

features on the larger canvas and general landscape. Iowa readers can find frequent references to state and regional circumstances familiar to their context. One chapter specifically addresses the voting behavior of the Pella Dutch in the 1860 presidential election. The importance of religious localism and how the ethnic church gave form and substance to community life, shaping core beliefs and values to define the essence of cultural identity, are illustrated in part by the example of Dutch Reformed Calvinists in their cultural island of the West Side of Chicago. Swierenga also includes a chapter on the Dutch Jewish experience that highlights distinctive Dutch synagogues as well as their absorption into the broader stream of American Judaism.

In this single volume readers are introduced to the depth and breadth of Swierenga's scholarship on Dutch ethnic history in America. That scholarship readily wins readers' profound respect while it teaches them about content, method, and the author's commitment to historical truth, ardent research, and crisp writing. They also learn why Swierenga's reputation as the dean of Dutch-American studies is fully deserved and unassailable. If a fourth generation of research and writing in the twenty-first century upholds the tradition of excellence established by Swierenga and his predecessors, Dutch-American history will continue to be a benchmark for ethnic studies.

*An Iowa Album: A Photographic History, 1860–1920*, by Mary Bennett. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990; reissued in paperback, 2001. xiv, 328 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$34.95 paper.

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In *An Iowa Album*, Mary Bennett has created both a keepsake and (as stated in the subtitle) a history. These two purposes, often seen as distinct from one another by historians who set memory apart from history, artifact and image from text, are not necessarily at odds, here or generally speaking. Historians' current preoccupation with collective memory has uncovered versions of the past that are often quite different from the "official record" based on state records and other public documents. What memories a people choose and debate are often shaped by their own contemporary personal and social needs. Memory, in short, is not only historical in nature but itself has a history.

Memory studies conjoin traditional political history with the so-called new social history of the 1960s and its successors, which broad-

ened historical inquiry by considering those groups whose voices had been theretofore muted, and by employing forms of evidence often considered more illustrative than integral to a given subject. Material culture, artwork, and photographs were enlisted as evidence to counter or augment the written record.

How to interpret these forms of evidence still elicits debate. How, for example, does one go about interpreting an album? Album keeping, widely practiced in the United States, is somewhere between hobby, pastime, and official history. The very act of creating a collection, be it of letters, ephemera, autographs, or photographs, is an act of discernment dedicated to a larger goal of exposition. That is to say, when we create a keepsake, we make choices about what is appropriate for an album to include, and those choices are based in the moment and on what we wish the future to be. Thus our sadness, perhaps, when we turn the pages of a photographic album and see the faces of friends we no longer know.

In *An Iowa Album* we see faces of folks we do know—not personally, but as part of an everyday past that is not far from the memory of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Although these images are of Iowans, placed within the context of the “fundamental cultural changes that occurred in Iowa in the years from 1860 to 1920” (xi), they reflect the ineluctable shift from a rural to an industrial, urban society. As Bennett observes, by 1920 (when the U.S. Census declared that the nation was more urban than rural) Iowa was “tied even more closely to an emerging national culture” (xi). Although Bennett, a photo archivist and special collections coordinator at the State Historical Society of Iowa, adopts a voice assuming that readers of *An Iowa Album* are Iowans, the photographic images she collects in this work mirror Americans’ experiences beyond Iowa’s boundaries.

To Bennett’s credit, the photographic images she has culled from the vast archive at the State Historical Society of Iowa (and other institutions and individuals) are unencumbered by burdensome historical or aesthetic commentary. The images are briefly identified by maker, subject, date, photographic type, and collection (if applicable). Interspersed among the images are excerpts from speeches, letters, newspapers, interviews, and other primary sources. The images do the heavy lifting here, while the excerpts illustrate what is seen without affecting the image’s meaning. Further, the juxtaposition of image and text invites closer inspection of the images, unlike a standard text-driven history in which a few images delight the eye while serving the narrative. Like a family album, this work depends on the reader’s ac-

tive participation in linking one image to the next, one story line to another, all in the purpose of making memory into history.

To be sure, Bennett helps this process along. Each chapter features a brief "snapshot in words" characterizing the chapter's topic historically. Chapter one, "Indians and the Land," reflects on what white and black Americans and foreign-born immigrants found when they settled in the state before 1860. The photographic images of Native Americans present tribal cultures in simultaneous states of preservation, fragmentation, and assimilation. Chapter two, "The Countryside," explores Iowa as "the quintessential agricultural state" (24). Here, farm activities are altered by the technological innovations of steel, steam, and gasoline, reminding us that the agricultural culture we nostalgically recall was one of hard labor, business acumen, and luck—as well as community cooperation and identity.

The establishment of towns and cities is the subject of chapter three, "Building Main Street." The symbiosis between town builders, railroad companies, and politicians clearly spelled success or doom for a given community. A rail line through town meant connections to the national economy and culture, through newspapers and goods; such a rail line meant that the town could become a hub serving its agricultural hinterland. Chapter four, "Town and Community Life," explores the schools, churches, fraternal societies, social clubs, and holidays and other celebrations that transformed a group of people into a community. Chapter five, "Home and Family Life," chronicles what many in the nineteenth century saw as the basis of the state. The final chapter, "Coming of Age," introduces the automobile as a symbolic vehicle of modernization. Images of transportation, bird's-eye views of bustling towns, and images of telephone operators and radio listeners bespeak a cultural shift that was both embraced and bemoaned.

The one invention that perhaps most domesticated modernity for Iowans was photography. Invented in 1839, photography was present at the state's beginning. In her epilogue Bennett explains the processes and techniques that created the images in *An Iowa Album*. Here she performs a great service, for the seeming artlessness of the photograph belies the difficulties of creating photographic images before the introduction of roll film at the end of the century. Too, Bennett warns that photographers and their patrons made choices. Despite what seems an overwhelming record of the past, that record will always be incomplete—like many albums, private, public, or historical. With this paperback edition, *An Iowa Album* may be viewed again, and by many more readers, furthering the ongoing interaction of memory and history.

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