational Aids, and Harbors Transformed the Great Lakes and America* (2020).

For the past fifteen years environmental historians have been laying siege to the corpus of Civil War historiography trying to break through the entrenched lines of battle narratives, slavery studies, and political histories. With this effort by Judkin Browning and Timothy Silver, they have brought their artillery within range of their objective. In a briskly written text of fewer than 200 pages, they highlight the themes Civil War environmental historians have the unique ability to explore and make more relevant to our broader understanding of the conflict. The themes are clearly laid out; however, in an attempt to provide systematic coverage of the entire four years of the war, they are also somewhat unsatisfactorily arrayed in chronological order. Chapter one is "Sickness, Spring–Winter 1861." The chapter starts with a detailed discussion of

the new diseases that enlistees were exposed to in the first months of the war and how armies adapted to the issue. For example, measles had a particularly debilitating effect on the mustering and training of southern soldiers drawn from rural areas. Of course, it is well known that throughout the war microbes were deadlier than bullets so the authors in the later pages of the chapter move beyond 1861 and discuss later disease challenges, particularly the Union Army's effective response to malaria and yellow fever.

Chapter two is "Weather, Winter 1861–Fall 1862," and it illustrates some of the challenges of bringing the environment to bear on military operations. The authors focus on George B. McClellan's Peninsula Campaign, emphasizing how the soil, topography, and most especially, the weather shaped the outcome. Repeated and heavy rain bogged down McClellan's advance. In addition, thick mud and standing water weakened the troops by limiting their access to rations and triggering dysentery, typhoid fever, and malaria. By the end of the campaign as much as 20 percent of McClellan's army was afflicted with illness including twenty generals. Yet after establishing the key role of weather in events the authors steer clear of a deterministic conclusion by noting "McClellan's personality and questionable decisions make it difficult to evaluate the role of weather in the Union defeat" (65). This cautious, perhaps judicious, approach reoccurs throughout the book as the authors advocate for the environment to be regarded as simply one of many factors influencing military operations. This balance is reflected in the respective backgrounds of the authors. Browning is a military historian while Silver is a specialist in environmental history.

The remaining chapters enhance our appreciation for the role of food, animals, and terrain. The chapter on death and disability is the least enlightening and does not take us much beyond the work of Drew Gilpin Faust and Mark S. Schantz. The chapter on animals, however, is particularly illuminating. Horses, obviously, were an important part of Civil War armies but so many military histories simply take their presence for granted. Browning and Silver establish the huge advantage the North had in the number of horses and the vast scale of their use. In 1864, the Army of the Potomac had more horses than Robert E. Lee had soldiers. The lack of horses limited the mobility of Confederate forces and, for example, shaped Braxton Bragg's strategy after the victory at Chickamauga where a third of his horses were killed. The rebel army's regular impressment of horses from civilian farms helped to keep their wagons and artillery in motion but severely affected food production. Feeding animals was a huge logistical challenge that the North managed

very well. A cavalry force of 1,000 horses required seven tons of hay and six tons of grain every day.

Iowa readers may be particularly interested in the impact of the war on pork production in the Confederacy. The staple of the Southern diet became dear as the war dragged on with 70–80 percent declines in the pig population. In the wake of war, the South became dependent on midwestern pork imports. Iowa hogs that were raised on corn had a higher fat content than the lean free-range hogs of the pre-Civil War South. This prompts the authors to speculate, “the Civil War might be partly responsible for the comparatively high rates of obesity, high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease in the South” (192). The war also illustrated the deficiency of veterinary knowledge in the country, which prompted both the army and many land grant colleges to begin the systematic study of animal health. In 1879, Iowa State College established the nation’s first college of veterinary medicine.

Near the end of their volume Browning and Silver argue that the Civil War brought about a profound change in America’s relationship with its environment. Proving that, however, will be the task of another volume. What they do accomplish is to enrich our understanding of the agency of microbes, animals, and landscape on the military history of the war.

Peppermint Kings: A Rural American History, by Dan Allosso. Yale Agrarian Studies Series. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. xvi, 296 pp. Notes, index. \$38.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Jeff Bremer is associate professor of history at Iowa State University. He specializes in the social and economic history of the American Midwest and is the author of *A Store Almost in Sight: The Economic Transformation of Missouri from the Louisiana Purchase to the Civil War* (2014).

Peppermint oil is not just a niche product at your local organic food store. It has a long history as a commercial item in the United States, a story which is meticulously surveyed in historian Dan Allosso’s unconventional book *Peppermint Kings: A Rural American History*. It traces the history of three different families who were involved in the production and distribution of peppermint oil. Allosso’s story is one of agricultural entrepreneurs, sometimes odd but always driven, who sought to make their fortunes selling something that the modern world has little use for, other than as a flavoring. But peppermint oil, made by boiling the plant in stills like whiskey, had wide appeal in the nineteenth century. It

served a medicinal purpose in a world that existed before modern medicine and was usually sold by peddlers before the Civil War. After the war, it became a branded international product. This story, while often dense, is the history of an industry and its evolution from the early republic to the Great Depression.

Peppermint was always a commercial crop and its sale ensured that producers took part in the emerging market economy of the early United States. The Ranney family were the first peppermint kings, based in the American Northeast. Peppermint was first grown in the U.S. in Massachusetts and New York and then later shipped eastward along the Erie Canal to new markets. The crop was more labor-intensive than wheat, but more profitable. The center of production then shifted to Michigan in the mid-nineteenth century. One family, the Hotchkisses, dominated the trade in the decades around the Civil War. They ran an international business that bought peppermint from farmers, then distilled it and finally marketed it. Their goods were distinctively packaged and branded in one of the first such efforts in the country.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Todd family, also based in Michigan, was the most important of the peppermint producers. They earned international awards and American patents for their oil. Albert Todd, an important local business leader, was elected to Congress in the late 1890s, supporting populist legislation to rein in the power of large corporations. By about 1910 Todd's company dominated the American and international peppermint business, producing most of the peppermint in the United States. They provided peppermint and spearmint oil for use in toothpaste and gum. By 1920 Albert was often referred to as "Peppermint Todd." The A.M. Todd company, which still produces mint, is now owned by Archer Daniels Midland, an agricultural conglomerate.

Peppermint Kings is not a book with any connection to Iowa. But its history of agriculture, production, and marketing would be familiar to most readers. The story is focused on rural people and their engagement with a more urban or distant population; it is also the story of families and kinship and their importance for business. Allosso's study does a good job of placing these family interactions with a growing capitalist world in the context of American economic development. The Hotchkiss family established their own banks and printed their own money, while the Todds were capitalists who hated the excesses of the Gilded Age. Allosso's history of a forgotten product and a neglected business serves as an example of how historians can explore forgotten topics. *Peppermint Kings* is a book written for academics and historians of agriculture and rural America. They will find its unusual story and

intriguing characters, as well as its business history, of interest. Non-specialists will find large parts of the book overly detailed and tough reading though.

Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist in the Arena, edited by Char Miller and Clay S. Jenkinson. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. xxiv, 234 pp. Illustrations, photographs, index. \$24.95 paperback.

Gregory A. Wynn is a retired U. S. Marine Corps officer and Vice President of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, which was chartered by Congress in 1920.

Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist in the Arena is a book about small things. This is good. In the immense scholarship of Theodore Roosevelt (over a thousand books and counting), the small things have often been overlooked. Editors Char Miller and Clay S. Jenkinson have done fine work knitting together a compendium of these small things—chance acquaintances, wildlife encounters, and political collaborations—which brings to mind Bruce Springsteen’s song “From Small Things (Big Things One Day Come).” It is good for us today that these small things resulted in something big: the protection of our natural and wildlife treasures and efforts to educate the nation about them. It is the small things that remind us that the grand arc of history is not pre-ordained. Sometimes history turns on the small things.

This is not a scholarly book, which is not a criticism. It is a collection of easily consumed essays casting a light on the origins and maturation of Theodore Roosevelt’s conservationist ideals, as well as those men and women he befriended and who consequently shaped his (and their own) thinking over a period of four decades. It is also a study of political power, personal relationships, and the impact of intellectual idealism. It reveals how small things like chance encounters and youthful enthusiasms led to the resultant big things of protecting over 200 million acres of national treasure.

The essays reveal interesting insights, many worth deeper studies. For example, in their piece on Roosevelt’s writing about his experiences in North Dakota, contributors Thomas Cullen Bailey and Katherine Joslin observe that with his unique blend of narrative and field naturalist expertise, TR “worked to create a literary genre almost of his own making” (24). Ian Tyrrell, a professor at the University of New South Wales, contributes a provocative piece on the mutual shaping of European conservation

efforts and TR's evolving globalism. These contributions whet an appetite to know more and reveal fresh areas for Roosevelt scholarship.

There are also quirky anecdotes. Melanie Choukas-Bradley tells us that the President lost a gold ring at Rock Creek Park in 1902 and placed an ad hoping for its recovery in a D.C. newspaper (72). Clay Jenkinson writes of William T. Hornaday, the famous taxidermist, placing a note in small box under the American Bison display at the Smithsonian pleading future generations to preserve these specimens as they were the "last of their kind" (157). Of course, Hornaday was wrong. His efforts, along with those of TR and others, as Jenkinson regales, prevented the extinction of these majestic animals. Duane Jundt writes that birds were among TR's lifelong loves equaling his passion for politics and family. Once again, from small interests and encounters, big projects can come.

