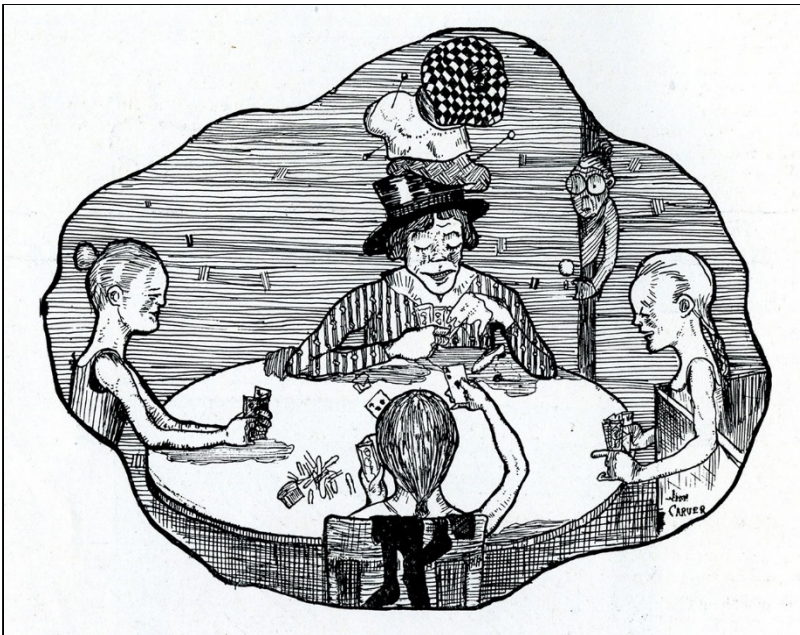


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A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF HISTORY

SPECIAL ISSUE: WOMEN AND IOWA JOURNALISM

In This Issue

STEPHANIE GROSSNICKLE-BATTERTON, a doctoral candidate and graduate instructor in the Department of American Studies at the University of Iowa, shows how the *Woman's Standard*, a monthly newspaper produced by the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association from 1886 to 1911, incorporated rural themes in its rhetoric, showed evidence of suffrage work in rural areas, and to varying degrees became a counterpublic space for rural women where contributors explored issues relevant to Iowa farm women.

JENNY BARKER-DEVINE, associate professor of history at Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois, explores the motivations of the women who produced the *Emerald Goose*, a humor magazine published at Iowa State College during World War I. She argues that they were not simply responding to an opening created by the war but were actively contesting for space in the student newsrooms and asserting their right to participate in curricular and extracurricular journalism.

TRACY LUCHT, assistant professor in the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University, surveys the storied career of Dorothy Ashby Pownall from her days as a "sob sister" at the *Des Moines Capital* during World War I through her publications in *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post* and until her retirement from the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* in 1955. Pownall's wide-ranging work, Lucht argues, reveals her methods of exercising agency within a patriarchal field and illustrates why historians must expand what they consider important journalism if they are to make their narratives more inclusive of women.

Front Cover

The women journalism students at Iowa State College who produced the humor magazine the *Emerald Goose* employed cartoons, poetry, and stories to question double standards for men and women at the college. This image from the March 1919 issue of the *Emerald Goose* is reproduced here courtesy Special Collections and University Archives, Iowa State University. For more on the *Emerald Goose*, see Jenny Barker-Devine's article in this issue.

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Contents

- 351 "Lock the Granary, Peggy":
Rhetorical Appeals to Rural Women
in the *Woman's Standard*, 1886–1911
Stephanie Grossnickle-Batterton
- 376 "Why, you can be a journalist, kid":
The *Emerald Goose* and Women's Journalism
at Iowa State College during World War I
Jenny Barker-Devine
- 406 From Sob Sister to Society Editor:
The Storied Career of Dorothy Ashby Pownall
Tracy Lucht
- 428 Book Reviews and Notices
- 465 Index

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Book Reviews and Notices

- 428 GREG HOCH, *Booming from the Mists of Nowhere: The Story of the Greater Prairie-Chicken*, by James A. Pritchard
- 429 BETHEL SALER, *The Settlers' Empire: Colonialism and State Formation in America's Old Northwest*, by Catherine J. Denial
- 431 JO ANN TROGDON, *The Unknown Travels and Dubious Pursuits of William Clark*, by W. Raymond Wood
- 433 BUTCH BOUVIER, *Brown Water: A Narrative of My Personal Journey in the Wake of Lewis and Clark*, by Norman Fry
- 433 BONNIE STEPENOFF, *Working the Mississippi: Two Centuries of Life on the River*, by Patrick Nunnally
- 435 SHARONY GREEN, *Remember Me to Miss Louisa: Hidden Black-White Intimacies in Antebellum America*, by Darrel E. Bigham
- 437 CHARLES M. HUBBARD, ED., *Lincoln, the Law, and Presidential Leadership*, by Timothy Walch
- 438 DANEEN WARDROP, *Civil War Nurse Narratives, 1863–1870*, by Theresa McDevitt
- 439 VIRGINIA SCHARFF, ED., *Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and the West*, by Ginette Alely
- 441 BRENT M. S. CAMPNEY, *This Is Not Dixie: Racist Violence in Kansas, 1861–1927*, by Kristen Tegtmeier Oertel
- 443 JOHN D. McDERMOTT, *Red Cloud: Oglala Legend*, by Denny Smith
- 444 PHILIP F. ANSCHUTZ, *Out Where the West Begins: Profiles, Visions, and Strategies of Early Western Business Leaders*, by J. T. Murphy
- 446 WILLIAM B. FRIEDRICKS, *Constructing a Legacy: The Weitz Company and the Family Who Built It*, by Bill Silag
- 448 CHRISTOPHER C. GILLIS, *Still Turning: A History of Aeromotor Windmills*, by Derek Oden
- 449 MICHAEL RANK, *How Iowa Conquered the World: The Story of a Small Farm State's Journey to Global Dominance*, by Zachary Michael Jack
- 451 RICHARD EDWARDS, *Natives of a Dry Place: Stories of Dakota before the Oil Boom*, by Paula M. Nelson
- 452 DAVID M. KRUEGER, *Myths of the Rune Stone: Viking Martyrs and the Birthplace of America*, by Kristin Elmquist
- 454 JASON WEEMS, *Barnstorming the Prairies: How Aerial Vision Shaped the Midwest*, by Jane Simonsen
- 456 JULIE K. RUBINI, *Missing Millie Benson: The Secret Case of the Nancy Drew Ghostwriter and Journalist*, by Michella M. Marino
- 457 DAVID W. MILLS, *Cold War in a Cold Land: Fighting Communism on the Northern Plains*, by Michael S. Mayer
- 460 BRIAN DUFFY, *Duffy's Iowa Caucus Cartoons: Watch 'Em Run*, by Tom Morain
- 461 H. ROGER GRANT, *Railroaders without Borders: A History of the Railroad Development Corporation*, by Kevin Byrne
- 463 RICK MARCH AND DICK BLAU, *Polka Heartland: Why The Midwest Loves to Polka*, by Kenneth J. Bindas

“Lock the Granary, Peggy”: Rhetorical Appeals to Rural Women in the *Woman’s Standard*, 1886–1911

STEPHANIE GROSSNICKLE-BATTERTON

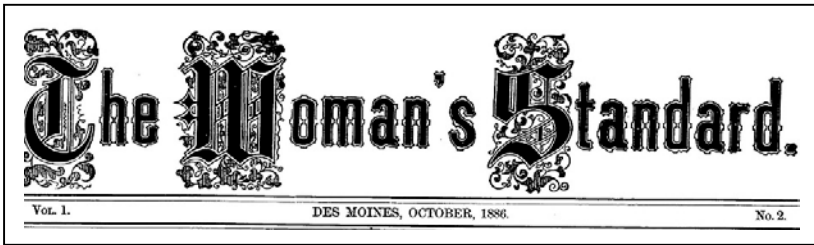
*So lock the granary Peggy, and make the hencoop stout,
Put the hogs back in the orchard, and turn the cattle out,
Hide the horses on the hillside, and should the assessor come
We’ll lock the door and make believe the folks are not at home.
The women then we’ll rally, for this is woman’s cause,
We’ll tell them that we’ve learned a way to aid in making laws.
We’ll do no work but only sing and shout from roof and steeple,
We’ll cook your meals and pay our tax, when you admit that we are people.¹*

IN OCTOBER 1886, the *Woman’s Standard*, a monthly newspaper produced by the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association, ran a poem titled “We the People” on the front page of its second issue. Invoking a figure named “Peggy” as a stand-in for the reader, the poem began and ended with a call to “lock the granary” until women had the right to vote. Sandwiched between was a discussion of the emptiness of the phrase “We the people,” complete with a historical lesson on various injustices from the American

The author would like to thank the State Historical Society of Iowa for its generous support of this project in the form of a research grant. Gratitude also goes to editor Marvin Bergman and the *Annals of Iowa*’s anonymous reviewers for their astute comments to improve the article, and to Leslie Schwalm, who provided valuable guidance in the early stages of this project.

1. Rebecca Dare, “We the People,” *Woman’s Standard* 1:2 (Oct. 1886), 1 (hereafter abbreviated as *WS*). Many of the articles in the *Woman’s Standard* have no author or title. If there is one, I provide it in the text or in the footnote. I accessed the *Woman’s Standard* digitally through The Gerritsen Collection of Aletta H. Jacobs: gerritsen.chadwyck.com.

THE ANNALS OF IOWA 75 (Fall 2016). © State Historical Society of Iowa, 2016.



Revolution to present. The poem's democratic appeals and robust calls for woman suffrage were couched within a distinctly rural context, imagining a female reader who would "put the hogs back in the orchard, and turn the cattle out."

This convergence of rural identity with the suffrage cause would continue throughout the *Woman's Standard's* 25-year run. A close analysis of the paper reveals that suffrage workers in Iowa appealed in distinct and intentional ways to their rural audience in the pages of the paper. In doing so, the *Standard* also became a space—albeit limited—for some rural women to articulate concerns, air grievances, and find validation for their lives on farms.

The *Woman's Standard* served as the official organ of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association (IWSA) from 1886 to 1911.² Begun in 1886 by former IWSA president Martha Callanan and based in Des Moines, the newspaper initially proposed to run for one year, unless it received enough support to continue. According to an announcement in its first issue, the newspaper would join "the on-coming tide of the world's thought" in demanding "the equality of all classes of citizens."³ The paper lived long past the initial one-year commitment, publishing monthly issues nearly every year through 1911.⁴

2. The IWSA (later known as the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association) was formed in 1870 at a Mount Pleasant convention called by Quaker Joseph Dugdale. For more information on the IWSA, see Louise R. Noun, *Strong-Minded Women: The Emergence of the Woman-Suffrage Movement in Iowa* (Ames, 1969), 133–42.

3. WS 1:1 (Sept. 1886), 1. Throughout its run, the *Standard's* place of publication changed depending on the management, including Des Moines (1886–1897, 1910–1911), Sutherland (1897–1899), and Waterloo (1899–1910). Editors included Mary Jane Coggeshall, Evelyn M. Russell, Lizzie B. Read, Carrie Chapman Catt, Katherine M. Pierce, Roma W. Woods, and J. O. Stevenson.

4. The *Standard* suspended publication for 18 months between 1894 and 1896. In August 1894 editor Katherine Pierce cited "financial depression" as the cause of the suspension. Publication resumed in March 1896, with Pierce still at the helm,

It is difficult to determine readership statistics for the *Standard*, especially across its entire time span. By 1901, however, the paper was telling advertisers that 2,000 copies were distributed to 400 towns.⁵ Most likely the readership consisted of the relatively small group of suffrage workers within Iowa and those they came into contact with who were receptive to the cause. Small suffrage papers like the *Standard* may not have had as many subscribers as general newspapers of the time, yet they remain a vital area of study because of their importance to the suffrage movement and women's lives at the turn of the century.

Scholars have identified several key functions of the suffrage press, including the ability to reach larger, more geographically diverse audiences than lectures and to connect local suffragists with national and state action. Publications also created community among suffrage supporters, reminding readers of shared burdens and successes. According to Martha Solomon, each paper "sought its niche by creating a distinctive blend of materials for various segments of the audience," even though the common theme of women's rights bound the readers together.⁶

The geographical context of the *Standard* illustrates this. Based first in Des Moines and later in Waterloo and Sutherland, and run largely by women and men who had moved to Iowa from the East, the IWSA's paper was clearly targeted to an audience that included many urban, middle-class women. However, it also needed to appeal to Iowa's large rural population. The content of the paper generally reveals this breakdown; most of the content is similar to other mainstream or national suffrage newspapers of the time, often including reports from suffrage conventions, updates on laws related to the cause in various parts of the country, and many opinion pieces on the history of

but the paper was reduced from eight pages to four pages per issue. See *WS* 8:12 (August 1894) and 9:1 (March 1896). Callanan would continue to publish the paper until 1899, when Sarah Ware Whitney took it over.

5. "A Few Words with Advertisers," *WS* 14:1 (March 1901), 2. The editor noted that about half of the subscription list was women. Hereafter, I refer to the *Woman's Standard* as the *Standard*, as most writers in the paper did, even though the official title remained *The Woman's Standard* throughout its run.

6. E. Claire Jerry, "The Role of Newspapers in the Nineteenth Century Woman's Movement," in *A Voice of Their Own: The Woman Suffrage Press, 1840-1910*, ed. Martha M. Solomon (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1991), 28; Martha Solomon, "The Role of the Suffrage Press in the Woman's Rights Movement," *ibid.*, 14.

women's rights and the varied reasons for expanding them. However, rural themes, including articles related to farming, make up a small, but significant portion of the paper's subject matter.⁷

The presence of rural themes in the *Woman's Standard* illuminates how the woman suffrage movement in Iowa appealed to and involved rural women, a topic that has not received much attention from scholars until recently.⁸ Sara Egge has done the most substantial and critical work on the relationship between the suffrage movement in Iowa and rural women. Noting the dearth of scholarly work on rural women and the suffrage movement and the assumptions on the part of some scholars that rural women were not interested in suffrage work, Egge shows that "in Iowa, farm women were neither ignorant nor uninterested" in the cause, and suffrage leaders adapted their efforts and tactics from 1870 to 1920 to involve farm women in their campaign.⁹ Analyzing the presence of rural women and the issues important to

7. Some issues of the *Standard* included six or seven articles in which rural themes can be identified, while other issues contained none. Most contained at least one or two. The total amount of content in each issue varied throughout the *Standard's* run. In early issues with eight pages, 30 to 40 pieces of content could appear in a single issue; after the paper was reduced to four pages in 1896, the content usually included 15 to 20 submissions or reprints.

8. Louise R. Noun's *Strong-Minded Women* includes biographies of the early leaders in the Iowa movement but does not take up rural suffrage work directly, especially since many of the figures moved from the East to Iowa, often settling in Des Moines or other urban Iowa locales. Glenda Riley's extensive scholarship on the women of the plains and prairies in the nineteenth century includes limited discussion of suffrage work, which provides valuable context for understanding the challenges suffragists faced. Exploring the ways the frontier necessitated the modification of women's roles in midwestern and western states, Riley points out that those modifications were "not deep-seated enough to underwrite such a major revision of policy as extension of suffrage to women." Thus, even though prairie states debated several suffrage bills, most—like Iowa—did not enact suffrage until the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Glenda Riley, *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains* (Lawrence, KS, 1988), 172.

9. Sara Anne Egge, "The Grassroots Diffusion of the Woman Suffrage Movement in Iowa: The IESA, Rural Women, and the Right to Vote" (M.A. thesis, Iowa State University, 2009), 4, 6. For further context on rural suffrage efforts in Iowa and the Midwest, see Egge's other works: "'Strewn Knee Deep in Literature': A Material Analysis of Print Propaganda and Woman Suffrage," *Agricultural History* 88 (2014), 591–605; and "'When We Get to Voting: Rural Women, Community, Gender, and Woman Suffrage in the Midwest'" (Ph.D. diss., Iowa State University, 2012).

them in the *Standard* extends this scholarship by turning attention to a text largely neglected in previous studies, despite its 25-year run.¹⁰

Throughout its run, the *Standard* incorporated rural themes in its rhetoric, showed evidence of suffrage work in rural areas, and to varying degrees became a counterpublic space for rural women where contributors explored issues relevant to Iowa farm women. The inclusion of rural issues such as property rights and gendered farm labor reveals the lived experiences of many farm women as well as the popular images of farm life circulating in the media at the time. The *Standard's* focus on suffrage work at places such as state and county fairs shows how the suffrage movement sought to include a variety of women. Yet analyzing the notions of rural identity included in the paper also reveals the many women who were excluded from the movement based on race or class.

THE SUFFRAGISTS who wrote in the *Woman's Standard* understood the need for consciousness-raising among Iowa's rural populations. According to the concept of consciousness-raising, members of an oppressed group, in order to effect change, must first become aware of their oppression and then become empowered to act as agents of change to combat that oppression. However, suffragists faced barriers in getting their message out and convincing women that they could become agents of change since, according to feminist rhetoric scholar Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "a central element in woman's oppression was the denial of her right to speak."¹¹

The *Standard* addressed those two concerns directly in its first issue, laying out the paper's justification and goals:

To suppress the full utterance of the moral convictions of a class which so largely molds the character of the race is a crime against

10. Egge does not take up the *Standard* as an object of study, mentioning it only once in relation to a local suffrage society distributing copies of it to ministers in their town in 1906. Egge, "The Grassroots Diffusion," 33. Noun also says little about the newspaper, mainly because the bulk of her study focuses on the years before 1886. When she does use the *Standard*, it is as a source of information about one of the women she profiles.

11. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, vol. 1, *A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric* (Westport, CT, 1989), 9.

humanity — against progress — against God. Believing this, and that the cause demands a wider hearing than has yet been given by even the many friendly papers of the State, the friends of Woman Suffrage in Iowa now speak to the public through the freer channel of their own paper.¹²

Thus, from the beginning the *Standard* sought to give women a political voice and spread the message to a wider audience so they could correct this “crime against humanity.”

For Iowa suffragists, rural women made up a key part of that wider audience. The inaugural issue suggests that the *Standard* provided an important way to link the campaign to rural areas specifically. The suffrage cause needed “plain presentations of woman suffrage before country audiences,” and the *Standard* was one of the “surest ways to convert a family” in the country to the “gospel of woman suffrage.”¹³ To raise their consciousness, or “convert” their audiences to the cause, the suffragists writing in the *Standard* tailored their rhetorical appeals to fit the rural context within which they operated, using rural metaphors and emphasizing themes relevant to life on the farm, including the intensity and peculiarities of labor and isolation on the farm and the issue of property and inheritance rights. In doing so, many of the writers invited readers to connect their lives on the farm with the larger cause of women’s equality.

One technique writers deployed in the *Standard* was to use imagery rooted in farm life to describe suffrage work. Such language often included standard metaphors common in general communication, such as “planting seeds” and “reaping the harvest,” but in many cases, as in the poem in the epigraph, writers went further to include specific imagery familiar to a rural audience. In a November 1890 piece titled “The Philosophy of Delay,” for example, editor Lizzie Bunnell Read encouraged readers to be patient as they waited for their suffrage work to yield results. Using several paragraphs to detail the development and growth of an ear of corn, she explained, “Time must enter into the product. The tissues must ripen, the fibers must toughen.” She went on to advise her readers that they, like farmers, must continue to work

12. WS 1:1 (Sept. 1886), 1.

13. *Ibid.*, 4.

while they wait on the harvest, "for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not."¹⁴

A few months later, Read began a piece with an excerpt from a farm journal about how to bring up colts in a proper way. She then used descriptions of horses and cows to illustrate how women had not been able to thrive in the country. She contrasted the Jersey cow's ability to grow larger on the prairies of the Midwest with the way men "left women to subsist upon the weeds and brambles their well-fed tastes had rejected," all the while calling them "the pony sex." Her solution was for women to demand that men "pass the meat around, let the women into fresh pastures; give them a generous allowance of oats" so that they would no longer remain the "pony breed."¹⁵ Here Read took the term "pony breed," a condescending term men were using to describe women, and put the onus for this condition back on the men of the time, extending the animal caretaking metaphor.

Read was not a farmer or a farmer's wife, nor do we know how her message was received or interpreted by rural women who may have read the paper.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the fact that she used such detailed knowledge of corn production and breed-specific terminology to resonate with her audience suggests that the imagined community of the *Standard* did include readers with at least a background in farming.¹⁷ Language rooted in a farming context also shows how suffrage workers like Read recognized and incorporated Iowa's agricultural identity into their campaigns.

At times, writers in the *Standard* would use this agricultural identity to make larger claims about national identity. In a February 1887 piece, "When the Hens Begin to Lay," the unnamed

14. Lizzie B. Read, "The Philosophy of Delay," *WS* 5:3 (Nov. 1890), 3.

15. Lizzie B. Read, "The Pony Breed," *WS* 5:6 (Feb. 1891), 5.

16. According to census records, Read's husband was a physician and operated a drug store. They lived in the incorporated town of Algona. 1880 U.S. Census, Kossuth County, Iowa, population schedule, Algona, p. 283 (stamped), dwelling 60, family 60, Samuel A. Read and Lizzie B. Read, digital image, AncestryLibrary.com.

17. For the concept of "imagined communities," see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2006). Anderson focuses on the relationship between print capitalism and the development of the nation-state but pays special attention to the role of newspapers in creating imagined communities.

author began by explaining how women who could not afford to pay 50 cents for a yearly subscription to the *Standard* could sell eggs to offset the cost. Moving from the personal to the national, the article went on to claim, "From the letters which come from many rural homes accompanying the modest fifty cents, we are led to believe that the founders of this great government, where the opinions of women are not counted, have made a mistake in choosing the typical American bird." The national symbol should not be the eagle, nor even "the pompous hero of the barnyard that vociferously calls his speckled harem about him just in time to see him gobble the precious worm." Instead, the *Standard* found the "practical hen" more fitting, as she "is helping the American woman to solve the problem of her independence."¹⁸ Here the hen not only served a practical function of providing financial means to buy the paper and become connected to the wider suffrage movement. The author also suggested replacing the eagle as the national symbol and found a proper replacement not in the rooster but in the hen. It is notable that hens are not only female but also part of the female sphere on the farm and could even provide a means of independent income for farm women.¹⁹ Hence, this rewriting could serve as an empowering image for rural women to connect their daily lives to the suffrage cause and the very essence of the nation.

IN ADDITION to using rural themes for metaphorical purposes, the paper used subjects of concern to rural women to gain support for the suffrage effort. One of those was the portrayal of the hardships of life on the farm, most notably loneliness and labor, which many agricultural reformers and mainstream writers of the time described as "drudgery." One particularly evocative story titled "Causes of Insanity" claimed that an Iowa State Board of Health doctor found that insanity was increasing the most in the agricultural classes. Adding its editorial opinion, the *Standard* blamed this on the isolation of farm life. "The farmer and his wife

18. "When the Hens Begin to Lay," *WS* 1:6 (Feb. 1887), 5.

19. For a thorough discussion of female- and male-centered activities on the farm, see Mary Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940* (Baltimore, 1995).

are often denied the pleasure of the society of others and are left alone for a great part of the time to brood over their own thoughts . . . with no cheering or sympathetic hearing from the outside." The loneliness of farm life was not always portrayed as a cause of insanity, but it was certainly a cause of concern throughout the newspaper.²⁰

One proposed solution for this isolation was for women to participate in their local temperance or suffrage association. A July 1888 article, "How Farmer's Wives in Kansas Go to Suffrage Meetings," included a summary of an article from the *Woman's Tribune* detailing three different farmers who had made sure their wives could attend the local suffrage meeting in Kansas. Two had kept the children nearby as they did farm work to facilitate their wives' absence; the other had allowed the use of field horses for transportation because he realized that "his wife needed an outing every once in a while."²¹ Whether this actually happened or not, the *Standard* used the story to show how suffrage meetings extended beyond work and into the social realm. An article like this could serve to convince women of the importance of attending meetings, encourage workers that small successes were happening, and portray farm husbands as potential allies—rather than enemies—in the suffrage struggle.

Articles, stories, poems, brief news reports, and jokes covered the subject of overwork, often described as drudgery. Writers described the state of farm life for women in terms as mild as "not what it is cracked up to be" or as dire as a "life destroying labor" and "as near slavery as we care to imagine anything."²² The stories

20. "The Cause of Insanity," *WS* 2:11 (July 1888), 3. The issue of isolation on the farm was especially prescient for women, whose duties at home might keep them from traveling with their husbands when the latter would go to town or meet with other farmers. Writers took up this topic frequently. For example, Susan Glaspell's 1916 play *Trifles* and 1927 short story "A Jury of her Peers" were both based on the 1900 murder of Iowa farmer John Hossack. Hossack's wife was accused of the murder, and the play and story lay the blame, in part, on her isolation as a rural farm wife and her husband's refusal to recognize that isolation as a problem.

21. "How Farmer's Wives in Kansas Go to Suffrage Meetings," *WS* 2:11 (July 1888), 8.

22. *WS* 1:2 (Oct. 1886), 8; C. F. Clarkson, "Farm Economies," *WS* 2:11 (July 1888), 5; Editor's note, *WS* 8:9 (May 1894), 7.

usually portrayed men as unable to understand their wives' plights and unwilling to hire help for them. (The Kansas story is a notable exception.) Many writers pointed out that men were quick to acquire labor-saving devices for their work in the fields but not for the work typically done by their wives. One article lamented that despite the importance of a farm wife's work, "the husband doesn't realize that she is working harder than any two men he has on the place, or if he does, that the work is killing her."²³

Mary Donley, a farm woman from Knoxville, emphasized the undervalued labor of most farm women in a piece wryly titled "God Made Women for Men to Take Care Of." Donley contended that although women do much labor on the farm inside and outside the house, many farmers neglect their wives' needs, instead spending the family's money on frivolities for themselves, such as tobacco. Out of the 52 farmers she counted around her, "but three of these" hired help for their wives in the house, even though farm wives typically engaged in a long litany of jobs on the farm, such as raising "hundreds of chickens every year." Donley concluded, "Surely if God did intend we live by the sweat of man's brow, we have greatly undervalued our privileges."²⁴

Stories such as Mary Donley's reflect the broader concern arising at the time over the state of farm women in the country. Labor on the farm began changing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for both men and women as reformers sought to elevate farming to middle-class status. In that model, farm women experienced increasing pressure from male agricultural reformers and professionals to become "professional homemakers." Historian Mary Neth writes, "The physical work of farm women not only clashed with middle-class status, but also made them 'unwomanly.' Such labor signified the inferiority of rural life. Professionals and the farm press portrayed farm women who worked in the field, and sometimes those who worked with live-

23. "Women on the Farm," *WS* 14:12 (Feb. 1902), 4.

24. Mary E. Donley, "God Made Women for Men to Take Care Of," *WS* 1:4 (Dec. 1886), 5. The 1880 census lists Mary E. Donley as the wife of Levi Donley of Knoxville, Marion County, with Levi's occupation cited as farmer and Mary's as "keeping house." 1880 U.S. Census, Marion County, Iowa, Knoxville Township, p. 54, dwelling 506, family 518, Levi O. Donley, digital image, AncestryLibrary.com.

stock, as drudges. The middle-class farmer's wife, like her urban counterpart, worked only in the home, providing for her family."²⁵

In the case of the *Standard*, stories concerning farm women's work served multiple functions while addressing a diverse audience. For urban, middle-class readers, they could function much like other examples of women's oppression from around the world; their "shock value" could awaken outrage and renewed interest in the cause. Perhaps they also resonated with city and town readers who had grown up on farms. At the same time, for those readers who were still engaged in farming, stories like these could offer common commiseration and burden sharing. In his study of the *Farmer's Wife*, a Kansas newspaper that blended suffragist and populist goals, Thomas R. Burkholder argues, "The women on the prairie had envisioned themselves as alone, isolated both geographically and intellectually, and without power."²⁶ Through stories of hardship in newspapers like the *Farmer's Wife* and in articles like Mary Donley's in the *Standard*, suffragists drew attention to farm women's shared hardships and framed them as justifications for expanding their rights.

IN THE *STANDARD*, the tactic of describing farm women's labor as "drudgery" was often linked to claims that such labor violated the "proper spheres" prescribed for middle-class women of the time. On the one hand, writers sometimes portrayed this perceived violation as negative and used it to point out the hypocrisy of men who wanted to keep women from voting based on "proper place" arguments. On the other hand, writers could also present women's farm labor as a liberating and powerful celebration of women's ability to transcend rigid gender roles.

The *Standard* included many descriptions of women stepping out of the household to help on the farm. The inaugural issue of the paper included a story from a Pennsylvania newspaper reporting that three women assisted in harvesting and "completed almost as much work as any of the men." The *Standard* added, "But we did not hear that the good men of Shanesville held up their

25. Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 215, 227–28.

26. Thomas R. Burkholder, "The Farmer's Wife, 1891–1894: Raising a Prairie Consciousness," in *A Voice of Their Own*, 163.

hands in holy horror that these women were getting out of their 'sphere' or do we notice that the press of the country was greatly exercised about it." In a reprint from the *Boston Herald*, a farmer from Missouri bragged that his wife had "done more work than any other woman now living on earth." The *Herald* wondered what the farmer did "while his wife was doing all the work on the farm."²⁷ These examples reveal the varied attitudes toward women's farm work present in the newspaper. The first highlights the hypocrisy in the press's general condemnation of women's rights as a violation of separate spheres while that same press condoned a violation of separate spheres by a woman who helped her husband in his labors. The second operated more as an attack on the masculinity of men who would have women do farm work for them but presumably not allow them to vote or act in other ways perceived as "male."

R. D. Blaisdell Thorp, a farm woman and frequent contributor to the *Standard*, combined these two attitudes in an 1889 piece listing the multitude of tasks farm women engaged in daily. The Manchester resident wrote, "Since she [woman] has milked cows, and fed hogs, and helped doctor sick horses and herded cattle . . . without being 'unsexed' she has no fear of bringing that horror upon herself by voting even against her husband's firmly rooted opinions."²⁸ Thorp's reminder that women have been allowed to step out of their proper sphere when convenient for men supports Mary Neth's contention that "by emphasizing the cooperative and joint nature of the farm enterprises, [women] could define their work in ways that undercut the traditional and legal definitions of patriarchal power."²⁹ In a similar way, stories in the *Standard* that highlighted how much work women did on the farm served as challenges to patriarchal rhetoric of the time and as support for the suffrage cause.

For Thorp and several other contributors to the *Standard*, women's labor in the fields was not mere "drudgery" but evi-

27. WS 1:1 (Sept. 1886), 5; WS 6:9 (May 1892), 7.

28. R. D. Blaisdell Thorp, "Are Women in Earnest?" WS 4:4 (Dec. 1889), 2; 1885 Iowa State Census, Delaware County, population schedule, p. 165 (stamped), dwelling 81, family 81, Justice B. & Rosa D. Thorp, digital image, AncestryLibrary.com.

29. Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 18.

dence that women were just as capable as men. Reports of women successfully growing fruit in California or managing farms on their own in the Midwest dotted the *Standard* throughout the years. Such women often engaged in agriculture because of a husband's or father's death or incapacity, but not always. In one case, "Miss Jennie Gray," who worked a 160-acre farm, claimed that she "could work another one if the fellows who want to marry her and settle down would quit bothering her." In another, an Iowa woman who bought a farm in Nebraska found that "the earth yields her increase to faithful tillage regardless of sex."³⁰ Both of these examples showed women successfully engaged in agriculture without any connection to male family members. Such instances were aberrations, however. Most often, the examples of women's work on the farm pointed to the mutuality and partnership, rather than independence, that farm life entailed, leading contributors to the *Standard* to call for farmers to consider their wives equal partners in the management and ownership of the farm.³¹

MANY WRITERS in the *Standard* took up the topic of property rights, a theme that resonated with a wide variety of women but was especially pertinent for farm women. By 1886, Iowa had firmly established legislation ensuring single and married women's right to property held in their own names, as well as to any wages they earned. However, for women on farms, property rights were more complicated. Husbands often continued to hold sole ownership of the farm, despite their wives' significant investments in the labor and financial operation of them.³² Writers in the *Standard* began arguing that farms should be held jointly instead.

30. "Notes," *WS* 1:7 (March 1887), 1; "An Iowa Woman," *WS* 2:10 (June 1888), 8.

31. In *Preserving the Family Farm*, Mary Neth explores how many farm women resisted urban, middle-class notions of women's work, taking pride in their physical labor and presenting it as evidence that they were "partners in a joint venture" (237).

32. Ruth A. Gallaher, *Legal and Political Status of Women in Iowa* (Iowa City, 1918), 91. The Iowa Code of 1851 allowed married women to retain the rights to property they held in their own name; the revised Code of 1873 ensured their rights to wages earned on their own. Gallaher points out that "property accumulated by them jointly was usually in the husband's name" (91).

Significantly, the topic appeared in the very first issue of the newspaper. In "Equal Rights in Property," Lizzie Read, operating on the notion that "every farm in Iowa is a bank" and "ten thousand women in Iowa" were depositing their labor into such banks each day, insisted that women and men become joint owners of their farms to ensure that both had access to the benefits.³³ Readers of the *Standard* who resided on farms agreed. In a letter to the paper in the following issue, R. D. Blaisdell Thorp expressed appreciation for Read's article, using striking language to invoke sympathy for the sacrifice women put into farms.

