

*University of Northern Iowa*, by Gerald L. Peterson. College History Series. Chicago: Arcadia, 2000. 128 pp. Illustrations. \$19.99 paper.

Reviewer Carroll Engelhardt is professor of history at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota. In addition to a history of that college, he has written several articles about educational reform in Iowa and is a UNI alum.

As one who matriculated at Iowa State Teachers College, graduated from State College of Iowa, and is pictured in the 1964 civil rights march there, I enjoyed this photographic history of this institution that is now called the University of Northern Iowa, published in time for the school's 125th anniversary. I'm sure other graduates and friends of the university, as well as residents of Cedar Falls, will similarly savor this broad visual survey for the memories it evokes and the sense of history it conveys.

University of Northern Iowa Special Collections Librarian and Archivist Gerald L. Peterson's skill and purpose in selecting the photographs is suggested by the collection's first two images. The frontispiece, portraying an eastern view of the campus in its Cedar Falls neighborhood setting in fall 1963, indicates that the book will chronicle campus and community life and how each has changed. The photo of the gateway at 23rd and College Streets, which represented the door to learning and a productive future for the thousands of us who attended, serves here as a portal to the past, allowing us to recall our undergraduate years and to learn more about the history of the institution that shaped our lives.

Detailed descriptions accompany subsequent evocative images, which are organized into seven thematic sections. Readers learn how the school began, see the leaders who shaped its growth, view how teaching and learning occurred inside and outside the classroom, trace campus development through images of buildings, survey the evolution of student residential life, and recall the fun we had as students.

*Struggling with "Iowa's Pride": Labor Relations, Unionism, and Politics in the Rural Midwest since 1877*, by Wilson J. Warren. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000. xv, 185 pp. Notes, tables, index. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Gregory Zieren is associate professor of history at Austin Peay State University. He was an interviewer on the Iowa Labor History Oral Project.

In 1995 the Center for the Study of Recent U.S. History hosted a conference at the University of Iowa to consider the work of a younger generation of scholars who have sparked a renaissance of inquiry into twentieth-century packinghouse labor. Skilled in the practice of oral history and community studies, they have both broadened the scope of

the subject to address new scholarly concerns and deepened our appreciation for the struggles of packinghouse labor. Shelton Stromquist and Marvin Bergman compiled the best conference papers and published the collection as *Unionizing the Jungle: Labor and Community in the Twentieth-Century Meatpacking Industry* (1997). Now conference participant Wilson Warren's book, *Struggling with "Iowa's Pride": Labor Relations, Unionism and Politics in the Rural Midwest since 1877*, takes its place alongside other significant works from that conference and carries the debate closer to the present-day controversy over packinghouses and packinghouse labor in Iowa and the rural Midwest.

Warren's work lends a new perspective because he focused exclusively on one plant (Morrell) in one community (Ottumwa, Iowa) and wove much of the information from several rich archives of oral history. And unlike Chicago or even Des Moines, Omaha, or Sioux City, Ottumwa's workforce in its heyday as a packinghouse center was overwhelmingly white, native-born, Protestant, and from Wapello and surrounding counties. Thus, Warren could control for variables such as race, religion, and ethnicity that bedeviled working-class solidarity in other communities and focus mainly on the workplace struggles that shaped both the workers' perceptions and the local union. Furthermore, Warren's study can follow developments in the town from the beginnings of the plant in the 1870s to its demise a century later. For all these reasons his work expresses a distinctive voice and makes a signal contribution not only to the literature of midwestern packinghouse labor, but to that on the development of the American working class.

The Morrell Company had its origins in nineteenth-century Great Britain and retained British managerial connections well into the twentieth century. The firm chose Ottumwa for its pork operations and sent family member Thomas Dove Foster as manager. Warren characterizes Foster's plant management style as "evangelical paternalism." From the 1870s to his death in 1915, Foster supported the local YMCA and sponsored an employee benefit society and annual company picnic. But compared with paternalism at Swift and Co. or H. J. Heinz from the same era, Morrell's practices did not amount to much. Information may not be readily available on the plant in the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, but Warren is sketchy about the Knights of Labor in the 1880s or the Amalgamated Association of Butcher Workmen's attempts to unionize the industry, though he implies that "evangelical paternalism" may have won the workers' loyalties instead. The politics of the era he covers briefly in another chapter.