There is nothing to criticize in this book. It is tightly written, interesting, and historically sound. If there is a minor quibble, it would be that the essays sometimes repeat similar tales and facts. Yet, when it comes to those big things such as the number of preserves, parks, and wildlife refuges TR created, it is worth repeating.

There are remarkable men and women in this book: John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, William Hornaday, John Burroughs, and Mary Pinchot. The latter was Gifford Pinchot's mother. In his essay, Char Miller relates that Pinchot did not want TR's vibrancy to overshadow her son's important legacy. Yet, for all their singular achievements, none shine brighter than TR. This book reinforces what Theodore Roosevelt's friend, William Hard, said about him: "He was the prism through which the light of day took on more colors than could be seen in anybody else's company" (Hard, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Tribute*, 1919).

Clay Jenkinson writes of TR's indifference to being memorialized in statues. Nevertheless, one statue is on Theodore Roosevelt Island in Washington, D.C. Another is in McHose Park in Boone, Iowa. The Iowa sculpture was created by Italian American Sculptor Vincenzo Miserendino (See Gregory A. Wynn, "The Little Known TR Sculptor Vincenzo Miserendino," *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal* XXXIII, No. 4 [Fall 2012]). It is magnificent and one of the few such fine art sculptures of TR in the nation. Despite its artistic gravitas, the beauty of the open public space it resides in outshines the statue. Just as, in this book, the reader is ultimately reminded that the open wild spaces Theodore Roosevelt so adored outshone even him.

Plagued by Fire: The Dreams and Furies of Frank Lloyd Wright, by Paul Hendrickson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019. x, 600 pp. Illustrations, essay on sources, bibliography, index, notes. \$35.00 hardcover.

Daniel Naegele, Ph.D., is Emeritus Associate Professor of Architecture, Iowa State University. He is the editor of *The Letters of Colin Rowe* (2015) and the author of *Naegele's Guide to the Only Good Architecture in Iowa* (2019).

Had today's we-are-the-truth media been around to assess Frank Lloyd Wright's situation in 1910, there may never have been Taliesin, the Imperial Hotel, Fallingwater, the Usonian houses, Johnson Wax, Price Tower or the Guggenheim Museum. It is a fashion now to find heroism in the common person, and this is as it should be. But the associated need to tear down the extraordinary genius of earlier years is truly unfortunate.

Nevertheless, to reduce "a haughty man" is what Paul Hendrickson wants to do. In *Plagued by Fire*, he tells stories about Wright—stories that he assures us are "the real story." The real story, he says, "is grainer, ruder" (19) than the same story as we have so often heard it told. The real story "has about it the drip-drip-drip of reducing a haughty man to his near-nakedness" (19). In earlier books, Hendrickson investigated Marion Post Walcott, Robert McNamara, and Earnest Hemingway. In this book, he tells the real story of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The book's dust jacket hyperbole bills *Plagued by Fire* as "a breathtaking biography that will change the way we understand the life, mind, and work of the premier American architect." The story has little to do with architecture. Hendrickson focuses not on Wright's successes but on the tragedies in his life: infidelities, ugly divorces, devastating fires, inconceivable murders and deaths. His concern is with the low points of a valiant, exuberating life, and on nearly every page he speculates about Wright's psychological make-up. His mission, in his own words, is the "historical-cum-imaginative reconstruction of what it must have been like" (19).

What was it like for Wright as the child of bickering parents in Richland Center? What was it like when Wright sought his first job in Chicago? When he married and fathered six children? When later his lover was killed by a mad servant who then burned Wright's house down? When his daughter and son-in-law were killed in a strange automobile accident?

What was it like? Hendrickson speculates, suggesting to his reader that his guess is far more informed, sympathetic, and knowing than the reader's guess could ever be. His facts are carefully selected to prove his point. "What would it have been like for the kids in those two

households?" he queries, referring to Wright's affair with Mamah Cheney in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1909 (172). His answer comes from the 1976 *Family Memories of Four Sisters*, a source he describes as an "obscure book, a family memoir" written by a "member of the Belknap family, who lived next door to the Cheneys" (172). The author, Margaret Belknap Allen, Hendrickson writes, "got some things factually wrong in the several pages she devoted to Wright and Mamah," adding quickly, "although perhaps she remembers this precisely, for it seems the kind of memory that would have burned into her brain cells" (172). To make his case against Wright, he offers as evidence Belknap's secret as she remembered it some sixty-seven years after it happened: "we children [would] look down into the Cheney living room below to watch the two of them making love" (172). What would "making love" have looked like to a ten-year-old in 1909? How many Wright-Cheney stories had Belknap heard in the intervening sixty-seven years? Is her story here no more than the whopper the present public wants to hear? The evidence is sketchy, yet for Hendrickson, it serves as an indication of Wright's callous neglect and the corrupting influence his careless attitude and perverted character had on the young.

The merit of the book? Hendrickson brings together Wright's great tragedies. Assuming we ignore the author's overly judgmental conclusions, the book presents us with the great depth of Wright's extraordinary life. *Plagued* is a book of anecdotes, real stories seldom proven true; yet the stories give us some idea of the social context in which Wright worked and some idea of the norms of the time that he challenged. Ignoring Wright's triumphs, the stories Hendrickson tells in *Plagued by Fire* illuminate the tragedies that Wright's genius overcame, and in doing so, they underscore "overcoming" as essential to his character.

Not mentioned in the book, Wright built ten buildings in Iowa. Taliesin, Wright's home in southwest Wisconsin and the site of much of the drama that makes up Hendrickson's tale, is sixty-six miles from Dubuque. Go there. You'll find that their stories are every bit as good as Hendrickson's.

The Merchant Prince of Black Chicago: Anthony Overton and the Building of a Financial Empire, by Robert E. Weems, Jr. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2020. xii, 210 pp. \$24.95 paperback.

Jennifer Delton is professor of history at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York. She is the author of *The Industrialists: How the National Association of Manufacturers Shaped American Capitalism* (2020).

Anthony Overton was the owner and operator of the Chicago-based Overton Hygienic Manufacturing Company, the maker of High Brown Face Powder and other products. Founded in 1898, Overton Hygienic remained a going concern until 1983. In the 1920s, Overton used strategic networking and marketing to expand his business interests into newspapers, banking, and insurance. The son of enslaved Louisianans, he was the first African American to head a major business conglomerate.

Business historian Robert Weems has written what will no doubt be the definitive study/biography of this important American businessman. Due in part to the lack of company records and Overton's own self-making myths, there has been a great deal of misinformation about him. Weems's main contribution is the incredible historical sleuthing he has done to recreate an evidence-based history of Overton's rise, fall, and unlikely survival as a businessman into the 1940s. This work included tracking down and assessing everything ever written about Overton, interviewing family members, diving deeply into Illinois history, and thoroughly scouring credit reports, insurance surveys, and city directories, which yielded important financial information about Overton's companies.

This is fundamentally a biography, a story of a complicated, talented man, born at "the dawn of freedom," who through hard work and business smarts built an empire and made himself a pillar of Chicago's black community, only to lose almost everything in the Great Depression, due in part to his legally questionable loans to family members. Competing against black businesswoman Madam C. J. Walker, Overton started the *Half-Century Magazine*, the main vehicle by which he advertised his wares, which was operated and staffed by black women and designed to attract black women readers. He was a "race man," who rejected crassly racist advertising and promoted race pride and cooperation. His company hired and promoted women into leadership positions. It would be easy for this story to veer into hagiography, but Weems is at his best in recounting Overton's legal troubles, which arose from Overton's strategic employment of his children and their spouses in his companies, and which also provide a window into the interactions between midwestern power structures and the black business community.

Weems has an eye for compelling details and the reader will not only learn about Overton's life and exploits, but also about black business in the Midwest in the twentieth century—the competition between black banks, the evolution of the black skin and haircare industry, the intersection of racial advancement and economic nationalism, all undergirded by the American apartheid system, which existed even in the

Midwest. Although born in the South and raised in Kansas, Overton was very much a midwesterner, which became clear when he won licenses to expand his Victory Life Insurance Company into New York and New Jersey markets; a fascinating story that reminds us of how regionally segregated markets were at this time. Finally, for people interested in state and local history, there is an excellent extended discussion of how the city of Chicago was able to restore and repurpose the *Chicago Bee Building* (built by Overton) and the Overton Hygienic Building as part of the revitalization of Bronzeville, the center of the Black Metropolis of the 1920s.

When Sunflowers Bloomed Red: Kansas and the Rise of Socialism in America, by R. Alton Lee and Steven Cox. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. 324 pp. Photographs, illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Greg Hall is professor of history at Western Illinois University. He is an expert on labor history in the American West and the author of *Harvest Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World and Agricultural Labors in the American West, 1905–1930* (2001).