That "bank," the farm, has swallowed up all the earnings of many a woman's life, all the courage and all the hopes of her youth and all the pleasures of dress and books and travel that she so much desires in mature years. Too often they must all be given up for the improvement of the farm and the wife drudges along, year after year, her better nature starving for want of food. Her life goes to improve the farm, "which is as much yours as mine," her husband has often said, but she finds out the fallacy of that assertion when the home is made unendurable for her as it too often is.

Thorp, the wife of a farmer, presented male ownership of the farm as an all-too-common problem for rural women. She suggested that the Iowa suffrage paper could be an important vehicle for raising awareness about it; in the same article, she wrote, "I wish the STANDARD could go to every home in Iowa."³⁴

Nearly 20 years after this exchange, the reprinting of a speech from a farmer's institute held in Iowa showed that the issue was still relevant for many readers. In the April 1905 article "Partners on the Farm," Margaret Nicholson, the wife of a farmer from Osian, Iowa, suggested that joint ownership of the farm should extend even beyond the mortgage documents. Echoing much of the language other writers used in the *Standard*, she included a list of a wife's many duties on the farm, but used it to show that women deserved a truly equal place in farm management. According to Nicholson, although a typical farm wife was expected to help in the fields, she "assume[d] one-half of the debt and none of the

33. Lizzie B. Read, "Equal Rights in Property," WS 1:1 (Sept. 1886), 6. Read would go on to serve as editor of the *Standard* from September 1890 to December 1892.

34. R. D. B. Thorp, "Equality in Marriage," WS 1:2 (Oct. 1886), 3.

credit." Nicholson insisted that a man's wife should instead be her husband's "helpmate and they two, captain and first mate, should be the ones to decide about the work and its profits." Nicholson maintained the established hierarchy of roles ("captain" and "first mate") but challenged the notion that men should solely control the profits. This is a notable resistance to the custom of the time; Mary Neth observes that "although, according to a 1920 survey, one-third of farm women in the central states kept the farm accounts, men controlled the financial and land resources and had both legal and customary control of management decisions on the farms."³⁵

Nicholson insisted not just on joint ownership of the farm's assets, but also on a revamping of how outsiders view the labor of women and men on farms and what should count as women's domain. Using the example of an assessor visiting the farm, she suggested that women should be asked questions about the farm—"how many bushels of corn" or "how many acres of ground do you have?"—instead of questions solely about how many children they have. She even went on to suggest that farms are unique in this partnership regard since "there can not be the same secrecy used as to investments that other trades will allow" when the family members are so dependent on one another in an isolated setting.³⁶

As a speech given at a farmers' convention, Nicholson's essay was obviously suited to a rural audience; its presence in the *Standard* implies that Nicholson thought it appropriate enough to submit and the editor found it relevant enough to run. When it ran in April 1905, rural issues were clearly still a concern for the paper, and women were beginning to feel more willing to assert their opinions and rights in a public mixed-gender setting like a farmer's institute.³⁷

35. Margaret Nicholson, "Partners on the Farm," *WS* 18:2 (April 1905), 1; Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 20. Census records list Nicholson's husband's occupation as "farmer." 1900 U.S. Census, Winneshiek County, population schedule, Military Township, Sheet no. 8, dwelling 177, family 183, H. Pratt & Margaret Nicholson, digital image, AncestryLibrary.com.

36. Nicholson, "Partners on the Farm," 1.

37. Women had been active in farmers' movements and organizations since the 1870s, but their roles within those organizations varied, generally evolving to become more active in the later years. The type of speech Nicholson gave to this

A CLOSE READING of the *Standard* also shows that rural women had more than a rhetorical presence in the movement. Rural suffrage work was happening in the state, although the results seem mixed. In the paper's early years, the evidence of rural work included scattered reports from small towns and sparsely populated counties of suffragists attempting to make inroads or partnering with other local women's interest groups.

In 1892 the *Standard* ran several reports about IWSA chapters working with WCTU groups to hold "woman's days" at county fairs. According to suffrage worker Emily Phillips, these met with mixed reactions. At one, workers received "gracious attention" that seemed to indicate that "the way is now open for a strong organization." At another, officials "made not the least effort to have order and quiet prevail" during speeches."³⁸ By 1901, Phillips was still expressing a mix of despair and hope for her work in rural areas. In a letter dated February 24, 1901, she shared that reading the *Standard* had greatly helped "the few faithful ones who still hold the banner of equal suffrage aloft in this fossilized town." Yet she ended by stating, "We hope for some work over the county and many converts among the rural population. I think they are the voters whom we want to reach and they are usually the ones who give a careful hearing too, to our speakers."³⁹ In many ways this reflected the sentiment suffragists expressed throughout the paper, regardless of geographic location. Workers in the movement endured long periods of work without strong results yet still expressed hope that the cause would eventually be won.

The increase in rural suffrage work in the years around the turn of the century was in part a response to calls from suffrage leaders to focus on rural areas. In an interview in the September

farmer's institute is much more assertive and bold than many of the earlier speeches from women within those movements. For a thorough discussion of the range and limits to women's self-expression in farmers' organizations and movements, see Donald B. Marti, *Women of the Grange: Mutuality and Sisterhood in Rural America, 1866-1920* (New York, 1991).

38. "Van Buren County Fair," WS 7:1 (Sept. 1892), 1; "Wapello County Fair," WS 7:1 (Sept. 1892), 4. As was characteristic of many stories in the paper, Phillips continued to express hope even when met with little enthusiasm at the Wapello County Fair, telling readers that "some day our fair men may be glad to make conditions what they should be for such an occasion."

39. Emily Phillips, [untitled], WS 14:1 (March 1901), 2.

1897 issue, Anna Shaw advised suffragists that "women's enfranchisement must come from the rural districts"; country women could become "the most zealous workers," she noted, because they are "the most tenacious of thought, not having so many things to dissipate it as the women of the cities."⁴⁰ Here, Shaw tried to turn the supposed isolation of farm life into an asset for the women's movement. In her view, women had less to distract them in the country. Those who wrote of the overburdening workload in the country may not have agreed with Shaw's assertion, but her words show that the movement's leaders saw the need for increased activism in rural communities.

With a renewed commitment to increase efforts in rural areas, suffrage proponents turned to the *Standard* as a vehicle to assist their endeavors. In October 1900 the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association's executive committee discussed the need to find "some woman in each quarter" of every county to "take up the *Standard* and make it her special work." Country post offices were suggested as the ideal place to talk with rural residents and "urge the *Standard*."⁴¹

As Iowa suffrage workers called for increased work in rural areas and increased distribution of the *Standard* to assist in the effort, they also seized on the state's agricultural identity to increase their profile in the national suffrage movement. At the IWSA state convention in 1900, leaders announced that a national suffrage bazaar was to be held in New York in December where each state would send representative products. Eleanor Stockman of Cerro Gordo County suggested that Iowa women send a carload of pigs, and she volunteered to provide the first one. Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), took to the *Standard* to encourage women to contribute to the effort by securing a pig to sell and donating the proceeds to the NWSA. Many women sent money in without having secured a pig and just asked that it be marked "pig money." Still, they collected enough pigs to fill a train car to be sold in Chicago. The proceeds were sent to the NWSA, and the canvas that covered the car was displayed at the bazaar to

40. "Charles City Convention," *WS* 10:7 (Sept. 1897), 3-4.

41. IESA Ex. Com. Meeting, 10/19/1900, p. 3, folder 2, box 8, Iowa Women's Suffrage Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

represent Iowa's contribution. The national superintendent of press work for the NWSA assured Iowans that "your state has had plenty of free advertising through the car load of hogs. . . . I think every paper in the United States made mention of it."⁴² The "pig money" incident suggests that rural identity could be tied to suffrage efforts to gain support within the state and to help define Iowa's reputation in the national movement's imagination.

Thus, in many ways, the content of the *Standard* confirms Sara Egge's thesis that suffrage work was more limited in rural areas in the nineteenth century but increased substantially after the turn of the century.⁴³ However, it also reveals that Iowa suffrage workers had been melding their efforts with rural identity on a grassroots level at least since the beginning of the paper's run in 1886. One key aspect of this was the suffrage movement's presence at the Iowa State Fair.

From 1886 through 1896, every issue of the *Standard* included a report on the state fair. In addition to describing the livestock, horticulture, and farm machinery exhibits, the reports detailed work done by the IWSA at each fair. In fact, the October 1886 report claimed that "the only permanent cottages built on the grounds by Iowa enterprise were by the Woman Suffrage and WCTU associations." Similar to accounts in future years, the reports noted that "a large amount of suffrage literature was distributed" and "over 1,400 names secured to the suffrage petition." The *Standard* also "found a welcome in many Iowa homes through this instrumentality."⁴⁴ The regular presence of state fair reports suggests that the IWSA not only had a presence at state

42. "Bazaar," *WS* 13:11 (Jan. 1901), 1. A digital search of four major newspapers of the time (*Chicago Tribune*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Washington Post*) found one mention of the "pig money" incident. "Suffrage Association's Pig," *New York Times*, 11/2/1900, 3.

43. Egge, "Grassroots Division," 6–7.

44. "State Fair," *WS* 1:2 (Oct. 1886), 5. In the 1880s and 1890s, suffragists had a visible presence at the fair. "Woman's Day" became a feature of fair week when suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt delivered an address in 1891. After the turn of the century, however, fair organizers discouraged political organizations like the IWSA from having a presence at the fair, eventually barring the organization from the Women's and Children's Building when it was constructed in 1913. See Chris Rasmussen, *Carnival in the Countryside: The History of the Iowa State Fair* (Iowa City, 2015), 76–78.

fairs in the late nineteenth century but also appeared to view them as a vital way to reach out to a diverse group of people.⁴⁵

Overall, the *Standard* reflects a trend in rural women's work within the woman suffrage movement in Iowa after the turn of the century. In the paper's later years, there are reports from more chapters around the state and articles about activities such as parades and rallies, regardless of geographical setting. However, that increase likely would not have been possible without the earlier rural work that the *Standard* had highlighted. Participation in the state fair in the 1880s and leaders' advice to focus on rural areas in the 1890s are two examples of the ways the movement sought out rural women in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

BEYOND the practical contributions the *Standard* made to the woman suffrage movement in Iowa, it also served a more abstract, but very real, community-building purpose. It created a sort of "counterpublic" space, a place where those who are otherwise not able to participate fully in public discussions are able to do so and where issues that are considered already settled or uncontested in the wider discourse become open for contestation and discussion.⁴⁶ Suffragist papers like the *Standard* exemplify the potentials and limits of this type of counterpublic. According to social theorist Nancy Fraser, "On the one hand [counterpublics] function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitation activities

45. Reports do not indicate where people who visited the suffrage building were from, so it is difficult to determine if the people who signed petitions and subscribed to the *Standard* at the fair were from rural or urban areas. However, the *Standard's* presence at an event strongly associated with agriculture and its reporting on the agricultural aspects of the fair is relevant here. For the Iowa State Fair's relationship with agriculture, see Rasmussen, *Carnival in the Countryside*.

46. Nancy Fraser introduces the concept of the subaltern counterpublic in "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* No. 25/26 (1990), 67. Working with Jurgen Habermas's definition of the bourgeois public sphere as a site for citizens to deliberate ideas separate from—or in opposition to—the state, Fraser insists that many subaltern groups are left out of that public sphere and so must create alternative spaces where they "invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (67). For more on the subject of counterpublics, see also Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York, 2005).

directed toward wider publics."⁴⁷ In this way, the *Standard* can be read as a counterpublic space for Iowa suffragists. It offered them a chance to find commonalities, experience a sense of solidarity, and participate in the consciousness-raising that is essential to any movement. The newspaper also served a larger purpose, beyond suffrage work; it developed a community where primarily women could rhetorically "gather" and discuss issues important to them.

The *Standard's* slogan points to this wider focus. Printed under each issue's masthead were the words, "The Woman's Standard will treat of the Home, Health, Purity, Culture, Temperance, Education, and of the legal and political interests of Woman, and of her right to the Franchise."⁴⁸ But what exactly did those concepts include? Did "the Home" include interests related to the farm? Did "Culture" include rural as well as urban identities?

Although the newspaper had always given some nod to issues affecting rural women, such as property rights and women's work on the farm, it was only later in its run that it began to branch out and include more articles related to rural concerns not overtly tied to women's rights. Notably, the *Standard* had always run reprints from agricultural newspapers that raised awareness of the farm woman's plight, but in later years the publication began to include information about broader farm issues. News about grassroots farm associations, irrigation techniques, and crop yields points to the *Standard's* larger rural context.⁴⁹ Perhaps appealing to male farmers as important suffrage supporters, or perhaps based on the belief that farm women who read the paper would also be interested in farm-related news, including articles like these allowed the paper to address larger rural concerns in addition to suffrage-specific news.

Rural women could also turn to the *Standard* for validation of rural culture, although that certainly was not a focus of the newspaper. Images of overworked women or farmers driven insane dotted the paper, but those existed mainly as a way to emphasize the need for women to participate in the suffrage movement. At other times, writers upheld and valorized a rural way of life. One

47. Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 68.

48. WS 1:1 (Sept. 1886), 1.

49. "The Male Fight for Equal Commercial Opportunity," WS 18:2 (April 1905), 1; "The Irrigation Outlook," WS 22:7 (Sept. 1909), 3.

such example was a reprint titled "Farm Life" in the September 1891 issue. Extolling the virtues of boys raised on farms, the writer expressed the "notable fact that in the colleges of our country the best students are the boys from the farm. In the workshops, in the halls of legislation, at the bar, in the forum, the pulpit, ninety-nine hundredths of the men who stand upon the summit were once boys on the farm." Attributing this success to "a constitution that endures labor," the writer went on to contrast the background of farm boys versus town boys: "They [farm boys] were barefooted, had tanned cheeks, wore patched clothes, and worked for bread." Meanwhile, boys in town were "fooling, brushing their hair and polishing their boots, while the rough country boy is plunging barefooted along the road to fame."⁵⁰ In this image, the author upheld farm life and an inversion took place—the hardships and poverty of farm life were signs that one was on the road to success, and the middle-class concerns for appearance and good grooming became signs that one was lacking the traits necessary for success. Since there was no girl in the piece (although the first line of the article mentioned boys and girls as the "grandest product of the farm"), readers could assume that the editors of the *Standard* thought a sufficient number of their readers would be interested in the general theme to run it.

Sentimental pieces like this exemplify the Jeffersonian ideal of the yeoman farmer, popular in mainstream culture. However, they could also serve to validate the experiences of readers who lived on farms or came from farm backgrounds. As Linda Steiner argues, newspapers marketed to rural audiences combatted middle-class notions of success by presenting farm women as "capable, intelligent, pragmatic, hard-nosed, and politically astute."⁵¹ Pieces like "Farm Life" implied that farm women were capable of raising children who were all those things as well. By including pieces that celebrated rural life as equal to, or in some cases superior to, city life, the *Standard* spoke to rural people in its counterpublic sphere, even if not to the same extent as publications like the *Farmer's Wife* did.

50. "Farm Life," *WS* 6:1 (Sept. 1891), 3.

51. Linda Steiner, "Evolving Rhetorical Strategies/Evolving Identities," in *A Voice of Their Own*, 194.

THE *WOMAN'S STANDARD* did not, however, give all voices and viewpoints equal weight; indeed, it left some out almost completely. A key limitation of counterpublics, Fraser contends, is that "even those with democratic and egalitarian intentions are not always above practicing their own modes of informal exclusion and marginalization."⁵² The writings of Elvie N. Logsdon for the *Standard* illustrate the exclusion and marginalization present in this counterpublic sphere. Logsdon was the wife of a farmer, held various positions in the Decorah Equal Suffrage Association, including president, and wrote for the *Standard* on multiple occasions.⁵³ In a 1906 article titled "Does the Indifference of Women Hinder Our Cause?" Logsdon answered the question in her title by pointing to the "stupidity, ignorance, and prejudice" of men as the main hindrance to the suffrage cause. In her explanation, Logsdon appealed to anti-immigrant rhetoric, claiming that men's "stupidity" stemmed from their insistence on protecting women from politics, never considering that their "immigration laws permit an influx of the ignorant, oppressed, and vicious of other lands to be our fellow citizens" and "gives us minors, idiots, insane, convicts, and incapables as our political equals."⁵⁴ If Logsdon was aware of the irony in decrying prejudice against (native-born white) women by using prejudice against immigrants to do so, she did not make it apparent in her piece.

As articles like Logsdon's indicate, the rural women included in the newspaper's imagined community were predominantly imagined as Anglo-Saxon.⁵⁵ Following many of the other mainstream suffrage papers of the day, the *Standard* often subverted racial equality to the cause of woman suffrage.⁵⁶ Although it ran

52. Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 67.

53. 1900 U.S. Census, Winneshiek County, Iowa, population schedule Decorah Township, sheet 11, dwelling 218, family 227, John H. Logsdon & Elvie N. Logsdon, digital image, AncestryLibrary.com.

54. E. N. Logsdon, "Does the Indifference of Women Hinder Our Cause?" *WS* 18:11 (Jan. 1906), 1.

55. A poem in the May 1893 issue, "Hans Dunderkopf's Views of Equality," juxtaposed a speaker's heavy German dialect and poor grammar with his refusal to allow his wife to vote, suggesting that anti-German sentiment was prevalent enough to be an effective way to appeal to audiences at the time. *WS* 7:9 (May 1893), 2.

56. For more on the relationship between racism, nativism, and the mainstream woman suffrage movement, see Suzanne M. Marilley, *Woman Suffrage and the*

some brief news bits about racial progress, for the most part the paper excluded racial issues or writers used them rhetorically to delegitimize minority rights in order to legitimize women's.⁵⁷ The rural image that the *Standard* deployed excluded, and thus made invisible, the rural work of immigrant, African American, and Native American women at the time.

The presence of rural imagery and rural women in the *Standard* shows that, to some extent, the paper did become a counterpublic sphere in which writers could discuss the nature of womanhood, proper spheres, farm labor, and rural life. By including writings from farm women like Mary Donley, R. D. Blaisdell Thorp, Margaret Nicholson, and Elvie N. Logsdon, the paper gave space for certain rural women's voices. Yet the paper created boundaries around that space, often excluding racial and ethnic minorities' experiences or using them rhetorically to bolster the cause.⁵⁸

THE WOMAN'S STANDARD ended publication before it was ever able to report that suffragists had finally won the vote for women. The Iowa state legislature approved the Nineteenth Amendment on July 2, 1919; the *Standard* published its last issue in November 1911.⁵⁹ Consistent with the attitude embodied throughout the paper's life, its farewell note exhibited a mixture

Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820-1920 (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 159-86; and Louise Michelle Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York, 1999).

57. This trope continues through the last issue, when the editors included in their "farewell" an indictment of the Iowa state legislature's refusal to grant suffrage to women, putting Iowa "on the same plane with that of the state of Louisiana, where its voters are largely poorly educated colored men." *WS* 24:7 (Nov. 1911), 2.

58. A notable example of suffrage leaders deploying nativist rhetoric is Carrie Chapman Catt, an Iowa and national leader who also served as editor of the *Woman's Standard*, 1890-1892. In a speech at the 1894 annual meeting of the IWSA, Catt declared, "This government is menaced with great danger . . . in the voices possessed by the males in the slums of the cities and the ignorant foreign vote." For Catt, the only way to prevent "the hoodlums of Chicago" from "reproduc[ing] the horrors of the Old World" is to take the vote from "the slums" and give it to women. Although the *Standard* did not reprint this speech since it was on a publishing hiatus at the time, the management and editors would have certainly heard the speech at the annual meeting. See "Iowa Annual Meeting," *The Woman's Journal*, 12/15/1894, 394.

59. Noun, *Strong-Minded Women*, 260.

of frustration, hope, and positive spin. Deviating from the grand rhetoric of the first issue regarding the paper's goals, editor Mary Coggeshall insisted that the "purpose of the founders had largely been realized" and so the paper was no longer necessary. According to Coggeshall, the paper had been created to communicate between the state suffrage association and local clubs; the permanent headquarters in Des Moines and the corresponding secretary could now facilitate that communication.

Read in tandem with the rest of the farewell address and with minutes from the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association executive committee, however, a somewhat different picture emerges. In the years leading up to its demise, the *Standard* struggled to find writers, financial support, and, most importantly, leadership.⁶⁰ Coggeshall, who had also served as the paper's first editor, returned in 1910 to take over the paper at the age of 74. Although she continued the work, her energy was depleted.⁶¹ After the Iowa legislature defeated another woman suffrage amendment in 1911, friends reported that Coggeshall "left the Capitol with pale face, broken look, and trembled lip."⁶² She died in December 1911, a month after the publication of the final issue of the *Standard*.

In her farewell piece, Coggeshall had written, "After the editor's resignation two months before the convention, no one has appeared ready to take the place, but if in the enlarged work of the future an organ for the society is deemed essential, the publication . . . will be resumed."⁶³ Despite a somewhat hopeful ending, the farewell article had a tone of exhaustion, frustration,

60. According to the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association executive committee meeting minutes of December 16, 1910, Coggeshall had requested that subscription rates be raised to support the paper. Ex. Com. Meeting, 12/16/1910, Executive Committee Minutes, 1910-1912, folder 4, box 9, Iowa Women's Suffrage Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines. Sara Egge points out that suffrage workers increased their activity in rural areas between 1900 and 1916. Thus, the newspaper's demise in 1911 suggests that suffrage workers were likely busy with other on-the-ground efforts. It also suggests Coggeshall's importance as a force behind the paper's longevity.

61. Minutes from the executive committee meeting of October 11, 1911, report that after Coggeshall announced her resignation the prior month, there was "difficulty of getting someone to edit it" and thus the paper would be suspended. Ex. Com. Meeting 10/11/1911, Executive Committee Minutes, 1910-1912.

62. Noun, *Strong-Minded Women*, 268.

63. "Why the Woman's Standard Suspends Publication," *WS* 24:7 (Nov. 1911), 2.



*Mary Jane Coggeshall, ca. 1900.
Photo from Iowa Women's Suffrage Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.*

and disappointment. And rightly so, for 25 years of publication and many more years of work still had not won the vote. Yet Coggeshall and the paper's other editors need not have been entirely disappointed, nor should they have concluded that their original goal "to speak to the public" had gone fully unrealized. If the *Standard* had meant to raise consciousness and give women a voice, it had done so for many. Through farm-based rhetorical appeals, updates on suffrage work in rural areas, and inclusion of some farm-related items beyond suffrage work, the paper did indeed speak to rural women, though to varying degrees. In doing so, it became one way for the imagined farm woman "Peggy" to join with the many women insisting that "we are people," too.⁶⁴

64. "We the People," *WS* 1:2 (Oct. 1886), 1.

“Why, you can be a journalist, kid”: The *Emerald Goose* and Women’s Journalism at Iowa State College during World War I

JENNY BARKER-DEVINE

ON APRIL 11, 1918, an article in the *Iowa State Student* lamented the absence of the *Green Gander*, the campus humor magazine published annually at Iowa State College (ISC, now Iowa State University) by the men of Sigma Delta Chi, a men’s journalism society. It had been more than a year since the United States entered World War I and many college men left campus for military service or lucrative jobs in war industries. All was not lost, however. The *Iowa State Student* happily reported that the women of Theta Sigma Phi, a new women’s journalism society, would release their own “scandal sheet” titled the *Emerald Goose*. An editorial in the first issue, published April 12, 1918, assured readers that this was merely a temporary wartime measure. “*The Emerald Goose* can not build ships, nor move freight, nor ‘go over the top’ with the boys. But we hope it can dispel gloom. We hope it can help keep cheerful the men who go—and the men and women who stay. This is our bit in this war.”¹

The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewers whose advice much improved this article and Becky Jordan, Reference Specialist at the Iowa State University Archives, for providing the images and for digging deep into the records to provide crucial evidence regarding the demise of the *Emerald Goose*.

1. “Scandal Eggs Burst with Emerald Goose,” *Iowa State Student*, 4/11/1918; “Nothing But the Truth,” *Emerald Goose*, 4/12/1918, 8.

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In print, members of Theta Sigma Phi claimed patriotism as their primary motivation, adhering to wartime rhetoric that permitted women to take on masculine roles only for the duration. On the surface, the four issues of the *Emerald Goose* published between 1918 and 1921 support popular conceptions of women in wartime as a reserve labor force. Yet, with the support of faculty and a national network of female journalists, the women of Theta Sigma Phi harbored grander ambitions. They intentionally created their magazine as a platform to write for general audiences, draw attention to women's issues, and protest the scant opportunities for women in journalism on campus and in the professional world. Furthermore, a contextual analysis of the *Emerald Goose* lends insight into how the upheavals of wartime and the 1918 flu epidemic affected gendered dynamics and generational conflict on a midwestern college campus.

The *Emerald Goose*, a seemingly small footnote to history, provides lessons on commemoration as we approach the centennial of U.S. involvement in World War I. Celebratory reflections will certainly use sources like the *Emerald Goose* to demonstrate how the conflict paved the way for woman suffrage and greater economic equality. For more than three decades, historians of American women have countered such notions by focusing on World War I as a focal point within the context of broader social, cultural, and political changes that unfolded over the course of several decades. Historian Barbara Steinson observes that World War I "created a climate for the continuing role of women on the public stage." Similarly, historian Maurine Weiner Greenwald argues that wartime demands brought to a head issues generated by the steady increase of women in the workforce that began in the 1870s. Labor shortages during the war allowed workers to "move from a defensive to offensive position" and to engage in strikes and smaller-scale labor revolts. In other words, experienced female workers and activists behaved intentionally, building on past experiences to bank on wartime rhetoric and move incrementally toward lasting change.² The *Emerald Goose*, then, was the product of protest, as women contested for space in the

2. Barbara J. Steinson, *American Women's Activism in World War I* (New York, 1982), 400; Maurine Weiner Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States* (Westport, CT, 1980), 38–39.

student newsrooms at Iowa State College and asserted their right to participate in curricular and extracurricular journalism.

IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY, professional newsrooms were male domains. Many male editors deemed the seedy beat of the average reporter inappropriate for the “gentle sex” and claimed that women lacked the stamina and skills to undertake serious writing. In 1898 editor E. A. Bennett asserted, “Women enjoy a reputation for slipshod style. They have earned it. . . . Not more than ten percent of them can be relied upon to satisfy even the most ordinary tests in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.” In 1903, in what is considered the first journalism textbook, author Edwin L. Schulman warned women to avoid taking “chances with the men.” He concluded that reporting robs a woman of her “feminine characteristics” and “rubs the bloom off a woman much more quickly than teaching or employment in a business office.” Editors sometimes employed so-called “sob sisters” to write sensational, emotive stories about tragic events, or for harrowing undercover assignments in slums and prisons, but their work was more often the object of ridicule. The majority of women in journalism wrote society columns, literature and film reviews, or material for designated “women’s pages” on fashion, recipes, homemaking, and childrearing. Such work could be done freelance from the confines of home for significantly less compensation than that of a full-time reporter.³

At the time, journalism was a novel subject of study at the collegiate level, and student newsrooms had yet to be entirely demarked along gendered lines. The University of Missouri—

3. E. A. Bennett, *Journalism for Women: A Practical Guide* (London and New York, 1898), 15–16; Genevieve G. McBride and Stephen R. Byers, “On the Front Page in the ‘Jazz Age’: Journalist Ione Quinby, Chicago’s Ageless ‘Girl Reporter,’” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 106 (2013), 93–94; Edwin L. Shuman, *Practical Journalism: A Complete Manual for the Best Newspaper Methods* (New York, 1903), 150, quoted in Jean Marie Lutes, *Front Page Girls: Women’s Journalists in American Culture and Fiction, 1880–1930* (Ithaca, NY, 2006), 9; Matthew Goodman, *Eighty Days: Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland’s History-Making Race Around the World* (New York, 2014), 8–12; Alice Fahs, *Out on Assignment: Newspaper Women and the Making of Modern Public Space* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2011), 2–9, 13–15; Linda Steiner, “Gender at Work,” *Journalism History* 23 (1997), 2–13; Amber Roessner, “‘The Great Wrong’: Jennie June’s Stance on Women’s Rights,” *Journalism History* 38 (2012), 182.

Columbia (MU) was the first to establish a school of journalism in 1908, leading the way in the field. ISC did not offer a journalism major until 1925, but beginning in 1905 students could take courses in journalistic writing as it related to home economics, agriculture, engineering, and forestry.

In 1909 male students at DePauw University founded Sigma Delta Chi as the nation's first journalism society, but they intentionally excluded women. That same year, female students at the University of Washington (UW), which housed the second school of journalism founded in the United States, established Theta Sigma Phi upon the advice of faculty. By 1915, the organization had chapters at the universities of Wisconsin, Kansas, Indiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Oregon. In March 1917, more than a year before the initial publication of the *Emerald Goose*, a group of women at Iowa State College sought a charter from Theta Sigma Phi with the clear intention of promoting women's journalism at ISC. All of the applicants had prior experience in writing and editing and stated in their petition for national membership that they aspired to professional careers in journalism.⁴

On January 11, 1918, seven women at ISC formally established the Omicron chapter of Theta Sigma Phi after nearly 18 months of planning. In doing so, they joined a larger movement to contest sexism by creating professional networks for women in journalism. The process of founding a chapter began with a serendipitous meeting between Merze Marvin, a 1916 graduate of MU, and Harry O'Brien, a professor of journalism at ISC who oversaw all student publications. At the time, Marvin was employed in the advertising department of the *Des Moines Register*, and she understood fully how sexism had shaped her career. In 1916 Walter Williams, the dean of the MU School of Journalism, refused to recommend Marvin for a faculty position at UW. She was "especially well qualified," Williams wrote to UW journalism professor Frank Kane; "her sex is her only drawback." Kane replied that he held no personal prejudice against women but agreed that Marvin's sex would "limit her cruelly." This is especially bizarre given that the UW faculty had supported the for-

4. Victoria Goff, "Association for Women in Communications, 1909-Present," in *Women's Press Organizations, 1881-1999*, ed. Elizabeth V. Burt (Westport, CT, 2000), 11-13.

mation of Theta Sigma Phi only seven years prior. Undeterred, Marvin became an outspoken advocate for women in journalism, with a special interest in enhancing collegiate programs. In a 1918 editorial for Theta Sigma Phi's national magazine, *The Matrix*, she accused colleges and universities of failing "in giving women their opportunity." Convinced by Marvin's tenacity, in the fall of 1916 O'Brien suggested to his female students that they form a chapter and enlist Marvin's help.⁵

O'Brien was still early in his tenure at ISC. He had earned an M.A. in English from Ohio State University in 1912 and arrived at ISC in 1915 after building an agricultural journalism program at Oklahoma State University. It is surprising that he reached out to female students given curricular limitations that prevented women from even enrolling in most ISC journalism courses. During the 1917-18 academic year, ISC offered 11 courses in the field of technical journalism, including introductory classes on journalistic writing and editing, agricultural advertising, bulletin writing (for aspiring extension agents and researchers), rural newspaper management, and the management of technical journals. These courses prepared students to apply their agricultural and scientific knowledge as writers and editors for technical periodicals, and many students found employment with magazines such as *Wisconsin Farmer*, *Wallaces' Farmer*, *Successful Farming*, and *Prairie Farmer*.⁶

5. By 1910, more than two dozen women's press clubs operated in 17 states, facilitating a rapid increase in the number of female journalists so that by 1920, 16 percent of all journalists were women. See Lutes, *Front Page Girls*, 8; Susan Henry, "'But Where Are All the Women?': Our History," in *Seeking Equity for Women in Journalism and Mass Communication Education: A 30-Year Update*, ed. Ramona Rush, Carol E. Oukrop, and Pamela J. Creedon (Mahwah, NJ, 2004), 3; Merze Marvin, "Why Not Women Instructors in Journalism?" *The Matrix* (May 1918), quoted in Goff, "Association for Women in Communications," 13; "Theta Sigma Phi at Iowa State" (1968), in *Women in Communications, Inc. Records*, MS 35, Iowa State University Archives, Parks Library, Iowa State University, Ames (hereafter cited as WIC Records).

