

All in One Room: A History of Country Schools in Johnson County, Iowa

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emphasis toward education and mutual support, helping midwestern farmers accommodate rather than fundamentally alter the market economy. She sees in the misnamed Granger Laws of the Midwest in the 1870s not a radical agrarian agenda finding voice in statutes, but rather the beginnings of what would later become specialized commodity groups aiming to secure market share in the twentieth century. After the 1880s—and very much tracking with the nation's economics—the Grange waned, revived in the 1920s, and then eclipsed in the 1950s as farm populations fell.

In Essentials, Unity has several nice touches that make it appealing to a general audience. Bourne balances her scholarly analysis with a case study of the Minnehaha Grange in Minnesota. Her narrative of its history over many decades enables her to show the critical role the Grange played in rural community building in the Midwest. Her clear and concise treatment of how local Granges interacted with state and national bodies demonstrates the critical role they played in defining rural life in America well into the twentieth century.

Bourne's disciplined focus on the Grange, which enables her to write a modest-length book, prevents her from engaging with wider scholarly debates about agrarian activism or rural family life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She does not elaborate on the relationship between the Grange and the Farmer's Alliance, the People's Party, the Farm-Labor Party, or the National Farmers' Union. Each of those had reformist or radical agendas, and the Midwest was a hotbed of agrarian political revolt. Bourne leaves open the question of whether those groups drew on different constituencies, yet for specialists this is a vital question when assessing the significance of the Grange. Bourne also does not invoke the work of social historians who examine the unique features of northern farm households in this period. Strong evidence exists that farm families embraced a set of gender relations that reflected a more equitable sharing of authority between men and women that translated into the public sphere. As midwestern farm women took such a prominent role in the agrarian politics of the late nineteenth century, it would be nice to see Bourne explore the extent to which the Grange helped advance that activism.

In Essentials, Unity is a well-written, compact history of the Grange that provides an excellent starting point for understanding the organization's importance in midwestern rural life for over a century.

All in One Room: A History of Country Schools in Johnson County, Iowa, by Franklin L. Yoder. Coralville, IA: Johnson County Historical Society,

2018. xi, 164 pp. Illustrations, graphs, bibliography, index. \$29.99 paperback.

Reviewer Christine A. Ogren is associate professor of history of education in the Educational Policy and Leadership Studies Department at the University of Iowa. She is the author of *The American State Normal School: "An Instrument of Great Good"* (2005).

Johnson County, Iowa, housed 160 country schools at the turn of the twentieth century. White settlers built the first one-room school in 1842, and the county's last one-room school closed in 1966. Based on oral histories and artifacts collected by a group of volunteers, *All in One Room* describes the 124 years of country schooling in Johnson County. On thick, glossy pages, text by one-room-school graduate and University of Iowa instructor Franklin Yoder accompanies several graphs and many high-quality photographs. Distributed throughout the book are a few dozen posed photos of teachers with students inside or outside their schoolhouses, and a few dozen informal photos of students on their way to school, eating lunch, playing games, sledding, and performing in plays. Also pictured are four historical maps and several documents, such as teachers' contracts and attendance reports.

In photos and the text, the twentieth century understandably receives much more attention than the nineteenth. After the first chapter briefly describes the establishment and early development of the county's schools, chapters two through ten focus on different aspects of one-room schooling—such as local control, teachers' duties, and the eighth-grade graduation examination—mainly during the twentieth century. Yoder quotes oral histories to illuminate students' collaborative approach to lessons, inclusive softball games at recess, and eager anticipation of the annual Christmas program; noting where but not when the interviewees attended country school suggests that students' experiences were similar throughout the decades.

Yoder acknowledges how state legislation such as the 1919 Standard School Law and periodic agricultural downturns affected the organization and control of Johnson County's one-room schools. Chapter nine demonstrates well the influence of larger forces in the 1950s, as Yoder describes how construction of the Coralville Reservoir forced the closure of several schools and how legislation requiring school consolidation caused much contention in Solon. Less clear in the book is how school experiences and educational developments in Johnson County connected to the larger history of education in the United States. Yoder reports on the lack of uniformity in rural-school textbooks in the nineteenth century and on the relative gender equality on rural playgrounds in the twentieth century without acknowledging that these were com-

mon characteristics of country schools. He also glosses over widespread conflict over the first round of consolidation by simply reporting that Cosgrove voters in 1920 created the county's first consolidated school.

Nostalgia flavors many of the oral-history quotations; former students reflected, "You knew everyone and their families, and you felt very safe and secure" (79) and "we created our own fun" (92). The book's overall tone, however, is more balanced. Acknowledging "female students who talked of male teachers who touched them in inappropriate ways" (90) and humor in recitations and skits that "came at the expense of negative stereotypes" (112), Yoder heeds his own caution that "we can easily romanticize rural schools and in the process, overlook their shortcomings" (154). *All in One Room* captures both strengths and shortcomings of country schools in Johnson County over more than a century.

Without Reseroation: Benjamin Reifel and American Indian Acculturation, by Sean J. Flynn. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2018. ix, 281 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Eric Steven Zimmer is a research fellow at the Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies (CAIRNS) in the Pine Ridge Reservation. He won the American Society for Environmental History's 2017 Rachel Carson Prize for Best Dissertation for his work "Red Earth Nation: Environment and Sovereignty in Modern Meskwaki History."

In *Without Reseroation*, Sean J. Flynn offers a robust biography of Benjamin Reifel, who was born in the Rosebud Indian Reservation. One of history's most distinguished South Dakotans, Reifel spent years at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and served briefly as its commissioner toward the end of his career. Along the way, Reifel completed a doctorate at Harvard and became the first Lakota to represent South Dakota in Congress. Flynn dives deeply into secondary literature and the holdings at several archives—including Reifel's papers and interviews he gave—to uncover Reifel's development as a person, a civil servant, a politician, and a policymaker.

As a BIA agent, Reifel helped many midwestern tribes—including the Meskwaki Nation in Iowa—draft their constitutions in the 1930s. A decade later, he represented the BIA in North Dakota while the U.S. government decided to dam the Missouri River. That proved to be one of the most controversial periods of Reifel's career. The Missouri River project flooded most of the best land in the Fort Berthold Reservation and nearly destroyed an indigenous agricultural economy that had thrived for at least a thousand years. Relying in part on Reifel's advice, as Flynn writes, the tribal council rejected a land swap proposed by the