During the early twentieth century, socialism in the United States was at its peak in popularity. It was as much of an urban movement as it was a rural movement as recent scholarship demonstrates with studies such as David Berman's *Radicalism in the Mountain West, 1890–1920* and Jeffrey Johnson's *"They Are All Red Out Here": Socialist Politics in the Pacific Northwest, 1895–1925*. R. Alton Lee and Steven Cox offer their own similar regional study with *When Sunflowers Bloomed Red*. Most students of American socialism are familiar with the *Appeal to Reason*, the longest running and most widely read socialist newspaper in American history, which was published out of Girard, Kansas. Yet, a thorough history of socialism and related radicalism in Kansas has not received substantial scholarly attention until now. Lee and Cox examine socialism in the state thematically. They analyze the movement with a series of distinct chapters in which the authors focus on writers, politicians, women, farmers, and workers. Chronology is present as well in the study, which makes the book an analytically coherent examination of socialism over time in Kansas. The authors caution, however, that a definitive history of socialism in the state would be difficult to create due to many short-lived socialist and radical periodicals produced in Kansas having not survived for researchers to examine. The same is true for a paucity of

archival materials such as letters, unpublished memoirs, and other records from the past, which researchers rely upon to bring the past to life. Nevertheless, the authors have provided readers with a detailed history based on both primary and secondary sources that illuminates socialism and its midwestern adherents from its rise to decline in Kansas.

The thematic chapters of *When Sunflowers Bloomed Red* explore the different types of socialists and the rise of the Socialist Party of America (SPA) in Kansas. Lee and Cox begin with an overview of the *Appeal to Reason* and its founding editor Julius Augustus Wayland. The publication became a financial success for Wayland, which few other socialist or radical newspapers could match. The success of the newspaper was significant for Girard; by 1912, it was the town's largest employer. The authors argue that many Kansans who became socialists followed a similar path that began with populism, a movement that swept through the Midwest in the 1890s and for a time took control of Kansas politics. This transition is an important feature of chapter two as Lee and Cox track the careers of several prominent socialists in the state. One of the more interesting chapters focuses on women socialists, with special emphasis on Annie Diggs, who played a key role in the woman's suffrage movement. One of the primary constituencies that socialist politicians sought to appeal to were wageworkers. Miners, particularly in the southeastern corner of Kansas, proved to be loyal socialist voters. Many were foreign-born, members of the United Mine Workers of America, and found socialist policies highly compelling.

The authors provide a chapter devoted entirely to the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the state. Although the IWW had socialists at its founding convention and had socialists in its ranks, it was not a socialist organization as the authors seem to imply. The chapter on the IWW could have been more nuanced in the connections between Wobblies (IWW members) and socialists in Kansas. They may have had similar end goals for a just and equitable society, but their means of getting there were very different. The authors are more adept with their analysis of the Nonpartisan League in the state, which was also not a socialist organization but had similar policy goals to the SPA. The last chapter is somewhat problematic in that even though it examines the activities of a number of leftists, communists, and radical organizations in the state during the Great Depression, much of the material in the chapter focuses on New Deal policies and politics, undermining the chapter's continuity with the other chapters in the book.

Despite a few minor quibbles with *When Sunflowers Bloomed Red*, the study is a significant contribution to the history of Kansas and to the Midwest in general. Although socialism was not as strong in Kansas as

it was in other midwestern states, Lee and Cox clearly demonstrate that a strain of radicalism pervaded a number of counties, towns, and cities in the state. Moreover, their scholarship underscores similar findings made by other scholars that reveal the presence of a notable level of radicalism that manifested itself in the largely rural central part of the country and in other regions as well, especially at the turn of the twentieth century. Jon Lauck, in *The Lost Region* (2013), has encouraged more midwestern scholarship in order for the region to be on par with the well-developed historical focuses that one can find in the history of the South, New England, and the West. *When Sunflowers Bloomed Red* is a welcome addition to the history of the American Midwest that should have appeal to students, scholars, and general readers.

The Rural Schools of Madison County: A Vanishing Heritage, by Ronald Howell. Winterset, IA: Ronald Howell, 2019. 254 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$44.00 paperback

Reviewer Franklin Yoder is an adjunct professor of history at the University of Iowa. He is the author of *All in One Room: A History of Country Schools in Johnson County, Iowa* (2018).

The history of rural schools in Madison County, Iowa, is well documented in Ronald Howell's account of these now defunct institutions. Books about rural schools often focus on personal memories of former students and teachers or they emphasize data about schools. Howell has included both approaches in this history by integrating each of those elements in this work.

The initial chapters cover a variety of topics related to rural schools. In addition to a brief history of rural school laws, the reader will find chapters on topics ranging from descriptions of outhouses to school fires and celebrations. The chapters in this section include anecdotes and historical documents that enrich the text.

The largest section of the book is devoted to histories of individual schools. Grouped by township, an account of the early history of each school provides data about the building along with one or two photographs. In a few instances, current photos of the school building are also included. This section of the book will be especially interesting to former students and teachers of the Madison County schools but of less interest to the general reader.

Photographs throughout the text add a visual dimension that gives readers a taste of how rural schools and students appeared. The amount

of data and information about each school is impressive and certainly represents many hours of research and data collection. This book adds to the list of books that tell the story of rural schools in Iowa.

Old-Fashioned Modernism: Rural Masculinity and Midwestern Literature, by Andy Oler. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2019. xi, 234 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

C. Elizabeth Raymond is Grace A. Griffen Professor of History at the University of Nevada, Reno. She is a scholar of American landscapes and sense of place, U.S. regionalism, and American women's history.

In *Old-Fashioned Modernism*, Andy Oler makes an argument considerably broader than his subtitle suggests. While the subject of his book is the depiction of masculinity in a range of (mostly) twentieth-century novels from the official twelve-state census district of the Middle West, his conclusions range beyond fiction into matters of contemporary and historical regional identity. At its heart this is a consideration of how midwestern literature “counters the simple binary of progressive urbanity and retrograde rurality . . . [by] imagining the Midwest as a comparatively inclusive middle ground that joins past and future” (6). Oler shows the reader how this was done by examining a series of twentieth-century novels “from the Great Lakes to the Great Plains” (6).

His study begins at the historical moment when American masculinity itself was in transition. The nineteenth century had traditionally measured manhood in terms of character and self-control. By the early twentieth century, however, this model was decidedly old-fashioned. In fiction and in fact, it was being displaced by a newer, personality-based male ideal that defined success in terms of wealth and corporate expansion (47). At this “disorderly modern moment” (14), Oler suggests, midwestern writers forthrightly depicted the challenges faced by both men and women responding to a changing society.

The works he analyzes foreground the experiences of men. *Old-Fashioned Modernism* begins with Sherwood Anderson's 1920 *Poor White*, then moves to Dawn Powell's *The Story of a Country Boy* and Lorine Nie-decker's multimedia poem *Next Year or I Fly My Rounds, Tempestuous* (both 1935). The Great Plains are represented by William Cunningham's *The Green Corn Rebellion* (1935) and *The Home Place* by Wright Morris (1948). *Not Without Laughter* (1930), Langston Hughes's semi-autobiographical novel, extends the argument beyond the rural and small town Midwest to include urban Chicago. That novel offers a view of black

masculinity that “challenges the assumed spaces and narratives of African American modernity” (163). In a concluding chapter Oler extends his discussion to the post-industrial Midwest, in brief explorations of J. Ryan Stradal’s *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* (2015) and Bonnie Jo Campbell’s short story, “Boar Taint” (2009).

These works, Oler claims, are simultaneously old-fashioned and modernist. Stylistically the texts are realistic or naturalistic (with the exception of Niedecker’s collage-poem), but they are also replete with modernist indeterminacy and anxiety. The writers deploy techniques like fragmentation to convey the “inchoate lack of order [that] is a key feature of modern life” (24). Collectively, he concludes, they try to address that lack of order by strategies of “coping, managing, negotiating” (30) rather than radical reconfiguration. The works do not offer resolution of the difficulties they describe. The authors and their protagonists seek—and sometimes occupy—an uncertain middle ground between nostalgic ruralism and dismissive urbanism. Oler sees this trait as regionally characteristic. “Much Midwestern cultural production,” he observes, “is preoccupied with questions of middleness” (30).

Although a study of six novels and a poem is not sufficient to demonstrate this important point, *Old-Fashioned Modernism* does offer some promising examples. A segment on the production of “race records” in small midwestern towns, inserted somewhat randomly into the chapter on *Not Without Laughter*, discusses the disparity between the literary portrayal of jazz as an exclusively urban phenomenon and the reality of relentless band travel to small-town venues and recording studios throughout the region. Actual historical complexity belies the superficial division between rural and urban that condemned the Midwest to increasing national irrelevance in the late twentieth century. Consideration of a 1938 post office mural, *Cooperative Planning and Development of Wauseon* (Ohio) alongside Anderson’s *Poor White* is another method Oler employs to extend his evidence beyond literary works. These instances of interdisciplinary analysis suggest the potential richness of a more sustained demonstration of his concluding claim: “Despite a national push for centralization, profit and efficiency, people and communities in the Midwest promote local and regional outcomes—allowing for growth and modernization, but moderating those through experience, tradition, and local needs” (168). Even readers unintrigued by Oler’s topic of early-twentieth-century masculinity in literature will find much worth pondering in his suggestive connections to expansive themes of middle western regional identity.

America Ascendant: The Rise of American Exceptionalism, by Dennis M. Spragg. Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2019. xxi, 409 pp. Notes, images, bibliography, index. \$34.95, hardcover.

Niko Letsos is a JD-PhD student at Northwestern University in Illinois where he specializes in the history of U.S. foreign relations, economic history and legal history.