6. *Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts General Catalogue, 1917-1918* 15, no. 32 (Ames, 1917), 107-10. ISC was coeducational from its founding, but in the 1910s, female students remained a minority. Exact enrollment numbers are not available for every year, but female enrollment experienced a rapid increase from only 360 in 1912 to 1,500 in 1927. It is also possible to estimate from the number of students enrolled in each major. In 1914-15, 72 percent of the 2,974 ISC students majored in the male-dominated subjects of agriculture, engineering, and veterinary medicine, while 28 percent majored in areas dominated by

The 1917–18 ISC catalog clearly delineated journalism courses along gendered lines with a bold heading: “Journalism for Women.” Only three of the eleven available journalism courses were offered for women: Beginning Technical Journalism, Technical Journalism Practice, and Management of a Technical Journal. Furthermore, female students had little time to take these electives. The 1918–19 catalog outlined programs of study for home economics majors that provided few opportunities to choose general electives. Students specializing in household arts (which emphasized textiles, clothing, and art history) or household science (which emphasized nutrition and hygiene) were allowed to take only $1\frac{1}{3}$ elective credits during their junior year, and between three and six elective credits during their senior year. That number was further reduced by the requirement that students choose their electives from a limited set list. The course Beginning Agricultural Journalism appeared among the available electives but not until the fourth year of study. Students majoring in home economics could also specialize in agriculture to prepare them for farm management, extension work, or agricultural education at the high school level, but the program of study offered no courses in journalism nor any room for free electives. In contrast, male students majoring in civil engineering were allowed ten elective credits during their junior and senior years, while male students majoring in agronomy were required to take Beginning Agricultural Journalism and were allowed 15 elective credits during their junior and senior years. Those majors clearly allowed male students greater flexibility in shaping their education.⁷

females: home economics, industrial science, and music. Even by 1917–18, at the height of American involvement in the war, little had changed; 67 percent of 2,700 students majored in agriculture, engineering, and veterinary medicine, while 33 percent majored in home economics, industrial science, and music. Even during wartime, women did not experience large gains in numbers and did not encounter increased opportunities to participate in student activities or student leadership positions. See “Iowa State College Summary of Attendance,” *Report of the Iowa State Board of Education for the Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1920* (Des Moines, 1920), 145. The women of Theta Sigma Phi estimated that approximately 600 women were enrolled at ISC. “Petition to Theta Sigma Phi,” in Theta Sigma Phi Records, RS 22/05, Iowa State University Archives, Parks Library, Iowa State University, Ames (hereafter cited as Theta Sigma Phi Records).

7. Clarence M. Baker, “State Men in Agricultural Journalism,” *The Ohio State University Monthly* 9, no. 6 (March 1918), 31; “Petition to Theta Sigma Phi,” in

College policies further inhibited women's participation in journalism by limiting their extracurricular activities. In 1914 ISC administrators devised a point system that gave value to specific activities in order to avoid situations in which "one man or woman is elected or appointed to many positions because of unusual popularity." They assigned each activity a specific point value and prohibited students from accumulating more than 50 points. For example, the president of the Cardinal Guild (the student government organization) earned 20 points, while the editor of the student newspaper earned 35 points. Activities that required less time, such as working as a reporter for the student newspaper, earned just 10 points.⁸

ISC administrators developed very different plans for men and women. Activities listed as appropriate for men included nearly all high-status positions, such as president of the Cardinal Guild, class officers, varsity athletics, and all leadership positions on major campus publications. In contrast, the list for women featured major leadership positions within just three women's organizations: the Home Economics Club, the Forensics League, and the YWCA. The system further devalued women's participation by assigning them higher point values. For example, the presidency of the YWCA was worth 35 points, as compared to 25 points for the president of the YMCA.⁹

With these curricular and extracurricular restrictions, few women participated in extracurricular journalism. By the 1910s, ISC offered six different student publications: the *Iowa State Student*, the *Bomb* (the yearbook), the *Iowa Engineer* (established in 1901), the *Iowa Agriculturalist* (1902), the *Ames Forester* (1913), and the *Green Gander* (1915). The *Iowa Agriculturalist* included women's pages written and edited by female students, but ISC did not sponsor a periodical devoted specifically to women until the *Iowa Homemaker* commenced in 1921. Women did not enjoy equal opportunities to work on these publications. In 1918 the 27-member

Theta Sigma Phi Records; *Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts General Catalogue*, 1918–1919 16, no. 44 (Ames, 1919), 216–28; *Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts General Catalogue*, 1917–1918 15, no. 32 (Ames, 1917), 167–73, 208–11.

8. "The Point System," in *When Freshmen Come to ISC* (Ames, 1915), 12–16.

9. *Ibid.*

Bomb staff included just three women. The 39-member staff of the *Iowa State Student* also included just three women: the social editor and two reporters. Three women, out of a staff of 20, worked on the home economics section of the *Iowa Agriculturalist*, and none worked for either the *Iowa Engineer* or the *Ames Forester*.¹⁰

As they contemplated their petition to Theta Sigma Phi, the women at ISC understood that forming this new group would require them to devote nearly all of their extracurricular points to journalism, especially if they wanted to take on leadership roles. Electing not to mention these limitations, they instead painted a more optimistic picture. The petition emphasized that six of the seven prospective members had already earned credits in journalism courses, though none had enrolled in those outside of the courses listed under the heading Journalism for Women.¹¹

The petition promised growth by noting that during the 1915–16 academic year 57 women had enrolled in one or more journalism courses; during the 1916–17 academic year, the number grew to 77. The petitioners believed that their technical training from courses in home economics and the sciences, combined with journalistic instruction, qualified them for jobs in home and family departments in agricultural publications and at women's magazines. They presented ample evidence to support their claims. After 1915, women from ISC won writing contests sponsored by the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and many worked as freelance contributors to magazines such as *Woman's Home Companion*, *McCall's*, *Successful Farming*, *Farm and Fireside*, and *The Fruit Grower*. Furthermore, they found inspiration from alumni such as Louise Peck ('13), the household editor of the *People's Popular Monthly* in Des Moines, and Clara Steen ('14) and Tura Hawk ('16), who did "considerable feature writing for the big magazines."¹²

All of the applicants boasted impressive resumés. Founding member Norma Daniels, a junior chemistry major, worked as a reporter for her hometown newspaper, the *Eldon Forum*, and on

10. *Bomb* (1918), 170–77. These numbers were similar to those in 1917, when 9 women worked on the *Bomb* (out of a total staff of 32), 2 women worked on the *Iowa State Student* (out of 29), 3 worked on the *Iowa Agriculturalist* (out of 23), and none worked on either the *Iowa Engineer* or the *Green Gander*. *Bomb* (1917), 374–80.

11. "Petition to Theta Sigma Phi," in Theta Sigma Phi Records.

12. *Ibid.*

the home economics sections of the *Iowa Agriculturalist*. Phoebe Mentzer, a junior in home economics, worked for the *Iowa State Student* and contributed feature articles to *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Des Moines Register*. Gladys M. Hultz, a senior in home economics, worked on the *Bomb*, served for two years as society editor for the *Iowa State Student*, and, like other founding members, worked on a sorority newsletter. They all intended to pursue professional careers in journalism following graduation. They believed that their experiences revealed a "developing widespread interest in journalistic study among the women at Iowa State College," and they hoped that interest would continue to grow.¹³

On March 22, 1917, just a few weeks before the United States went to war, the women students finally submitted their petition to the national chapter of Theta Sigma Phi. They wrote nothing about promoting women's journalism only for the duration of the war or about filling leadership positions left absent by men; rather, they wished to "seriously devote" themselves to advancing women's journalism at ISC.¹⁴

When national Theta Sigma Phi president Helen Ross Lantz charged Merze Mervin with the Omicron chapter's installation ceremony in January 1918, she affirmed that the women at ISC should maintain that devotion. Marvin was to impress upon the new members that "as an organization they must mean something. Warn them against having too many parties and teas. In the main their meeting should be for the purpose of discussing professional matters." Lantz, Marvin, and the members of Omicron chapter understood that they were part of a broad national network that relied on strength in numbers.¹⁵

THE CHAPTER'S ACTIVITIES happened to coincide with the development of a home-front rhetoric that authorized authority figures to accept women's public engagement. On April 19, 1917, just two weeks after Congress declared war, ISC administrators adopted wartime programs for female students. Catherine McKay, dean of home economics, outlined a program of women's war

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Helen Ross Lantz to Merze Marvin, 1/8/1918, Theta Sigma Phi Records.

work with courses on hygiene and home care of the sick, voluntary work, hospital supplies, knitting and sewing, emergency building, drying and preserving vegetables, gardening, stock feeding, bee-keeping, and poultry raising. Although women also participated in fund drives, the sale of Liberty Bonds, and customary female activities sponsored by the Red Cross and the YWCA, college administrators focused on impending labor shortages. They offered courses in agriculture and technical subjects, including a women's "tractor school." On May 17, 1918, Robert E. Buchanan, then dean of industrial sciences, insisted that ISC administrators increase women's enrollment and train them for the growing number of professional and scientific positions across the country. The efficient instruction of young women was, after all, a "patriotic duty" so long as the country was at war.¹⁶

It was within this context that the members of Theta Sigma Phi minimized their professional ambitions and emphasized war-time rhetoric. On May 7, 1918, shortly after the debut of the *Emerald Goose*, an editorial in the *Iowa State Student* titled "Women in Journalism" fully supported women's temporary employment in journalism as a means to fulfill their patriotic duties. Signed only "J. W.," it was likely authored by Josephine Wiley, an early initiate of Omicron chapter. She wrote, "With our men constantly pledging themselves in the national service, we believe it to be the patriotic duty of the women who are entering professions at this time, be they newspaper or otherwise, should also pledge for a definite period of time." The editorial noted that homemakers could remain within their home while using their skills to publish useful articles on "war time recipes and suggestions on furnishing a dining room in blue and white." Taking it one step further, Wiley then asserted that women were capable of much more than writing articles concerning society and the home; women reporters could easily write two columns on the fire across town and the "pro-German who started it." The editorial clearly framed women's work as temporary and unusual.¹⁷

16. "Assignments Made for Women's Work," *Iowa State Student*, 4/19/1917; "Tractor School for Girls Now Possible," *Iowa State Student*, 5/10/1917; Earle D. Ross, *A History of Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts* (Ames, 1942), 304-5; *Iowa State Student*, 5/17/1918.

17. "Women in Journalism," *Iowa State Student*, 5/7/1918.

At first glance, the women of Theta Sigma Phi appear to have acted in accordance with college policy and served as members of a reserve labor force, reluctantly taking the place of men for the duration of the war. In April 1918 they dedicated the first issue of the *Emerald Goose* to the absent men of Sigma Delta Chi and asserted, "When the Green Gander went to war the [*Emerald Goose*] stepped in his place." In the second issue, published in March 1919, the women again downplayed their efforts. The editors wrote that as a result of the war, the *Emerald Goose* filled the "vacancy in the hearts of Iowa State College people." Using the titles of their publications as representative characters, the women described how, once the *Green Gander* returned "with victoriously beating wings," the *Emerald Goose* anxiously "waddled forth to greet him."¹⁸

BY PORTRAYING the *Emerald Goose* as a wartime measure, its creators minimized its significance. A century later, the same rhetoric often prevents us from appreciating its value as a historical source. It would be easy to dismiss the magazine as a mere replacement of the *Green Gander*, but a closer examination reveals how members of Theta Sigma Phi used humor to reflect on women's collegiate experiences.

Historian Beth Bailey discerned that campus publications provided important information regarding proper middle-class manners, behavior, and attitudes toward consumer items. The growth of magazines around the turn of the century shaped a "remarkably coherent universe" of convention not only on local campuses, but for nearly all college students across the country. That code of conduct proved necessary as more young people attended college and interacted with the opposite sex without the guidance of watchful parents. Yet because most college publications were produced by men, material for women was often prescriptive or written in condescending, dismissive tones.¹⁹

That was certainly true for the *Green Gander*. Excluding women from Sigma Delta Chi also excluded them from writing

18. "Nothing But the Truth," *Emerald Goose*, 4/12/1918, 8; "Beta Number," *Emerald Goose*, 3/19/1919, 8.

19. Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore, 1989), 8-9, 14-15.

for the organization's magazine. As a result, the *Emerald Goose* provided a rare platform for women's authentic voices.

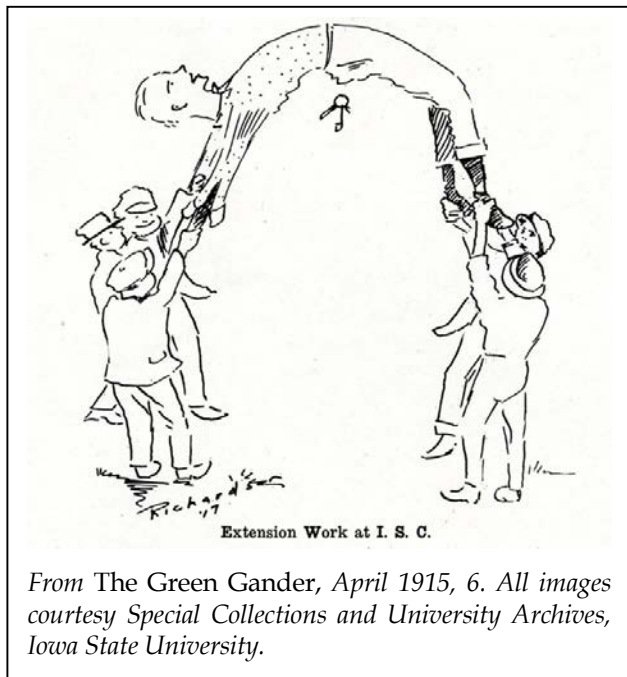
Both ISC humor magazines – the *Green Gander*, first published in 1915, and the *Emerald Goose*, first published in 1918 – gave students an opportunity to promote campus unity by looking at the lighter side of student life. In the first issue of the *Green Gander*, one contributor noted the necessity of humor at a college dedicated to two very serious and somewhat somber vocations: agriculture and housekeeping. He wrote, “If the editors of the *Green Gander* can by increasing the amount of joy, foolishness, humor, lightness of outlook, and cheerfulness of disposition in these two mighty professions, they will rank with the benefactors of the ages.”²⁰

Student writers and editors poked fun at themselves, the faculty, administrators, and the rules by which students were to abide. In many ways, the writers and editors attempted to level social relationships by consistently remarking that no foolish act, even those of professors and deans, was safe from exposure. Yet the experience could be quite different for men and women. Literary scholar Catherine Keyser asserts that in the 1910s and 1920s, humor was especially important for female writers because it “facilitates self-invention and cultural commentary.” The *Emerald Goose* was more than a forum for poking fun. It allowed women to critique the administration's strict limitations on their behavior and the largely unregulated lives of male students, all the while diffusing tensions over appropriate gender roles. Over the course of four years and four issues, the *Emerald Goose* shows the complexity and limits of humor in challenging established gender norms.²¹

The two ISC magazines differed in how they promoted gendered social conventions and campus unity. Early issues of the *Green Gander* featured stories and jokes that reinforced a competitive, masculine culture on campus by emphasizing varsity athletics (primarily football), the draft and military service, hazing rituals, fraternities, and the joys of bachelorhood. These strengthened existing traditions that were often imbued with violence.

20. George Fitch, “When George Came Home,” *Green Gander*, 4/1/1915, 5.

21. Catherine Keyser, *Playing Smart: New York Women Writers and Modern Magazine Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2010), 10.



A favorite topic was humiliating freshman initiation rituals. According to a 1915 freshman orientation manual, male first-year students were required to wear beanies from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day (except Sunday) and were forbidden from wearing collegiate insignia or calling upperclassmen by their nicknames. In 1909 the Cardinal Guild outlawed physical hazing practices, including “stretching,” whereby four upperclassmen picked up a freshman, one holding each limb, and shook him vigorously until all of the change fell out of the unfortunate freshman’s pockets. Nonetheless, an illustration of the ritual, with the caption “Extension work at ISC,” appeared in the first issue of the *Green Gander*, showing that the practice was still part of campus life in 1915.²²

22. *Green Gander*, April 1915, 6. The practice of wearing beanies, or “class caps,” was not simply a student ritual. It was endorsed by the administration. Strict guidelines dictated that all caps were to be maroon in color with buttons on the top to signify the freshman’s major. At the end of each academic year, the freshmen held a bonfire at which they burned their caps and celebrated their promotion to sophomore status. *When Freshmen Come to ISC*, 22–23.

References to dating and women in the *Green Gander* often included silly sketches denoting women's frivolity and the silliness of their beauty regimens, poking fun at the high cost of dating, and portraying marriage as a dreaded affair. The male writers' stories reveal that they expected to date widely and enjoy physical interaction with women without serious commitment. In a nod to female intelligence, they also noticed the exceptional nature of college-educated women. One 1917 issue featured a comment that no man married to an "Ames girl" could claim an exemption from the draft on the grounds of caring for "a dependent." The same issue featured a daring poem concerning the strange, somewhat unfeminine skills of Edith Curtiss ('18), an ISC student and the daughter of Charles F. Curtiss, dean of the Agriculture Division. The poem indicated that she could "judge horses, hogs and lowing kine," but because she could not cook, her father "at the cafeteria . . . doth dine."²³

The editors of the *Green Gander* occasionally sympathized with female students by condemning the rules that governed women's conduct. Those rules were in keeping with guidelines at similar institutions throughout the United States, although the disparity in gendered expectations at ISC may have been intensified by the absence of male dorms. Men enjoyed a significant degree of personal freedom because they chose to live in boardinghouses, stay with families, or join fraternities. Women, by contrast, were required to live in dormitories overseen by housemothers who enforced strict rules handed down by the "advisor to women." Female students were to study between 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and have their lights out at exactly 10:30 p.m. They were allowed "eight light cuts" per person per quarter so long as they did not occur on two consecutive nights. Women adhered to a 10 p.m. curfew on Friday nights, with lights out by 11 p.m., and a midnight curfew on Saturdays. Women's activities on and off campus were strictly monitored. They could not attend a dance if it did not have a college sanction (and prior to 1920 college-sanctioned dances only occurred on Saturday nights), daytime picnics were to end before dusk, all evening picnics required chaperones, and if a woman expected to

23. *Green Gander*, 11/10/1917, 18, 25.

return to the dorm after 6 p.m., or if she planned to leave Ames for any reason, she needed to inform her housemother.²⁴

Articles in the *Green Gander* occasionally addressed such rules. In April 1917 one article spoke out against the installation of electric lights "in every cozy retreat" on campus. The lights imposed on couples' privacy and, thereby, their ability to "mate." The writer of the article wondered why, "in the age of eugenics and science," administrators would "work so hard to prevent bright, young college students from falling in love." Later that year, an article in the homecoming issue scoffed at the strict rules posted in sorority houses that governed the women's behavior. The writer asked, "Are the girls of Iowa State less able to take care of their own thoughts and actions than the men? Such fossilized remains of antiquated ideas as are exhibited by the Women's By-Laws might well have been relegated to the ash heap years ago."²⁵

The first issue of the *Emerald Goose*, released in April 1918, mirrored the format of the *Green Gander*, consisting primarily of short poems, jokes, cartoons, and a few short, short stories. The writers were not quite as daring as those in the *Green Gander*. The jokes were aimed primarily at fellow students, administrators, and faculty, but more often they used pseudonyms and cryptic language that required firsthand knowledge of individuals' antics. Nevertheless, the writers expressed desires for greater personal freedoms. One poem described library dates, where couples met in the dark stacks. Rather than describe this as an exciting, positive venture, though, the poet expressed annoyance at not being able to study on account of all the noise. A short story titled "For Freshman Girls" featured the misadventures of two young women who missed curfew by two minutes. After trying to pry open the doors of the women's dormitory, they were caught by an angry housemother in "kid curlers" who let them in without consequence. Rather than directly challenging the rules, the moral of the story was simply to "tell the chaperone so she will be there

24. Mark Walter Robins, "American Anxiety and the Reaction of Michigan Agricultural College," *American Educational History Journal* 31 (2004), 73; *Official Rules Concerning Student Conduct, with Suggestions in Regard to Health and Mental Hygiene* (Ames, 1924), 14–16.

25. "Making It Harder to 'Fuss,'" *Green Gander*, 4/1/1917, 4; "Girls, You Should Appreciate Such Motherly Interest," *Green Gander*, 11/10/1917, 8.

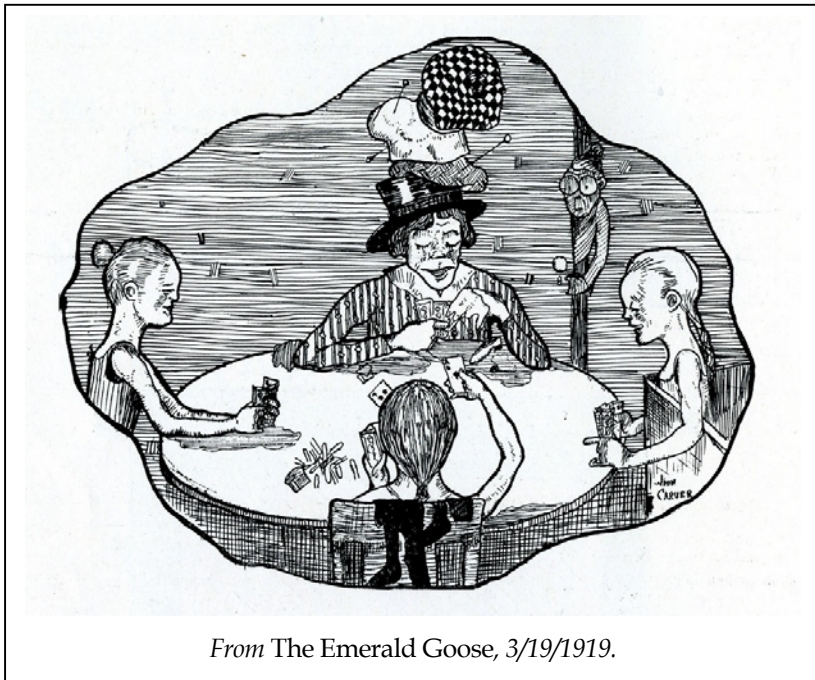
to greet you." Overall, the first issue of the *Emerald Goose* reflects a hesitation on the part of female students to cross boundaries of propriety, a hesitation that the writers of the *Green Gander* did not share. The following year, however, the women of Theta Sigma Phi produced a very different magazine.²⁶

The 1918–19 academic year was one of upheaval at ISC. In February 1918 the campus welcomed a contingent of 500 recruits with the Student Army Training Corps (SATC), a nationwide military program that provided eight weeks of technical instruction. In the fall of 1918 an even larger group of 1,200 men arrived for a more elaborate SATC program that combined academic studies with technical training. By October, however, the Spanish influenza epidemic derailed all campus activities. At its height, more than 1,250 cases were reported primarily among the SATC, and 52 SATC cadets died as a result. As State Gym and a nearby church were converted into makeshift hospitals, administrators enforced a strict quarantine to keep the disease out of the women's dormitories and the larger Ames community. The responsibility for keeping female students healthy fell to Fredrica Shattuck, an instructor of speech and theater, who reluctantly took over as the Acting Advisor to Women on October 1, 1918, when her predecessor became ill.²⁷

The epidemic eased by early November 1918 and the administration's efforts to contain it proved successful, but the disease and the quarantine remained on campus through January and February 1919. The second issue of the *Emerald Goose*, published in March 1919, expressed women's restless resentment of the quarantine rules that tightened their already strict regulations. The very first page took a jab at the Acting Advisor to Women in a cartoon of female students brainstorming ideas in O'Brien's office stating, "But Mr. O'Brien we can't, Miss Shattuck won't let us." Even more revealing is a cartoon featured prominently on the second page. Four young women play strip poker while a shocked Shattuck peers through the door. A poem, written as a

26. "Ye Campus Gossip" and "For Freshman Girls," *Emerald Goose*, 4/12/ 1918, 10, 22.

27. Becky Jordan, "1919: A Glimpse of Campus Life 70 Years Ago," Exhibit Catalog 42 (1989), Iowa State University Archives, Parks Library, Iowa State University, Ames, 1–2.



letter from a female student to her brother stationed in France, described how the women were “bored to tears” because of the quarantine. They believed the game to be innocent, but after being caught, the poem’s subject says she has been expelled, explaining sarcastically, “We’re court martialed/ And reduced in rank. / We are shameful/ And immodest/ And unlady-like/ And a menace/ To the morals / Of the institution, / And a discredit / To the ideals / Of I.S.C.” The cartoon and the poem were based on actual events, when six female students living in Lyon Hall were suspended for the remainder of the quarter. The cartoon and poem, then, were not exaggerated musings on female sexuality but rather public expressions of protest and solidarity with the suspended students.²⁸

That was only the beginning. The entire 1919 issue was peppered with poems and stories questioning double standards for men and women. One short story titled “Dorain Dewey’s Di-

28. Untitled cartoons and poem, *Emerald Goose*, 3/19/1919, 3-4; Jordan, “1919,” 3-4. Interestingly, the mother of one offender wrote to Shattuck, reproaching her for forcing the women to leave campus during the epidemic and for not providing more “amusements” to keep the women out of trouble. Jordan, “1919,” 3-4.

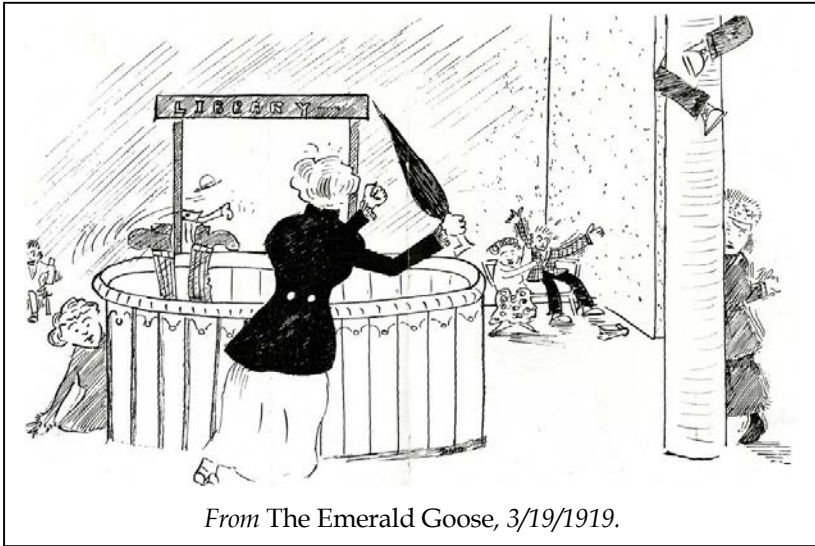
lemma—How will it be in Ames in 1975?” playfully predicted that in 1975 gender roles would be entirely reversed. By then it would be the young college men whose lives were strictly regulated to preserve their sexual purity. When the main character, Dorain Dewey, steps off the train in Ames, he wonders if he should plan on a career or simply “win his way upward, perhaps into the heart of some strong, manly millionaires.” His dreams are dashed as he is thwarted by unfriendly policewomen, “husky cabwomen,” and a scheming seductress. His only salvation is a fine, upstanding woman who proposes at the end of the story and allays Dewey’s fears of personal failure. The story itself provides a sharp critique of double standards for women and their daily struggles with harassment and personal safety. Telling the story in a humorous light allowed it to appeal to a general audience and raise significant issues without fully challenging male authority. Similar concerns emerged from a poem in the same issue titled “The Eternal Question.”

*Johnny may go to the dances,
Oh, Johnny may go to the fair,
And Johnny may go where he pleases,
Now, really, do you think that quite fair?*

*And why may I not do as Johnny?
Or why does not Johnny do as me?
And why may I not do as Johnny
As well as another body?*

The final emphasis on one’s “body” in the poem is especially revealing when one considers how laws at the time regarding rape and sexual violence typically held “a woman’s behavior as the standard defining whether rape occurred.” Historian Kimberly Jensen finds that concerns about violence, whether it was domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, murder, or a hostile workplace, had a “profound effect” on the strategies women developed when entering public spaces. “The Eternal Question” laid bare a significant issue in the lives of college women living on a campus where they were far outnumbered by men.²⁹

29. “Dorain Dewey’s Dilemma—How will it be in Ames in 1975?” *Emerald Goose*, 3/19/1919, 9; “The Eternal Question,” *ibid.*, 21; Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana, IL, 2008), 21–22.



Rather than setting themselves apart from the male students, the contributors to the 1919 issue used poems and cartoons to express women's sexual desires and their wish to partake in campus unrest alongside the men. As literary scholar Catherine Keyser pointed out, as much as a female writer might use humor to mock others' behaviors, quite often "she also wants to participate in it." One poem titled "The Fussers Baedeker" suggested several dark spots on campus for "spooning" with one's lover. Just as in the 1918 issue, the 1919 issue again referenced library dates. This time, however, a cartoon spread across two pages illustrated the practice, undermining Shattuck's authority by portraying her thundering through the library wielding an umbrella as spry couples took cover.³⁰

Throughout January and February 1919, rebellious students overwhelmed administrators occupied with enforcing the quarantine and overseeing demobilization of the SATC. The most notorious incident occurred on February 6, 1919, when members of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity butchered a hog on a farmer's property and took it back to the fraternity house. As it turned out, the hog was a prized boar belonging to Agriculture Dean Charles

30. Keyser, *Playing Smart*, 167; *Emerald Goose*, 3/19/1919, 16-17, 23.

Curtiss. The incident was the subject of at least seven poems and one cartoon in the 1919 issue of the *Emerald Goose* that, for the most part, made light of the situation. For example, one small blurb read: "The Betas may be good thieves, but in porch climbing they still have something they can learn from Parley Sheldon and Bill Hawkins, who have long had practice at the gentle art on the fire escape of West Hall." This referenced an actual incident when male students climbed into the female dormitories through the windows to join an all-female dance. While the item chided the Betas, it identified and even complimented the men who made the ascent.³¹

The one exception, a poem titled "The Double Standard," drew attention to the fact that, even with the destruction of property and theft, the men who stole the prize boar received the same punishment as women caught breaking curfew.

*I go to a show on a Tuesday nite,
Quite much against the college rule;
I am caught, I am tried, I am sentenced to pay,
But, by jinks, I'll be hanged if it's fair.*

*My Friend, Mr. Beta, goes out after night,
And steals for his frat one fat pig.
He is caught, he is tried, and he is sentenced, he pays,
But not as compared to myself.*

Again, the poem referenced an actual incident when 18 women obtained permission to go to a movie on March 7, 1919. Instead, they attended an unchaperoned public dance in downtown Ames. As punishment, they lost all social privileges for the first six weeks of the spring quarter.³²

For the women of Theta Sigma Phi, silly poems, cartoons, blurbs, and stories were not only ideological critiques but also pointed criticisms of the realities they regularly encountered. They were well aware of sexism on campus and in the professional

31. Jordan, "1919," 4; Untitled poems and untitled cartoons, "At the Beta House," and "Did it Ever Happen to You?" *Emerald Goose*, 3/19/1919, 11-13, 15, 22, 25, 27, 30. The incident of men climbing into a women's dormitory is verified in "Interview with Miss Fredrica Shattuck, Retired Professor of Speech, January 15, 1959," Iowa State University Archives, Parks Library, Iowa State University, Ames, 6-7.

32. "The Double Standard," *Emerald Goose*, 3/19/1919, 13.



Hark, hark, the dogs do bark,
The Betas are coming to town,
So lock up your hogs, unchain your dogs
And nail your front porch down.

From The Emerald Goose, 3/19/1919.

world that awaited them. Amid the blurbs and poems about campus life, the 1919 issue featured a poem reminding women never to “ask for quarter as a woman,” and to “play the game just as a man can play.” The poem warned women that they would encounter “crime and dirt,” but concluded,

*If you can do a man's work with men
And never lose your womanhood,
Why you can be a journalist, kid,
Here's to you, girl – make good!”³³*

33. “An ‘If’ for the Theta Sigs,” *Emerald Goose*, 3/19/1919, 8.

THE SECOND ISSUE of the *Emerald Goose* appeared in March 1919. It was released amid growing student unrest that was further captured in the returning issue of the *Green Gander*, published one month later in April 1919. Yet rather than expressing camaraderie with the staff of the *Emerald Goose*, the men of Sigma Delta Chi were unequivocally antagonistic. An editorial in the *Green Gander* praised the men who had served in the military and boldly proclaimed a new era in journalism. Men who had seen war and traveled the world brought a "youthful vigor" to the profession. Another editorial expressed relief at the reappearance of the *Green Gander* and asked whether the *Emerald Goose* had sufficiently filled its place in wartime. The answer: "Heaven help us, NO!" The editors could "scarce wait until the simple reading folk have recovered from the startling revelations that dear goose made." The same issue featured a poem dedicated to the staff of the *Emerald Goose*.

You can talk about the women's rights,
And the talent that they show,
But the way they butchered that poor book
To me was an awful blow.

Their jokes were old, their take-offs crude,
And it meant naught to me.
I rise right now to let you know
It was not worth twenty C.³⁴

Even if the criticisms were intended humorously, they were overtly hostile and dismissive of the women's work, going well beyond simple chiding or rivalry.