More thoroughgoing and penetrating is his analysis of the nationwide packinghouse workers strike in 1921 and Morrell management's promotion of welfare capitalism in the 1920s. Like other packers, indeed like many industries seeking to ward off union organizing and foster employee loyalty, Morrell first defeated the Amalgamated in 1921, then showed the friendly face of the anti-union "American Plan" by offering workers paid vacations, a plant council, group life insurance, and so on. Warren disputes Lizbeth Cohen's influential argument that welfare capitalism paved the way for the organizing campaigns of the 1930s. Instead, he calls it "a reform facade that did little to improve the plant's labor relations." This chapter, which, like most of the other chapters was published in an earlier form in the *Annals of Iowa*, is an outstanding contribution to an important debate and deserves wide recognition.

The Great Depression and the New Deal undermined the legitimacy of welfare capitalism and provided the impetus for an organizing campaign at Morrell that started first in the Amalgamated and then in the CIO's Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee. P1, as the Morrell local was known throughout Iowa and the PWOC, was one of the most militant and best organized. A crucial addition to the workers' ranks came from laid-off coal miners from southern Iowa. They brought the solidarity of the United Mine Workers of America with them when they moved to Ottumwa and infused the local with a new spark and increased sophistication in dealing effectively with management. Shopfloor issues such as work pace, the prerogatives of foremen, overtime pay, and dues payment all ignited conflict with management and were usually resolved by one or another demonstration of collective action, including strikes and walkouts. The recollections of Morrell's workers from oral histories give Warren's account of the 1930s organizing a vitality and freshness that conventional written sources fail to convey.

On the other hand, Warren fails to use oral histories to suggest any major changes in the plant's labor relations during World War II and, as a consequence, fails to consider the influence of women who replaced Morrell workers fighting overseas. There is one mention of the "no strike" clause, nothing on the "Little Steel" formula, and little to suggest that wartime differed from peace. This is the most serious omission of coverage in an otherwise fine study.

Warren devotes a chapter to the postwar intergenerational conflicts between older workers who had created a militant unionism in the 1930s and younger workers who entered the plant later. He shows us a landscape of militant job actions and unbending leaders who

eventually gave way in the 1950s to such later stalwarts of the Iowa labor movement as Jack McCoy and Russell Bull.

In a separate chapter, Warren also shows how Ottumwa's packing-house workers formed a bulwark of the Democratic Party as it transformed the balance of power in Iowa in the 1950s and 1960s away from the once-dominant Republicans. Herschel Loveless and Harold Hughes relied on the union voters of Wapello County and other urban centers to swing the state firmly into the Democratic column in races for governor and U.S. senator, as did Dick Clark and John Culver in the 1970s.

But by then the Morrell Co. had closed its Ottumwa operations as recession, excess plant capacity, an outmoded facility, and the so-called IBP revolution in production efficiency winnowed out less productive plants. Hormel then operated a smaller plant in Ottumwa from 1974 to 1987, when Excel replaced them. Warren's chapter on the end of Morrell in Ottumwa and the meatpackers that replaced the old company is a sad litany of wage concessions, broken corporate promises and workers treated like so many disposable parts. The final insult to hundreds of former Morrell workers, now retirees, came in 1995, when the corporation disposed of \$15 million in health benefits in order to lower the asking price for a sought-after corporate buyout. Warren's final chapter is a moving reminder that capital is mobile and sometimes leaves wreckage in its wake, as many other small Iowa and midwestern towns have learned since 1973.

A review can hardly do justice to the work that went into this book, though the notes give some idea of the amount of oral interviews, old newspapers, census data, corporate information, and secondary sources consulted. This work is certainly definitive and will enlighten readers interested in labor history, meatpacking, Iowa history, and small-town economic development.

*A Union Against Unions: The Minnesota Citizens Alliance and Its Fight against Organized Labor, 1903–1947*, by William Millikan. Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001. xxxi, 495 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, index. \$34.95 cloth.

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*A Union Against Unions* offers a remarkable case study of the ways political power is organized and exercised in state and city politics in the first half of the twentieth century. William Millikan's brilliant and

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