According to this book's back cover, broadcasting professional and media researcher Dennis Spragg aims to show how the Second World War's media-government alliance established the case for American exceptionalism. It would be easy to imagine this book as a contribution to the field by focusing on that alliance, in line with Wendy Wall's excellent *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (2008).

That was not the book that was written. Spragg does not engage Wall or other historians who have worked on state-media relations at all. Instead, the book traces the background and success of FDR's supposed goal of doing away with "expansionism as a national imperative and replacing it with interventionism" as proof of American exceptionalism (xiii). It would be fine to write a book trying to argue for American exceptionalism. The author of such a book would have to be clear-eyed when addressing idealists' arguments detailing failings to live up to U.S. rhetoric and realists' points on how the U.S. behaves like other great powers. A book on exceptionalism ought therefore to have an international perspective. Calling one nation exceptional is inherently a relativistic claim, as it speaks to some unexceptional average that defines most nations.

Spragg did none of those things. The text's normative objective led to an unfocused, rambling book. There is a chapter centered on Alexander Hamilton. The Second World War makes up only a minority of the book. The book ends with points on the problems that the U.S. faced in the 2010s, tied to the "largely liberal news media [being] aligned with one political party and, increasingly, the leftist wing of that party" (334). Spragg is more interested in telling the reader America is exceptional rather than providing evidence of something, in fact, exceptional.

Spragg sets up strawmen to knock down. Much of the United States's difficulty with Latin America is because Latin Americans "resented" America's "cultural, economic, and political" achievements (33). He brushes aside one of the most famous U.S. imperial adventures abroad, arguing that "the United States did more in fifty years to aid Philippine development than Spain did in five hundred years" (37).

Spragg does not consider that the possible sources for that putative progress have to do with general twentieth century technological breakthroughs and how poor and devastated the Philippines was in 1946. MacArthur in Japan gets hagiographic treatment, while the Reverse Course goes unmentioned. "Revisionists," meanwhile, are alone in condemning "the American strategy that supported regime change or influenced elections in nations such as Iran and Guatemala" (317).

The history Spragg tells to make these points covers well-known episodes in U.S. history, concentrated on presidents. It is mostly a correct narration, while there are many slipups that stand out. For instance, American philanthropy has deeper roots than America in the wake of the Gilded Age (69). The British did not think they were agreeing to quickly end their hold on India when they signed onto the Atlantic Charter (95). The Korean War did not prevent future Maoist brinkmanship (309). Spragg strikes many right notes on race, for example, when talking about stereotypes in World War II media, but makes dubious claims as well. While FDR "did not pass any significant civil rights legislation . . . people of color worshipped him," Spragg contends (105). An African American majority indeed swung for FDR in all of his national elections aside from 1940, but that is beside the point. A nuanced historian would not essentialize a large and varied group as worshipping someone. It is that type of generalization which populates this book.

In the book's middle chapters, there is interesting and more specialized history on Washington, D.C., looping John Ford, Walt Disney, and other media luminaries into the war effort. There is incisive analysis of how controversies related to media-government coordination were resolved and films made and received. Even in these chapters, the historical reasoning and sequencing is more often uncertain. Spragg's focus on selling the war seems to stem from Dwight Eisenhower's dictum: "Morale is the greatest single factor in a successful war" (188). Spragg does not foreground that point but hides it in a chapter outlining the progress of WWII battles and offering plot summaries for Oscar-winning movies. Spragg makes no attempt to transition between the high politics surrounding Allied espionage within Nazi Germany and detailing the release of and actors in *Mrs. Miniver*.

This book should serve as a warning to writers trying to cover too much and a lesson in how not to wage historiographical war.

The Preacher's Wife: The Precarious Power of Evangelical Women Celebrities, by Kate Bowler. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. 338 pp. Glossary, images, appendices, notes, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Rebecca A. Koerselman is an Associate Professor of History Education at Northwestern College in Orange City, IA. She specializes in twentieth-century U.S. history with particular emphasis on gender and evangelicalism.

Born on a farm near Alton, Iowa, Robert H. Schuller, the fifth son of Dutch immigrant parents, became the widely recognized evangelical figure of the Crystal Cathedral and the “Hour of Power” program. But what role did Schuller’s wife play in his meteoric rise? Arvella De Haan, born near Newkirk, Iowa, was playing the organ in the Newkirk Reformed Church when Schuller, a guest preacher, walked in. According to Schuller, he saw her and knew she was the woman he would marry: “It was love at first sight” (119).

But was it love at first sight or first sound? Kate Bowler explains that Schuller invested in Arvella’s visible and invisible talents. He preached the sermons, and Arvella played the organ. When Schuller’s opulent Crystal Cathedral opened in Garden Grove, California, it housed a large pipe organ for Arvella to play. She also became the executive producer. In that role, she led a twenty-five member production staff, chose the scripture, solos, choir pieces, and dictated the staging and camera angles. According to Bowler, “she was a stickler for the details and relished her role as the silent orchestrator of the television program that made her husband a star and her church into an icon of Christian entertainment. In no uncertain terms, Arvella told the *LA Times*, ‘my career is my husband’” (120).

In *The Preacher’s Wife*, historian Kate Bowler chronicles the roles of women in an American evangelical landscape that was generally opposed to women in pastoral leadership. Bowler examines women in five categories: the preacher, the homemaker, the talent (often musical, like in the case of Arvella Schuller), the counselor, and the beauty. Two key issues shape the public lives of evangelical women, according to Bowler: complementarian theologies that limited their visibility in leadership and ordained roles, and the market forces that governed the industries that sustained their careers. Bowler concludes that the power of women evangelical celebrities is therefore quite fragile, lacking institutional and structural power that most evangelical men inhabit. From the 1970s forward, according to Bowler, conservative Christians doubled down on the Christian family as a “bulwark against changing cultural forces,” (68), yet they simultaneously allowed the growth of an industry that catered to Christian women and emphasized their domestic life.

Bowler makes a compelling case, studded with lively interviews, a glossary of terminology, pictures, charts, graphs, and appendices of

quantitative information on women, megachurches, seminaries and ordination. Given the wealth of quantitative evidence in the appendices, would it be possible to quantify exactly how much market power women like Beth Moore, Jen Hatmaker and Joanna Gaines wield? She also analyzes the similarities and differences in the treatment of Asian American, Latina, and African American women celebrities, who navigate the roles of leadership and commercial success even more carefully. Bowler writes absorbing accounts of the historical role of women in leadership and as missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her account of women as counselors and therapists is particularly compelling. Bowler even allows the reader to hear her own voice as she includes her own questions and comments during the interviews.

In her conclusion, Bowler examines the significance of the #metoo era and the Trump presidency for evangelical women. Perhaps Bowler could more fully address the degree to which the recent visibility of evangelical women, such as presidential advisor Paula White, may be a deliberate use of image to counteract the growing disgust with predatory male leadership in churches and the larger American culture, brought to public light in the #metoo era. Bowler's strengths are many, as she balances writing for a popular audience with her academic expertise. She writes with warmth and humor in her descriptions of evangelical women and clearly delights in this complex and fascinating topic.

Index to Volume 79

- Accidental drowning, 331–33
Adams, John, 217
Adams, John Quincy, 217
Adolescence, 311–41; beginning of, 316, 340–41; biological definition, 314–15; in the eastern U.S., 314–15, 317, 329, 337, 339, 341; end of, 316–17, 340–41
Adolescent employment, 324–28; table illustrating, 325, 338
Adolescent self-determination, 329–331
Advice literature (books and pamphlets), 312–13, 315
African Americans, 36, 41, 47, 141, 157, 237–38, 259, 360–61
Age-graded public schools, 313, 316, 341
Age of consent, 53
Age of Fear: Othing and American Identity during World War I, reviewed, 100–02
Age of majority, 45, 53, 313–16, 320, 322–23, 331, 340
The Alchemy of Slavery: Human Bondage and Emancipation in the Illinois Country, 1730–1865, reviewed, 85–87
Alexander, Thomas G., book by, reviewed, 292–94
Aley, Ginette, book review by, 300–01
Alger, Horatio, 136
Allosso, Dan, book by, reviewed, 386–88
Amana Colonies, 176
America Ascendant: The Rise of American Exceptionalism, reviewed, 398–400
American Dream, 344, 366
American exceptionalism, 174–75
American history (subject), 220, 226–31, 233, 240–42
American Legion, 245
American Library Association, 131, 139, 146, 148, 151
American Republic Insurance, 161, 171
American Revolution, 354–55
Americanism, 217, 226–27, 231–32, 244–45
Ames, Iowa, 343–66; population of, 349–52
Ames Chamber of Commerce, 355–56
Ames City Council, 351–53, 355, 359–62
Ames City Directory, 360
Ames Daily Intelligencer, 347
Ames Daily Tribune, 343, 345, 352–55, 360–63
Ames High School, 352
Ames Industrial Development, Inc., 355–56
Ames League of Women Voters, 355–56
Anderson, Douglas Firth, book review by, 199–201
Anderson, Gary Clayton, book by, reviewed, 380–82
Anonymity, 248, 254, 259–60, 268, 273
Anthony, Susan B., 43
Anticatholicism, 259, 262–68, 274, 280
Anticommunist (American) propaganda, 157, 173, 182, 185
Anti-public school activism, 261, 314
Antisuffragists, 42–43
Applied patriotism, 231–34, 242–43
Apprenticeship, 316–17, 324–25, 327–28, 330, 334, 337–38
Apps, Jerry, book by, reviewed, 106–08
Armstrong, Louis, 178
Aron, Raymond, 156