The women of Theta Sigma Phi did not even have an opportunity to respond before the *Green Gander* released a special homecoming issue in November 1919. Again, an article made light of women's demands for equality by stating that they should be denied special considerations and polite customs. The article declared, "They have howled and pleaded, argued and bled, raved and lobbied, for many many generations of hair restorer begging, nay beseeching and screeching for EQUAL RIGHTS. And now they have them." The article then went on to

34. "Again," *Green Gander*, 4/17/1919, 18; "The Emerald Goose," *ibid.*, 9.

state that because women had achieved their goal, men should no longer give right of way to women on sidewalks, give up a seat on a streetcar, open doors, "carry bundles, fire the furnace, earn the living, and do the thousand and one other things which we mere sterner sex have to do at present. Bet they even regret the fact that they can't shave."³⁵

By March 1920, when the next issue of the *Emerald Goose* was published, the campus climate had changed considerably. In addition to incidents of hazing and general unrest during the spring of 1919, students began to intentionally organize protests. One major point of contention was a rule limiting student dances on campus and in fraternity houses to Saturday nights, with a strict closing time of 11 p.m. For months, the Cardinal Guild and the Women's Guild (the auxiliary to the student government) had petitioned administrators to allow dances on Fridays and Saturdays until midnight. Hoping to provoke a response, at several dances on April 5, 1919, students distributed fliers that read, "Dance until twelve o'clock. Stick by the Ship. Don't get cold feet. United we stand, divided we fall." Even when authorities extinguished the lights, many continued to dance well into the night.³⁶

President Raymond Pearson eventually compromised and allowed dancing on Friday nights, but he initially responded with a heavier hand, demanding a "manly" apology from the Cardinal Guild and expressing stern disappointment in "good students" who willingly broke rules. The Cardinal Guild furnished the apology, and Pearson demonstrated some flexibility as he engaged faculty and students in assessing social regulations. Many faculty asserted that there were too many rules and students should be allowed greater freedom, but administrators were reluctant to institute more liberal policies. In June 1919 Pearson and the Board of Deans, under pressure from an outraged Alumni Association, decided that campus humor magazines "should be properly censored." The board's minutes do not specify content that provoked this response, and they identified Sigma Delta Chi as the primary culprit, but their use of the plural in reference to "organizations" and "magazines" implies a reference

35. *Green Gander*, 11/15/1919, 19.

36. Jordan, "1919," 5-6.

to the controversial 1919 issue of the *Emerald Goose*. The deans concluded that should the students refuse to cooperate, the sponsoring organizations would be "discontinued."³⁷

Tensions boiled over in the fall of 1919. A group of vocal students demanded that classes be canceled on November 11, 1919, in honor of Armistice Day. Administrators planned commemoration ceremonies but insisted that classes be held until 10:30 a.m. As rumors of unrest spread, the Board of Deans preemptively agreed to punish any protesters, especially the ringleaders. In the end, they suspended one student indefinitely, placed 21 on probation, and fired two sympathetic faculty members. Their actions had the desired effect, as no further cases of student misconduct appear in the minutes of the Board of Deans for the remainder of the 1919–20 academic year. It is within this context that the women of Theta Sigma Phi began work on the 1920 issue of the *Emerald Goose*. All but two of the women who had worked on the 1919 issue had either graduated or left school, and with the administration tightening the reins on student behavior, the new staff may have been reluctant to push the boundaries of acceptable feminine behavior.³⁸

Despite the threat of censorship, the *Emerald Goose's* writers continued to express their sexuality. A 1920 poll from the women of East Hall, a women's dormitory, asked who had or had not been kissed. With the caveat that the statistics would not "spoil" anyone's "chance for dates," the poll listed the names of the women in three categories: "I Have," "I Have Not," and "We Would If They Would." Of the 40 women polled, 28 claimed to have been kissed, 6 had not, and 6 wished for the opportunity. One woman in the "I Have" category added, "Hell, yes," next to her name, while another added, "Proud of it." In 1921 the women dedicated that year's issue to the "art of campuistry," or the practice of bending the rules and flirting with men. They even attempted to show the extent of their liberation by publishing women's rules from the late nineteenth century.³⁹

37. Ibid., 6–7; Minutes, Fifty First Meeting of the Board of Deans, 6/10/1919, Iowa State University Archives, Parks Library, Iowa State University, Ames.

38. Ibid.

39. "I Ain't Never Been Kissed," *Emerald Goose*, March 1920, 15.

Still, the 1920 and 1921 issues of the *Emerald Goose* took on a more conservative tone, perhaps because of the threat of censorship. Compared to the 1918 and 1919 issues, those in 1920 and 1921 featured more jokes, poems, and blurbs framing women's sexuality within the context of marriage. By focusing on marriage, the women reinforced ISC's rules that required women's lives to be strictly monitored and controlled. For example, a short poem that encouraged following college rules stated,

*'Tis wrong for a maid to be
Abroad at night alone!
A chaperone she needs 'till she
Can call some chap-her-own.*

A 1920 poll of fraternities sought the "most marriageable men on the market." One man from Sigma Phi Epsilon nominated a fraternity brother based on his willingness to "eat anything, thereby eliminating all waste as well as meal-planning. He is an inveterate sleeper, so his wife need not worry about his staying out all night."⁴⁰

The women of Theta Sigma Phi occasionally included an item in defiance of the administration's threat of censorship. In the 1921 issue a cartoon of an old, dour woman was accompanied by a poem that read,

*Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary,
How did your Goose come out?
With censors three, so good are we
Just send it home without a doubt.*⁴¹

They also continued to make clear calls for equal opportunity through discussions of suffrage and gainful employment. In 1920 an article titled "How Will You Vote?" encouraged college women to become informed and active voters. Their immediate goal was not to better society, but rather to prove their capabilities to the men who opposed woman suffrage. The writer of the article pointed out that women should not feel bad if men

40. Untitled poem and "The Most Marriageable Men on the Market," *Emerald Goose*, March 1920, 6. The editors of the *Green Gander* seem to have been less constrained by the threat of censorship than those of the *Emerald Goose*.

41. Untitled poem, *Emerald Goose*, May 1921, 31.

laughed at their desire to vote because "eight men out of every ten, right here at ISC, do not know the meaning of some of the most common terms used in voting."⁴²

In 1921 the *Emerald Goose* advertised a new journal, the *Women's National Journalistic Register*, produced by the national Theta Sigma Phi organization. One purpose of the journal was to announce employment opportunities and "lessen the periods of unemployment or hack work, the long struggle, almost inevitable, for girls of literary aspiration." The editors of the *Emerald Goose* donated a "large share" of the proceeds from their sales to the *Women's National Journalistic Register* and planned to do so until the journal became self-supporting. The article concluded, "Thus we feel that the Iowa State Chapter of Theta Sigma Phi is doing its 'bit' for women in journalism."⁴³

THE EXPERIENCE of establishing Theta Sigma Phi and publishing the *Emerald Goose* provided the structure and organization women needed to promote themselves as journalists on campus and after graduation. In 1919 chapter membership grew to 17 women, and by that summer five alumnae of Omicron chapter working in Des Moines teamed up with Merze Marvin to found Theta Sigma Phi's second professional chapter in the nation. Having experienced success at the collegiate level, they hoped to carry the advantages of networking and professional development into the workplace. Following her marriage to attorney Vernon Seeberger in 1919, Marvin embarked on a successful freelancing career composing features for Des Moines newspapers and national magazines, earning enough to hire a housekeeper so that she could write. Even when pregnant with her first child, she enthusiastically corresponded with national president Marion Lewis about the creation of the *Women's National Journalistic Register* because male "editors aren't going to come to us."⁴⁴

Unfortunately, four years of success did not translate into longevity for the *Emerald Goose*. In 1920 Theta Sigma Phi lost one

42. "How Will You Vote?" *Emerald Goose*, March 1920, 10.

43. "Women's Journalistic Register," *Emerald Goose*, May 1921, 8.

44. Theta Sigma Phi Alumna Chapter, Des Moines, to Marion Lewis, 8/4/1919, and Merze Seeberger to Marion Lewis, 8/2/1919 and 8/30/1919, WIC Records.

of its most critical advocates when Harry O'Brien left ISC to become associate editor of the *Country Gentleman* in Philadelphia. His efforts to bring more women into the journalism program convinced ISC administrators to support the introduction of the *Iowa Homemaker* in 1921 as a publication on par with the *Iowa Agriculturalist* and the *Iowa Engineer*. The *Iowa Homemaker* provided opportunities for writing, editing, and advertising, but it also reinforced gendered divisions within journalism. Because women had their own outlet, men were not obliged to provide greater access to existing campus publications, and women were further discouraged from writing for general audiences and using humor to critique sexism.⁴⁵

In 1922 the *Green Gander* announced its "engagement," or "more lamentably our marriage," to the *Emerald Goose* as the former allowed women on its staff and the latter ceased production. The exact reasons for this compromise are unclear, but the result was a silencing of women's humor. Theta Sigma Phi and Sigma Delta Chi claimed equal ownership of the magazine, but an editorial in the February 1922 issue of the *Green Gander* made it clear that "Mrs. Gander may have a different version, but in this family the male member will wear the trousers." Only five women worked on the magazine that year. One served as associate editor and four served as "Gander Sleuths." By the May 1922 issue, the number of women increased to eight, with two associate editors, one art contributor, one editorial contributor, and four Gander Sleuths. By the October 1922 issue, however, the number regressed to five: two associate editors, two art contributors, and one Gander Sleuth. The only time between 1922 and the magazine's demise in 1960 that women made up more than half of the *Green Gander* staff was during World War II. The presence of women on the staff also failed to transform the content of the magazine; it remained largely antagonistic toward female students. For example, the February 1922 issue of the *Green Gander* included "Advice to College Co-Eds," such as "Do not drink from a drinking fountain. The dew drops on your lips incite the men to wild thoughts." As the list went on, it served as a reminder to women that, as a small minority on campus, their bodies and daily be-

45. "Class Personals," *Ohio State University Monthly* 11 (July 1920), 59.

havior were under scrutiny not only by college administrators but also by male students.⁴⁶

ALTHOUGH the *Emerald Goose* lasted just four years, it nonetheless represented a determined effort on the part of women at ISC to promote women in journalism on campus and within the profession. The magazine could easily be considered a temporary wartime measure, yet the women of Theta Sigma Phi clearly wished to create a lasting organization to further their own professional goals. In their 1925 annual report to the national chapter, members of Omicron chapter continued to reflect the founders' goals. They reported that ISC offered a new journalism major, and they hoped to attract more female students to the field by asking the department to hire female faculty.⁴⁷

The students also carried experiences afforded by the *Emerald Goose* and Theta Sigma Phi into professional careers. In a 1942 alumnae survey, Katherine Proper ('26) listed her occupation as "homemaker-freelance home economics writer." Following graduation, she balanced childrearing with publishing articles in *Country Gentleman*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Successful Farming*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*. Marjorie Griffin ('37) went on to become assistant editor at *Successful Farming* for two years, and in 1939 she began writing a daily food column for the *Detroit Times* under the name Prudence Penny. Virginia Garberson Rich ('34) wrote a food column for the *Chicago Tribune*.⁴⁸

Others pursued careers as home economics teachers and home demonstrations agents and in a variety of other professional fields. Founder Phoebe Mentzer ('22) earned a master's degree in chemistry from ISC in 1925, married in 1930, and then taught chemistry at the University of Washington in Seattle. In 1970 Gladys Gallup Wilson ('18) specified her occupation as "housewife," yet she had earned graduate degrees in education from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and pursued a successful career as an extension specialist with the

46. "United" and "Advice to College Co-Eds," *Green Gander*, February 1922, 4, 7; *Bomb* (1918), 170-77; *Bomb* (1919), 245.

47. Annual Report of Omicron Chapter, 1925, in WIC Records.

48. Alumnae survey by the members of Omicron Chapter, 1942, WIC Records.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). At the time of her retirement in 1960, Wilson was working as the director of a division of extension research and training for the USDA. Similarly, Virginia Lowe ('19) married in 1920, and in 1964 she listed her occupation as "housewife." Nonetheless, she had taught at Peru State College in Peru, Nebraska, and had done "journalism work" for the *Omaha Daily News*. On a 1958 alumnae information form, the assistant editor of the first *Emerald Goose*, Bess Bartley ('18), indicated that she had married twice and worked on several newspapers before taking ownership of a concrete pipe factory in Atlanta, Georgia. Although none of these women directly pursued careers in journalism, their activities indicated a desire to apply their degrees to professional occupations.⁴⁹

The members of the Omicron Chapter of Theta Sigma Phi began organizing in 1917 with the intention of enhancing women's access to journalism programs at Iowa State College. The urgency of World War I created an opening for them to publish a unique humor magazine with a distinctive female voice, but the conflict itself and the ensuing rhetoric of women's patriotic duty did not necessarily fuel their determination to make their way in a male-dominated field. Nor did it alter deeply engrained sexist attitudes on the part of administrators or male students. Only in a moment of crisis, when administrators were preoccupied with containing the Spanish influenza, could the women push the boundaries of supposedly appropriate behavior. In their petition to the national chapter of Theta Sigma Phi, the women of ISC recognized that they faced several obstacles, but they hoped to improve women's participation on student publications and make the journalism program more inclusive. The women claimed, "As individuals we have tried separately to accomplish some of these things. We believe that organized, with a chapter of Theta Sigma Phi, we could work in harmony to much better ends."⁵⁰

49. Phoebe Mentzer Lindquist, obituary, 5/10/1965, Alumni Records, RS 21/7/1, Special Collections, Iowa State University Library, Ames; Gladys Gallup Wilson to Iowa State University Alumni Office, 1970, *ibid.*; "Mrs. Wilson Was Extension Director," obituary, 1983, *ibid.*; Virginia Lowe Good to Iowa State University Alumni Office, 5/21/1964, *ibid.*; Bess Bartley Mulholland to Iowa State College Alumni Office, 3/19/1958, *ibid.*

50. "Petition to Theta Sigma Phi," Theta Sigma Phi Records.

The short-lived career of the *Emerald Goose* reveals the delicate balancing act women on college campuses performed to justify their public voices and participation in publishing. An editorial in the first issue of the *Emerald Goose* hints that its staff understood women's public roles to be problematic. "Tho the Emerald Goose aims to tell the truth," the writer stated, "we do not vouchsafe that she states the whole truth and nothing but the truth. She has tried to be kind, tho critical, sensible, tho silly, and humble tho humorous." In some ways, this statement summarized the women's attitudes toward a system that excluded them from curricular and extracurricular journalism and that required them to adapt their language so as not to be too outspoken. Perhaps what they did not realize is that nearly a century later, we would continue to take their words at face value and believe that these women harbored no higher aspirations. It is only by delving into the broader context and reading their organizational records that we learn how they faced significant resistance from male editors, colleagues, and students. They understood very well the limitations placed on them. Undaunted, they systematically built local, state, and national networks to overcome those barriers and define themselves as professionals.⁵¹

51. "Nothing But the Truth," *Emerald Goose*, 4/12/1918, 8.

From Sob Sister to Society Editor: The Storied Career of Dorothy Ashby Pownall

TRACY LUCHT

IN 1966 Dorothy Ashby Pownall (1895–1979) spoke at an awards banquet for the Iowa City chapter of Theta Sigma Phi, the national society for women journalists. “At heart, I shall always be a reporter,” she said, “the proverbial old fire horse who leaps with delayed alacrity into action at the smell of smoke.” Recalling her years writing feature stories for the *Des Moines Capital*, Pownall delivered an exuberant endorsement of journalistic adventure, the kind that leaped from the front page and won grudging respect from crusty city editors. Pownall described for the audience her 50-year career with its “many bypaths,” including stints as a stunt reporter, sob sister, advice columnist, freelance poet, and small-town society editor. “In those earliest days, girl reporters were something of an oddity,” Pownall said, recounting how creativity and good humor had enabled her to patch together a long, distinguished career that had led the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* to declare, “[If] there is a dean of women journalists in Iowa City at the present time, Dorothy Ashby Pownall must be it.”¹

This biographical article examines the professional life and journalism of a versatile and successful woman writer during the first half of the twentieth century. Historians have long cautioned

1. Dorothy Pownall, speech given at Theta Sigma Phi banquet, 4/27/1966, Iowa City, Iowa, box 1, Dorothy Ashby Pownall Papers (hereafter cited as DAP Papers), Iowa Women’s Archives (hereafter cited as IWA), University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City; “She Has 50 Years of Good Writing Behind Her,” *Iowa City Press Citizen*, 4/22/1966, clipping, box 1, DAP Papers.

against generalizing from one person's experience, but a notable career such as Pownall's is worth examining for the insight it provides about the understudied field of women's journalism in the Midwest. Particularly noteworthy are Pownall's professional tactics and journalism from the beginning of her work for the *Des Moines Capital* in 1917 through her publications in *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post* and until her retirement from the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* in 1955. Pownall's wide-ranging work reveals her methods of exercising agency within a patriarchal field and illustrates why historians must expand what they consider important journalism if they are to make their narratives more inclusive of women.²

Even as notable women journalists and the roles they played have made their way into the scholarly literature, journalism history continues to represent mostly a male point of view, told from the perspective of publishers, editors, and male reporters. The stories of exceptional women have been added to the mix, but their experiences remain "stirred, not shaken," treated as an added spice rather than a key ingredient of journalism history. This has led women's historians such as Carolyn Kitch to argue that scholars must go beyond merely documenting the presence of women in journalism to study "how and why women's careers in the media have taken the shape and direction and quality they have."³

The first half of the twentieth century is a prime period for examining this question. The American public was becoming more accustomed to seeing women's bylines and writing in metropolitan and rural newspapers.⁴ Elizabeth Cochrane ("Nellie Bly")

2. Maurine Beasley, "Recent Directions for the Study of Women's History in American Journalism," *Journalism Studies* 2 (May 2001), 207–20; Susan Henry, "Changing Media History through Women's History," in *Women in Mass Communication: Challenging Gender Values*, ed. Pamela J. Creedon (Newbury Park, CA, 1989), 34–57. The evidence for Ashby Pownall's life comes from her personal manuscripts; her newspaper articles for the *Des Moines Capital*; her freelance magazine articles; her advice columns in the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*; and the text of interviews and speeches she gave.

3. Barbara Friedman, Carolyn Kitch, Therese Lueck, Amber Roessner, and Betty Winfield, "Stirred, Not Yet Shaken: Integrating Women's History into Media History," *American Journalism* 26 (Winter 2009), 163.

4. Eileen M. Wirth, *From Society Page to Front Page: Nebraska Women in Journalism* (Lincoln, NE, 2013), 17–22; Alice Fahs, *Out on Assignment: Newspaper Women and the Making of Modern Public Space* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2011), 8, 17–23; Jean

and Winifred Black Bonfils ("Annie Laurie"), among others, had established a model of stunt reporting that was adopted by adventurous young women who did not mind making themselves the focus of their stories.⁵ Rather than hide the fact that these reporters were women, newspapers highlighted their gender, splashing illustrations and the women's bylines next to bold headlines advertising their latest escapades, such as going undercover in an asylum, as Cochrane was famous for doing, or cross-dressing to cover a catastrophic flood in Galveston, Texas, as Bonfils had dared. To publishers, the publicity offered by these stunts was well worth any perceived impropriety because these "girl reporters" raised circulation and created opportunities to sell branded merchandise, such as the "Nellie Bly" board games sold by the *New York World* during Bly's globe-trotting adventure in 1889-90.⁶

Some of the same women who engaged in stunt reporting also embodied the role of "sob sister," the pejorative term used for women who wrote subjectively about courtroom drama or urban tragedies. The label had been used by a male journalist to express his displeasure with four formidable women writers who used their front-row seats at the sensational murder trial of Harry Thaw in 1907 to provide intimate, dramatic accounts of the event as it unfolded.⁷ Such sensationalism, criticized at the time and since, has been of major interest to women's historians because of the way women's bodies were, paradoxically, a source of both empowerment and exploitation.⁸ These women entered the public realm not only with their writing, but also with their bodies—consciously putting their physical safety and perceived virtue at risk in order to communicate the gritty realities of urban life. By allowing themselves to be a spectacle, these women gained a voice in the public sphere and earned the ability to tell

Marie Lutes, *Front Page Girls: Women Journalists in American Culture and Fiction, 1880-1930* (Ithaca, NY, 2006), 1-11; Deborah Chambers, Linda Steiner, and Carole Fleming, *Women and Journalism* (London and New York, 2004), 16-22.

5. Maurine Beasley and Sheila Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism*, 2nd ed. (State College, PA, 2003), 64-73; Marion Marzolf, *Up from the Footnote* (New York, 1977), 37.

6. Fahs, *Out on Assignment*, 42-47.

7. Marzolf, *Up from the Footnote*, 32-34.

8. Lutes, *Front Page Girls*, 15-16.

stories that otherwise might never have been told. Cultural scholar Jean Marie Lutes writes of these women, "It was the news-women's role as vehicles of publicity, as both objects and agents of the news, that cemented their identity as sob sisters."⁹

Dramatic writing allowed some measure of stylistic freedom because women were not expected to contribute—indeed, were considered incapable of producing—serious journalism. Alice Fahs argues that "human interest writing allowed women a new latitude in both subject matter and expression, permitting them to move beyond the maternal and domestic into realms of wit, satire, and sarcasm."¹⁰ Fahs describes how women who desired a life beyond the satellite existence offered by traditional marriage used the changing nature of newspapers at the start of the century to establish a new public presence. Typically beginning with a position on the women's page, these journalists patched together careers that involved space work—feature articles that newspapers bought by the column inch—and multiple outlets, for which the writers adjusted their voice to appeal to different audiences. If a woman was lucky enough to obtain a salaried staff position at a magazine or newspaper, it was not in the area of what was considered hard or serious news. Rather, the position demanded that a woman writer provide explicitly gendered content in the form of articles about the "four Fs"—food, family, fashion, or furnishings—or that she provide the "woman's angle" on topical news of the day.¹¹

During the first three decades of the twentieth century most newspaperwomen worked in the women's section or on the society page. Ishbel Ross, author of the first history of women journalists (who aspired to front-page status herself), described the former as "a department which once merited the scorn it received" and the latter as "the opportunity and the bugaboo of women since the idea first was introduced."¹² Subsequent historians, however, have found evidence that women's page editors empowered themselves to use the segregated space as a public

9. Lutes, *Front Page Girls*, 70.

10. Fahs, *Out on Assignment*, 99.

11. Beasley and Gibbons, *Taking Their Place*, 117.

12. Ishbel Ross, *Ladies of the Press: The Story of Women in Journalism by an Insider* (New York, 1936), 441.

platform from which to explore important social, economic, and political issues.¹³ Similarly, historians have noted that a number of women writers – including midwesterners Willa Cather, Edna Ferber, and Susan Glaspell – used their experiences in journalism as early fuel for their literary ambitions, although they are rarely included in the scholarship on literary realism.¹⁴ Women's entry into the public space of journalism sparked debate, although writing had long been a legitimate occupation for women because it was something they could do from their homes.¹⁵

In the midcentury Midwest, it was common for women to edit the society page or write a weekly column for their community newspapers. There is evidence to suggest that women's jobs were more multifaceted in the Midwest than on metropolitan newspapers. Ishbel Ross wrote about the early work of a few midwestern writers, such as Marguerite Martyn, who wrote features for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and Marguerite "Birdie" Switzer, who wrote news features, a women's column, and short fiction for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* in addition to running its women's department. Eileen Wirth's book about Nebraska women journalists – the first book to chronicle the experiences of women journalists in the Midwest – demonstrates that women in rural areas and smaller cities were active contributors to their community newspapers as owner/publishers, women's page and society editors, and news reporters.¹⁶ Among Dorothy Ashby Pownall's contemporaries in Iowa were Ikey Teel Harling (1902–1973), who ran the *Durant News* with her husband for 18 years, and Vina Roberts Thorpe (1893–1995), who published nine weekly newspapers

13. Kimberly Wilmot Voss, "Dorothy Journey: A National Advocate for Women's Pages as They Evolved and Then Disappeared," *Journalism History* 36 (2010), 13–22; Jan Whitt, *Women in American Journalism: A New History* (Urbana and Chicago, 2008), 42–52.

14. Lutes, *Front Page Girl*, 123–25; Whitt, *Women in American Journalism*, 87–106; Linda Ben-Zvi, *Susan Glaspell: Her Life and Times* (New York, 2005), 29–49.

15. Kimberley Mangun, "Should She, or Shouldn't She, Pursue a Career in Journalism? True Womanhood and the Debate about Women in the Newsroom," *Journalism History* 37 (2011), 66–79.

16. Gladys Talcott Rife, "Personal Perspectives on the 1950s: Iowa's Rural Women Newspaper Columnists," *Annals of Iowa* 49 (1989), 661–82; Ross, *Ladies of the Press*, 552–53, 555; Wirth, *From the Society Page to the Front Page*, 18–24, 29–54.

in central Iowa with her husband.¹⁷ Pownall's career was preceded by that of Susan Glaspell (1876–1948), who began writing for the *Des Moines Daily News* during college and worked as a reporter and columnist for that paper from 1899 to 1901 before leaving the state and becoming a celebrated novelist and playwright.¹⁸

This article is the first scholarly examination of Pownall's career, which embodied four distinct phases: (1) sob sister, (2) literary lady, (3) advice columnist, and (4) society editor. Each role represented a different response to conditions for women in the field of twentieth-century print journalism.¹⁹ Women needed to present themselves in ways that would not threaten to destabilize a historically masculine newsroom culture while internalizing enough of that culture to be successful. In some ways, Pownall's work presents her as something of a traditionalist as she fulfilled all the roles expected of a woman journalist. However, a deeper interpretation of Pownall's multifaceted career reveals her shrewd "feel for the game" as she navigated gender norms in ways that ensured her professional longevity.²⁰

DOROTHY ASHBY, born in Superior, Wisconsin, in 1895, had been attending Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin, for only one year when her father died and she was forced into the workforce. She took a job as a women's page reporter at the *St. Paul (MN) Daily News* in 1915 but was soon writing features for the news section. She was well regarded at the *Daily News* and established a reputation that went beyond the Twin Cities. After two years, she was lured south by a telegram from Bill Jarnagin, managing editor of the *Des Moines Capital*, a colorful afternoon newspaper in Iowa's capital with a circulation of about 50,000.

17. Guide to the Ikey Lenora Teel Harling Papers, IWA, <http://collguides.lib.uiowa.edu/?IWA0238>; Guide to the Vina Thorpe Papers, IWA, <http://collguides.lib.uiowa.edu/?IWA0253>.

18. Ben-Zvi, *Susan Glaspell*, 38–49.

19. Beasley and Gibbons, *Taking Their Place*, 31.

20. This term for a professional's way of adapting to her field comes from Pierre Bourdieu, whose social theory is useful for understanding the interplay between structure and agency in the lives of individual historical actors. Quoted in Karl Maton, "Habitus," in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell (Stocksfield, UK, 2008), 49–66, 54.

Jarnagin wanted her to provide the “woman’s angle” on Camp Dodge, a U.S. Army training ground northwest of the city, as it mobilized for World War I.²¹ Dorothy Ashby (later Pownall) jumped at the chance to become the first woman on that beat and took the train to Des Moines in search of adventure. The *St. Paul Daily News* must have been sorry to lose a talented writer but wished her well. After she had gone, her former editor wrote to tell her she could return any time. “Sometime, when you get over being a militant soldier girl and want to work once more on a regular newspaper, perhaps you will find the way back to the old homestead. The latchstring will be out, anyhow, and maybe there’ll be a nice, comfortable seat by the fireside!”²²

At the *Capital*, Pownall slipped easily into her role as a “sob sister,” the term she embraced for her job, which was to report the human interest aspects in military stories and other breaking news. Being “something of an oddity,” she later recalled, “was an advantage, occasionally.”²³

On August 31, 1917, the *Capital* advertised the reporting trio it planned to send to Camp Dodge, including photos of Pownall, a male reporter, and a male photographer. As the newspaper described her role, “Miss Dorothy Ashby will handle the news from a woman’s standpoint, writing that class of news known in newspaper circles as ‘feature stuff.’ Miss Ashby is also an experienced writer, and The Capital believes her readers will enjoy her articles.”²⁴

The *Capital* might have been the first paper to send a woman journalist to the camp, but it was not alone in doing so. The *Des Moines Register* also hired a woman, Sue McNamara, as a wire correspondent. Pownall enjoyed a long friendship with McNamara, even after McNamara moved to Washington, D.C.

Having a “girl reporter” brought publicity. The *Capital* highlighted Pownall’s gender in a way that was reminiscent of the

21. Dorothy Ashby Pownall, “A Girl Reporter at Camp Dodge,” *Palimpsest* 47 (1966), 225–56. Camp Dodge was to be the largest of the 14 U.S. Army training camps in the United States and was home to the 88th Infantry Division.

22. H. B. R. Briggs to Dorothy Ashby, n.d., box 1, DAP Papers.

23. Dorothy Pownall, “Woman of the Year” speech, 4/27/1966, box 1, DAP Papers, 2.

24. Display ad, *Des Moines Capital*, 8/31/1917, 4.



Dorothy Ashby poses with an officer she interviewed at Camp Dodge. All photos from Dorothy Ashby Pownall Papers, Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City.

presentation large metropolitan newspapers had used to advertise their stunt reporters. By that time, both male and female reporters were getting bylines in the *Capital*, but, unlike its treatment of its male reporters, the newspaper also published Pownall's photo with her stories, beginning with her first front-page byline on September 5, 1917.²⁵ In addition, editors used her name in the headlines, making her an active character in the stories and calling attention to their entertainment value: "Miss Ashby Finds Hypnotist, a Couple of Prize Fighters and 'Strong Man' at Camp Dodge"; "Miss Ashby Takes Mess With 313th Engineers — Eats Out of Mess

25. Dorothy Ashby, "Whitmer, First Man at Camp, Proud and — 'It's Great,' He Says to Dorothy Ashby," *Des Moines Capital*, 9/5/1917, 1.

Kit and Everything"; and "Gassed! Miss Ashby Joins Officers at Camp Dodge and Goes into the Very Midst of Poisonous Fumes."²⁶

There were plenty of stories for "Miss Ashby" to find at Camp Dodge, which provided temporary quarters for a total of about 150,000 soldiers before it was demobilized. In an essay reminiscing about the assignment, Pownall described her time at Camp Dodge as "some of my happiest experiences in a half century of newspaper reporting," saying she had delighted in finding the "human interest side of the sprawling, teeming training center." Every morning, she and her colleagues drove about ten miles to the camp in a Model T provided by the newspaper, their legs covered with an army blanket during the cold winter months. They enjoyed the full cooperation of the commanding officer, Major General E. H. Plummer, who told Pownall he wanted women to feel safe at the camp. Pownall never recorded any harassment from soldiers, although she acknowledged receiving patronizing treatment in the newsroom and said she had been "young and naïve and would not have recognized a leer if I saw one."²⁷

Pownall made daily life in the military come alive for readers. As she told it, "I snooped up and down the company streets, talking with officers and men, and watching the cross section of Middle West humanity lining up at the registration building." She attended farewell ceremonies when soldiers were deployed and memorial services when they were killed, carefully recording the reactions of mothers as their sons boarded trains or were laid to rest. She drew vivid pictures of the rank and file, capturing the diverse palette of ethnicities and backgrounds she found among the recruits (a startling contrast with the pronounced ethnocentrism of the paper's editorial page). She also wrote about the women associated with the military, including those in volunteer positions and those who had come to camp in search of loved ones. An officer who worked with Pownall at Camp Dodge wrote to a colleague that she was "the best woman reporter [he had] ever known" and had "a keen, fair and intelligent method of handling news."²⁸

26. *Des Moines Capital*, 9/18/1917, 4; *ibid.*, 10/9/1917, 9; *ibid.*, 1/27/1918, clipping, box 2, DAP Papers.

27. Pownall, "A Girl Reporter at Camp Dodge," 225–26, 229–30.

28. *Ibid.*, 235; George Walker to Maj. Butler, n.d., box 1, DAP Papers.



Dorothy Ashby poses whimsically at Camp Dodge. The photo, which she captioned "Not Too Military," is in an album she titled "Training to Fight the Kaiser."

As Pownall understood it, her role as a military reporter was to "get the message to the folks at home that the servicemen were well-treated, well-fed, and happy."²⁹ Her dispatches were uniformly upbeat, matching the overwhelming patriotism of war-related news while adding what she understood to be the feminine touch. Her stories were sometimes lighthearted and sometimes sorrowful, but they always provided the subjective counterpart to the straight news presented by the newspaper's male reporters.

Demonstrating her firm grasp of this dynamic, she later said, "In those good, old days, it was considered humorous to assign [girl reporters] to odd jobs like covering prize fights and wrestling matches"—so she covered them with gusto. Assigned to cover a wrestling match that featured Earl Caddock, world champion

29. Pownall, "Woman of the Year," 5.

heavyweight, as he defended his title against a Polish wrestler at Camp Dodge, she later admitted, "I pulled out all the stops." Indeed, she breathlessly described how "the wrestlers' bodies glistened in the calcium glare" as they moved "like panthers." She shocked readers by describing how "the Pole was hurled through the ropes, once almost into the lap of a feminine watcher."³⁰

Writing in a conspiratorial voice, Pownall allied herself with her readers, taking them with her as she navigated the camp and interviewed officers, celebrities, and widows. She often directed her articles specifically to women, using interjections such as "you, Mrs. Housewife" or "Say, girls, you know all about those hypnotizing eyes. You must, for the movies are full of them these days."³¹ Rather than position herself above events, reporting with a bird's-eye objectivity, Pownall maintained a firmly grounded position as she told stories from a visitor's perspective.

As American involvement in the war intensified during 1918, Pownall's byline appeared less frequently and more space was given to wire reports detailing troop movements and developments in Europe. Patriotic bravado gave way to the solemn realities of war, and Pownall began to look for stories outside the camp. She found the state's capital full of human drama.

