

Never Curse the Rain: A Farm Boy's Reflections on Water

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ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

Otto, Joseph. "Never Curse the Rain: A Farm Boy's Reflections on Water." *The Annals of Iowa* 76 (2017), 459-460.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.12444>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

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

understanding water's importance in the lives of my family and neighbors and learning to conserve it" (138–39).

Apps is known for his many works on Wisconsin history and culture, but his stories have relevance beyond the places he so artfully describes. Each chapter is a quick, stand-alone story that will stir kindred memories of water use in readers' minds. With prose appealing to local historians and weekend warriors alike, *Never Curse the Rain* will resonate with any rural Iowan who ever fished from a truss bridge, camped on a sand bar, floated a river, or took their family to the lake.

The Baseball Whisperer: A Small-Town Coach Who Shaped Big League Dreams, by Michael Tackett. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. xvi, 255 pp. Illustrations, index. \$26.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Corey Seeman is the director of Kresge Library Services at the Ross School of Business of the University of Michigan. He previously was the director of technical services of the National Baseball Library of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown and has focused his sports research on minor league baseball.

When you tune into a Cardinals or Cubs game over the summer, you see the best baseball has to offer. Yet the participants in those games represent only a tiny percentage of those who pick up a bat, ball, and glove over the summer. So many players dream of being a Royal or Yankee as they toil in the minor leagues, independent leagues, semipro baseball, collegiate summer leagues, and youth summer traveling teams year in and year out. The dreams of playing in the Major Leagues has led many players to Clarinda, a city of just over 5,000 in southwestern Iowa. You didn't go to Clarinda just to play baseball. You went to change your life, though not all of the players knew that at the time.

In 1969 Merl Eberly, a 35-year-old former minor league ballplayer, took over the Clarinda A's as field manager. Under his guidance, the community team became a collegiate league team. Collegiate leagues enable athletes with college eligibility left to continue playing over the summer and enhance their skills to get a better shot at the minor leagues. Eberly could not have known how successful his endeavor would be. He rallied the Clarinda community to support this summer league baseball team that won a championship and produced scores of Major League baseball players in what might be the least likely of stops. Clarinda alumni who made it to the Major Leagues include Bud Black, José Álvarez, Von Hayes, Scott Brosius, and many others. Clarinda had one special alumna in Ozzie Smith, the great shortstop from the San Diego Padres and Saint Louis Cardinals who was inducted into the National