- Arson, 261–62, 268–69
The Athlete's Guide, 58
 Austen, Jane, 141
Authorized Agents: Publication and Diplomacy in the Era of Indian Removal, reviewed, 190–92
Avant-Garde in the Cornfields: Architecture, Landscape, and Preservation in New Harmony, reviewed, 308–10
- Baby Boom, 343
 Barbells, 56, 65–66, 71, 78, 83
 Barber, Marilyn, 329–30
 Baseball, 70–7, 74, 78
 Basketball players, 68–70, 81; image of, 69, 70
 Bass, Patrick, book review by, 298–300
 Beardshear, William M., 212
 Beauregard, Robert, 344, 354, 365
 Beck, Joseph, 38
 Beck, Paul N., book review by, 303–05
 Beienburg, Sean, book by, reviewed, 102–04
 Bell, A.F., 35–42, 53
 Beltman, Brian W., book by, reviewed, 199–201
 Benn, David W., book review by, 189–90
 Bennett, Eric, 165–66
 Bernstein, Leonard, 178
 Betten, Antonie, 34
 Bibliotherapy, 141, 147–48, 151
 Big Sioux River, 1, 21, 23
 Bilasch, Theodore, 332
The Bird's Christmas Carol, 141
 Blake, John Joseph, 329, 335–36
 Blake, William, 335–36
 Bloemendaal, E. J. G., 15
 Bloody shirt, 245
 Board of Control of State Institutions, 121, 123, 125–32, 135, 149–50
 Bolks, Seine, 19
The Bone and Sinew of the Land: America's Forgotten Black Pioneers and the Struggle for Equality, reviewed, 192–94
 Books as therapy, 141, 147–48, 151
 Boone, *Black Hawk, and Crockett in 1833: Unsettling the Mythic West*, reviewed, 290–92
 Bootlegging, 249, 260, 262–68, 281
 Bowes, John P., book review by, 190–92
 Bowler, Kate, book by, reviewed, 400–01
 Boyd, Willard L. "Sandy," 166; book by, reviewed, 203–05
 Breeders Association of Story County, 347
 Bremer, Jeff, book review by, 386–88
 Brigham, Johnson, 126; image of, 126
Brigham Young and the Expansion of the Mormon Faith, reviewed, 292–94
 Brown, Eliza H., 49–53
 Brown, Thomas J., book by, reviewed, 305–06
 Browning, Judkin, book co-authored by, reviewed, 384–86
 Brummelkamp, Antonie, 4–5
 Buchanan, Rex C., book co-authored by, reviewed, 189–90
 Bucharest, Romania, 164
 Buck Construction, 357–58
 Budapest, Hungary, 164
 Buena Vista County, Iowa, 247–83
 Buena Vista County Board of Supervisors, 268–69
Buffalo Bill Cody: A Man of the West, reviewed, 95–96
 Bulgaria, 164
- Calliope, Iowa, 21–27, 31, 33; raid on, 23–25
Campaign for Wilson's Creek: The Fight for Missouri Begins, reviewed, 92–93
 Campney, Brent M.S., book by, reviewed, 376–78
 Capen, Edward, 66–68, 71, 79–80
 Captain M., 361
 Carey, Jack, 274, 276, 279
 Carey, Miriam E., 121–22, 129–32, 138–42, 144–50; image of, 130
 Carney Hall, 260–62
 Carr, Jo Ann Daly, book edited by, reviewed, 300–01
 Carver, George Washington, 360–61

- Catalogue and Rules for Prison Libraries*, 131
- Catholics, 259, 262–68, 274, 280, 313, 328–29, 335–36
- Catt, Carrie Chapman, 41
- Cavanaugh, Catherine, 44–47
- Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 356
- Censorship in libraries, 135–37
- Central Intelligence Agency, 165–66
- Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, 240
- Charis-Carlson, Jeff, book review by, 111–13
- Chastity, 35–38, 41, 44–46
- Chemical Lands: Pesticides, Aerial Spraying, and Health in North America's Grasslands Since 1945*, reviewed, 108–09
- Cherokee County, Iowa, 17–18
- Cherokee Mental Health Hospital, 129, 137, 153, 270–71
- Chicago, Illinois, 348
- Chicago and North Western railroad, 356
- Child labor, 312, 322
- China, 165
- Chui, Edward, 66–68, 79
- Civic virtue, 216–17, 231
- Civil Rights Era, 361
- Civil War, 13–14, 16–17, 44, 230; memory of, 212–15, 220, 230, 233, 238, 245–46, 327–28
- Civil War Congress and the Creation of Modern America: A Revolution on the Home Front*, reviewed, 93–94
- Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*, reviewed, 305–06
- The Civilian Conservation Corps in Wisconsin: Nature's Army at Work*, reviewed, 106–08
- Clarinda Mental Health Hospital, 129, 144
- Clarke, Dustin S., article co-authored by, 311–41
- Claussen, H.R., 42
- Clemmons, Linda, book review by, 380–82
- Cleveland, Grover, 226–27
- Cliburn, Van, 178
- Clinton County, Iowa, 46–47
- Clow, Richmond L., 198–99
- Code of Iowa, 352–53, 356–57
- Colavito, Jason, book by, reviewed, 371–73
- Cold War, 153–85, 344–45
- Cold War liberalism, 171–73
- Cole, Perry O., 240
- “Colony before Party: The Ethnic Origins of Sioux County’s Political Tradition,” 1–34
- Columbia University, 61
- Compulsory school attendance laws, 312–14, 322, 341
- Conard, Rebecca, book review by, 106–08, 113–14, 373–75
- Conference of Natural Beauty, 359
- Congressional Library, 223
- Connon, David, book by, reviewed, 301–03
- Conzett, Josiah, 311–12, 317–18, 323, 326, 329, 331–32, 334–35
- Conzett, Nellie, 311–12, 317–18, 329–30
- Copperheads (political slang), 13
- County attorney, 246–83; distinction from prosecutor, 251
- Courtwright, Julie, book review by, 108–09
- Cownie, John, 125, 127
- Cox, Anna-Lisa, book by, reviewed, 192–94
- Cox, Steven, book co-authored by, reviewed, 393–95
- Cracow, Poland, 163, 181
- “Criminal Seduction and Women’s Citizenship in Iowa, 1865–1879,” 35–55
- Crumbaker, William P., 132, 136, 144
- Csaplár, Vilmos, 179
- Cultural diplomacy, 153–85; definition of, 155–56
- Curtis, Florence Rising, 135–37
- Cutter, Barbara, book review by, 382–84
- Czechoslovakia, 164
- Daily Iowa State Register*, 43, 54
- Dakota Territory, 2, 23
- Dakota tribe, 18
- Davis, McKinley “Deacon,” image of, 69
- Day, James, 50–52

- De Witt, Petra, book review by, 296–98
- Deere & Company, 161–62, 176
- DeLand, James, 256–58, 264
- Delaware County, Iowa, 49–50
- A Delicate Aggression: Savagery and Survival in the Iowa Writers' Workshop*, reviewed, 111–13
- Dell, Charles, 326
- Delton, Jennifer, book review by, 391–93
- Democracy and Education*, 244
- Democratic Party, 9–16, 21, 26–27, 30, 34
- Demos, John, 316
- Demos, Virginia, 316
- Des Moines, Iowa, 11, 15, 25–26, 47, 163
- Des Moines Public Library, 148
- Developed land, definitions of, 344, 352–53, 358
- Dewey, John, 244
- Dickins, Charles, 140–41
- Dickinson, North Dakota, 58–59
- Doran, Walter A., 236
- Dowling, David O., book by, reviewed, 111–13
- Doyle, Chris, 82
- Dubuque, Iowa (city), 311–41
- Dubuque County, Iowa, 311–41
- Dubuque Board of Education, 322
- Dubuque Emigrating Company to California, 330
- Duroc hogs, 347
- Dutch settlements, 1–34; assimilation, 3, 6–7, 9, 12, 26–28; immigration, 3–8, 12, 16–17; opposition to, 12–13, 21–27, 32–33; politics, 9–34
- East Coast, 312, 314–15, 317, 329, 337, 339, 341, 345
- East Germany, 156, 181
- Eberle, Mark E., book by, reviewed, 95–98
- Efford, Alison Clark, book review by, 98–100
- Eisenhower, Dwight, 75
- Eldora, Iowa, 129, 143, 145
- Ellickson, Robert, 252, 271–73
- Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps*, reviewed, 196–97
- EMC Insurance, 162
- The End of the Myth From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America*, reviewed, 367–69
- Engle, Hualing Nieh, *see* Hualing Nieh
- Engle, Paul, 160, 162–83; image of, 163; retirement, 178
- Entireties doctrine, 256–57
- An Environmental History of the Civil War*, reviewed, 384–86
- Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains*, reviewed, 201–03
- Esplin, Scott C., book by, reviewed, 87–89
- Etcheson, Nicole, book review by, 288–90
- European Superiority Complex, 156, 166, 174, 177
- Evangelical Protestantism, 313, 316, 335
- Exxon Corp, 161
- Fair Housing Commission (Ames), 362
- Fair Housing Ordinance (Ames), 361–62
- Fair View Farm, 343–366; image of, 359
- Federal Highway Act, 348
- Federal Housing Administration, 365
- The Federalist Frontier: Settler Politics in the Old Northwest, 1783–1840*, reviewed, 288–90
- Felch, Alpheus, 10
- Filene, Benjamin, book review by, 104–06
- Fines, 266–27
- Finkelman, Paul, book co-edited by, reviewed, 93–94
- Florence Crittenden Home for Unwed Mothers, 270–71
- Football, 56, 60, 67, 72–78, 81–82
- Ford Foundation, 158, 161, 167
- Foreign Leaders Program, 158