Pownall developed a persona through her articles that was breezy and knowing, an example of "playing smart" in the literary style that was coming into vogue, epitomized in larger markets by writers such as Dorothy Parker.³² Her writing conveyed a sophisticated understanding of gender norms, which she appeared to acknowledge but did not fully honor. For example, when she wrote about fashion, as was expected of a woman writer, her articles carried a hint of derision. "Oh girls! Do you wear 'toothpick' heels? If you do you're not half so stylish as you think you are, besides being as uncomfortable as the law allows."³³

30. Ibid., 2; Pownall, "Girl Reporter," 252; Dorothy Ashby, "Thousands Cheer Earl Caddock, Iowa's Own Mat Idol, as He Downs the Giant Zbyszko; It's Thumbs Down for Wladek," *Des Moines Capital*, February 1918, clipping, box 2, DAP Papers.

31. Ashby, "Miss Ashby Finds Hypnotist," 4.

32. See Catherine Keyser, *Playing Smart: New York Women Writers and Modern Magazine Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2011), 2-15.

33. Dorothy Ashby, "Mrs. Pennybacker Flays Bad Meals and High Heels," *Des Moines Capital*, 2/2/1919, box 2, DAP Papers.

She also wrote about manners and propriety, including an article about a small scandal involving a woman passenger on a streetcar who was not wearing stockings. Even then, there were hints that she did not take social rules too seriously. Quoting the man who had called an “ossifer” on the woman, she presented the encounter more as a clash of cultures than as a true violation. “Mebbe it goes all right in the east, but we’re not much for fads, here. You ain’t gonna get on no car without your stockings. We can’t have them wild wimmin puttin’ nutty ideas in our Des Moines girls’ minds.”³⁴

It was a staple of Pownall’s style to keep the subjects of her stories in perspective, even when she covered visits by Woodrow Wilson and other political dignitaries. She was also careful never to inflate her own importance. Noting the “rainbow” of hats and badges at a meeting of the League of Women Voters, Pownall insisted, “If anyone wants to know any more about the speech, he will have to ask a good reporter. There was such an intriguing hat in the second row on the platform that this sob sister missed some of the quiet eloquence.”³⁵

It was common for Pownall to inject herself into the story in that way, as if she were an actress playing a part on stage. She also used this technique when she was not able to get a desired interview. For example, writing about a reticent soprano on tour in Des Moines, she began the story this way: “This is a drama in which a bell boy and a girl reporter are the chief participants. For color there is a grand opera star, her maid, and a breakfast tray. But the bell boy and the G.R. are the only ones who appear.”³⁶

Pownall’s writing during this period of her career was wry, astute, and often funny, but she could “sob” with the best women reporters of her day. For her first story away from Camp Dodge, she attended the first day back at school with the classmates of a little girl who had died after being struck by a car. Less than three months later, she wrote a similar story about an adult man who

34. “Horrors! Here’s Girl on Street Sans Stockings” [unsigned], *Des Moines Capital*, n.d., [circa 1918], clipping, box 2, DAP Papers.

35. Dorothy Ashby, “New Fall Hats Seen at Davis Meeting: ‘Sob Sister’ Fails to Keep Her Mind on Her Job,” *Des Moines Capital*, n.d., clipping, box 2, DAP Papers.

36. Dorothy Ashby, “‘Na, na! Madame She in Bed’ — and the Door Closed,” *Des Moines Capital*, 10/18/1917, 15.

had been killed in a car accident, grabbing readers with this dramatic lead: "He was gone. And to the woman, lying back in the arm chair beside the little coal stove, the shock seemed almost too much to bear." In September 1919, Pownall interviewed the widow of Con McCarthy, a Des Moines detective killed while arresting a suspect, for a story splashed across the front page. She later described her writing as "melodramatic prose by a girl who had never had any trouble in her whole young life."³⁷ Understanding that it was her job to convey emotion, Pownall dutifully did so—but the color she added to her stories and the way she later described her work made it clear that this was a performance rather than a natural way of approaching the news.

Pownall supplemented the meager salary she received from the *Capital* by moonlighting as a press agent for a local stage company and as a stringer for the *Davenport Democrat*, covering the state capital for the eastern Iowa newspaper. Her staff position at the *Capital* paid off in other ways, however. She met her husband, Fred Pownall, at the newspaper, where he served as telegraph editor, city editor, and eventually executive editor until the *Des Moines Register and Tribune* absorbed the *Capital* in 1927.³⁸ That year, Fred Pownall was offered a job as director of publications and journalism professor at the University of Iowa (then called the State University of Iowa). The next phase of Dorothy Pownall's career would be a more fluid one as she created a life of letters reminiscent of women writers in the nineteenth century. She became a literary lady, writing poetry and nonfiction for national periodicals while running her household and caring for three children.

POWNALL displayed a temperate understanding of gender roles even as she advocated for women in public capacities. Speaking years later about the suffragists she had once covered, she emphasized, "These were not militant women, but intelligent

37. Dorothy Ashby, "Sorrow Hovers over Nollen School Today for Little Hortense Will and Her Happy Smile Have Gone Forever," *Des Moines Capital*, 10/16/1917, 1; Dorothy Ashby, "Husband of Mrs. Thomas Dies from Injuries Received in Street Car Wreck the Day Their Paroled Son Comes Back Home from Prison," *Des Moines Capital*, 1/12/1918, 1; Pownall, "Woman of the Year," 4.

38. Phyllis Fleming, "Their World Seldom Dull: Coffee Pot Always on at Dorothy and Fred Pownalls," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 10/29/1961, clipping, box 1, DAP Papers.

students of local, state and national affairs," thus bestowing her approval on their decorous, moderate brand of advocacy.³⁹ As the founding president of the Des Moines Women's Press Club when it was established in 1919, Pownall asserted women's right to organize and engage in public roles—as long as they did so within the bounds of acceptability. "In Iowa," she wrote, "there are many women [engaged] in newspaper work. There are city editors; woman's editors; society editors, reporters, and women who conduct social departments." The subject of that article, the owner and publisher of a newspaper in northwestern Iowa, insisted that women were well prepared for such work because "it's the woman reader who can make or break a paper."⁴⁰

Pownall used her contacts with prominent women to feed the freelance phase of her career, writing profiles of women such as Agnes Samuelson, state superintendent of public schools, and Mary Watts, a promoter of the "better babies" movement. In 1922 she wrote a uniformly positive article about the formation of a Department of Women's Affairs within the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, which she called "the first and only one of its kind in the country." The group had charged itself with improving the conditions and productivity of employed women in the city by advocating for better housing and educating younger women about how to be successful in business.⁴¹

Pownall wrote extensively about women, children, and parenting, reflecting her belief, according to a reporter who interviewed her, that "writing and homemaking are an excellent combination."⁴² Pownall encouraged other women to use the same

39. Dorothy Ashby Pownall, "I Was There," speech given at the Iowa convention of the League of Women Voters, 5/8/1969, box 1, DAP Papers.

40. Dorothy Ashby, "Can a Woman Successfully Edit and Publish a Weekly Newspaper? 'Sure,' Declares Mrs. Anna Donovan of Emmetsburg Tribune," *Des Moines Capital*, n.d., clipping, box 2, DAP Papers.

41. Dorothy Ashby Pownall, "Fitter Families: The Idea of an Iowa Woman," *The Iowa Magazine*, 3/13/1923, box 2, DAP Papers; Dorothy Ashby Pownall, "A Club for Women of Big Business," *Woman's Weekly: The Magazine of Service*, 3/4/1922, box 2, DAP Papers, 1.

42. Johanna Nelson, "From 'Sob Sister' to Magazine Writer—Mrs. Fred M. Pownall Has Three-Sided Career; Knowing Success in Journalism, She Takes Unbounded Interest in Young Writers," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 2/26/1939, clipping, box 1, DAP Papers.

strategy, advising aspiring writers, "There are so many incidents in our daily lives that others like to read about. Telling how you solved domestic problems, taught good manners to your children or helped organize your neighborhood in a project helpful to your community" could provide a creative outlet and a reasonable income even if it did not sound glamorous.⁴³

After writing every morning, Pownall devoted the rest of her day to her husband and three daughters. She took advantage of her access to local researchers at the University of Iowa to write about studies related to child development. Yet even on that subject, she dropped hints that she did not take the hype about scientific parenthood too seriously. For example, she wrote a humorous poem titled "Preschool Soliloquy," which was published in the *Saturday Evening Post*. The poem—written from the point of view of a child (a "prescholar")—seems to make light of convoluted psychological explanations for what might be considered normal childhood behavior. Throughout the poem, a child narrator mocks his parents' earnest attempts to ensure that he is properly stimulated and prepared for high achievement while subtly suggesting a connection between their progressive parenting and his own propensity for poor behavior. He holds himself up as the "Perfect Problem Child," a complex specimen studied at conferences, yet punctuates his soliloquy with a brief outburst that readers would recognize as a typical childish tantrum.⁴⁴

Pownall also poked sly fun at a strain of provincial culture that might have cast her and Fred as "Ma and Pa," with "Ma" judged solely on the basis of her capability in the kitchen. One of her poems, written from a wife's perspective, ended with this declaration of gratitude: "I love him most, however, comma/ Because he never calls me 'mamma.'" ⁴⁵ This sort of wry humor suggests that while Pownall might have presented herself as a domestic expert, dispensing common sense with the authority of a midwestern homemaker, there was more to her worldview.

43. Pownall, "Woman of the Year," 11. For examples of Iowa women who took up this task, see Rife, "Personal Perspectives."

44. Dorothy Pownall, "Preschool Soliloquy," *Saturday Evening Post*, 11/5/1932, box 2, DAP Papers.

45. Dorothy Pownall, "Lines to the Papa," *Saturday Evening Post*, 10/1/1932, box 2, DAP Papers.



Dorothy Pownall poses in her home in 1939 for a story in the Iowa City Press-Citizen titled "From 'Sob Sister' to Magazine Writer." The story emphasized how she combined writing and homemaking.

Pownall's witty poems and limericks — featured in *Photoplay Magazine* and even read by actors as part of Fred Stone's traveling show — appealed to social critics and progressive thinkers.⁴⁶ She took her place among the community's intelligentsia as a founding member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Speakers (SPCS), a social club of 16 University of Iowa faculty, students, and community members who invited literary speakers, such as Gertrude Stein, to Iowa City with the promise of a good time. The freewheeling SPCS also included Frank Luther Mott, a respected journalism historian and writer, and painter Grant Wood, already famous for *American Gothic*. Notably, the group

46. Charles "C. B." Dillingham to Dorothy Pownall, 1/22/1923, box 1, DAP Papers.

did not count Fred Pownall as a member, which suggests that Dorothy had established an intellectual identity beyond that of a typical faculty wife. In 1935 she was invited to speak about magazine writing at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, which was gaining respect among literary enthusiasts.⁴⁷

Pownall's poetry adopted a more solemn and religious tone after the tragic death of her six-year-old daughter, Carol, who was hit by a car outside the family's home in June 1933.⁴⁸ A series of poems—"Winter Again," "Six Years Old," "Spring Always Comes," and "Such a Little Child"—on that devastating loss published in *Ladies' Home Journal* generated mail from people grateful to her for giving voice to a mother's grief. Subsequent verses Pownall wrote for *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping* emphasized God and faith, although it is difficult to say whether this represented a more pronounced religiosity in Pownall's outlook or a response to demand from mass-market magazines in search of conventional content. Perhaps more revealing of Pownall's approach to personal tragedy is that, aside from these four poems, no mention of Carol's death ever appeared in Pownall's writing or in profiles written about her, even those that mentioned her other two daughters, Eleanor and Dorothy.

POWNALL might have kept her own troubles out of public view, but she readily aired the private lives of anonymous others in an advice column she started in 1929. Writing as Mary Manners, Pownall received enough mail to publish a daily column for ten years in the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, the state's second-largest newspaper. Although Pownall later would minimize her role as "a sort of poor folks' Dear Abby," in reality she published letters that exposed the inner workings of relationships and provided a forum for passionate lifestyle debates. Topics included monogamy, marriage, drinking, dating, friendships, and even the mythology that surrounded rural life. ("When someone tells you what a swell place a farm is, turn a deaf ear and stick to your city job,"

47. Frank Luther Mott, "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Speakers," *Palimpsest* 43 (1962), 113-32; Frank Luther Mott to Dorothy Pownall, 4/9/1962, box 1, DAP Papers.

48. "A Newspaper Family's Sad Bereavement," *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 6/23/1933.

one writer stated. Another boldly asserted, "As for the farmers, I have yet to meet one who does not crave pity, while city folks keep their chins up."⁴⁹

Under the cover of anonymity, readers expressed all manner of forceful opinions and divulged shocking secrets. One writer made it known that she and her husband drank heartily with their friends, launching a Prohibition-era debate over the merits and demerits of alcohol. (Mary Manners came down on the side of abstinence.) Another time, Pownall published a letter from a married woman who was secretly in love with another man but could not bring herself to tell him. That man recognized himself in the letter and professed his mutual adoration, resulting in the woman's divorce and a letter updating Mary Manners on their subsequent marriage. After that episode, Pownall's husband told her, "It's lucky you didn't land in jail for this."⁵⁰

A similar pair of letters to Pownall came from a married woman who was distraught over a six-year affair she had been having with another man, which she could not bring herself to end. She wrote of having visited three male experts for help: a "rather famous psychoanalyst" at the University of Iowa, her minister, and the family physician. The psychologist and physician responded by making sexual advances toward her, and the minister betrayed her confidence, leaving her disillusioned and feeling so hopeless that she had considered suicide. In a subsequent letter, she wrote of consulting a divorce attorney who suggested that she stay married and continue the affair. "Isn't it strange that the four men who are all highly educated, and trained, would take the same general view of something which has got me completely haywire?" she wrote to Pownall, who had responded in print by asking "Tabloid," as the woman signed her letters, for a self-addressed envelope so that she might reply to her personally. The woman was not willing to risk outing herself by giving Mary Manners a mailing address. One reason she was so distressed

49. Pownall, "Woman of the Year," 9; Mary Manners [Dorothy Pownall], "'Irresistible' Tom Suffers Deflation from Girl Who Is Unimpressed by His Tricks," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 3/29/1936, 4; Mary Manners [Dorothy Pownall], "Easter Is Reminder of New Hopes, Beauty in Nature, and Smallness of Personal Woes," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 4/12/1939, 8.

50. Fleming, "Their World Seldom Dull."

was that she had given birth to a child who, unbeknownst to her husband, was her lover's biological son. Pownall responded with compassion to such readers, seeming to understand the cruel trappings of a proper middle-class life, especially for women. Her advice might have been trite, but it was not judgmental.⁵¹

In the advice she delivered about romance and friendship Pownall emphasized morality, modesty, understanding, and common sense — although she suspected that a number of letters came from teenagers and “young people having some fun with me.”⁵² It is significant that she gave space to all perspectives, even those considered controversial, and offered comfort to women who had been betrayed or otherwise mistreated by the men in their lives. Simply by creating a forum for the discussion of domestic issues in a newspaper, she blurred the line between what was considered public and what was kept private. In a tactic similar to that adopted by women's page editors, she used the editorial license granted to a seemingly trivial column to carve out a space in the public sphere for voices and concerns that otherwise might not have been heard. Men as well as women read the feature, which the *Gazette* frequently plugged on the front page. Pownall continued “Mary Manners” until 1939, when she ended it for reasons that are not clear from her records.

SEVERAL YEARS LATER, the editor of the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* approached Pownall with an offer — “something absolutely new” — to become the newspaper's society editor. Her husband told her she should take the job because “she was on the phone all the time anyway.” She said it was a positive experience because of the autonomous nature of the position: “I did it all myself.”⁵³

Society editor was a far more traditional position for newspaperwomen than any of the prior work Pownall had done. Society news was the section of a women's department that chronicled the social lives of residents who enjoyed enough status to

51. Letters to Mary Manners [Dorothy Pownall], signed “Tabloid,” n.d., box 2, DAP Papers.

52. Pownall, “Woman of the Year,” 9.

53. *Ibid.*, 10; Fleming, “Their World Seldom Dull.”

see their names in print. Calls came in regularly from women with news to share of club meetings, fundraisers, weddings, and socializing. It was the editor's job to decide which items to publish, which ones deserved a full story, and how the page should be laid out. Charlotte Curtis, the legendary *New York Times* society editor (and native of the Midwest) known for insisting that not all brides were beautiful, described the job this way: "Reporting a society story or a woman's news story, or anything, the techniques of reporting are the same regardless of what you do. . . . Something has happened – a wedding has happened, a charity ball has happened, a murder has happened. . . . You answer all the who, what, why, when and where and how and so on, but what you're doing is telling the world it happened. And if you can, you try and tell them what it means, if anything."⁵⁴

In recent years, historians have begun revisiting the women's sections of newspapers, finding them to be an important site of public discourse that has been neglected in the scholarly literature. For example, Curtis used her degree in sociology to give a sharper edge to the *New York Times* society page, just as other women's page editors used their food sections to explore cooking as both an art and a science.⁵⁵ That sort of analysis was absent from Pownall's society page, however, as was her characteristic humor. There is little evidence in her records to indicate her method of managing this section, apart from her claim that she put it out entirely on her own. Under her leadership, the page, titled "Society – Clubs," handled traditional women's content, including news of weddings, social gatherings, and club work in addition to short, standing features on fashion, cooking, and a daily item provided by the Child Welfare Service. The page was clean, the copy was crisp, and the content was straightforward. The formulaic nature of the page was more conservative than one might have expected, given Pownall's eclectic body of work. Yet the section earned numerous awards from the Iowa Press Women and the National Federation of Press Women during her tenure, including first place for best women's department at a U.S. daily

54. Quoted in Marilyn Greenwald, *A Woman of the Times: Journalism, Feminism, and the Career of Charlotte Curtis* (Athens, OH, 1999), 75.

55. See Kimberly Wilmot Voss, *The Food Section: Newspaper Women and the Culinary Community* (Lanham, MD, 2014).



Dorothy Pownall poses in her home in 1961.

newspaper with a circulation of more than 2,500. Pownall also wrote feature articles for the general news section of the paper and won several awards for those, including a Golden Grand Merit award and one for “versatility” as a journalist.⁵⁶

The latter award certainly fit a woman who, as a journalist, had worn as many hats as she had seen at her first suffrage meeting. After retiring from the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* in 1955, Pownall continued to write freelance articles, including an award-winning historical essay in the *Palimpsest* about covering Camp Dodge.⁵⁷ She and her husband also continued to entertain and enjoy the success of their daughters, one of whom worked for magazines as a freelance artist and one of whom worked in the psychology department at Miami University of Ohio. Throughout their lives,

56. “Press-Citizen Society Editor Receives 3 Press Awards,” *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 4/20/1953, box 1, DAP Papers.

57. Pownall, “A Girl Reporter at Camp Dodge.”

Dorothy and Fred Pownall provided generous counsel to young people interested in journalism; there is still a scholarship in each of their names at the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

DOROTHY ASHBY POWNALL'S storied career might have faded from public memory, but there is much to learn from it. The fluidity with which Pownall moved through the gendered roles she played demonstrates, to a significant degree, her feel for the game. Faced with a field that was challenging for women, Pownall found ways to navigate that field successfully while demonstrating that gender could be used to one's advantage. By trading on her femininity as a sob sister, Pownall earned the approval of editors, who saw the market value in playing up her gender with a byline and photo. By tailoring her freelance work to fit her life as a homemaker and by leveraging her contacts as a faculty wife, Pownall found national outlets for her journalism and poetry. By posing as the prim but compassionate Mary Manners, Pownall gave space to scintillating human drama and created a forum for public discussion of private issues primarily of interest to women. By capitalizing on her social status and experience, Pownall was able to retire as an award-winning society editor. Each phase of her career was skillfully molded to fit a gendered archetype, resulting in a set of practices that enabled her to continue to find work. If one thinks of such practices as "embodied history," one recognizes in Pownall's career the grooves of many years of gendered patterns, performances, and traditions.⁵⁸

58. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, 1990), 56.

Book Reviews and Notices

Booming from the Mists of Nowhere: The Story of the Greater Prairie-Chicken, by Greg Hoch. A Bur Oak Book. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015. xiii, 126 pp. Maps, graphs, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer James A. Pritchard is adjunct associate professor of environmental history and natural resource policy at Iowa State University. He is a coauthor of *A Green and Permanent Land* (2001).

This wonderful book is at once enlightening and hopeful, a welcome outlook amidst the challenges of wildlife conservation today. Readers interested in the history of Iowa or wildlife in the Midwest will find *Booming from the Mists of Nowhere* provocative in its consideration of historical landscape change, and intriguing as it brings diverse historical voices into the conversation.

Hoch traces pinnated grouse (*Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus* and related species) populations through time in North America, describing interactions among people, land, and wildlife on scales from a few acres to the entire Great Plains. Euro-American farmers settling the prairies reported astounding numbers of prairie-chickens. In fact, these particular birds followed the plow, increasing in numbers and shifting their range, reaching a high point when the mix of crop fields and prairie was about half and half.

The author gracefully points toward fundamental truths, including “grassland wildlife needs grass” (think habitat), and insightfully describes the underlying complexity of grassland ecosystems. Indeed, prairie-chickens are “complex creatures living in very dynamic landscapes” (106). Readers will readily grasp Hoch’s concise and imaginative explanations, for example, how a human flu season is similar to the workings of disease and parasites in bird populations. Along the path to understanding the relationship between structural diversity of vegetation and chick survival rates, readers are invited to consider life from an animal’s viewpoint, in this case imagining a predator looking for bird nests amidst the various prairie forbs and grasses.

Hoch’s account embraces the latest practice and science, including “patch-burn grazing” techniques currently employed in southern Iowa, busily investigated by graduate students counting the variety of insects and birds. Interestingly, it’s not the choice of cows or bison but rather the management of grazing animals that matters in restoring field and

prairie to vibrant condition. The author's discussions of habitat fragmentation—how birds use various prairie types, and how habitat availability can shape the genetic diversity of prairie-chicken subpopulations—is compelling because it links the prairie's past to its future. Small populations of birds use remaining prairie patches scattered over the landscape, exchanging (one hopes) heritable traits as part of a larger metapopulation.

Undeniably, prairie-chickens are “birds of working lands” (100). Midwestern farmers used to foster six or more crops, but simplifying the landscape negatively affected bird populations. Although the prairie ecosystem has been driven to functional extinction, the author argues that “there is room on the prairie landscape for many species of grassland birds,” given better habitat management and enough grass (10). Conservation can work successfully with grazing and haying at the township level, while patches of 320 acres scattered over the larger landscape (along with some larger core areas) would encourage various grassland birds. Government agencies, non-profit organizations, and citizens all have roles to play, but ultimately the “true fate of all these species lies in the hands of farmers, ranchers, and rural landowners” (107).

Hoch is not only a competent biologist but also a thorough researcher and a worthy author as well, drawing readers into a fascinating world of birds, biology, and history. Successfully integrating passages from historical accounts and natural history, the narrative provides reflective moments and additional insight into human interactions with wildlife. This account is a thoughtful and well-executed blend of wildlife science, history, and poetic thought.

Readers should accept Hoch's invitation to see for themselves the prairie-chickens during their courting season on the lek, when the males call with haunting voices and show off their colorful feathers while the females choose mates, shaping evolution. It is an experience promising inspiration, uplift, and a sense of renewal in witnessing prairie-chickens “booming from the mists of nowhere” (108).

The Settlers' Empire: Colonialism and State Formation in America's Old Northwest, by Bethel Saler. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. iv, 382 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Catherine J. Denial is the Bright Professor of American History at Knox College in Illinois. She is the author of *Making Marriage: Husbands, Wives, and the American State in Dakota and Ojibwe Country* (2013).

In *The Settlers' Empire*, Bethel Saler sets out to counter the widely held belief of many historians that there was no nation-state in place in the

United States before the Civil War. Saler argues that it was in governing its western empire that the central government of the United States gained in power and strength after the Revolution. By focusing on the Old Northwest, Saler invites us to watch the ascendancy of the United States, a process captured in treaties, policy documents, laws, court cases, literature, newspaper accounts, and the personal papers of settlers.

Saler ably proves her central point—the scaffolding of nation-making is apparent in each encounter she describes. The close attention she pays to treaty-related documents is particularly welcome; she analyzes not only the treaties themselves but also reports from Indian agents, members of the military, and treaty commissioners, demonstrating, step by step, how those representatives of the United States understood themselves to be engaged in the process of building a nation.

Saler makes her point early and often: we should look west to see the complicated workings of the new nation's statecraft. The duties of the first U.S. regiment authorized by Congress after the revolution demonstrate as much. In Saler's words, "This First Regiment also distinguished it[self] as part of a post-colonial settler regime where domestic, international, civil, and military matters blurred in the imperial spaces of the American public domain" (48).

Saler also thoughtfully presents other key agents of the United States' plans, such as the judges who sought to remake "custom of the country" marriages between Euro-Americans and Native peoples into marriages governed by American law. If left untouched, "custom" marriages, Saler argues, muddled the distinctions between whiteness and non-whiteness that were of central importance to representatives of the encroaching state. Marriage was a tool of assimilation and a means by which white male authority could be inscribed upon the domestic realm. From such well-ordered households would come well-ordered American towns and cities.

There is much to commend in Saler's book, but the author does make narrative and analytical choices that leave much unexplored. The very nomenclature of the book tells us, as readers, where to place ourselves in our imaginations: on the eastern seaboard of the United States, looking toward a place which, to similarly situated individuals, is the Northwest. The region was not Northwest to the many Native communities who lived there, Native communities whose voices are muffled in this text. We are not invited to stand beside them and look east, or to recast the region in the terms they understood and lived. Resistance to the United States' plans is also under-investigated, and early chapters fail to provide any real perspective from Native people themselves. That gives rise to an interpretive framework that wreathes U.S. actions with

a certain inevitability. For example, in concluding a section on the 1825 treaty of Prairie du Chien, Saler writes that "the conclusion of this treaty in mid-August 1825 suggested the degree to which Wisconsin Indian bands met federal authorities on unequal ground, conforming to Euro-American notions of territoriality and of their (Indian) subject nationhood" (107). Indian nations are, in this interpretation, already on a losing footing. This sits oddly with the fact that a large number of Native nations completely ignored the boundaries set by the treaty after it was signed. Happily, much greater Native agency can be found in Saler's chapter on mission work in the region, where the author details the missionaries' generally losing efforts to convert Native people to the Christian faith.

The Settlers' Empire is an engaging text that paints a vibrant picture of the Midwest's past as many settler-colonist Americans understood it. I recommend it for enthusiasts of federal policy and those with an interest in midwestern history and for purchase by university libraries.

The Unknown Travels and Dubious Pursuits of William Clark, by Jo Ann Trogdon. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2015. xxii, 469 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$36.95 hardcover.

Reviewer W. Raymond Wood is professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Missouri, Columbia. His most recent book (with Robert M. Lindholm) is *Karl Bodmer's America Revisited: Landscape Views Across Time* (2013).

William Clark's role in the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Meriwether Lewis renders him one of the iconic figures of nineteenth-century America. The bicentennial of that expedition resulted in a number of books detailing his life and his accomplishments in government service. But documents continue to turn up that illuminate his life; one of the most important is the journal that he kept (1798–1801) on a flatboat journey from his home in Louisville, Kentucky, to New Orleans. The journal also contained a map showing many details of features along the Mississippi. The document, housed in the State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia, was virtually overlooked after it arrived there in 1928 until Jo Ann Trogdon discovered it in 1992.

Clark left Louisville on March 9, 1798, his two flatboats containing cargoes of tobacco, furs, and salted pork. Having left the army, and hoping to begin a profitable business, he would sell the cargoes in New Orleans, which was then in Spanish Louisiana. Trogdon poses several interesting questions about Clark's activities at his destination. Those questions revolve around whether he was somehow involved with what became known as the Spanish Conspiracy. The term refers to efforts by Spanish

officials in New Orleans to detach Kentucky and nearby territory from the United States and to create a buffer state between the United States and Spanish Louisiana. Spanish sources even secretly paid U.S. Army General James Wilkinson (known to the Spanish as Agent 13) to act traitorously on its behalf in the scheme; Wilkinson even secretly shifted his allegiance from the United States to the king of Spain.

No fewer than 22 other individuals were involved in this seditious project, most of them well known to Clark. Prominent among them were Benjamin Sebastian (a family friend), Daniel Clark Jr. (no relation), Andrew Ellicott, John McKee, and Stephen Minor, all of whom knew about the conspiracy, and whom William met in New Orleans. Although the journal contains many details of the trip downriver, once Clark arrived in New Orleans its entries diminish; indeed, Clark records that "nothing extraordinary happened" between his arrival and his departure in August. But details regarding this period of Clark's life are preserved in Spanish documents, records that Trogdon has mined to offer a series of conjectures about what took place there in Clark's contacts with the conspirators. They record, however, only his commercial activities while he was in the city.

Was Clark acting, knowingly or not, as an agent for his friend General Wilkinson? The information that Clark inscribed on his map would have been immensely useful in Wilkinson's schemes. Clark's return home was delayed by his return upriver to Natchez, where he smuggled a secret Spanish payoff of 670 Spanish dollars to an unnamed corrupt American official (surely General Wilkinson) by illegally transporting those Spanish coins across the U.S. border. What did he know of this transaction?

Returning to New Orleans, Clark turned for home by sea, taking passage on the schooner *Star*, arriving in New Castle, Delaware, after sailing around Florida and up the East Coast, suffering from malaria en route. He continued on by land to Virginia and then returned to Louisville by way of the Ohio River, reaching home on Christmas Eve.

Trogdon continues her narrative of Clark's life, including the trip he made to Washington in 1801, recorded in later entries in his Mississippi journal. There he met President Jefferson's secretary, Meriwether Lewis (his old subordinate in the army), and likely told him of his Mississippi River experiences, perhaps thereby paving the way for Lewis to choose him as his second-in-command on the Corps of Discovery.

Trogdon's narrative of William Clark's travels demonstrates how important it is to consult alternate sources in presenting a story. Her account is enriched by her careful and cautious analysis and interpretation of those primary documents. She has successfully woven diverse

sources into a comprehensive account of some of the dangers that faced the newly formed United States at that time, an account that casts new light on the life of one of America's most famous figures between late 1797 and 1803. The voyage down the Mississippi helped shape the river experiences and skills that Clark put to such good use on what he would call his "western travels" – the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Brown Water: A Narrative of My Personal Journey in the Wake of Lewis and Clark, by Butch Bouvier. Onawa, Iowa: Butch Bouvier (keelboat@long-lines.com), 2015. xv, 186 pp. Illustrations, glossary. \$20.00 paperback.

Reviewer Norman Fry is a retired Southeastern Community College American history instructor with a longstanding interest in life in Iowa's small towns and along the Mississippi River.

Brown Water is Butch Bouvier's personal narrative of his boat journey along the route taken by Lewis and Clark on the Missouri River. Bouvier describes himself as a "hands on" historian with a passion for living history, and his goal is not only to take the journey but to recreate the boats used by early river explorers. The narrative of *Brown Water* is composed of three parts. The first is Bouvier's own narrative describing the boat building and the journey. The second narrative, written in journals given to the crew by the author, offers the volunteer crew's perspective on the river journey. The third narrative includes "Knowledge Nooks," short explanatory inserts that illustrate the history and techniques of boat building.

Rather than a standard history, *Brown Water* is a modern boatwright's account of the building of traditional riverboats. Bouvier gives abundant details on the selection of wood for boat construction, the construction process, and the navigation by shallow draft keelboats and pirogues. Readers interested in riverboat architecture will find Bouvier's book an informative read. Readers fascinated by a personal adventure story, one that relates that adventure to the history of early Iowa and the perils of navigating the Missouri River, will find *Brown Water* a raconteur's delight.

Working the Mississippi: Two Centuries of Life on the River, by Bonnie Stepenoff. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2015. xxii, 182 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$36.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Patrick Nunnally is editor of *Open Rivers: Rethinking the Mississippi*, a digital journal published by the University of Minnesota.

The middle Mississippi—that stretch between St. Louis and Memphis—is Mark Twain’s river. The stretch lacks the Delta’s romance or the approachable sense of the river farther north. The middle Mississippi is where the river really becomes “America’s River,” carrying massive amounts of freight as well as the freighted meanings that have made the river such an iconic part of American life. Bonnie Stepenoff’s book is a very approachable way to begin to understand the place.

Stepenoff’s focus is on the myriad people who work on and closely alongside the river. She introduces readers to boat captains and cooks, pilots, gamblers, and roustabouts, all of the upstanding as well as shady characters who have made the river their home. For the most part, these are voices not often heard; their inclusion, whether from oral history accounts or from other documents, is one of the book’s strengths.

A challenge for those who write about the river is how to organize their material—whether to employ chronology or geography as their central structure. Stepenoff alternates chapters on particular cities and towns, working from north to south, with chapters on classes of river workers. A chapter on Cairo, Illinois, is followed by her discussion of engineers, which is followed in turn by a focus on New Madrid, Missouri. This approach is generally satisfactory but does at times mean a loss of thematic continuity. Stepenoff’s vivid, accessible prose makes her ideas and points readily understandable, though.

