The Other Missouri History: Populists, Prostitutes, and Regular Folk

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Amish became more attentive to the boundaries that separated them from the rest of society. As those boundaries were tested during the twentieth century, the Amish appeared to be stuck in time as they eschewed modern technology and conveniences. But Pratt shows that this appearance of rigidity is overdrawn as the Amish negotiated and adjusted the boundaries. To the outsider, these changes might seem minuscule, but within Amish society they are monumental. They are often the key to their survival as a people “in the world but not of the world.”


Reviewer Heather Haynes recently graduated from Southeast Missouri State University with an M.A. in history. Her master’s thesis was “Public Action from the Private Sphere: The Wednesday Club of Cape Girardeau.”

_The Other Missouri History: Populists, Prostitutes, and Regular Folk_ is a collection of essays that explores topics such as race, class, and gender as expressed by ordinary men and women from various parts of Missouri during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The essays are organized thematically rather than chronologically, providing a variety of perspectives on Missouri history. Specific subjects include the use of race and violence to alter the political climate of both Ralls County and southwest Missouri following the Civil War, the effects of race on class relations in St. Louis before and after the Civil War, the failure of Populism in northern Missouri, the plight of sharecroppers in southeast Missouri in the early twentieth century, the rise of female influence on social reform as seen in the formation of women’s clubs, and the assault on prostitution during the Progressive Era.

The editor was careful to include stories of both African Americans and women. The book’s inclusive nature and the attention it gives to the experiences of common men and women are among the book’s strengths. Although the book focuses specifically on Missouri history, readers will find that these essays focus on themes that are also important to the history of Iowa and the larger Midwest.