- Fort Des Moines, 146–48; image of, 147
- Fort Dodge, Iowa, 248
- Fort Madison Penitentiary, 129
- Franklin, Benjamin, 217
- Free Democracy Party, 10
- Free School Act, 14
- Free Soil Party, 10–11
- “The Free Voter” pamphlet, 30–33
- Free will, 313, 335
- Frese, Stephen J., book review by, 109–11
- Friedrich and Sons Construction, 357–59
- Friedrich, Bob, Jr., 363
- Friedrich, Kurt, 363
- Friedrich, Reinhard, Jr., 361–62, 364
- Friedrich, Reinhard, Sr., 359–60, 363
- “From Fair View Farm to Parkview Heights: Involuntary Annexation and the Middle-American Dream,” 343–66
- The Frontier Army: Episodes from Dakota and the West*, reviewed, 303–05
- Fulbright Program, 158, 162, 177, 182
- Fulbright, William J., 177
- Functional strength, 62–63, 83
- Galena, Illinois, 323, 332, 334
- Galush, William J., book review by, 306–08
- Garfield, James A., 218
- Garrison, Zachary Stuart, book by, reviewed, 296–98
- Garth, Richard, 68–69
- Gear, Clarissa, 323, 332, 334–35
- Gear, Maria, 323, 334
- Georgetown University, 247
- Gergely, Ágnes, 175
- German Americans on the Middle Border: From Antislavery to Reconciliation, 1830–1877*, 296–98
- Germans in Illinois*, reviewed, 98–100
- G.I. Bill, *see Servicemen’s Readjustment Act*
- Giddle, Elmer, 274–81
- Gitchie Manitou the Mighty, 18
- Globalism, 170–71
- Glymph, Thavolia, book by, reviewed, 382–84
- Godwin, P.M., 263–64
- Golden Jubilee Pageant, 1–2, 5–7, 18–19
- Grand Army Advocate*, 236
- Grand Army of the Republic, 211–46
- Grandin, Greg, book by, reviewed, 367–69
- Granger, Barlow, 10
- Grant, Ulysses S., 218
- The Great Depression, 348–49, 365
- Great River City: How the Mississippi Shaped St. Louis*, reviewed, 369–71
- Griggs, Burke W., book co-authored by, reviewed, 189–90
- Grimes, James, 10
- Guiler, Thomas A., book review by, 308–10
- Gunkel, Ann Hetzel, book co-authored by, reviewed, 306–08
- H and F Builders, 357–58
- Habitat for Humanity, 361–64
- Hajdik, Anna Thompson, book review by, 87–89
- Hall, Greg, book review by, 393–95
- Hämäläinen, Pekka, book by, reviewed, 286–88
- Haraszti, Miklós, 180
- Harbour, Jennifer, book review by, 192–94
- Harris, M. Keith, 215
- “Harvard of the West,” 223
- Harvard University, 60, 62, 223
- Haudenshield, Jacob, 325
- Hausmann, Stephen, book review by, 286–88
- Haven, Norman, 48–49
- Hayes, Rutherford B., 218
- Haygood, Nancy, 35–38, 40, 53
- “He Can’t Vote,” 354
- The Heartland: An American History*, reviewed, 185–87
- Heemstra, Tjeerd, 22–23
- Heerman, M. Scott, book by, reviewed, 85–87
- Hendrickson, Paul, book by, reviewed, 390–91
- Henry Ford’s Five-Dollar Day, 349
- Henry, O., 141
- Hevel, Michael S., book review by, 203–05

- The History of Starved Rock*, reviewed, 373–75
- History of Story County*, 346
- Hoffman, Merritt, 247–48
- Hoffman, Peter, 326, 333, 335
- Hoganson, Kristin L., book by, reviewed, 187–89
- Holland, Michigan, 9–10
- Homestead Act of 1862, 14, 18, 29
- Hommerding, Christopher, book review by, 96–98
- Homosexuality, 273–80
- Hospers, Henry, 3, 8, 10, 16–17, 20; image of, 20, 21–28
- Hostile Heartland: Racism, Repression, and Resistance in the Midwest*, reviewed, 376–78
- “‘How about Some Muscle?’: C.H. McCloy and Strength Training Research at the University of Iowa, 1940–1959, 56–83
- Howard, Ashley, book review by, 376–78
- Howell, Ronald, book by, reviewed, 395–96
- Hungary, 155, 163–64
- Hunter, Edith M., article by, 343–66; book review by, 305–06
- In God’s Presence: Chaplains, Missionaries, and Religious Space during the American Civil War*, reviewed, 194–95
- Independence Mental Health Hospital, 129, 132, 144
- Indianapolis, Indiana, 222
- Industrial School for Boys, 129, 135–36, 143–45
- Industrial School for Girls, 129, 141, 143–45
- Ingraham, Prentiss, book by, reviewed, 95
- Insiders in Buena Vista County, 254–62, 272–73, 277–78, 280
- Institution for Feeble-Minded Children, 128–29, 137, 270–71
- Institute for International Education, 161, 176
- Institute of Cultural Relations (Hungary), 163, 165, 172
- The Interior Borderlands: Regional Identity in the Midwest and Great Plains*, reviewed, 285–86
- Interstate Highway Act, 365
- Involuntary annexation, 343–366
- Iowa City, Iowa, 153–54, 161–64, 166, 170–184
- Iowa City high school class, image of, 339
- Iowa Confederates in the Civil War*, reviewed, 301–03
- Iowa Department of Transportation, 351
- Iowa Federation of Women’s Clubs, 124
- Iowa General Assembly, 11, 14–16, 25, 233
- Iowa Highway Commission, 348–49, 351
- Iowa International Writing Program, 153–85; funding, 164–67; uniqueness of program, 168–70
- Iowa Library Association, 124
- Iowa Library Commission, 124, 131, 133, 150
- Iowa Library Quarterly*, 150
- Iowa Soldiers’ Orphans’ Home, 128–30
- Iowa Star*, 10
- Iowa State College, 212, 347, 349–51, 360–61
- Iowa State College Dairy Industries Building, 349
- Iowa State Traveling Library, 150
- Iowa State University, 351, 356, 360–61
- Iowa Supreme Court, 36–54, 356
- Iowa Woman Suffrage Association, 43–44, 47
- IREX, 158
- Iron Curtain, 162, 178–79, 184
- Jackson, Kenneth, 354, 362
- Jefferson, Thomas, 217
- Jenkinson, Clay S., book co-edited by, 388–89
- Johnson, Colin, 273
- Johnson, Doyle “Nig,” 274–78
- Johnson Foundation, 163
- Johnson, Lyndon, 359
- Johnson, Russell, 327–28

- Johnson, Sarah, 48–49
 Jones, Edith Kathleen, 131–32, 146
Journal of Physical Education, 63–64
 Jung, Partick J., book by, reviewed 84–85; book review by, 290–92
- Kansas Baseball, 1858–1941*, reviewed, 95–96
 Kansas-Nebraska Act, 10, 12
 Karamanski, Theodore J., book review by, 384–86
 Kehrborg, Richard F., book review by, 93–94
 Kelderman, Frank, book by, reviewed, 190–92
 Keller, Ron J., book by, reviewed, 89–90
 Kennan, George F., 157
 Kennon, Donald R., book co-edited by, reviewed, 93–94
 Kett, Joseph, 313–15, 330
 Khrushchev, Nikita, 345
 Kingsley, Allen, 49–52
 Kinne, La Vega, G., 125, 128
 Kitchen debate, 345–46
 Klumpp, Andrew, article by, 1–34
 Know Nothing Party, 9, 11, 13
 Koerselman, Rebecca A., book review by, 400–01
 Konrád, György, 180
 Korean War, 74
 Kramer, Paul, 159
 Kretschmer, Herbert, 326
 Ku Klux Klan, 258–68, 274, 277, 279–81
 Kutzler, Evan, book by, reviewed, 298–300
- Lahlum, Lori Ann, book co-edited by, reviewed, 201–03
 Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, 223
Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power, reviewed, 286–88
 László, Szabolcs, article by, 153–85
 Lauck, Jon K., book edited by, reviewed, 285–86
 Le Cocq, Francis, Sr., 29–30
 Leaving home (adolescents), 328–30
 Lee, R. Alton, book co-authored by, reviewed, 393–95
 Leggett, James, 237–38
- Lehman, Christopher P., book by, reviewed, 378–80
 Lenderink, Henry J., 30–33
 Letsos, Niko, book review by, 398–400
 Levitt, William, 366
 Levittown, New York, 358–59
 Lewis, Mary, 313–14
 Librarianship, professionalization of, 122–51
 Library Bill of Rights, 148
 Library Services and Reconstruction Act (Title IV-A), 150
A Life on the Middle West's Never-Ending Frontier, reviewed, 203–05
 Lincoln, Abraham, 12
Lincoln in the Illinois Legislature, reviewed, 89–90
Lincoln's Confidant: The Life of Noah Brooks, reviewed, 91–92
 Lindell, Lisa, article by, 121–51
 Little, Jim, 255–58
Living by Inches: The Smells, Sounds Tastes, and Feeling of Captivity in Civil War Prisons, reviewed, 298–300
 Lofaro, Michael A., book edited by, reviewed, 290–92
 Lomax, Michael E., book review by, 95–96
 Lost Cause, 220, 230
 Lotte, A. Morris, 150
 Lyftogt, Kenneth L., book review by, 92–93
- Mack, Jennifer E., article co-authored by, 311–41
 Madison, James, 217
 Mallea, Amahia, book review by, 369–71
 Manhattan Project, 349
 Manifest Destiny, 352
 Marathon, Iowa, 263
 Marietta Academy, 59–60
 Marietta, Ohio, 58–60
 Marion County, Iowa, 11–12
 Markley, James E. E., 239
 Marriage, age at, 317–20; graph showing marriage age, 319
 Marshall Plan, 156
 Martin, Archie, 360–61