Working the Mississippi is not analytical in the way much conventional scholarship is. For example, she closes her chapter on the troubled city of Cairo, Illinois, by stating that no single cause led to the city’s troubles, “but some of its woes came straight from the river” (88). Perhaps she feels it would be speculative to explore how troubles “straight from the river” influence, or are influenced by, troubles that originate on land, but some further discussion is probably warranted. The idea is too intriguing just to drop.

There is an almost playful sense to Stepenoff’s approach that contrasts well with deeper analytical tomes. One of many little-known tidbits in the book is that Chester, Illinois, an otherwise forgettable small town, was the home of Elzie Crisler Segar, creator of the comic book character Popeye, the Sailor Man. Townspeople have long speculated who the local counterparts were for such nationally recognized figures as Wimpy, Bluto, and Olive Oyl. It turns out the Mississippi River and the communities on its banks have a greater resonance in the national imagination than even the most knowledgeable river rat might have guessed.

Throughout *Working the Mississippi* Stepenoff illustrates, but does not explicitly make an argument about, the myriad ways the Mississippi

River's story illuminates so many other stories central to the region's and nation's history. Many scholars of the Mississippi treat the river as important in and of itself, a *sui generis* geographical and historical phenomenon that is important simply because of its size and centrality to the continent. Of course, that is true; it would be hard to imagine a history or geography of the region that did not take the Mississippi fundamentally into account. Stepenoff's "smaller" stories, which originate from a particular place or a particular type of work, make very clear how much the river and its corridor of influence have to say to historians of such seemingly disparate subjects as race, class, labor, or gender. Her work provides material for scholars and others interested in how communities work, whether local influences trump national patterns, or how much influence individuals have on particular events, as opposed to the context of their place and time.

Ultimately, that is perhaps the greatest value of Stepenoff's book: she invites readers to look more closely at subjects they may have a passing familiarity with, and, by doing so, to see connections to ideas and things that they had not thought of as associated with the Mississippi River at all. Hers is not at all the "last word" on the Mississippi River, but rather the first word on a host of subjects that are touched by the river.

Remember Me to Miss Louisa: Hidden Black-White Intimacies in Antebellum America, by Sharony Green. Early American Places. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2015. xvii, 199 pp. Illustrations, chart, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paperback.

Reviewer Darrel E. Bigham is emeritus professor of history and director of Historic Southern Indiana, University of Southern Indiana. He is the author of *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley* (2005).

The title of this brief work suggests the need to explore the little-known bonds of affection between slaves or freedpeople and their current or former white owners. The locus is Cincinnati, the midwestern border city with the largest number of African Americans in the antebellum period, where many unmarried mothers settled with their children born of unions with white masters. Many of these were "fancy," attractive, fair-skinned women whose children were deemed, in the language of the day, "mulatto," often able to "pass" as whites.

Green wants us to examine not only the well-known matrifocal trend in black families but also the role of white males in the equation. She asserts, "The historical record shows that there was often reciprocal regard, warmth, and even caring in settings where whites and blacks

became trading partners, shipmates, servants, allies, or lovers" (9). Often—as in the case of Ava White and her former owner, Rice Ballard—they and their children were freed and settled in the Queen City, miles distant from owners' white families. Not all white men were exploitative or consistent in their relations with their female slaves. What former enslaved people did to secure their freedom and support was less important "than what white *men permitted of themselves*" (9). How black women and their children felt about that was probably shaped by the way they understood male-female and parent-child relations as well as master-slave relations.

Such interracial unions, although stigmatized over time, often led southern white men to invest emotionally and financially in the lives of enslaved women and children. This thesis is supported by detailed examination of the black families of three white planters—Samuel Townsend, Rice Ballard, and John Williams. All three families would settle in Cincinnati. Their prosperity depended not only on their actions but also on their head start as freedpeople, the locus of their settlement, the attitudes of the community, and luck.

This study is organized into four chapters and an epilogue. Chapter one surveys the "hidden life" of the planter. The second and third explore, in turn, the perspectives of white wives and "favored" black women. The last examines the world of the progenies, before and after the Civil War. In the epilogue the author stresses that historical study has paid too much attention to racial oppression and not enough to the intimacies created between white owners and black women, especially those who were fair-skinned. Those women "emerged as both victors and victims, immoral and upright, enslaved and indeed free *with* white men's help" (132). It is easier to describe relations as rape and more difficult "to say it was love or something approaching that" (132).

The author has provided a provocative and well-researched investigation of a topic that needs much more attention by students of American history. The traditional view of racial exploitation of black women by white slaveowners certainly is simplistic, but whether her examination of just three case studies in one city suffices to redress the balance remains to be seen. The book's audience is narrowly academic, as demonstrated by the absence of a narrative approach and the unfortunate tendency to rely on abstract jargon. Too often speculative words like *may*, *probably*, *possibly*, *suggests*, and *evidently* (see pp. 24–25, for instance) weaken her arguments. Context—time and space—seem lacking. But this is a stimulating work that should encourage examination of how and why mixed-race families came to settle in other midwestern cities.

Lincoln, the Law, and Presidential Leadership, edited by Charles M. Hubbard. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015. x, 214 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$34.50 hardcover and e-book.

Reviewer Timothy Walch is director emeritus of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and a volunteer at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City.

Yet another book about Abraham Lincoln is not always a welcome event. Indeed, it is often said that no historical figure other than Jesus Christ has generated as many books as the sixteenth president of the United States. Can it be that scholars have anything more to say about this man?

As surprising as it might be, we have not yet exhausted the topic. Thanks to Charles M. Hubbard, Lincoln Historian at Lincoln Memorial University, we have a fresh collection of essays on various aspects of Lincoln's application of constitutional law. Together, these nine chapters fit together neatly to remind us of the intricate nature of Lincoln's views on the law.

As can be surmised from the title, this is not a book for the average history buff. Although all of the essays are well written, the subject matter is specialized. To benefit from this volume, readers should have an interest in how Lincoln applied his personal commitment to the law and his understanding of the Constitution to presidential decision making.

Given that caveat, the book offers a range of perspectives from a diverse collection of experienced Lincoln scholars. The list of topics is impressive: civil liberties, presidential pardons, executive decision making, political ideology, the responsibilities of citizenship, constitutional restraints, the loyalty of government employees, and much more.

Almost in the manner of a jazz ensemble, each contributor steps forward to play a solo. Daniel Stowell focuses on the connection between the law and decision making. Mark Steiner follows on immigration and citizenship. Then comes Charles Hubbard on slavery and national unity and Frank Williams on civil liberties during wartime. Edna Greene Medford evaluates Lincoln's paradoxical path to emancipation. She is succeeded by Ron Soodalter, who writes about Lincoln's sense of mercy and social justice. The last three chapters are by Bruce Carnahan (military practices toward civilians), Natalie Sweet (loyalty and treason) and Jason R. Jividen (Lincoln's impact on his successors).

Even though there is much to admire in these essays, there is precious little on Iowa or the Midwest. Iowa is not mentioned at all, and only Mark Steiner's essay on Lincoln and citizenship includes brief passages (pp. 7–18 and 36–42) on Lincoln's life and work in Illinois. Does it matter that this book doesn't have much to say about Lincoln's ties to the Midwest? Perhaps not. If it's true that Lincoln belongs to the ages, it also must be said that he belongs to all the states.

Civil War Nurse Narratives, 1863–1870, by Daneen Wardrop. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015. ix, 267 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00 paperback.

Reviewer Theresa McDevitt is Resident Librarian for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of "'A Melody Before Unknown': The Civil War Experiences of Mary and Amanda Shelton" (*Annals of Iowa*, 2004).

Eager recruits joined the Union army at the start of the Civil War, but the military was ill equipped to deal with their unprecedented numbers. Camps were hurriedly organized with inadequate housing, clothing, food, and sanitary conditions. Almost immediately, soldiers began falling ill and dying from camp diseases. It did not take long for reports of miserable camp conditions to filter back to women at home who wished to support the war effort and who felt responsible for the health and well-being of their friends and relatives—and of all soldiers risking their lives for the sake of the nation. Prior to the war, a vocal group of women had been pushing for a greater role in society and defying conventions by taking more public roles in reform work associated with protection of the family and moral improvement. The wartime crisis led many women to take a further step—the daring choice to serve as wartime nurse/relief worker. At the time, nursing outside the home was not a respectable profession for women, and traveling across the county unchaperoned to reach men in need was perceived as a reckless act that endangered life, limb, and reputation. Nonetheless, in the course of the war at least 20,000 American women provided relief services in one form or another. Between 1863 and 1870, at least 12 of those women wrote book-length narratives chronicling their wartime experiences.

In the present volume, Daneen Wardrop, who has written before about the literature of the Civil War era, takes a new look at seven of the works from that "first wave" of wartime narratives, classifying them as distinct from later memoirs and as a subgenre of Civil War literature whose authors adopted the rhetoric of antebellum reform to engage their readers and explain their wartime experiences. Chapters treat each of the seven women's writings and diverse experiences, but all provide basic information on their lives prior to the war, their travels, their motivations for volunteering, and the difficulties they encountered when they brought their domestic expertise to what they often perceived as the professionalized, cold, and overly bureaucratic hospital setting.

Authors examined differed. Some (such as Louisa May Alcott) were well known during the war; others wrote anonymously. Some served for long periods perilously near the front; others arrived at calmer locations behind the lines after the fighting had ended and stayed for short

periods. In spite of the differences, Wardrop is able to discuss common themes in all the works, specifically those relating to the woman question, interracial interactions, and development of a national character through patriotism.

More comprehensive studies of women's wartime relief work have been written—Jane Schultz's *Women at the Front: Hospital Workers in Civil War America* (2004) is probably the most comprehensive—along with hundreds of individual studies of Civil War nurses' writings, but this work is unique in its focus on this subset of wartime writings that appeared during the war or shortly thereafter. Also, its focus on the works as narratives crafted in response to the most significant cultural themes of the period, and how they differed from later nurse narratives, is a novel and interesting interpretation that is valuable in telling the wartime story of these women while also illustrating the cultural context in which they lived. None of the women discussed was from Iowa, but their stories are quite similar to those of Iowa relief workers such as Annie Turner Wittenmyer (who wrote her wartime narrative later), and the interpretive framework might be applied to those works as well.

Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and the West, edited by Virginia Scharff. Oakland: Autry National Center of the American West in association with University of California Press, 2015. xv, 224 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Ginette Aley is adjunct professor of history at Washburn University and a Carey Fellow at Kansas State University. She coedited *Union Heartland: The Midwestern Home Front during the Civil War* (2013).

The Civil War not only embroiled the North and South as a sectional conflict, but encompassed the entire nation. The driving wedge, as historian and editor Virginia Scharff notes, was westward expansion. *Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and the West* is a nicely illustrated collection of 11 essays edited by Scharff, a companion volume to the *Civil War and the West* exhibit at the Autry National Center curated by Carolyn Brucken. One of the volume's strengths is its overriding focus on the exhibit's material culture and the narrative contexts of the items in an otherwise wide-ranging and exceptionally well-written set of essays.

The narratives of westward expansion often fail to highlight the tragic ironies and the ways liberty was asserted by some yet denied to others. Brenda E. Stevenson's "The Price of Slavery across Empire" offers an engaging description of how the cost of slavery went far beyond the bill of sale for the enslaved people brought to Texas in the 1850s.

Jonathan Earle's "Beecher's Bibles and Broadwords" keenly reconsiders contemporaneous Bleeding Kansas in light of the impact of new breech-loading Sharps rifles (carbines) and Free Staters fighting against proslavery forces while also ironically intruding on Kansas Indian lands. Similarly complex and representative of emerging conflicts among Native Americans, Kent Blansett's "When the Stars Fell from the Sky" focuses on the experiences of Colonel Stand Watie in Indian Territory to recount the slaveholding Cherokees' efforts in support of the Confederacy while in search of sovereignty. Reconstruction would take an additional toll. Maria E. Montoya's insightful "The Not-So-Free Labor in the American Southwest" relates how the Thirteenth Amendment, while ending slavery, left unresolved complicated and unfree labor relations in the West involving many American Indians, Mexicans, and Chinese.

At times America's Civil War era underscored the West's legacies of conquest. John Mack Faragher considers the controversial career of John C. Frémont (The Pathfinder), who, aged and ill in 1887, relocated to southern California with his wife, Jessie Benton Frémont, to accept the charity of friends. By that time, their view of empire looked different than it had decades earlier. So, too, did Americans' interpretations of Manifest Destiny. Adam Arenson's "John Gast's *American Progress*" sets the broader political context for the allegorical painting often used as a representation of westward expansion across the plains, despite its limitations. Completed in 1872, *American Progress* looks different when viewed as part of the short-lived Liberal Republicans' push for sectional reconciliation over flawed Reconstruction. Durwood Ball, in "Liberty, Empire, and the Civil War in the American West," considers the utility of several artifacts employed by the Union army and volunteers. In particular, Ball recounts the context of a bugle used during Brigadier General Alfred Sully's 1863 campaign involving the Second Nebraska and Sixth Iowa Cavalries, along with a company of the Seventh Iowa, to punish Sioux in Dakota Territory suspected in the deadly uprising in Minnesota the previous summer and to quell agitation. That event became known as the Battle of Whitestone Hill, but the Seventh Iowa Cavalry remained engaged in the government's Indian subjugating campaigns.

Discussions of empire and liberty also include ideas about identity. Some of these are historically complicated as Daniel Lynch shows in "On the Edge of Empires, Republics, and Identities," an interesting narrative about Juan de la Guerra and his role in the California Native Cavalry Battalion patrolling the postwar borderlands. Others are more straightforward and entail relinquishing the Union uniform for seeking solace in southern California while reaching out to veterans and John

Brown's family, as Horatio Rust did. That is the captivating focus of William Deverell's "After Antietam." With a distractingly breezy style, Virginia Scharff considers how a Scottish-born Mormon immigrant and the highly contested Wyoming Territory both became American after the Civil War. And, in a fitting conclusion to the collection, Jennifer Denetdale's "You Brought History Alive for Us" reflects on the historical impact of colonialism in silencing the lives and recasting the identities of nineteenth-century Navajo women. Of particular interest is the author's description of the process of recovering stories about their community leadership.

Empire and Liberty is a suggestive volume that only hints at the regional complexity of the American West. Yet we also see the region's many connections to the nation as a whole. As a result, the Civil War and Reconstruction era offers a compelling circumstance to rethink the traditional boundaries of the period's historiography.

This Is Not Dixie: Racist Violence in Kansas, 1861–1927, by Brent M. S. Campney. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015. x, 281 pp. Maps, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Kristen Tegtmeier Oertel is Mary Frances Barnard Professor in Nineteenth-Century American History at the University of Tulsa. She is the author of *Bleeding Borders: Gender, Race and Violence in Pre-Civil War Kansas* (2008).

Most northerners pride themselves for standing on the "right" side of history when it comes to racism in the nineteenth century; they point to their distant relatives who fought in the Union army or the lack of de jure school segregation in their states as proof that their communities frowned upon the kind of systemic racism that plagued the Deep South after the Civil War. Kansans, in particular, laud their Free State past and lift up mythical figures like John Brown to privilege a narrative that claims Kansas as a racial utopia, the "Land of Canaan" where African Americans settled after fleeing racial violence in the South. With Brent Campney's ironically titled *This Is Not Dixie*, no Kansan, indeed no mid-westerner, will ever be able to discount the unfortunate likelihood that racial violence has characterized the black experience throughout the country. In fact, Campney argues, "Racism was indisputably 'an inherent part of the state's ideological and political founding,'" and he claims that white Kansans "utilized racist violence and other means to establish a legacy of white supremacy that cast a long shadow" on the state's history (212, 213).

Campney uses a "capacious model of racist violence" that includes "sensational violence" like lynching and riots but also considers "threat-

ened violence," when lynch mobs pursued their subject but never succeeded, and "routine violence" like assault, property damage, and rape (1–6). Campney combed through hundreds of newspapers from the era, and what he found is disturbing: between 1861 and 1927, 52 African Americans were lynched by whites in Kansas, and at least 17 more were killed by police; between roughly 1890 and 1913, whites planned and threatened 78 lynchings; and almost 30 race riots peppered the state's history and occurred almost everywhere blacks lived, from tiny towns like Larned to larger cities like Leavenworth (202–4).

Perhaps the most devastating evidence Campney provides comes from the gory details of some of those lynchings, like the 1901 "Leavenworth burning." Fred Alexander had been arrested for assaulting a white woman, but before he could be tried for the alleged crime, a mob broke into the local jail and tied him to a stake, covering him in coal oil and lighting him on fire. According to the *New York Times*, "Probably 8,000 people witnessed the burning," after which "there was a wild scramble to obtain relics. Bits of charred flesh, pieces of chain, scraps of wood—everything that could possibly serve as a souvenir—was seized" (90). Like the photography exhibit and website *Without Sanctuary*, which features chilling photographs of white crowds who attended lynchings as spectacle and entertainment, Campney's study reminds modern readers that racial violence infused American culture.

Yet Campney also provides inspiring examples of African American resistance to such violence, most impressively in the form of jailhouse defenses. For the period between 1890 and 1916, Campney found 22 instances of armed black men standing guard at local and county jails protecting black suspects, in addition to blacks ignoring white orders to disperse, black families hiding accused offenders, and blacks refusing to reveal information to white authorities (204). Such sustained resistance demonstrates that "blacks fought an unbroken struggle for their rights throughout the study period, and they did so vigorously and courageously despite daunting odds" (205).

For all of its strengths, Campney's study overlooks some important scholarly precedents. Previous scholarship firmly establishes the foundation of racism in Kansas Territory and includes whites' racist beliefs about Native Americans in that development, a piece of the historical puzzle that Campney ignores. During his study period, Indians were forcefully removed from their homes in Kansas to other locations in the state and to Indian Territory. Whites certainly did not reserve their racial venom for blacks, and one wonders how capacious Campney's model of racial violence is when it does not include Indians and also Latinos, who were populating the Santa Fe Trail (and railroad) in the

late nineteenth century and working at Kansas City's packinghouses in the early twentieth century. Despite these oversights, Campney's book is an important corrective to the still prevailing belief that racial violence was a uniquely southern problem.

Red Cloud: Oglala Legend, by John D. McDermott. South Dakota Biography Series. Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2015. xv, 194 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$14.95 paperback.

Reviewer Denny Smith is associate professor of history and director of Native American Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His research and writing have focused on Plains Indians.

With three major scholarly biographies of Oglala Lakota war and civil chief Red Cloud already published by 1997, the South Dakota Historical Society Press nonetheless has wisely selected Red Cloud as the fourth person in their state biography series. Equally thoughtfully they invited distinguished frontier and "Indian wars" historian John D. McDermott to write it.

Red Cloud was a towering figure as war chief, but after 1868, when he dedicated himself to reservation life, he became a polarizing tribal leader, both within Lakota circles and in Lakota-federal Indian policy affairs. McDermott safely navigates these turbulent waters to focus mainly on Red Cloud's story.

In the first two chapters on Red Cloud's early years, McDermott presents unique insights. Using interviews with Red Cloud late in his life by historians Doane Robinson and R. Eli Paul, McDermott presents rare details such as Red Cloud's extensive war honors and his special affinity with horses.

In chapters 4–6 McDermott recounts the well-known 1865–1868 Lakota–U.S. Army wars in the Powder River region. He knows this story well, having written two fine studies on this period: *Circle of Fire* (2003) and *Red Cloud's War* (2010).

Red Cloud's formative years at the newly established Red Cloud Agencies were based primarily in neighboring Nebraska. After forcing the U.S. Army to abandon Forts Reno, Phil Kearny, and C. F. Smith in the summer of 1868, Red Cloud traveled to Fort Laramie and signed the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

In chapters 7–9 McDermott addresses the turbulent 1869–1877 years as Red Cloud battled the Indian Affairs Office over the negligent treatment of Oglalas at two different Red Cloud Agencies. The author emphasizes that these agencies were in fact situated in western Nebraska. Red Cloud refused to relocate to the Great Sioux Reservation (in present

South and North Dakota west of the Missouri River) established by the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, of which Red Cloud was the most important signatory.

The last three chapters (excluding the author's concluding remarks) cover Red Cloud's agency life after 1878 at the newly established Pine Ridge Reservation, finally situated on the Great Sioux Reservation. McDermott concisely sifts through the well-studied 1878–1889 period of catastrophic land losses: the Black Hills in 1877 and dismemberment into six smaller Sioux reservations in 1889. After 1889, Pine Ridge Lakotas sadly forgot their great leader, and Red Cloud died in 1909 an impoverished Lakota.

McDermott emphasizes two of Red Cloud's crucial qualities: after 1868 he dedicated his life to peace with non-Indians, and he spent his whole life defending Lakota traditional ways.

In this marvelously researched study, McDermott provides a clear and concise narrative. I agree with his positive assessments of Red Cloud, but we still need a culturally sophisticated biography of the Lakota chief. Red Cloud deserves an interpretation that explains why he was in fact so greatly revered as the Oglalas' agency leader: every political battle he fought and every decision he made was predicated on the long-term interest of his people, not his own fortunes. That is what great tribal leaders do.

Out Where the West Begins: Profiles, Visions, and Strategies of Early Western Business Leaders, by Philip F. Anschutz. Denver: Cloud Camp Press, 2015. 392 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer J. T. Murphy is professor of history at Indiana University South Bend. His research and writing have focused on the military history of the nineteenth-century U.S. West, the Oregon Trail, and frontier settlement, among other topics.

In his initial sentence, Philip F. Anschutz asks, "*Who created the American West?*" (13). Because he is a successful, Denver-based, corporate executive ranked 108th on *Forbes Magazine's* list of the world's billionaires, the answer seems simple enough—people like him. "It will come as no particular surprise to my friends," he writes, admitting this conceit, "that I selected entrepreneurs and businessmen to write about" (14). *Forbes* scores Anschutz's wealth as primarily self-made. He grew up in western Kansas, where his mother was a teacher who inspired his interest in history and the arts (he dedicates this book to her); his father, an oilfield wildcatter, laid the groundwork for his future business career. From his start in the oilfields, he expanded his corporation to include enterprises associated with the modern American West. He

purchased then sold the Southern Pacific Railroad, developed the telecommunication firm Qwest, acquired part ownership of the Los Angeles Lakers along with their home, the Staples Center, and ventured into publishing and entertainment. Anschutz's personal story is reflected in the very structure of his book, in the 49 men he profiles, and in his view of the West as a place where it is possible to turn "visions of what might be into realities" (13).

Out Where the West Begins is a celebration of men (never women) who had ideas, saw potential opportunities, took risks, tapped a need or satisfied a waiting market, and made money — lots of it. After acquiring their wealth, some failed financially, but many gave money away or invested it back into their communities through philanthropy or boosterism. To tell their stories, Anschutz places them within one of seven categories and repeats a formula showing an individual's personal and business history. He begins with a general assessment, explains background and career, gauges character (all are hard-working, intelligent, ambitious, and generous), evaluates success and contributions to society, and concludes by praising each man's importance to westward expansion. Henry Ford, for example, made cars accessible in a "land of vast distances and rugged obstacles" (322).

Anschutz begins with the fur trade, a nod to moneymaking and the West's mythic appeal. The same can be said for his next section, "Agriculture and Livestock," where he lumps famed cattlemen Charles Goodnight and John Wesley Iliff with the lumber magnate Frederick Weyerhaeuser and Charles Boettcher, a Colorado hardware merchant "especially remarkable for being a multi-discipline, multi-industry investor in the American West" (99). The section on railroads and transportation describes men familiar to students of the frontier, such as the "big four" of the Central Pacific Railroad, "Stagecoach King" Benjamin Holladay, partners Henry Wells and William Fargo, railroad mogul James J. Hill, and Fred Harvey, innovator of the hospitality industry. Of the six names associated with mineral extraction, the inclusion of John D. Rockefeller seems gratuitous, but Anschutz reminds us with profiles about George Hearst and Meyer Guggenheim that mining in the West was an industry shaped by science, engineering, and capital investment. He recognizes that the West's development tied into the national economy. That point is central to his discussion of manufacturing and the men — Adolph Coors, Levi Strauss, Charles Pillsbury, and Gustavus Swift — who created companies that continue today. The most interesting representative of Anschutz's "Finance and Banking" section is A. P. Giannini, whose Bank of America became a powerhouse by catering to the immigrant population ignored by bigger banks. Anschutz's final set

of profiles covers three prominent figures associated with entertainment and communications: Harrison Gray Otis, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, early filmmaker Carl Laemmle, and the ultimate entertainer, William F. Cody.

It is easy to see that Anschutz admires his subjects; although he notes foibles and mistakes, their accomplishments are his focus. He praises John Evans, appointed Colorado Territory's governor in 1862, for his efforts in developing Denver and the region, but he sidesteps the governor's complicity in the Sand Creek Massacre.

This book is easy to criticize: Anschutz's view of history can be as simplistic as it is insightful; his choices can be questioned (why Samuel Colt and not Oliver Winchester?); his sources need updating; there is some sloppy editing in the bibliographies; and he is prone to overstatement. But it is a handsome book with sturdy pages and colorful art, and it contains more than one gem in his list of favorites. For readers interested in American entrepreneurs, Anschutz provides a starting point; despite its drawbacks, the book is worth having on the shelf.

Constructing a Legacy: The Weitz Company and the Family Who Built It, by William B. Friedrichs. Des Moines: Business Publications Corp., 2015. xviii, 311 pp. Illustrations, note on sources, notes, index. \$20.00 paperback.

Reviewer Bill Silag, a former editor of the *Palimpsest*, is working on a biography of Iowa author Ruth Suckow.

Charles Weitz was 30 years old in 1855 when he and his wife arrived in Des Moines, the newly designated state capital. Charles found work as a carpenter and soon opened his own shop. Business was spotty at first—rail service to Des Moines was still years away—but Weitz believed in Des Moines's metropolitan future, so he kept up with his modest trade, started a family, and got to know the local landscape. The arrival of the railroads in the late 1860s sparked a long-awaited economic boom that continued mostly without interruption until the 1890s. Charles Weitz was in the middle of much of that urban development, as were his grown sons, including Frederick Wilhelm, born in 1867, who would succeed his father as CEO of the family's construction business in 1903.

Author William Friedrichs explains the firm's longevity in terms of family character: "The Weitz family itself was a key reason for the company's success," he contends. "Beginning with Charles, the [Weitz] clan created a strong familial stake in the company, and then, over the generations, identified and developed family members with a passion and talent for running the firm" (xi–xii).

Much of the book's text focuses on the Weitz Company's ongoing efforts to develop new markets and new relationships with various government agencies. But especially interesting are the author's discussions regarding succession at the executive level. As a child in Germany in the 1830s, Charles Weitz apparently understood from an early age that his birth family's weaving business was not large enough to ensure employment for every family member—several of Charles's siblings were already at work in the family business—and likely he would be on his own when the time came to earn a living. Decades later, as a successful business owner in Des Moines, Charles decided to do better by his own heirs. He had come to see each family member as a stakeholder in the primary mission of the family—the economic survival of the Weitz family itself. The building company would be his legacy to future Weitz generations, secured by the continuing financial success of the family enterprise.

Charles's son, Frederick Wilhelm, began to take charge of the day-to-day administration of the company in the 1880s, adhering to a long-term business plan devised under his father's direction. The plan emphasized construction of large commercial structures, such as grain storage bins and office buildings, along with the local post-office construction projects Weitz had been doing for years within and increasingly beyond Iowa's borders. By the turn of the twentieth century, government contracts had become a major source of Weitz company income.

Each of the Weitz men who served as CEO of the company had his own goals, but presumably a major element of the succession process had to do with achieving a family consensus regarding the aspiring CEO's goals moving forward. For Frederick Wilhelm Weitz (CEO 1906–1935), the emphasis was on winning contracts for government buildings; Rudolph (Rudy) Weitz (CEO 1935–1974) was associated with FHA-financed apartment complexes. But Rudy's son, Frederick William (Fred) Weitz (CEO 1974–1995), who found his niche in the construction and management of retirement communities, had other changes in mind as well; he proposed selling shares in the Weitz Company to company employees in a process that would eventually lead to complete employee ownership. The Weitz family accepted Fred's proposal, the work of restructuring the company commenced, and beginning in 1995 the Weitz Company was employee-owned and operated.

The new firm had two divisions, one for the construction and management of continuing-care retirement communities, the other for general construction. In the new firm's first decade, both divisions did well, but in its second decade the general construction division—the core of

the original Weitz Company — began to have trouble, “dragged down by the deep recession that began in 2007” (xviii). Finally, in 2012, the general construction division of the Weitz Company was sold to a multinational corporation based in Egypt. The retirement community division of the company continues to thrive.

Friedricks writes in a style that is informative and reader-friendly. His sources include interviews with Weitz officials and family members, company documents, and construction industry publications. Dozens of black-and-white photos document some of the Weitz company’s project outcomes and their impact on Des Moines’s built environment, as well as the range of its domestic and international activity. Overall, *Constructing a Legacy* is an excellent company history, focusing on a fascinating family story that will appeal to specialists and general readers alike.

Still Turning: A History of Aeromotor Windmills, by Christopher C. Gillis. Tarleton State University Southwestern Studies in the Humanities Series. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2015. xviii, 274 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$35.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Derek Oden is associate professor of history at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas. He is the author of “Perils of Production: Farm Hazards, Family Farming, and the Mechanization of the Corn Belt, 1940–1980” (*Annals of Iowa*, 2014).

Christopher Gillis’s interest in windmills reaches back decades, and his vast knowledge is clearly evident throughout his outstanding book, *Still Turning*, which tells the story of Aeromotor, one of the industry’s best-known names. Those looking for an expansive treatment of the many dimensions of windmill technology might find the book unsatisfying. However, readers will discover that *Still Turning* is meticulously researched and an exceedingly worthwhile company history.

Gillis begins by discussing the inventive ways people employed windmills to drain wetlands, obtain salt, and pump ground water. Such efforts eventually led to developing “water-pumping windmills” that were “relatively easy to erect, durable, and able to run with minimal maintenance” (16). He then examines the company’s origins in the late 1880s and its rise as a major windmill manufacturer. He also chronicles the many challenges company leaders overcame throughout the corporation’s history. Today, Aeromotor is the only surviving U.S.-based company that manufactures a “mechanical water-pumping windmill” (196). In 1919, however, there were 31 such companies (101). Gillis’s work fully explains the many factors that led to the industry’s present state.

Readers will find much to admire in this work. Gillis provides impressively reasoned technical descriptions and wisely chosen visuals. He also offers rich discussions of a host of people who shaped the company's history through rapid technological change, war, and economic stress. By the 1890s, Aeromotor was exporting windmills to Argentina, England, and even as far afield as Australia. By the mid-twentieth century, however, the company was selling windmills that had been assembled in Argentina and exited domestic manufacturing of the device for a time (146).

A particularly important theme woven throughout the work involves how "self-governing water-pumping windmill" manufacturers faced competition from other water extraction methods (16). Aeromotor responded to such threats by entering many diverse and related fields such as gasoline-pumping engines and electric pumps (77, 138). Nevertheless, by the 1940s, the large-scale dissemination of electrical power into the countryside had become particularly disruptive for the windmill industry. Thus, Aeromotor intensified its efforts to become more than a "windmill company and to embrace the sales opportunities of electric water pumps" (132). Today, rural residents enjoy even more water extraction options with the advent of "solar-powered water pumps" for remote water-pumping needs (190). Nevertheless, the company endures, as evidenced by its present 40,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in San Angelo, Texas (186). Gillis has honored the rich legacy of the Aeromotor Company by telling the story of a company whose name graces windmills scattered across the nation and world.

How Iowa Conquered the World: The Story of a Small Farm State's Journey to Global Dominance, by Michael Rank. Kansas City: Five Minute Books, 2014. xi, 163 pp. Bibliography. \$9.99 paperback; \$2.99 e-book.

Reviewer Zachary Michael Jack is a seventh-generation Iowan, associate professor of English at North Central College, board member of the Midwestern History Association, and the author of *Iowa: The Definitive Collection*, among others.

Michael Rank's compelling book *How Iowa Conquered the World* reads more as public writing or journalism than it does as traditional, primary source-derived historiography, although it qualifies strictly as neither, and that's okay.

The author—a native Iowan from Knoxville, a doctoral candidate in Middle Eastern history, and a former journalist—leads with his thesis: "The goal of this book is to make an extremely difficult argument. I will attempt to convince you why Iowa is the greatest cultural force in the world. Not in the Midwest or the United States, but in the world" (3).

The straightforwardness, boldness, repetitiveness, and syntactically fragmented nature of that claim underlines the ethos behind Rank's project. Some historians would object to the whiff of sectionalism or chauvinism (or even jingoism) implicit in such an argument, as well as to its bombastic tendency, but I find the author's unapologetic pride in his home state refreshing. Rather than couch or obscure, Rank identifies his innate boosterism (bias?) and owns it, then moves on with his project.

In many ways the premise for *How Iowa Conquered the World* is derivative of a title published more than 20 years ago: Thomas Cahill's *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (1995). Like Cahill, Rank intends a popular rather than exclusively scholarly audience for his treatment of his home state's preeminence, and, like Cahill, he may succeed in offering an accessible synopsis or digest of one place's heroically, historically understated influence. Rank himself waits until page 125, in the book's closing chapter, to trace his inspiration, identifying Roifield Brown's "How Jamaica Conquered the World" podcast as analog and precedent for his own promotional act. "Much like myself," Rank explains, "he wants to sing those songs and make them known." The "Caribbean island known for reggae, dreadlocks, steel drums, and Olympic sprinters," he notes, "is another place that has the same number of residents and also has a mighty reach despite its small size" (125).

