In This Issue

FIVE HISTORIANS—H. Roger Grant, John D. Buenker, Rebecca Conard, George McJimsey, and Franklin D. Mitchell, all native Iowans except for one “Naturalized Iowan”—describe their experiences as Iowans and analyze how those experiences shaped their perspectives as historians.

KATHLEEN M. SCOTT introduces the Iowa Polio Stories Oral History Project, a new collection housed at the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, that captures the voices of the people who were most affected by polio: polio survivors as well as physicians, pediatricians, and nurses. Their words reveal how they felt, how they coped, how their communities responded, and how they survived the anguish of the “dreaded” disease.

PAMELA RINEY-KEHRBERG reviews three new books with complementary portraits of family farming in Iowa and the Midwest in the early twentieth century.

Front Cover

Youngsters participate in a scrap metal drive in Hampton during World War II. In this issue, five historians reflect on how such experiences shaped their perspectives as historians.

Editorial Consultants

Rebecca Conard, Middle Tennessee State University
Kathleen Neils Conzen, University of Chicago
William Cronon, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Robert R. Dykstra, State University of New York at Albany

R. David Edmunds, University of Texas at Dallas
H. Roger Grant, Clemson University
William C. Pratt, University of Nebraska at Omaha
Glenda Riley, Ball State University
Malcolm J. Rohrbough, University of Iowa
Dorothy Schwieder, Iowa State University
The Annals of Iowa
Third Series, Vol. 67, Nos. 2/3
Spring/Summer 2008
William B. Friedricks, guest editor

Contents

131  An Albia Childhood
     H. Roger Grant

147  Growing Up Iowan—Sort of!
     John D. Buenker

165  Public History and the Odyssey of a Born-Again Native
     Rebecca Conard

181  Naturalized Iowan
     George McJimsey

196  An Out-Migrant’s Tale
     Frank D. Mitchell

212  The Iowa Polio Stories Oral History Project
     Kathleen M. Scott

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF HISTORY FOUNDED IN 1863
Copyright 2008 by the State Historical Society of Iowa
ISSN 0003-4827
Review Essay

219 Dwight Hoover, A Good Day’s Work: An Iowa Farm in the Great Depression
   Mildred Armstrong Kalish, Little Heathens: Hard Times and High Spirits on an Iowa Farm during the Depression
   Carrie A. Meyer, Days on the Family Farm: From the Golden Age through the Great Depression
   by Pamela Riney-Kehrberg

Book Reviews and Notices

224 Owen W. Muelder, The Underground Railroad in Western Illinois, by Galin Berrier
227 August Scherneckau, Marching with the First Nebraska: A Civil War Diary, by Paul Fessler
228 David Dary, True Tales of the Prairies and Plains, by J. Thomas Murphy
229 Bernd C. Peyer, Ed., American Indian Nonfiction: An Anthology of Writings, 1760s–1930s, by Lee Schweninger
230 Laurence M. Hauptman and L. Gordon McLester III, Eds., The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment, 1860–1920, by Emily Greenwald
231 Joan M. Jensen, Calling This Place Home: Women on the Wisconsin Frontier, 1850–1925, by Paula M. Nelson
233 William B. Friedricks, Investing in Iowa: The Life and Times of F. M. Hubbell, by Eric J. Morser
235 Lawrence H. Larsen, et al., Upstream Metropolis: An Urban Biography of Omaha and Council Bluffs, by Jon C. Teaford
238 Mohammad A. Chaichian, White Racism on the Western Urban Frontier: Dynamics of Race and Class in Dubuque, Iowa (1800–2000), by Kristin Anderson-Bricker
241 Peter Fearon, Kansas in the Great Depression: Work Relief, the Dole, and Rehabilitation, by J. Christopher Schnell
243 Jan Olive Nash, Iowa City Municipal Airport: Opening the West to Aviation, 1918–2007, by Janet R. Daly Bednarek
244 Mark Dewalt, Amish Education in the United States and Canada, by Frank Yoder
246 Abigail Foerstner, James Van Allen: The First Eight Billion Miles, by Roger D. Launius
248 Douglas Reichert Powell, Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape, by James R. Shortridge

New on the Shelves
Historians Remember Iowa: An Introduction

BY GUEST EDITOR WILLIAM B. FRIEDRICKS

I AM NOT A NATIVE IOWAN, so it might seem strange that I had a hand in this special issue, which considers the Iowa experience and its impact. Let me explain. I was born and raised in southern California and came to Iowa in 1988 when I joined the history department at Simpson College in Indianola. Serendipity, you might say, led me to Iowa history. Shortly after I started at Simpson, a college trustee suggested that I write a history of the Des Moines Register. I took up the recommendation and have been researching and writing on Iowa topics ever since. Those pursuits brought me into contact with Annals of Iowa editor Marvin Bergman, and in the fall of 2006, he invited me to serve as the guest editor for an upcoming issue of the Annals.

Part of the job entailed developing a topic for the special issue. At the time, I was reading a number of memoirs, including Doris Kearns Goodwin’s Wait Til Next Year. In that book, Goodwin turned her critical skills as a historian on herself, recounting her childhood in New York in the 1940s and 1950s. Rather than taking a nostalgic trip into her past, Goodwin entwined her story with the many complexities of American life at mid-century.

Goodwin’s memoir gave me an idea. Why not ask prominent historians with significant ties to Iowa to consider their own years in the state? After several discussions with Marv, we decided to do just that. We asked five historians—four are
native Iowans, the fifth moved here as a child—to focus on themselves and analyze their experience in Iowa. We also wondered how their Iowa years might have shaped their perspective as historians. Finally, instead of using the standard process of having submitted articles assessed by anonymous reviewers, we had our five contributors comment on their peers’ essays and then engage each other in their final drafts.

The assignment was difficult on several levels, largely because historians generally think and write about others, not themselves. Nonetheless, Roger Grant, John Buenker, Rebecca Conard, George McJimsey, and Frank Mitchell undertook the challenge. As you will see, they’ve written revealing, personal accounts of periods and places in Iowa, sometimes poignant, sometimes humorous, but always with the broader currents of American life and thought in mind. Their stories are at once similar and different; elements of a common Iowa culture emerge, but variations due to time, location, and gender are also evident. Taken together, these essays tell us much about what it means to be an Iowan. I found the essays stimulating and interesting. I hope you do as well. My thanks go to Marv for giving me this opportunity and to our five contributors who carried out the task with grace and aplomb.