- Martin, Nancy, 360–61
 Masculinity, *see rural masculinity*
Mason City Globe-Gazette, 217, 234
 Mason City, Iowa, 211–46
 Mason, Kevin, book review by, 198–99
 Massachusetts compulsory school law, 313
Massacre in Minnesota: The Dakota War of 1862, the Most Violent Ethnic Conflict in American History, reviewed, 380–82
 Maulden, Kristopher, book by, reviewed, 288–90
 McCloy, Charles Harold, 56–83; image of, 61, 77
 McConnell, Stuart, 215
 Memoirs as primary source material, 249–50
 Memorial College (Oberlin, KS), 220–21
 Memorial University, 211–46; alternate locations for, 222–24; enrollment, 235–38, 241, 243; image of envisioned plan, 216; image of first academic building, 225; normal department, 240–41
 Meningitis, 331
 Men's Reformatory at Anamosa, 129, 139–40, 144
The Merchant Prince of Black Chicago: Anthony Overton and the Building of a Financial Empire, reviewed, 391–93
 Mergenthal, Rebekah M.K., book review by, 367–69
 Mexican migrant workers, 255–58
 Mexico Border Traveling Library Service, 146
 Middle-class ideals, 312–13
 Military drill, 232–33, 236
 Military instruction, 233–34
 Miller, Benjamin L., book by, reviewed, 194–95
 Miller, Char, book co-edited by, reviewed, 388–89
 Mills County, Iowa, 35
 Ministry of Culture (Hungary), 163
 Ministry of Interior, 164–65
The Misunderstood Mission of Jean Nicolet: Uncovering the Story of the 1634 Journey, reviewed, 84–85
 Mississippi River, 176, 184, 333
 Mitchell, Robert B., book review by, 91–92
 Mitton, Frank, 327
 Moline, Illinois, 162, 176
 Moore, Jane Ann, book co-authored by, reviewed, 375–76
 Moore, William F., book co-authored by, reviewed, 375–76
The Mormon Handcart Migration: "Tounge nor pen can never tell the sorrow," reviewed, 294–96
 Morrill Act, 232
 Morris, Betty Lee, 349
 Morris, Edward, 346, 348–49, 352–57; image of, 348
 Morris, Gertrude (Rutheford), 346–47
 Morris, Leslee, 349, 357–58, 363
 Morris, Mary Jane, 349
 Morris, Neva, 343, 346–49, 357–58, 364–66; image of, 348; image of home, 350, 365
 Morris, Walter, 346–47
 Morris, Walter L., 348–49
 Moscow, USSR, 159, 171,
 Moulton, Candy, book by, reviewed, 294–96
The Mound Builder Myth: Fake History and the Hunt for a "Lost White Race," reviewed, 371–73
 Mount Pleasant Mental Health Hospital, 129, 140
 Muscle-boundedness, 64–67, 76–77, 80
 Museum of Modern Art, 157
 Musical diplomacy, 156–58, 178
 Murphy, J.T., book review by, 95–96
 Naegele, Daniel, book review by, 390–91
 National Animal Disease Laboratory, 351, 360
 National Collegiate Athletic Association, 73, 82
 National Football League, 74
National Tribune, 218, 221

- National university, 217–22, 227, 235, 240–41
- Native Americans, 7–8, 18
- Nelson, Lawrence J., book co-authored by, reviewed, 109–11
- Nemes Nagy, Ágnes, 171–72, 177, 179
- The Netherlandish Association for Emigration to the United States of North America, 4–5
- The Netherlands, 3–7, 15, 17
- Neu, Jonathan, article by, 211–46
- New Deal legislation, 365
- New England, 313–14, 320
- New Jersey, 322
- New York City, 248
- New York State Library Association, 131
- Nicholson, Ben, book co-edited by, reviewed, 308–10
- Nicols, Roger L., book review by, 84–85
- Nieh, Hualing, 160, 178, 181; image of, 163
- Nikita Khrushchev's Journey into America*, reviewed, 109–11
- Nixon, Richard, 345
- North Star Rural Club, 347
- North Star School, 362
- Northwood, 359
- Oberlin, Kansas, 221–22
- O'Connor, Frank "Bucky," 69–70
- O'Connor, Henry, 43–44
- Offenburger, Andrew, book review by, 185–87
- The Old Curiosity Shop*, 141
- Old-Fashioned Modernism: Rural Masculinity and Midwestern Literature*, reviewed, 396–98
- Oldt, Franklin T., 323; biographies by, 323–25, 328–29
- Oler, Andy, book by, reviewed, 396–98
- Olympic games, 75
- Olympic weightlifting, 66
- Ontario, Iowa, 351
- Onymousness, 248–50, 254–55, 250, 257–58, 267–68, 273–81
- Orange City, Iowa, 19–34
- Orbán, Ottó, 172, 174, 179
- Orton, Chad M., book review by, 294–96
- Ouellette, Richard D., book review by, 292–94
- Outsiders in rural Iowa, 254, 255–59, 278, 280
- Owen Lovejoy and the Coalition for Equality: Clergy, African Americans, and Women United for Abolition*, reviewed, 375–76
- Pacific Railway Act, 15
- Park View Heights, 343–66
- Parker, Francis W., 228
- Parrillo, Nicholas, 267
- Patrick, Jeffrey L., book by, reviewed, 92–93
- Patriot's Hill, 212
- Patton, Walter J., 239–44
- Paul, R. Eli, book edited by, reviewed, 303–05
- Payne, Harvey, book co-authored by, reviewed, 113–14
- Peck, Graham A., book review by, 375–76
- Pegram, Thomas R., book by, reviewed, 102–04
- Pella, Iowa, 3–4, 10–22
- Pelmulder, Jelle, 28–30
- Pendleton, Charles, 247–83
- People's Convention, 27–29
- People's Daily*, 182
- Peoples' Friendship University, 159
- Peppermint Kings: A Rural American History*, 386–88
- Philadelphia, 334
- Physical Culture*, 59, 62, 65
- Physical education, 56–83
- Physical Educator*, 71, 81
- Physical training, 62–64
- Pierce, James O., 228–29
- Plagued by Fire: The Dreams and Furies of Frank Lloyd Wright*, reviewed, 390–91
- Plainfield, New Jersey, 223
- Plummer, Mary Wright, 131
- Poland, 162, 164, 181
- Poles in Illinois*, reviewed, 306–08
- Poll tax, 314
- Popescu, Petru, 180
- Pragatz, B., 332