In offering an inventory of Jamaica's better-known cultural calling cards, Rank foregrounds his own coverage-via-inventory. The author intends to offer an hors d'oeuvres of Iowa's cultural legacy here, not a main course. At approximately 135 pages, minus bibliography and excessive back matter, the book is slight measured against conventional monographs. Indeed, the back jacket and introduction reiterate the sampler/survey methodology deployed therein, promising in bullet points to cover everything from how Iowa and Iowans "saved billions of people from starvation" to how it "created Silicon Valley in the 1960s." (The primary basis for the latter claim is that Robert Noyce, the Burlington, Iowa-born cofounder of the Intel Corporation, became a sort of honorary "mayor of Silicon Valley" [24].) Some historians will object to such sweeping claims, because Rank's argument rests, in fact, on case study. In fact, the author could better identify and signpost his methodologies throughout, as well as cite his sources (there is a bibliography but no endnotes and a paucity of in-text journalistic attributions).

Rank's online publisher, as it appears on Amazon.com, is the Amazon self-publishing platform CreateSpace. His book seems geared toward galvanizing Amazon readers in particular, as evidenced both by its affordability (free for Kindle subscribers), and by the author's unusually direct appeal in the back matter page titled "One Last Thing,"

where readers are reminded go to the book's Amazon page "to leave a review please. Thank you again for your support!" (163). The back matter of the print-on-demand title also includes an excerpt from Rank's work in progress and a page for "Other Books by Michael Rank," which lists such titles as *History's Most Insane Rulers* and *Greek Gods and Goddesses Gone Wild*.

Rank's approach is educational, entrepreneurial, and commercial. He brings a journalist's bent to bear, although he apparently conducted few if any original interviews. The metaphors with which he chooses to illustrate his thesis—comparing Iowa's underdog status to former Iowa State running back Troy Davis as the introduction's overriding metaphor—are curious, and yet they emphasize a whimsicality often eschewed in more hidebound historical scholarship. In the end, Rank appears both eager for, and solicitous of, readers; his ethos is earnest. Readers of the *Annals of Iowa* may wish to give *How Iowa Conquered the World* a try.

Natives of a Dry Place: Stories of Dakota before the Oil Boom, by Richard Edwards. Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2015. xvi, 198 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$16.95 paperback.

Reviewer Paula M. Nelson is professor of history emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. She is the author of *After the West Was Won: Homesteaders and Town-Builders in Western South Dakota, 1900–1917* (1986) and *The Prairie Windows Out Its Own: The West River Country of South Dakota in the Years of Depression and Dust* (1996).

We do not talk much about virtues these days. The word seems old-fashioned, descriptive of the old sexual morality, maybe, but not one for our modern world, so full of transgressive beliefs and behaviors. Along comes Richard Edwards, director of the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, to remind us how just how much virtues matter. He is self-conscious about it, informing readers as he concludes his memoir that he does not see the inculcation and practice of virtues as conservative. That label reminds him of all of the evils of the modern-day political right, which he jabs vigorously in a few discordant lines near the end of his fine book. The lesson most readers will learn here is that teaching and practicing virtues is an excellent way to support a functional society. The people whose stories Edwards tells are an object lesson in their value.

Richard Edwards's grandparents homesteaded in Mountrail County, North Dakota, shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. His parents moved into Stanley, the county seat, where he was born and lived until age 12, when the family moved to Massachusetts. Although he left

Stanley in 1956, Edwards returned on occasion to visit and maintained ties with relatives in North Dakota. To research the book, he did a number of oral history interviews, checked the local newspapers and histories, and plumbed his memory and the memories of others for stories of his home town. *Natives of a Dry Place* is the result, a memoir that tells the story of town and county residents in an interesting way.

After explaining how the oil boom of recent years has pulled at the fabric of society and changed the landscape in troubling ways, Edwards lays out the design of his book: he will tell stories of local people who represented the virtues that are so vital to their society. Edwards understands that Stanley's people "cultivated a distinctive way of thinking about the world and how an upstanding person ought to behave, a set of values or character traits or habits of mind," that is, virtues (24). People in other places had them, too, Edwards says, especially on the northern Great Plains. Virtues he highlights include resoluteness, steadfastness, devotion to community, pluck, commitment, optimism, a spirit of adventure, and modesty. Each virtue has its own story, each one highly engaging and readable. Resoluteness tells of the death of Tom Scrivner in 1923 and the men who tried to rescue him without thought of themselves from a deep, dry well left behind on the prairie when the original landowner moved away. Steadfastness is the story of his father, "a necessary man" (45) — rural mail carrier, town fix-it man, pillar of the community. Pluck tells the story of Edwards's much older sisters, who moved to Portland, Oregon, during World War II, to be welders in the shipyards. Each chapter has depth and complexity. Edwards's father was not a good family man at first but he grew into it. Tom Scrivner may have been pushed into that well by angry young Finns, who resented his dalliance with a young Finnish girl, whom he married when she became pregnant. No one in this book is perfect. Many human foibles are on display, but virtue shines through.

Natives of a Dry Place is well written, heartfelt, and thought provoking. Those who grew up in small towns in the Midwest or on the Great Plains may find much to relate to. Those who want to understand the values that shaped rural society in the past and that remain present today, even in the face of demographic change, decline, or displacement, will learn much from this book.

Myths of the Rune Stone: Viking Martyrs and the Birthplace of America, by David M. Krueger. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. x, 213 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$130.99 hardcover; \$36.99 paperback.

Reviewer Kristin Elmquist teaches history at Park Center Senior High School in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota. She holds an M.A. in cultural anthropology specializing in immigration history at New York University.

Myths of the Rune Stone is the latest contribution to a long discussion of a curious event that occurred in rural Minnesota at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1898 a Swedish immigrant farmer named Olof Ohman claimed to have unearthed a stone near Alexandria, Minnesota, that was inscribed with ancient runic characters that told a strange story. According to the translated runic characters on the stone, in 1362 Viking warriors were present in the area and were attacked by "skraelings"; they left an inscription on the stone in memory of their dead. Ever since, scores of Minnesotans have taken sides in the debate over the authenticity of the stone and the possibility of a Viking trip to the heart of Minnesota—an area thickly populated with Swedish and Norwegian immigrants by the 1890s when the stone was found.

Religious studies scholar David M. Krueger dives into the Kensington rune stone story, not to address the familiar arguments about the stone's veracity but to analyze the significance of the intense interest in the stone from its "discovery" until the present. He exhaustively examined archival texts, published books, and accounts of rune stone-related events, and analyzes those events as "rituals" performed for "civil religious" purposes to meet the needs of different populations.

Krueger focuses on different themes for different eras of the rune stone story. The earliest phase focused on immigrant communities' sense of belonging, particularly in the context of the 1862 Dakota War in western Minnesota. Krueger examines the alleged deaths chronicled on the stone as a "blood sacrifice myth," absolving immigrant communities of guilt for displacing the earlier residents of the area. In this way, the indigenous population was scapegoated in the conflict over territory. Krueger interprets interest in the stone in the 1920s up through the 1948 display of the rune stone at the Smithsonian in the context of rural vs. urban, immigrant vs. "American," and intellectual vs. common-sense struggles in the definition of American identity and values. He argues that the rune stone played a role in religious debates between Catholics and Protestants in the 1950s; the stone could be seen as "proof" of Catholic patriotism, because the pre-Reformation Christian Vikings who allegedly came to the middle of the North American continent would necessarily have been Catholic. He goes on to situate later public rituals involving the rune stone in the Cold War and Vietnam eras, including a National Guard helicopter mission to locate evidence of an ancient Viking settlement—what Krueger terms the "re-taking of rune stone hill." Krueger speculates on what new narratives await

the rune stone story, particularly in the face of renewed immigration to Minnesota from other parts of the world and new communities competing for Minnesotan—and American—identities.

This is an excellent contribution to the long history of rune stone discourse. Krueger's disciplinary background brings a fresh and potent perspective to the subject. Scholarly in his approach and format, Krueger supports his ideas with deep knowledge of rune stone texts, events, pageants, comic books, and speeches and the views of both prominent supporters and detractors. In addition to its local interest, the book will be fascinating for anyone exploring how civic myths are constructed, and in this case how a region can appropriate civil religious ideas for its own purposes and to help construct its own identity by reimagining its history, creating its own rituals, and defining itself against other groups in a national context. Krueger's study makes a valuable contribution to regional and immigration history and elucidates the role that civil religious rituals play in defining a community's identity.

Barnstorming the Prairies: How Aerial Vision Shaped the Midwest, by Jason Weems. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. xxvi, 340 pp. Illustrations (some in color), notes, bibliography, index. \$122.50 hardcover, \$35.00 paperback.

Reviewer Jane Simonsen is associate professor of history at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. She is the author of "On Level Ground: Alexander Gardner's Photographs of the Kansas Prairies" in *Recovering the Prairies* (1999).

Barnstorming the Prairies makes the Midwest's dubious reputation as "flyover country" worth a double-take. In this image-rich investigation of prairie landscapes, aerial views become the defining angle of a modern perspective that shaped agricultural policy, regional art, and architectural innovation in the first decades of the twentieth century. Earlier midwesterners primarily experienced the landscape as horizontal, but the prospects enabled by flight shifted their visual axis to the vertical, reorienting ocular perceptions of "progress." Weems's study performs a similar function, creating a fresh take on visual studies of midwestern landscapes by ascending to the aerial.

Elevated prospects were not an entirely modern invention. Bird's-eye views date back to the Renaissance and were a common way to represent the expansionist's romance of distance. Gridded landscapes—emphasizing equality, control, and individual opportunity—operated in conjunction with other methods of spatial understanding, including topographical maps, farmstead lithographs, and citizens' profiles. Agricultural crises during the interwar years made this idealism untenable

just as flight enabled new prospects. Aerial surveys, especially those made by the government, became directives validating the need for new forms of federal management, in part by convincing farmers of the limitations of their earthbound perspectives.

The final two chapters are devoted to Grant Wood and Frank Lloyd Wright, arguing that airborne prospects influenced their artistry in complex ways. Wood's work as a wartime camouflage artist evolved into aerial/terrestrial tensions that are essential to the ambivalent renderings of past and present, modern and nostalgic, yeoman and capitalist, that characterize Wood's paintings. Wright, known for his horizontal Prairie Style architecture, nonetheless drew on vertical vision in an attempt to subvert growing disjunctures between urban and rural landscapes. His plan for "Broadacre City" anticipated a midwestern modernity that Weems terms "Jeffersonian urbanism" (218).

As it was for the aerial photographers he studies, Weems's strength is his ability to link seemingly disparate cultural elements into a unified whole that unsettles familiar perspectives. Alfred Andreas's 1875 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa*, which brought together aerial views with town maps and narratives, serves as a touchstone for reading the comprehensive nature of even single photographs. Each of the chapters takes on an oft-studied topic — the magisterial gaze of the grid, Farm Security Administration photographs, Wood, Wright — and locates new "visual homologies" (191) in texts ranging from advertisements to geographic information system readouts that, taken together, attest to the interlocking influences of aerial systems of knowing. For example, although the grid has been studied as a system of control, few scholars have interrogated how the grid operated in conjunction with other nineteenth-century systems of knowing and seeing. Furthermore, Weems traces the elevated view into the twentieth century, exploring its evolution in conjunction with technological, cultural, and political change. Images of comprehensive — and thus abstract — aerial views are deftly linked to farm life photographs to indicate how the magisterial gaze inflected even seemingly domestic visions. A slightly elevated Soil Conservation Service image of a farmer plowing his field becomes evidence of the photographer's intent to "disrupt the expected trajectory of vision" in order to validate modern farming techniques (67).

Weems convincingly argues that the aerial gaze was deeply influential, yet the conflation of *midwesterner*, *farmer*, and *landowner* raises questions about who constructed these views, to whom they were most available, and who was most likely to adopt them as part of their worldview. Weems is successful in divorcing the magisterial gaze from a simple association with power, connecting it, in most cases, to views available

to the masses. Yet the visionaries and viewers Weems investigates are primarily male – from photographers, boosters, mapmakers, and artists to an implied audience of land-owning individuals who bought property, worked with agents, and made decisions. Gender is apparent in some analyses; Weems makes an intriguing connection between a photograph of quilters and the ways that *Life* editors may have imagined resonances between domestic ritual and the “agricultural future” (123). What happens when women claim aerial perspective? Would the perceptions and experiences of women working on farms in the 1930s and 1940s have been affected in the same way by aerial views as men’s were? Perhaps, but that possibility is only hinted at in the conclusion, which begins with a discussion of the “cognitive transformations” intimated by Dorothy’s aerial exodus to the land of Oz in the influential 1939 film (254).

The conclusion, like the rest of the book, opens the door to new interpretations of midwestern landscapes, particularly as they pertain to mass culture. Enthusiasts of visual culture, history, and rural life should welcome this book, which performs significant cultural work itself in re-orienting scholarly views of the Midwest, and is a strong contribution to the current recentering of the Midwest in American culture studies.

Missing Millie Benson: The Secret Case of the Nancy Drew Ghostwriter and Journalist, by Julie K. Rubini. Biographies for Young Readers. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015. viii, 123 pp. Illustrations, sidebars, appendices, notes, bibliography. \$28.95 hardcover, \$14.95 paperback.

Reviewer Michella M. Marino is assistant professor of history at Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska. Her master’s research focused on young girls growing up in the Midwest during the World War II era.

Much like author Julie K. Rubini, as a young girl I, too, was drawn to the yellow-spined mystery novels starring the independent amateur sleuth Nancy Drew. Despite my interest, I never gave much thought to Carolyn Keene, the author of the Nancy Drew books. Had I looked more deeply into Keene’s life, it would not have mattered, because, as Rubini explains, “There is no Carolyn Keene. There never was” (1).

Thus, Rubini establishes a mystery surrounding the original ghostwriter of the series, Millie Benson, and why she only gained authorial recognition after a 1980 court case and a Nancy Drew conference held at the University of Iowa in 1993. Rubini sets up her biography for young readers in the same charming, formulaic manner as the Nancy Drew books, right down to her use of “holding points,” the concluding hook at the end of each chapter that compels readers to turn the page.

Rubini chronologically details the personal life of Mildred (Millie) Augustine Wirt Benson while also highlighting relevant Iowa history until roughly 1940, when Benson relocated to Ohio. Readers get a glimpse into early twentieth-century small-town life in Ladora, Iowa, before witnessing the growth of the University of Iowa campus and its academic programs in the early 1920s. Rubini explores Benson's development as a journalist and writer from a young girl growing up in Iowa through her time at the University of Iowa, which helped prepare her to ghostwrite for the Stratemeyer Syndicate as well as write and publish under her own name. By the mid-1950s, Benson parted ways with the Stratemeyer Syndicate but continued to pursue a career as a journalist, combining her love of travel, flying, and mystery.

Rubini's book is geared for younger readers, but the best part of the book is that Rubini slyly teaches children what scholarly historical research and writing looks like. She splendidly contextualizes changing gender roles, merges national and local history through such topics as the Great Depression, and explains the history of early to mid-twentieth-century writing and publishing. Furthermore, she uses footnotes and a bibliography to showcase an interesting array of primary and secondary sources.

Even though it is intended primarily for young readers, the book still offers much for adults in its insight into book syndicates and in the life story of an under-discussed but important author in children's literature. A few mysteries remain unresolved, however. Readers who are intrigued by passing mention of the "challenging" relationship between Benson and her daughter never learn more about the topic, including what became of Benson's family after her death in 2002. Although Benson seemingly played an integral role in interpreting the Nancy Drew character, Rubini does not analyze Benson's development of Nancy Drew in comparison to the outlines created by the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Doing so would have added depth to Benson's contributions to the legacy of the Nancy Drew character. Still, the secret case of the Nancy Drew ghostwriter is one worth exploring.

Cold War in a Cold Land: Fighting Communism on the Northern Plains, by David W. Mills. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. ix, 300 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Michael S. Mayer is professor of history at the University of Montana. He is the author of *The Eisenhower Years* (2009).

According to David Mills, people in the northern Great Plains states (South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana) "enthusiastically supported

the federal government's effort to combat Soviet communism" (4) during the Cold War in spite of the region's isolationist sentiment during the period between the world wars. Those efforts included programs to combat communist subversion at home and to defend the United States from attack by the Soviet Union. The latter, in particular, affected the northern Great Plains states in the form of nuclear missile sites (which brought economic benefits) and the Ground Observer Corps. People in the northern Great Plains states also participated enthusiastically in religious activities infused with anticommunist messages and in patriotic programs such as the Freedom Train, the Citizens Food Committee, and the Crusade for Freedom.

Yet Mills does not find the permeating collective sense of fear among people in the northern plains states that other historians of the era have described. For example, "people in this region generally did not participate in civil defense measures, demonstrate against military construction projects, or demand anticommunist legislation from their state and local governments" (4). Communist hunting "was not pervasive" on the northern plains (57). Overall, Mills maintains that "citizens on the northern Great Plains often did not see the Cold War as frightening or traumatic but as a source of [economic] opportunity" (237). The dichotomy is a false one; the two perspectives, of course, are not mutually exclusive.

Mills argues that regional authors have treated the northern Great Plains as a colonial economy, which he defines simplistically as "extracting more resources from an area than a controlling interest contributes" (6). At various points, Mills claims either to invalidate or to refine that interpretation. He emphasizes that federal spending exceeded taxation on the northern Great Plains during the Cold War and asserts that the Cold War thus enabled the states of the northern Great Plains "to reverse the trend of colonialism" (236). He acknowledges, however, that such a pattern had begun at least as early as the Great Depression.

Factual errors damage the book's credibility. The Dies Committee did not "cease to exist" during World War II (26). Richard Nixon never chaired the House Committee on Un-American Activities (35). The infamous "spy queen" was Elizabeth Bentley, not "Barkley" (66).

Further, the book displays a less than sure mastery of the period and a lack of reading in the general literature. Important works about the Red Scare and about the Cuban Missile Crisis are missing from Mills's notes and bibliography. Mills's limited and selective reading either accounts for the book's pronounced bias or reflects the author's preconceived notions. Mills tends to cast the role of liberals in the most favorable light possible. With respect to the Red Scare, he tends to excuse liberals and place responsibility exclusively on the political right.

For example, he writes that Truman established the President's Temporary Commission on Employee Loyalty only because he "had to" after the Republican sweep in the elections of 1946 (26) and that the Truman administration initiated the prosecutions of leading members of the Communist Party under the Smith Act in response to Republican charges that Truman was soft on communism (34). In fact, Truman needed no excuse to go after communists or to violate civil liberties in the process. Mills's ideological blinders lead him to miss the significance of important information he uncovers. For example, he quotes Lee Metcalf, a Democratic senator from Montana, to the effect that many members of the John Birch Society in that state were Democrats (56); Mills offers no elaboration or analysis. Similarly, Mills states that Republicans red-baited Mike Mansfield during his bid to unseat a conservative Republican senator, Zales Ecton, in 1952, but Mills ignores the fact that Mansfield engaged in some red-baiting of his own. Regarding other issues, Mills's description of Eisenhower's New Look defense policy on page 116 is a caricature; Eisenhower did not "leave little alternative to nuclear war in dealing with any military crisis." A more sensible account on page 189 still overstates the case. The historical record does not bear out Mills's unequivocal assertion that John F. Kennedy had no idea before he entered the White House that the missile gap was a myth (200).

The book's prose is plodding, tedious, and sometimes ungrammatical. Even aside from factual errors and poor writing, the book has an amateurish quality. For example, Mills reports that Senator Karl Mundt, despite his strained relationship with Dwight D. Eisenhower, asked the president to campaign for him in 1954, but Mills never tells readers whether Eisenhower did so (54). Mills writes that the phrase "in God we trust" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance "at the direction of President Eisenhower" (62); later on the same page he acknowledges that this was done by an act of Congress. In a more serious instance, Mills asserts that an unidentified professor at the University of Montana lost his job after being accused of communist sympathies (40). The footnote cites only a letter to Mundt and admits that no newspaper account confirmed this.

The book adds to the literature on the Cold War some specific information about the domestic Cold War on the northern Great Plains. Perhaps its most significant contribution is the discussion of the Ground Observer Corps. Catherine McNicol Stock's marvelous study of the northern Great Plains during the Great Depression demonstrates that there is much to be learned by studying the region. Mills's book unfortunately falls far short of her example.

Duffy's Iowa Caucus Cartoons: Watch 'Em Run, by Brian Duffy. Iowa and the Midwest Experience Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016. xiv, 172 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$21.00 paperback.

Reviewer Tom Morain is a former administrator of the State Historical Society of Iowa and director of history at Living History Farms in Des Moines. He recently retired as director of government relations at Graceland University but continues as a consultant.

Iowa's Caucus Cartoons is to political junkies what a high school yearbook is to a 50-year class reunion. Flipping the pages, one sees whimsical caricatures of the famous and the wannabees that resurrect long-dormant memories. A yearbook makes no attempt to analyze the educational attainments of the innocent faces staring back from the pages. Nor does Duffy make a similar effort. Yet they both start the wheels turning for those who lived, and sometimes endured, the intense battle for a very small sample of Iowa voters.

Political cartoons both as an art form and as political commentary require some common ground between cartoonist and reader. First, readers need to have some degree of familiarity with the subject material, whether issues or politicians. There has to be at least some fundamental understanding of whom or what the cartoon is about. Neither a caricature nor a spoof works unless one understands the real thing. Fortunately, Brian Duffy had a perfect audience for his artistic commentaries. Readers of the *Des Moines Register* are inundated every four years (for what often seems like the entire four years) with presidential hopefuls testing the waters of the Iowa caucuses. Other areas of the country may not be paying attention to issues or even to who is running within five days after the midterm elections, but Iowa readers do or will soon learn to.

Watch 'Em Run is a primer on U.S. presidential politics dating back to 1972. A foreword by David Yepsen, the *Register's* former chief political reporter, provides a brief background on how the Iowa caucuses rose to such importance in the early 1970s and how the two political parties partnered to enhance their significance. Duffy himself provides an explanation of the process of selecting delegates to the party's national convention and the logistical differences between the Republican and Democratic processes.

Duffy moves chronologically through the campaigns. His sketches include snapshots of very early days in the campaigns when many a politician held an inflated vision of their appeal beyond their loyal followers. The cartoons are familiar, dredging up memories buried under candidate foibles and election night details after the shouting had left Iowa. Dick Gephardt, Elizabeth Dole, Steve Forbes, Pat Buchanan,

Howard Dean? They all had their moments in the Iowa sun (at least the Iowa January sun), but who remembers them now?

Political caricature is an art. Duffy manages to exaggerate some physical characteristic and make it forever the candidate's distinguishing feature. Jimmy Carter has an enormous toothy smile. George W. Bush sports pointy ears. Michael Dukakis has heavy dark eyebrows. Duffy claims that John Glenn was the hardest candidate to draw, but fortunately he could put him in an astronaut's suit. It is worth noting that Duffy's depictions are not cruel. They may not be how the candidate would choose to be presented—Governor Terry Branstad is characteristically short—but they never highlight a disability or a serious embarrassment.

There is no doubt that visuals carry a punch that is hard to achieve in words. They often crystallize what readers are already thinking. In 1988 the seven Democratic candidates became Duffy's "seven dwarfs," none of whom had much stature overall or even in comparison with the others. Gary Hart's sexual misadventures earned him a new dwarf handle, "Sleazy."

Older political junkies will love the book. Regardless of what happened to their candidates in the caucuses or on election night, Duffy's cartoons bring back the opening minutes of an exciting game.

Railroaders without Borders: A History of the Railroad Development Corporation, by H. Roger Grant. Railroads Past & Present. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. xii, 234 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

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

H. Roger Grant is one of America's most able and prolific railroad historians, having authored more than 30 books on the subject. He adds to that reputation in this volume while moving in a fresh direction. Rather than elaborate on the history of bygone carriers, as he has frequently done, his topic is the history of an existing, tight-knit enterprise that invests in and manages shortline and regional railroads in need of rejuvenation: the Railroad Development Corporation (RDC). Founded in 1987 by Henry Posner III, RDC mirrors his global vision, operating railroads on four continents. Grant undertook this study at Posner's request, but he recounts failures as well as victories and scrupulously documents his analysis, drawing on a wide variety of print sources—newspapers, industry publications, books, articles, and materials in RDC's superb archives—and on numerous interviews with key actors. A seasoned

writer, Grant weaves together an absorbing narrative about this “small, imaginative, honest, and socially conscious” company (xi) and the railroaders who constitute it.

Posner ardently embraces free enterprise while deeming himself “a capitalist with a conscience” (x). His firm’s mission is to save railroads and produce profits while respecting the public interest and local cultures. Reasoning that reinvigorated railroads will stimulate local economies, Posner further believes that management must remain sensitive to the societies within which it operates. Given RDC’s involvement in emerging markets beyond American borders (thus the title of this volume), the humanitarian element is particularly meaningful. Grant examines RDC’s efforts to achieve these objectives and uses historical context expertly to frame his narrative.

The book consists of five chapters: the initial two explore activities within the United States; the next three portray RDC’s efforts elsewhere. Readers of the *Annals of Iowa* will find the second chapter especially absorbing. The longest chapter, it investigates RDC’s first triumph: restoring the Iowa Interstate Railroad (IAIS) to sound operational and fiscal health. As he does for each railroad, Grant recounts in detail the evolution of IAIS, beginning with the rise and demise of its predecessor, the Rock Island. After futile efforts to revive an east-west line across Iowa, prospects brightened in 1991 when RDC entered the picture. Posner’s firm created an effective, modern railroad, applying critical lessons learned from earlier defeat. Good timing, or good fortune, enhanced its endeavors. A decade earlier, for instance, the Staggers Act had transformed railroad-government relations from contentious to more supportive, subsequently enabling beneficial federal loans to IAIS. A meteoric rise in ethanol production, meanwhile, occurred *after* RDC gained control of IAIS, enhancing the railroad’s bottom line but not influencing the purchase price. As Posner remarked, sometimes it is “better to be lucky than good” (84), adding that IAIS was both. Grant agrees but asserts that success was due fundamentally to RDC’s insistence on capable personnel, excellent customer and labor relations, improved safety, and sound finances. Today, IAIS remains “the jewel in [RDC’s] crown” (208).

Not all attempts, however, were unequivocally fruitful. Despite resolute efforts, Posner’s team had failed in its earlier endeavor to purchase the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad. Although the IAIS success soon followed, Posner decided that future opportunities were more promising abroad, so he began to concentrate on recently privatized railroads located in “Emerging [Transportation] Corridors in Emerging Markets” (99). The final three chapters demonstrate the variability of those outcomes. Chapter three unravels the complicated histories of RDC efforts

to surmount challenges in Argentina, Guatemala, and Peru. The firm remained committed to social awareness, sometimes through philanthropy, but the ventures were not always financially rewarding. Similarly, chapter four examines RDC's management of a railroad connecting Malawi and Mozambique in 1990s Africa and another in post-Soviet Estonia. Notwithstanding exasperating political instability, those projects were profitable although they did not fulfil their promise. The closing chapter examines "New Involvements," featuring investments in Colombia, Germany, France, and (surprisingly) Pennsylvania. The last, a bus service, collapsed; the jury is still out on the other three as regards their profitability. Yet Grant justly concludes that RDC has experienced overall success while remaining attentive to Posner's goal of social responsibility.

Grant obviously admires Posner and the RDC's goals, business practices, and achievements. He nonetheless exhibits a fair-minded assessment of the outcomes in each chapter. This book will undoubtedly appeal to readers interested in railroads but also to anyone intrigued by the study of business. Outstanding photographs and maps add visual interest. Overall, the author's wide-ranging research, extensive command of railroad history, and clear expression make this volume a pleasure to recommend.

Polka Heartland: Why The Midwest Loves to Polka, text by Rick March, photos by Dick Blau. Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015. 200 pp. Illustrations (mostly color), bibliography and discography, notes, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Kenneth J. Bindas is professor of history at Kent State University. He is the author of *Swing, That Modern Sound: The Cultural Context of Swing Music in America, 1935-1947* (2001) and *All of This Music Belongs to the Nation: The WPA's Federal Music Project and American Society, 1935-1939* (1996).

Rick March takes us through the small towns of Wisconsin to outline the continuing attraction polka music still holds for many people. Supplemented by excellent photographs by Dick Blau, *Polka Heartland* is a personal and heartfelt look at this interesting and unique popular music. March is a longtime folklorist, polka enthusiast, and musician, so his analysis is not very critical, but that is not the point of the book. What he and Blau set out to do with words and pictures is to detail how this music remains an active part of many people's lives and, with that, the historical factors that led to it coming to the Midwest and why it still remains a part of many small-town celebrations.

Jazz is generally seen as America's unique contribution to music, not simply for its longevity, innovation, or even popularity, but because

it came from the bottom up, blended a variety of musical genres, and eventually came to include every race, gender, and ethnicity. But well into the first third of the last century it was not certain that this African American contribution would hold the mantle of America's music as there were many other ethnic and regional competitors. As March makes plain, polka was favored by a large number of people throughout the Midwest, in urban areas like Cleveland, Chicago, and Milwaukee as well as in rural areas stretching from Mexico to Canada. Polka shared with jazz the blending of various sounds, working-class roots, and an upbeat performance aesthetic.

This book is about community and the integral role polka plays in maintaining a midwestern sense of identity. March and Blau guide readers through the various polka styles played throughout Wisconsin. German, Slovene, Bohemian, Polish, and Slavic immigrants who came to the upper Midwest made this music a "symbol . . . denoting regional identity" (53). Traveling to small-town polka festivals and clubs, March introduces us to the people and music of those who favor the concertina over the accordion, Bohemian over Dutchman, and the definitional characteristics of Slovenian and Mexican polka music. March also introduces some of the key innovators of the music, like Romy Gosz, Barefoot Becky Livermore, Eddie Blazonczyk, and of course the king of polka, Frankie Yankovic, who played the Slovene style. Even though Yankovic grew up in Cleveland (making it one of the leading polka centers), his national popularity beginning in 1947 and carrying over until his death in 1998 resonated with the people of Wisconsin, making him a Badger by association. He influenced several generations of Wisconsin polka musicians and was a wonderful ambassador for the music.

March and Blau guide readers on a tour of polka music in Wisconsin. By doing so, they provide an entrance into communities. Whether it be the Pulaski Polka Days or the Las Vegas Latin Night Club, one gets a sense from reading this book that polka plays a vital role in the lives and identity of these communities. The photos, except for a few, reveal that many of the patrons are elderly, and often the crowds are sparse. However, the enthusiasm for the music, and the recent attraction by a younger audience, suggest that the music is evolving yet again. Marion Jacobson's history of the accordion, *Squeeze This* (2012), outlines a similar trajectory, suggesting that polka and its instrumentation are attracting newer and younger fans and musicians. As a music that seems to define the Midwest, this is welcome news as its resurgence will allow the region to retain a connection to its ethnic and class identity while at the same time basking in the nostalgic glow of a time when polka ruled.

