

Finally It's Friday: School and Work in Mid-America, 1921-1933

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Book Reviews

We Have All Gone Away is one of the finest works of its type in print. It certainly is a stronger piece than either Harvey M. Sletten's *Growing Up on Bald Hill Creek* (Iowa State University Press, 1977) or Loren Reid's *Hurry Home Wednesday: Growing Up in a Small Missouri Town, 1905-1921* (University of Missouri Press, 1978), two similar publications that have rightfully received favorable reviews. Not only does Harnack develop his central theme with great skill, but his prose is pellucid. Moreover, he writes with a great deal of wit; the chapter "Queen of Hearts" describing an incompetent school teacher, a Miss Flock, is hilarious. That essay alone makes the price tag a bargain. *We Have All Gone Away* was originally published by Doubleday in 1973, with a large-type edition by G. K. Hall the same year. Iowa State University Press, in bringing out a paperback version, has manufactured another handsome volume.

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

H. ROGER GRANT

Finally It's Friday: School and Work in Mid-America, 1921-1933, by Loren Reid. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1981. pp. viii, 292. Photographs, index. \$14.00.

Finally It's Friday is an engaging memoir of Loren Reid's life as a student in Iowa in the 1920s and early 1930s. Reid attended high school in Osceola and earned degrees at Grinnell College and the State University of Iowa before beginning a distinguished teaching career that eventually brought him to the University of Missouri at Columbia, where he is now professor emeritus of speech and dramatic art. In this reminiscence he describes campuses that seem to have been immune to the worries of the outside world and provided passage between life at home and entry into the routine of earning a living—happy, somewhat sheltered places dominated by the life of the mind. Reid's experience was social as well as intellectual, but most impressive here are the author's vivid recollections of professors whose classroom teaching set standards of taste and judgement that lasted a lifetime. Reid shares his memories with us in a style that is witty and learned, conveying a feeling for the mood of Iowa in the twenties, at least among the state's college students.

Aside from its considerable literary merit, what makes *Finally It's Friday* so distinctive a memoir is that its author was already earning a living when he attended college. Osceola *Tribune* editor

Dudley Reid introduced his son to the linotype machine while the lad was still in high school, giving him a skill that helped pay tuition and living expenses in the years ahead. Later at Grinnell and Iowa City, young Reid packed his days with course work and his evenings with typesetting for local newspapers. Thus through his eyes we catch contrasting glimpses of two different worlds: the quiet order of the college classroom and the rush-to-deadline pace of a newspaper pressroom. We learn much about the operation of the dailies and weeklies that proliferated in Iowa earlier in the twentieth century and something of their role in the cultural life of the state's small towns in that era. We also meet dozens of the people with whom Reid worked and studied in these years—pressmen and editors, as well as professors and college administrators. The author's delightful characterizations of these talented and—mostly—generous people reveal a good deal about the quality of life in the pre-Depression years and the way in which an Iowa youth matured in that era. Although Reid occasionally overstates the degree to which things have changed since then, *Finally It's Friday* is a superb combination of autobiography and social history that will appeal to both general readers and professional scholars.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

WILLIAM SILAG

George Washington Carver: Scientist and Symbol, by Linda O. McMurry. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981. pp. x, 367. Photographs, notes, index. \$25.00.

George Washington Carver began life with formidable disadvantages—slave status, unknown paternity, frail constitution, kidnapped as an infant, and orphaned early. When he died in 1943, however, Carver enjoyed international acclaim for his scientific achievements. In this cradle-to-grave biography Linda O. McMurry, associate professor of history at North Carolina State University, examines the factors that eventually rendered Carver the most widely known black in America. McMurry analyzes the relationship between Carver the scientist and Carver the symbol; she finds the latter more significant. *George Washington Carver: Scientist and Symbol* accords much attention to the cultural, social, and economic context that molded Carver and to the Zeitgeist that shaped his image. Nevertheless, macrocosmic considerations do not obscure Carver the man in this volume.

McMurray adroitly identifies the paradox and incongruity of

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