

Invisible Hawkeyes: African Americans at the University of Iowa during the Long Civil Rights Era.

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experts as intruders who were attempting to disrupt traditional patriarchal control over the farm family's maintenance and use of agricultural equipment. When the credentialed experts called for stricter state regulation of farm machinery — such as proposed legislation mandating installation of rollover protective systems on all farm tractors—Corn Belt farmers and implement manufacturers balked. The era of cooperation among farmers, educators, industrial safety experts, manufacturers, and the government thus came to an end. Oden appropriately concludes his study with this collapse of the original farm safety coalition. Examination of the movement beyond the mid-1970s, he states, is better left to “a separate work focusing on that period's unique aspects” (4).

Oden recounts his story of mid-twentieth-century farm safety in thorough, workmanlike fashion. His numerous sources include oral histories with midwestern farmers, local newspaper accounts, farm safety periodicals, extension service and 4-H publications, and the papers of Iowa-based farm safety specialist Norval Wardle. Although his study deals with the entire midwestern Corn Belt, most of his evidence is centered in Iowa, and the book's photographs of mid-century farm life are all from collections housed at the State Historical Society of Iowa. Oden neglects to provide any dates or specific locations for these Iowa farm scenes, however, and he does not identify the men, women, and children portrayed in these rich visual sources. These omissions are particularly puzzling given the exhaustive detail with which the author otherwise covers his subject.

Harvest of Hazards is nevertheless an important study of a topic that historians have largely ignored. It provides necessary context and background information for anyone wanting a better understanding of contemporary farm safety debates, as well as those interested in the history of mid-century Corn Belt farming more generally. Historians of both U.S. public policy and U.S. agriculture will find it useful reading.

Invisible Hawkeyes: African Americans at the University of Iowa during the Long Civil Rights Era, edited by Lena M. Hill and Michael D. Hill. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016. x, 230 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$20.00 paperback.

Reviewer Patrick Naick is associate professor of English at Coe College, where he also coordinates the American studies and African American studies programs. His research interests include twentieth-century African American literature and American urban studies.

In the summer of 2016, just a few months prior to this book's release, author James Alan McPherson died in Iowa City. McPherson, the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, was alumnus and

professor emeritus in the Iowa Writers' Workshop, having joined the faculty in 1981, a decade after earning his own MFA there. In the fall of 2017, roughly a year after McPherson's death, the University of Iowa opened the doors to a new dormitory, its largest to date: Catlett Hall, named for famed artist Elizabeth Catlett. When Catlett earned an MFA degree from the University of Iowa in 1940, she was one of the first three recipients—and the first African American—of that degree in the United States. These events may not seem particularly monumental, but they are important. The broader historical context of their midwestern significance and possibility is explored in *Invisible Hawkeyes: African Americans at the University of Iowa during the Long Civil Rights Era*.

Invisible Hawkeyes uses the conception of invisibility from Ralph Ellison's 1952 novel *Invisible Man* as an analytical frame for the experiences of several African Americans at the University of Iowa during the long civil rights era (1930s–1960s). That lens provides an additional layer of complexity to the work, particularly for those with an interest in Ellison. Readers less familiar with the novel will still benefit from the strength of the book's content independent of that device.

Ellison's tale begins with a prologue in which the anonymous narrator describes his predicament: "I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me." That refusal to see characterizes the climate of the University of Iowa in regard to race relations during the early years of the Hills' temporal scope, and the text demonstrates the persistent, although often unacknowledged, presence and contributions of African Americans at the university and in the Iowa City community more broadly. However, the university and its environs did evolve in this respect, and many of those African American students moved to a state of visibility. *Invisible Hawkeyes* examines the University of Iowa's changing stance from tolerance to more deliberately progressive. It seeks to explain how a predominately white university in a predominately white state became host and home to one of the most renowned voices of contemporary American literature and has further secured the legacy of an honored alumna with a towering structure of glass, brick, and steel nestled on the east bank of the Iowa River.

The overarching thesis of the work is that during the decades under study, the University of Iowa became a leader in creating a space for African American students to pursue higher education amid the national struggle for civil rights. As the contributors to the book discuss, this can be best observed in the areas of creative arts and athletics, where

several white, male professors and coaches, including Philip G. Clapp, Grant Wood, and Francis Cretzmeyer, created opportunities for a larger black presence on campus. Lena Hill notes in the introduction, "*Invisible Hawkeyes* . . . not only reinforces Iowa's leadership in educating creative artists and athletes but also illustrates how local cases of black faces in white spaces anticipated and echoed national scenes of interracial striving and accomplishment. . . . By looking at UI and a smaller college town like Iowa City, we unearth how fraught moments of interracial collaboration, meritocratic advancement, and institutional insensitivity deepen our understanding of the painful conversion of the United States into a diverse republic committed to racial equality" (2).

These moments are collected in five essays about the arts and athletics interspersed with five testimonials from former University of Iowa students. Through these essays, the book reminds us of the quotidian experiences of the civil rights struggle—those with a regional resonance spearheaded by local players. The chapters also serve as informative local history. The testimonials contribute to our understanding of daily, lived experience. Personal testimonials that were more directly related to the subjects of the other essays would have facilitated a greater comprehension of the "painful conversion" at this precise locale.

This is but a small critique. Overall, *Invisible Hawkeyes* is a valuable addition to midwestern cultural studies. It is also an asset to scholarship about the role of the Midwest in the civil rights movement. Each contributor has a connection to the University of Iowa, thereby ensuring an investment in illuminating aspects of its history and continuing conversations about race and the community.

Never Curse the Rain: A Farm Boy's Reflections on Water, by Jerry Apps. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2017. xii, 141 pp. \$22.95 hardcover and e-book.

Reviewer Joseph Otto is a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Oklahoma. His dissertation is an environmental history of drainage in Iowa.

Jerry Apps's *Never Curse the Rain* is a memoir about rural life in Wisconsin, but with a twist—it is all about water and how water shaped not only his life, but the lives of his parents, his children, and his grandchildren. From his earliest memories of baptisms and drought on the farm to his days as a young man sitting by the lake with his sweetheart, to middle age and canoe trips in the north woods, Apps reminds readers that water is a precious resource shared and cared for by all. "Those things we take for granted are often in the most danger. I grew up