Index to Volume 75

- Across the Deep Blue Sea: The Saga of Early Norwegian Immigrants*, reviewed, 75–77
- Addams, Jane, 258
- African Americans, 2, 3, 42–45, 56–57, 156–57, 249
- Agent of Mercy: The Untold Story of Dr. Archibald S. Maxwell, Civil War Surgeon and Iowa State Sanitary Agent*, reviewed, 173–75
- Agricultural workers, 1–2, 5–6, 13–15, 17, 20, 29, 145; photo of, 13
- Aguirre, Benita, 42
- Alex, Lynn M. *See* Whittaker, William E.
- Aley, Ginette, book review by, 439–41
- Allen, Davy, 111
- Alvarez, Sebastián, 41, 42
- American Beet Sugar Co., photo of, 34
- American Capitals: A Historical Geography*, reviewed, 83–85
- American Organic: A Cultural History of Farming, Gardening, Shopping, and Eating*, reviewed, 279–81
- American Protective Association, 244–45
- Ames, Iowa, 101–29
- Ames & College Railway, 101–29; photos of, 107, 112, Spring cover
- Ames Forester*, 382, 383
- Amish, 50, 52–54
- An Agrarian Republic: Farming, Antislavery Politics, and Nature Parks in the Civil War Era*, reviewed, 169–71
- Anderson, Douglas Firth, book review by, 85–87
- Anderson-Bricker, Kristin, book review by, 93–95
- Anschutz, Philip F., book by, reviewed, 444–46
- Anti-Semitism, 245–46
- Apps, Jerry, book by, reviewed, 269–70
- The Archaeological Guide to Iowa*, reviewed, 164–66
- Army, U.S., 201–33
- Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Co., 6, 25, 26, 27, 40, 42
- Aubrey, Dean, 54
- Bagley, Will. *See* Tate, Michael L.
- Baird, W. H., 25
- Baker, S Zebulon, book review by, 188–90
- Baptist Bible Union, 250
- Barker-Devine, Jenny, article by, 376–405
- Barnstorming the Prairies: How Aerial Vision Shaped the Midwest*, reviewed, 454–56
- Bartley, Bess, 404
- Beardshear, William, 105, 123–24
- Bennett, E. A., 378
- Bennett, Richard E., book review by, 166–68
- Bergan, Bishop Gerald, 235, 236, 241, 242, 254, 258
- Berger, Henry W., book by, reviewed, 183–85
- Beta Theta Phi, 394–95
- Bettendorf, Iowa, 10, 11, 15, 24, 32–33
- Bettendorf Co., 11, 24, 32–33
- Betts, Colin, book review by, 164–66
- Bigelow, Bruce, book review by, 171–72
- Biggs, Douglas, article by, 101–29
- Bigham, Darrel E., book review by, 435–36
- Bindas, Kenneth J., book review by, 463–64
- Birmingham, Robert A., book by, reviewed, 277–78
- Bissel, Daniel, 216–18, 221, 222, 224, 226–27, 229–30
- Black Hawk, 61–70, 203, 209, 211, 213, 223, 224; portrait of, 67, 204

- Black Hawk and the Battle for the Heart of America*, reviewed, 65–66
 “Black Hawk and the Historians: A Review Essay,” 61–70
Black Hawk and the War of 1832: Removal in the North, reviewed, 66–68
 Black Hawk War, 61–70, 232
The Black Hawk War of 1832, reviewed, 68–69
 Blau, Dick. *See* March, Rick
 Blondeau, Maurice, 228
 Bly, Nellie, 407–8
 Boardinghouses: college, 105; immigrant, 17
 Boilvin, Nicolas, 207, 228
Bomb (Iowa State College yearbook), 382, 384
 Bonfils, Winifred Black, 408
Booming from the Mists of Nowhere: The Story of the Greater Prairie-Chicken, reviewed, 428–29
 Bouvier, Butch, book by, reviewed, 433
 Bowes, John P.: book by, reviewed, 66–68; book review by, 260–62
 Bramhall, James, 119
 Breckenridge, Ona May, 136
 Bremer, Jeff, book review by, 268–69
Brigham Young: Sovereign in America, reviewed, 166–68
 British, 203–5, 212–14, 217, 219–21, 223, 228, 230, 232
 Brotherhood Trio, 234–59; photo of, 255
Brown Water: A Narrative of My Personal Journey in the Wake of Lewis and Clark, reviewed, 433
 Brown, Frank, 119, 120
 Brown, Nicholas A., and Sarah E. Kanouse, book by, reviewed, 71–73
 Buchanan, Robert E., 385
 Buckley, Arthur, 119
 Buckley, Jay H., book by, reviewed, 64
 Buechsel, Mark, book by, reviewed, 89–91
 Buxton, Iowa, 56–58
 Byrne, Kevin, book review by, 461–63
 Caddock, Earl, 415–16
 Callanan, Martha, 352
 Camp Dodge, 412–16; photos of, 413, 415
 Campney, Brent M. S., book by, reviewed, 441–43
Campus Beautiful: Shaping the Aesthetic Identity of Iowa State University, reviewed, 272–73
 Cardinal Guild, 382, 388, 398
Carnival in the Countryside: The History of the Iowa State Fair, reviewed, 81–83
 Cather, Willa, 410
 Catholics, Roman, 236, 240–43, 245, 250
 Catlin, George, 229
 Catt, Carrie Chapman, 367
 Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 244
Cedar Rapids Gazette, 422–24
 Chamber of Commerce, Des Moines, 419
 Chapman, Mike, book by, reviewed, 281–83
 Chase, Hal S., book review by, 180–81
 Child development, 420
 Child welfare reform, 133, 158
 Child Welfare Research Station, Iowa, 139–41, 152, 158, 162
 Children and youth, 130–63
 Children and Youth: Iowa Commission on, 136–54, 159; National Committee on, 134–36
 Children in a Democracy, Conference on (1940), 132, 143
 Children’s Bureau, U.S., 133, 135, 142
 Ching, Barbara, book review by, 276–77
 Church Women United, 246
Civil War Nurse Narratives, 1863–1870, reviewed, 438–39
 Clark, William, 212, 219, 227, 231
 Clinchy, Everett, 251–52
 Coal mining, 54–56
 Cochrane, Elizabeth, 407–8
 Coggeshall, Mary, 374–75; photo of, 375
 Cold War, 132, 133, 160–63, 257
Cold War in a Cold Land: Fighting Communism on the Northern Plains, reviewed, 457–59

- Collette, Ralph, 112–13
A Complex Fate: William L. Shirer and the American Century, reviewed, 192–93
- Congregationalists, 236, 239–40, 249
- Constructing a Legacy: The Weitz Company and the Family Who Built It*, reviewed, 446–48
- Cook's Point (Davenport), 11, 32–33
- Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University, 58
- Corn Poll: A Novel of the Iowa Caucuses*, reviewed, 283–84
- Correctional facilities, 150–51, 159
- Coughlin, Father Charles, 245–46
- Council Bluffs, Iowa, 10, 15, 16, 29
- Council of Churches: Federal, 251; Greater Des Moines, 246
- Courtship, 389, 390, 399
- Cox, John, 225
- The Crops Look Good: News from a Midwestern Family Farm*, reviewed, 95–96
- "Cultivating Healthy Personalities: Iowa and the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth," 130–63
- Curtis, Charlotte, 425
- Curtiss, Charles F., 389, 394–95
- Curtiss, Edith, 389
- Cuthbertson, Ken, book by, reviewed, 192–93
- Daniels, Norma, 383–84
- Daughters of the American Revolution, 233
- Davenport, Iowa, 10, 11, 15, 17, 32–33
- Davidson, Charles, 119
- Davis, Allison, 157
- de Boer, Louis, 152
- de la Garza, Mary C. *See* Whittaker, William E.
- Dean, Adam Wesley, book by, reviewed, 169–71
- Dean, Thomas K., book review by, 89–91
- Dearborn, Henry, 206, 218
- Death and Dying in the Working Class, 1865–1920*, reviewed, 182–83
- Decorah, Iowa, 372
- Defining Duty in the Civil War: Personal Choice, Popular Culture, and the Union Home Front*, reviewed, 77–78
- DeGard, Katy, 55
- Degrees of Freedom: The Origins of Civil Rights in Minnesota, 1865–1912*, reviewed, 177–79
- DeLuca, Sara, book by, reviewed, 95–96
- Democratic Art: The New Deal's Influence on American Culture*, reviewed, 91–93
- Denial, Catherine J., book review by, 429–31
- DePauw University, 379
- Depression, Great, 15, 46
- Des Moines, Iowa, 10, 15, 16, 28, 235–42, 245–54, 352, 353, 411–18
- Des Moines Brotherhood Trio, 234–59; photo of, 255
- Des Moines Capital*, 406, 407, 411–18
- Des Moines Daily News*, 411
- Des Moines Messenger*, 240
- Des Moines Register*, 379, 412, 418
- Des Moines Round Table of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 236, 253, 257, 258
- Des Moines University, 250
- Díaz, Gregorio, photo of, 44
- Dickson, Robert, 228, 230
- Dilly, Barbara J., book review by, 279–81
- Dinkey (railway), 101–29; photos of, 107, 112
- Domestic labor, 17, 19
- Donley, Mary, 360
- Douglas, Bill R.: article by, 234–59; book reviews by, 87–89, 190–92
- Dowling Academy, Des Moines, 236, 240, 242
- Drake University, 252
- Dubuque's Mines, 221
- Duffy, Brian, book by, reviewed, 460–61
- Duffy, Mrs. W. E., 29
- Duffy's Iowa Caucus Cartoons: Watch 'Em Run*, reviewed, 460–61
- Durant News*, 410

- Edson, George T., 1-2, 9-10, 26, 36-37, 43
Educating Milwaukee: How One City's History of Segregation and Struggle Shaped Its Schools, reviewed, 194-96
 Education, 148, 380-81
 Edwards, Richard, book by, reviewed, 451-52
 El Cometa (Fort Madison), 9, 11
 El Istafiate (Fort Madison), 40
El Trabajo (Davenport), 31
 Elder, Donald C., III, book review by, 175-77
 Eldora State Training School for Boys, 151, 159
 Elmquist, Kristin, book review by, 452-54
Emerald Goose, 376-405
Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and the West, reviewed, 439-41
Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country, reviewed, 262-64
Equal Before the Law: How Iowa Led Americans to Marriage Equality, reviewed, 98-100
 Equal Suffrage Association: Decora, 372; Iowa, 367, 374
 Ernst, Kathleen, book by, reviewed, 268-69
 Eustis, William, 216-17, 226
 Ewing, Oscar R., 135, 155, 161
- Factories (trading posts), 205-6, 209, 215
 Farm women, 351-75
 Farm work, 361-63
 Ferber, Edna, 245, 410
 Ferguson, Gillum, book by, reviewed, 266-68
 Finnegan, Cara A., book by, reviewed, 79-81
 Flanders, Judith, book by, reviewed, 274-75
 Foley, William, book by, reviewed, 63
 Fort Belle Fontaine, 205-6, 216, 222, 231
 Fort Clark, 231
 Fort Dearborn, 220, 222
 Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railway, 126-27
 Fort Mackinac, 220, 222, 232
 Fort Madison, 201-33; illustrations of, 208, 210, 226, Summer cover
 Fort Madison, Iowa, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 26, 27, 28, 29, 40-45
 Fort Mason, 222, 230
 Fort Massac, 222
 Fort Osage, 206, 222, 226, 229, 230
 Fort Shelby, 232
 Foster, J. Ellen, 158
 Foster, O. D., 239
 Fox Indians. *See* Meskwaki
 Foxwell, Mary Grace. *See* Guebert, Alan
 Fraternities, 376, 379, 386, 394, 397, 398, 400, 402
 French, Frank, 112
 Friedrichs, William B., book by, reviewed, 446-48
 "From Sob Sister to Society Editor: The Storied Career of Dorothy Ashby Pownall," 406-27
 Fry, Norman, book review by, 433
- Gallman, J. Matthew, book by, reviewed, 77-78
 García, George, 33
 García, Inés, 9, 17, 41
 Gardens, 18, 20
George Washington Carver: A Life, reviewed, 180-81
 Gibbs, Eva, 39
 Gillis, Christopher C., book by, reviewed, 448-49
 Glaspell, Susan, 410, 411
 Glasser, Melvyn, 155
 Gloege, Timothy E. W., book by, reviewed, 87-89
Good Housekeeping, 422
 Goodwill Team, 234-59; photo of, 255
 Grant, H. Roger, book by, reviewed, 461-63
Great Lakes Creoles: A French-Indian Community on the Northern Borderlands, Prairie Du Chien, 1750-1860, reviewed, 264-66
The Great Medicine Road, Part 2, Narratives of the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails, 1849, reviewed, 168-69

- Great Western Sugar Co., 5
 Greek Americans, 35–37
 Greeley, Wallace, 121
 Green, Sharony, book by, reviewed, 435–36
 Green, William D., books by, reviewed, 177–79
Green Gander, 376, 386, 387, 389, 390, 397–98, 402
 Greene, C. George, 118
 Grieve, Victoria M., book review by, 91–93
 Griffin, Marjorie, 403
 Grinnell College, 240
 Grossnickle-Batterton, Stephanie, article by, 351–75
Guaranteed Pure: The Moody Bible Institute, Business, and the Making of Modern Evangelicalism, reviewed, 87–89
 Gubbels, Thomas J., book review by, 183–85
 Guebert, Alan, with Mary Grace Foxwell, book by, reviewed, 194
 Guerra, Flora, 34

 Haldy, Lanny, book review by, 73–75
 Hall, John W., book by, reviewed, 69–70
 Hamilton, Thomas, 216, 222–31
 Hansen, Marc. See Witosky, Tom
 Hanson, Howland, 248
 Harling, Icey Teel, 410
 Harper, Harry, 43
 Harrison, William Henry, 219, 231
 Hawk, Tura, 383
 Hayes, Kevin J., book by, reviewed, 186–88
 Hazing, 388
 Health care, 147–48
 Hernández, Cesario, 8
 Hernández, Walter, 33
 Hettle, Wallace, book review by, 77–78
 Hidalgo, Lorenzo, 33
 Hillis, Cora Bussey, 140
 Hillman, John L., 248
 Hoch, Greg, book by, reviewed, 428–29
 Ho-Chunk Indians, 202, 213, 214, 221–25, 228, 232, 233

 Hoehnle, Peter A., book edited by, reviewed, 73–75
 Hoffmann, Msgr. M. M., 251
 Holy City (Bettendorf), 11, 24, 32–33
 House, James, 212
 Housing, for Mexican immigrants, 11, 24, 32–34
How Iowa Conquered the World: The Story of a Small Farm State's Journey to Global Dominance, reviewed, 449–51
 Howard, Benjamin, Territorial Governor, 222, 227, 230, 231
 Hubbard, Charles M., book edited by, reviewed, 437
 Hull, William, 221
 Hultz, Gladys M., 384
 Humor magazines, 376–405
 Hunt, George, 211, 216, 221
 Hunt, Thomas, 206

 Idleman, Finis, 248
Illinois in the War of 1812, reviewed, 266–68
 Immer, Esther, 136, 137, 138, 141, 143, 153
 Immigrants and immigration: Mexican, 1–47; Greek, 35–37; Italian, 35–37
 Immigration Act of 1917, 13
 Indians, American, 201–14, 219–33
Inherit the Holy Mountain: Religion and the Rise of American Environmentalism, reviewed, 190–92
Inspiration and Innovation: Religion in the American West, reviewed, 85–87
The Inspirationists, 1714–1932, reviewed, 73–75
 Intermarriage, racial and ethnic, 38, 42–45
Iowa Agriculturalist, 382, 383
 Iowa City, 406, 420–27
Iowa City Press-Citizen, 406–7, 424–26
Iowa Engineer, 382, 383
Iowa Homemaker, 402
 Iowa State College. See Iowa State University
 Iowa State Fair, 152, 368
Iowa State Student, 376, 382, 384, 385
 Iowa State University, 47–60, 101–29, 376–405

- Iowa Writers' Workshop, 422
Iowa's Record Setting Governor: The Terry Branstad Story, reviewed, 281-83
 Ioway Indians, 211
 "'It All Started with the Amish': Reflections on a Career in Iowa History," 47-60
 Italian Americans, 35-37
- Jack, Zachary Michael: book by, reviewed, 283-84; book review by, 449-51
 James, Leonard, 221
 Jarnagin, Bill, 411-12
 Jarrot, Nicholas, 211
 Jay's Treaty (1794), 203
 Jefferson, Thomas, 203
 Jessup, Walter, 237
 Jewish Federation of Des Moines, 236
 Jews, 236-39, 245
 Johnson, John (factor), 207, 215, 221
 Johnson, John W., book review by, 98-100
 Johnson, Willard, 234, 235, 253-58; photo of, 255
 Jones, Landon Y., book by, reviewed, 63-64
 Jorsch, Thomas F., book review by, 182-83
 Journalism, 351-427
 Julien, Denis, 216
 Jung, Patrick J.: article by, 201-33; book by, reviewed, 68-69; book review by, 266-68
 Juvenile delinquency, 148-51
- Kane, Frank, 379
 Kanouse, Sarah E. See Brown, Nicholas A.
 Kerstetter, Todd M., book by, reviewed, 85-87
 King, Charles Bird, portrait of Black Hawk by, 67, 204
 Kingsley, Alpha, 207-12, 218, 219
 Kirby, J. Edward, 248
 Know Nothings, 244
 Korean conflict, 160
 Krueger, David M., book by, reviewed, 452-54
 Krugler, John D., book review by, 185-86
 Ku Klux Klan, 59, 245, 252
- La Yarda (Fort Madison), 40
 Labor, U.S. Department of, 1-2, 9-10, 13, 22-23, 26
Ladies' Home Journal, 407, 422
 Lampe, Willard, 237
The Land of Milk and Uncle Honey: Memories from the Farm of My Youth, reviewed, 194
 Lane, Rev. Stoddard, 234, 235, 236, 239-40, 252-58; photos of, 239, 255
 Lange, Frank, 117
 "'The Laughing Rolling Stock of the State': The Ames & College Railway, 1902-1907," 101-29
 Laurie, Annie, 408
 Lawrence College, 411
 Lazon, Everett, 251-52
 Leamer, A. B., 248
 Lehigh Portland Cement Co., 8, 24, 34; photo of, 35
 Lehigh Row (Mason City), 8, 33-37
 Lehman, Tim, book review by, 169-71
 Lenox, Iowa, 242
 Lenroot, Katherine, 135-36
 Leu, Peggy Ann, 156
 Lewis, Marion, 401
 Lewis, Meriwether, 206, 218
 Library, Des Moines Public, 247
Lincoln and the Immigrant, reviewed, 171-72
Lincoln, the Law, and Presidential Leadership, reviewed, 437
 Linebaugh, F. W., 120
 "'Lock the Granary, Peggy': Rhetorical Appeals to Rural Women in the *Woman's Standard*, 1886-1911, 351-75
 Loew, Patty, book by, reviewed, 96-98
 Logsdon, Elvie N., 372
 "Lonely Sentinel: A Military History of Fort Madison, 1808-1813," 201-33
 Loras College, 240
 Loring, Homer, 126
 Louisiana Purchase, 202-3
 Lovoll, Odd S., book by, reviewed, 75-77

- Lowe, Virginia, 404
 Lucander, David, book by, reviewed, 93-95
 Lucht, Tracy, article by, 406-27
 Lutherans, 243
 Lyftogt, Kenneth L., book review by, 173-75
- Madison, James, 209, 228
 Magazines, humor, 376-405
 Mahan, Bruce, 156
 Mahoney, Timothy R., book review by, 83-85
 "Making Iowa Safe for Differences: Barnstorming Iowa on Behalf of Religious Tolerance, 1936-1943," 234-59
The Making of Home: The 500-Year Story of How Our Houses Became Our Homes, reviewed, 274-75
Making Photography Matter: A Viewer's History from the Civil War to the Great Depression, reviewed, 79-81
 Manly, Iowa, 10, 16, 43
 Manners, Mary (Dorothy Ashby Pownall), 422-24
 Mannheimer, Rabbi Eugene, 235-39, 243, 248, 249, 253-58; photos of, 238, 255
 March, Rick, and Dick Blau, book by, reviewed, 463-64
 Margis, Matthew J., book review by, 278-79
 Marino, Michella M., book review by, 456-57
 Marston, Anson, 124-25
 Martin, R. Kent, 161
 Martyn, Marguerite, 410
 Marvin, Merze, 379-80, 401
 Mason, David Vaughn, book by, reviewed, 166-68
 Mason City, Iowa, 1-2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 19, 24, 33-40
Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America, reviewed, 260-62
The Matrix, 380
 Maxwell, George C., book by, reviewed, 173-75
 Mayer, Michael S., book review by, 457-59
- Mayo, Leonard, 135-36
 McCarthy, Con, 418
 McDermott, John D., book by, reviewed, 443-44
 McDewitt, Theresa, book review by, 438-39
 McDonnell, Michael A., book by, reviewed, 260-62
 McElroy, William, 124
 McKerley, John W., book review by, 177-79
 McNamara, Sue, 412
 Meatpacking workers, 16
 Men and Religion Forward Movement, 246
 Mental illness, 358-59
 Mentzer, Phoebe, 384, 403
 Meskwaki Indians, 203, 206, 209, 219, 232
 Mexican Americans, 1-47
 Mexican Revolution, 7
 Midwifery, 19
 Miles, Hollis, 159
 Military history, 201-33
 Miller, Ronald, 151
 Mills, David W., book by, reviewed, 457-59
 Ministerial Alliance, Des Moines, 240
Missing Millie Benson: The Secret Case of the Nancy Drew Ghostwriter and Journalist, reviewed, 456-57
 Mississippi River, 202, 204-7, 209
Moments of Impact: Injury, Racialized Memory, and Reconciliation in College Football, reviewed, 188-90
 Montès, Christian, book by, reviewed, 83-85
 Morain, Tom, book reviews by, 81-83, 460-61
 Mordy, Rev. James, 249
 Morris, Lester, 119, 120
 Morrissey, Robert Michael: book by, reviewed, 262-64; book review by, 264-66
 Mott, Frank Luther, 421
Mr. Jefferson's Hammer: William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy, reviewed, 65
 Murphy, J. T., book reviews by, 168-69, 444-46

- Murphy, Lucy Eldersveld, book by, reviewed, 264-66
- Murray, Leonard C., 142, 147, 149
- Muscatine, Iowa, 16
- Musher, Sharon Ann, book by, reviewed, 91-93
- Muslims, 244
- Myths of the Rune Stone: Viking Martyrs and the Birthplace of America*, reviewed, 452-54
- National Conference of Christians and Jews, 235, 236, 257
- The National Joker: Abraham Lincoln and the Politics of Satire*, reviewed, 270-71
- Native Americans. *See* Indians, American
- Natives of a Dry Place: Stories of Dakota before the Oil Boom*, reviewed, 451-52
- Nelsen, James K., book by, reviewed, 194-96
- Nelson, Paula M., book review by, 451-52
- Neolin, 213
- Newton & Northwestern Railway, 126
- Nichols, Jeff, book review by, 192-93
- Nichols, Roger L., review essay by, 61-70
- Nicholson, Margaret, 364-65
- Nineteenth Amendment, 373
- Nollen, John, 243
- Nunnally, Patrick, book reviews by, 96-98, 433-35
- O'Brien, Harry, 379-80, 402
- O'Donnell, Jodi, book edited by, reviewed, 272-73
- O'Sullivan, Robin, book by, reviewed, 279-81
- Oden, Derek, book review by, 448-49
- Oertel, Kristen Tegtmeier, book review by, 441-43
- Ojemann, Ralph J., 152
- Oklahoma State University, 380
- Olson, Daron W., book review by, 75-77
- Oral history, 53-57
- Out Where the West Begins: Profiles, Visions, and Strategies of Early Western Business Leaders*, reviewed, 444-46
- Owens, Robert M., book by, reviewed, 65
- Page, Robert, 223-24
- Palimpsest*, 426
- Palmer, King, 136
- Parker, Clyde, 155-57, 159
- Pearson, Raymond, 398
- Peck, Louise, 383
- A Peculiar Imbalance: The Fall and Rise of Racial Equality in Minnesota, 1837-1869*, reviewed, 177-79
- Phillips, Emily, 366
- Photoplay Magazine*, 421
- Pike, Zebulon Montgomery, 204
- Pitt, James, 255
- Plummer, Maj. Gen. E. H., 414
- Plymouth Congregational Church, Des Moines, 236, 239, 249
- Polka Heartland: Why The Midwest Loves to Polka*, reviewed, 463-64
- Pontiac, 213
- Potawatomi Indians, 220
- Pownall, Carol, 422
- Pownall, Dorothy Ashby, 406-27; photos of, 413, 415, 421, 426
- Pownall, Fred, 418
- Prado, José, 28
- Prado, Lucy, 41
- Prairie du Chien, 218, 227, 228, 232
- Pritchard, James A., book review by, 428-29
- Prohibition and temperance, 423
- Proper, Katherine, 403
- Property rights, women's, 363-65
- Protestants, 239-40
- Pryor, Nathaniel, 212
- "Racializing Mexican Immigrants in Iowa's Early Mexican Communities," 1-47
- Raeburn, John, book review by, 79-81
- Railroad workers, 5, 9, 15-16, 20, 41
- Railroaders without Borders: A History of the Railroad Development Corporation*, reviewed, 461-63

- Railroads, 101–29
A Rainbow Division Lieutenant in France: The World War I Diary of John H. Taber, reviewed, 278–79
 Rank, Michael, book by, reviewed, 449–51
 Rasmussen, Chris, book by, reviewed, 81–83
 Read, Lizzie, Bunnell, 356–57, 364
Re-Collecting Black Hawk: Landscape, Memory, and Power in the American Midwest, reviewed, 71–73
Red Cloud: Oglala Legend, reviewed, 443–44
 Red Oak, Iowa, 242
 Reform schools, 150–51, 159
 Religion, 422
 Religious tolerance, 234–59
Remember Me to Miss Louisa: Hidden Black-White Intimacies in Antebellum America, reviewed, 435–36
 Rich, Virginia Garberson, 403
 Rieck, Richard. *See* Tate, Michael L.
 Riney-Kehrberg, Pamela: article edited by, 47–60; book reviews by, 95–96, 194, 269–70
 Robinson, Rev. George, 249
 Rockefeller, John D., 238
 Rodriguez, Estefanía Joyce, photo of, 22
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 132, 158
 Rosenow, Michael K., book by, reviewed, 182–83
 Ross, Ishbel, 409, 410
 Ross, John Elliott, 251–52
 Rubini, Julie K., book by, reviewed, 456–57
 Rundell, Walter, 50–51
 Rural women, 351–75
Sacred Land: Sherwood Anderson, Midwestern Modernism, and the Sacramental Vision of Nature, reviewed, 89–91
St. Louis and Empire: 250 Years of Imperial Quest and Urban Crisis, reviewed, 183–85
St. Paul (MN) Daily News, 411–12
 Salazar, Santiago, 27
 Saler, Bethel, book by, reviewed, 429–31
 Samuelson, Agnes, 419
 Sánchez, Magdaleno, 9
The Sand Art Bottles of Andrew Clemens, reviewed, 276–77
 Santa Fe Railroad. *See* Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Co.
Saturday Evening Post, 407, 420
 Saudak, Robert, 156
 Sauk Indians, 202, 203, 205, 206, 209–11, 213, 214, 219, 223, 228, 232, 233
 Saukenuk, 223
 Schaefer, Matthew, book review by, 283–84
 Scharff, Virginia, book edited by, reviewed, 439–41
 Schulman, Edwin L., 378
 Schultz, Jaime, book by, reviewed, 188–90
 Schumaker, Kathryn, book review by, 194–96
 Schwieder, David W., article edited by, 47–60
 Schwieder, Dorothy Hubbard, article by, 47–60; photo of, 50
 Scranton, Harold, 119
 Sears, Robert R., 140–41
 Seashore, Carl, 158
 Secord, Mrs. S. F., 29
 Seeberger, Vernon, 401
 Segregation, racial, 156
The Settlers' Empire: Colonialism and State Formation in America's Old Northwest, reviewed, 429–31
A Settler's Year: Pioneer Life Through the Seasons, reviewed, 268–69
Seventh Generation Earth Ethics: Native Voices of Wisconsin, reviewed, 96–98
 Shattuck, Fredrica, 104, 391, 394
 Shaw, Anna, 367
 Shawnee Prophet. *See* Tenskwatawa
 Sheaffer Pen Co., 44
 Sheldon, Parley, 121
 Shreve, Earl, 119
 Sigma Delta Chi, 376, 379, 386, 397, 398, 402
 Sigma Phi Epsilon, 400
 Silag, Bill, book review by, 446–48
 Silverman, Jason H., book by, reviewed, 171–72
 Simonsen, Jane, book reviews by, 71–73, 454–56

- Simpson, Robert, 216
 Sioux City, Iowa, 10, 16
Skunk Hill: A Native Ceremonial Community in Wisconsin, reviewed, 277-78
 Smith, Denny, book review by, 443-44
 Smith, Marcellus K., 114-17, 119
 Snyder, Dr. John, 126
 Sob sisters, 408-9, 412-18
 Society editors, 424-26
 Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Speakers, 421-22
 Sororities, 377, 379-80, 383-86, 395-404
 Spanish influenza epidemic, 391
 Stark, Horatio, 216-18, 219, 221, 222, 223-24, 227
 State Historical Society of Iowa, 52, 54, 57, 58
 Steen, Clara, 383
 Stepenoff, Bonnie, book by, reviewed, 433-35
Still Turning: A History of Aeromotor Windmills, reviewed, 448-49
 Stockman, Eleanor, 367
 Stoll, Father Vitus, 249
 Stoll, Mark R., book by, reviewed, 190-92
 Stone, Fred, 421
 Storms, Albert, 105, 120, 123, 124, 128
 Student life, 376-405
 Sucholeiki, Roy, book by, reviewed, 276-77
 Suckow, Ruth, 247
 Suffrage, woman, 351-75, 400-401
 Sugar beet workers, 1-2, 5-6, 14-15, 17, 20
 Summers, Mark Wahlgren, book review by, 270-71
Surveillance and Spies in the Civil War: Exposing Confederate Conspiracies in America's Heartland, reviewed, 175-77
 Sutherland, Iowa, 353
 Swander, Mary, 245
 Switzer, Marguerite "Birdie," 410
 Taber, John H., book by, reviewed, 278-79
 Taber, Stephen H., book edited by, reviewed, 278-79
 Tate, Michael L., et al., book edited by, reviewed, 168-69
 Taylor, Zachary, 231
 Tecumseh, 213, 219, 221, 223
 Television, 156
 Temple B'nai Jeshurun, Des Moines, 236
 Tenskwatawa, 213, 219, 223
 Terry, Jennifer Robin, article by, 130-63
 Thanksgiving, 247-48
 Theta Sigma Phi, 377, 380, 383-86, 395-404, 406
This Is Not Dixie: Racist Violence in Kansas, 1861-1927, reviewed, 441-43
 Thompson, Jerome L., book review by, 272-73
 Thompson, Todd Nathan, book by, reviewed, 270-71
 Thorp, R. D. Blaisdell, 362, 364
 Thorpe, Vina Roberts, 410-11
 Tiffereth Israel Synagogue, Des Moines, 245
 Tippecanoe, Battle of, 219
 Towne, Stephen E., book by, reviewed, 175-77
 Trask, Kerry A., book by, reviewed, 65-66
 Treaty of Ghent, 232
 Trogdon, Jo Ann, book by, reviewed, 431-33
 Truman, Harry S., 155, 160-61
The Two-Wheeled World of George B. Thayer, reviewed, 186-88
Uncommon Defense: Indian Allies in the Black Hawk War, reviewed, 69-70
 Unemployment, youth, 145-46
 University of Iowa, 418, 420, 423;
 School of Religion, 234, 237-39, 250, 251
 University of Missouri, 378-79
 University of Washington, 379
The Unknown Travels and Dubious Pursuits of William Clark, reviewed, 431-33
 Updegraff, Ruth, 152
 Valerio-Jiménez, Omar, article by, 1-47

- Valley Junction, Iowa, 10, 16
 Vasquez, Emile, 223–25
 Vega, León, 8
 Vega, Miguel, 8
 Vega, Peter, 36
 Vella, Christina, book by, reviewed, 180–81
 Veyna, Gertrudes, 17
- Wages, of soldiers at Fort Madison, 215
 Wajda, Shirley, book review by, 274–75
 Walch, Timothy, book reviews by, 281–83, 437
 Walsh, Father Robert, 235, 236, 240–43, 250, 253–58; photos of, 241, 255
 War Department, U.S., 202, 205, 206, 207, 216–17
 War of 1812, 201, 219–33
 Wardrop, Daneen, book by, reviewed, 438–39
 Warren, Stephen, book review by, 262–64
 Waterloo, Iowa, 353
 Watts, Mary, 419
 Weems, Jason, book by, reviewed, 454–56
 Weesheet, 229
 Welfare Association, Iowa, 138
 White House Conference on Children and Youth (1950), 130–63
 Whiteside, James, book review by, 186–88
 Whittaker, William E., et al., book by, reviewed, 164–66
 WHO Radio, 254
 “‘Why, you can be a journalist, kid’: The Emerald Goose and Women’s Journalism at Iowa State College during World War I,” 376–405
Wilderness Journey: The Life of William Clark, reviewed, 63
 Wiley, Josephine, 385
 Wilkinson, Henry P. “Hank,” 107, 117–18, 127
 Wilkinson, James, 203–5
- Will, Hortense, 418
William Clark and the Shaping of the West, reviewed, 63–64
William Clark: Indian Diplomat, reviewed, 64
 Williams, Walter, 379
 Wilson, Gladys Gallup, 403
 Wilson, Woodrow, 417
 Winnebago Indians. *See* Ho-Chunk
 Winnebago Uprising (1827), 232
Winning the War for Democracy: The March on Washington Movement, 1941–1946, reviewed, 93–95
Wisconsin Agriculture: A History, reviewed, 269–70
The Wisconsin Historical Society: Collecting, Preserving, and Sharing Stories since 1846, reviewed, 185–86
 Witosky, Tom, and Marc Hansen, book by, reviewed, 98–100
 Woman suffrage, 351–75, 400–401
 Woman Suffrage Association: Iowa, 351–75; National, 367–68
Woman’s Standard, 351–75
 Women: in journalism, 351–427; Mexican, 16–20; rural, 351–75
 Women’s Affairs, Department of, 419
 Women’s Clubs, Iowa Federation of, 138
Women’s National Journalistic Register, 401
 Women’s Press Club, Des Moines, 419
 Wood, Grant, 421
 Wood, W. Raymond, book review by, 431–33
Working the Mississippi: Two Centuries of Life on the River, reviewed, 433–35
 World War I, 12, 250, 376–77, 384–86, 391, 399, 404, 412–18
 World War II, 140, 143, 145, 148, 242, 257
- Zimm, John, book by, reviewed, 185–86
 Zimmer, Eric Steven, book review by, 277–78

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