- The Preacher's Wife: The Precarious Power of Evangelical Women Celebrities*, reviewed, 400–01
- President's Council on Youth Fitness, 75
- Prifogle, Emily, article by, 247–83
- “‘Product Patriots As Well As Scholars’: GAR Educational Reform and the Establishment of Mason City’s Memorial University,” 211–46
- Private land ownership, 344, 354, 366
- Progress, postwar definitions of, 343–47, 349–50, 352–53, 366
- Prohibition, 9, 13, 259, 262–68, 279
- Prohibition, the Constitution, and States’ Rights*, reviewed, 100–02
- Prosecutorial discretion, 247–83; distinction from discretion, 251
- Queerness in rural Iowa, 273–80
- Qian, Xiao, 182
- Racial discrimination, 157, 345, 360–62
- Radzilowski, John, book co-authored by, reviewed, 306–08
- Railroads, 15, 29, 58
- Rape, laws related to victims, 49–52
- Raymond, C. Elizabeth, book review by, 396–98
- Raymond, Levi B., 228–29
- Reconciliationism (Civil War), 216, 246
- Rees, Amanda, book reviewed by, 285
- The Reformatory Press*, 139
- Remembrance of Things Present: The Invention of the Time Capsule*, reviewed, 104–06
- The Republic Magazine*, 243
- Republican Party, 10–17, 25–34, 41–42
- Republican political theory, 39–40, 53–54
- Research Quarterly*, 67–68, 79
- Return to the City of Joseph: Modern Mormonism’s Contest for the Soul of Nauvoo*, reviewed, 87–89
- Richards, Benjamin, 54
- Richardson, John, 167–68, 178
- Richmond, Heather, book co-authored by, reviewed, 98–100
- Riley, Glenda, 318–19
- Rittenhous, Rufus, 322–23, 326, 330–32, 334–35, 340
- Roberts, Tim, book review by, 301–03
- Robinson, Gifford S., 125, 132–33
- Robinson, Julia, 133–35, 143–46
- Rockefeller Foundation, 161, 169
- Romania, 164, 180–81
- Romeo, Sharon, article by, 35–55
- Ronda, James P., book co-authored by, reviewed, 113–14
- Roosevelt neighborhood (Ames), image of, 359
- Roosevelt, Theodore, 227, 235
- Rothert, Henry W., 128
- Rowe, S. Frances, 144
- Rozum, Molly P., book co-edited by, reviewed, 201–03
- Rudolph, Frederick, 214
- Rural masculinity, 253, 259–60, 265, 268–73, 278–80, 283
- The Rural Schools of Madison County: A Vanishing Heritage*, reviewed, 395–96
- Rural social networks, characteristics of, 249, 255; examples of, 255–81
- Sabatino, Michelangelo, book co-edited by, reviewed, 308–10
- Salafia, Matthew, book review by, 196–97
- Sargent, Dudley, 60
- Savery, Annie, 47, 54
- Scholastic Coach*, 78
- Schaupp, John M., 356
- Scholte, Henry, 3–5, 8, 11–14
- School attendance rates, 314, 317, 320–24, 336–37, 341; graph of, 337
- School for the Blind, 129
- School of the Deaf, 129–29
- Schwieder, Dorothy, 259–60, 364–65
- Second Great Awakening, 316
- Seducible women, 35–55
- Seduction Laws, 35–55
- SeEVERS, William, 47–48
- Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, 71–72, 350, 366
- Settler colonialism, 8
- Shean, Andrew, 43–47

- Shellenberger, Grace, 133, 140–41, 146, 148
- “‘The Shock of Seeing the Freedom of American Life’: The Iowa International Writing Program as Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War,” 153–85
- Shoenbachler, Matthew G., book co-written by, reviewed, 109–11
- “The Short American Century,” 346
- Shorthorn cattle, 347
- Shurley, Jason, article by, 56–83
- Silver, Timothy, book co-authored by, reviewed, 384–86
- Sioux City Journal*, 22
- Sioux County, Iowa, 1–34
- Sioux County Board of Supervisors, 21–22, 26–27
- Sioux County Herald*, 24, 26–28, 31–33
- Sioux County Independent*, 30
- Sioux Rapids, Iowa, 253, 263
- Sipma, Sjoerd, 15
- Skunk River, 352
- Slavery, 11, 13, 220, 230
- Slavery’s Reach: Southern Slaveholders in the North Star State*, reviewed, 378–80
- Smith, Zachary, book by, reviewed, 100–02
- Smithsonian Institute, 223
- “‘So Well Begun and So Much Needed’: Building up Libraries for Residents of Iowa’s State Institutions,” 121–51
- Social worker in Buena Vista County, 268–70
- Society of Christians for the Holland Emigration to the United States of North America, 4–5
- Soldiers’ Home, 128–29
- Sons of Veterans, 216, 219, 222, 224–25, 232, 239, 243–45
- Sortor, Alexander Louis, Jr., 222, 225–28, 234, 236, 240
- Soviet Bloc, 163–65, 183
- Soviet propaganda, 155–56
- Soviet Union, 74–75, 155, 159, 164, 171
- Spalding, A. G., 58
- Spanish-American War, 214, 222; veterans of, 211
- Spaulding, Forrest, 148
- Spirit Lake Massacre, 8
- Spotted Tail: Warrior and Statesman*, 198–99
- Spragg, Dennis M., book by, reviewed, 398–400
- Squaw Creek, 352
- St. Louis, 329
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, 43
- State Hospital for Inebriates, 130, 138, 144
- State Library Board, 125
- State Normal and Industrial College for Colored Students (Tallahassee, Florida), 237
- State v. Bell*, 35–42, 53
- State v. Carron*, 36, 44–46, 53
- State v. Gardner*, 38–39
- State v. Haven*, 36, 47–49, 53
- State v. Kinglsey*, 36, 49–53
- State v. Tarr*, 52
- Stek, Pam, book review by, 201–03
- Stinson, Jennifer K., book review by, 378–80
- Stockett, Julia Carson, 133, 135, 140–42, 146, 149–50; image of, 142
- Stone, Fred, 31–33
- Stone, Rufus, 24, 31
- Storm Lake, Iowa, 247–83
- The Storm Lake Register*, 264
- Story County, Iowa, 343, 346–48, 351, 356, 363
- Story County Fair Association, 347
- Story County Land Trust, 362
- Strength training, 64–83; see also weight training.
- Strength & Health*, 65, 76, 81
- Suburbanization, 343–66
- Such Anxious Hours: Wisconsin Women’s Voices from the Civil War*, reviewed, 300–01
- Suffragists, 41–43
- Svaty, Joshua L., book co-authored by, reviewed, 189–90
- Szász, Imre, 165, 172, 174, 178, 181
- Taxpayer’s Committee, 353–55
- Taylor, Amy Murrell, book by, reviewed, 196–97
- Taylor, Mildred Dodd, 366
- Temperance, 253, 255, 258–59, 262–68

- Temple, Wayne C., book by, reviewed, 91–92
- Tennessee, 332, 334
- Torrance, Eliakim "Ell," 212, 228–29
- Townsend, Eliza E., 133–34, 138–39
- Tractor and Gas Engine Review*, 347
- Transplanters on the Grasslands and the Fruits of Chain Migration*, reviewed, 199–201
- Tuberculosis, 331–32
- Tucker, Frederick D., 237–39
- Twain, Mark, 137, 141
- Typhoid fever, 331
- Tyler, Alice S., 124–28, 134; image of, 124
- Undeveloped land, definitions of, 344, 352–53, 358
- Union Army, 213, 311, 327
- Union Cause, 220, 244–45
- Unkultur*, 156
- U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 161, 167
- U.S. Department of the Interior, 242
- U.S. Information Agency, 158, 161, 177, 182
- U.S. State Department, 157, 161–62, 165, 167, 176–78, 182
- U.S. Supreme Court, 356
- University of Iowa, 56, 58, 61, 64–83
- Up from Slavery*, 141
- Urban imperialism, 354
- Utica, New York, 222–23
- Vail, David D., book by, reviewed, 108–09
- Van Raalte, Albertus, 4–5, 8–12
- Veterans of Foreign Wars, 245
- Vigilantism, 260, 262–68
- Visions of the Tallgrass: Prairie Photographs by Harvey Payne*, reviewed, 113–14
- Voelker, Christian, 325
- Vogel, Otto, 70–71
- Voice of America, 182
- Voldeng, Mathew Nelson, 137
- De Volksvriend*, 19, 28–30, 33
- Volunteers in libraries, 143–45
- Wage work, 314, 316, 328
- Wagner, R. Richard, book by, reviewed, 96–98
- Walczynski, Mark, book by, reviewed, 373–75
- Wanko, Andrew, book by, reviewed, 369–71
- Warsaw, Poland, 165
- Washington, Booker T., 141
- Washington, D. C., 157, 160, 165–67, 223, 247–48
- Washington, George, 212, 217–18
- Water Tower Place, 363
- Weems, Robert E., Jr., book by, reviewed 391–93
- Weight training, 56–58, 64–83; images of, 72–73; *see also strength training*
- Wendler, Arthur, 65–66, 68–70
- Wesley, Timothy, book review by, 194–95
- West Coast, 345
- West Germany, 156
- West Point, 361
- Western Reserve Library School, 134
- We've Been Here All Along: Wisconsin's Early Gay History*, reviewed, 96–98
- When Sunflowers Bloomed Red: Kansas and the Rise of Socialism in America*, reviewed, 393–95
- Whigs, 9–11
- Wiebe, Robert H., 215
- Wiggin, Kate Douglas, 141
- Wilkerson, Miranda E., book co-authored by, reviewed, 98–100
- Winkle, Kenneth J., book review by, 89–90
- "Winks, Whispers, and Prosecutorial Discretion in Rural Iowa, 1925–28," 247–83
- Wise, Mary, book review by, 371–73
- Woman suffrage, 41–44, 47, 53–54, 245
- Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 54
- Woman's Relief Corps, 216, 219, 224, 227, 235, 239–42, 245–46
- The Women's Fight: The Civil War's Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation*, reviewed, 382–84
- Women's Reformatory, 143

- Wood, Sharon, book review by, 85–87
- Work related accidents, 332
- Worker, Georgia B., 224
- “Working Hard and Living Out: Adolescence in Nineteenth-Century Dubuque,” 311–41
- The World Comes to Iowa*, 181–82
- World War I, 232, 247
- World War II, 249, 349, 365
- Writers’ Union (Hungary), 163
- Wuthnow, Robert, 6
- Wynn, Gregory A., book review by, 388–89
- Yablon, Nick, book by, reviewed, 104–06
- Yankee Bourgeoisie, 312
- Yankton College, 60
- YMCA, 60–61
- Yoder, Franklin, book review by, 395–96
- Young brides, 318–19, 339
- Yugoslavia, 164
- Zieke, Paul, 276

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