

weather and its effect on the household and farm, news of her children and the other immigrant families in the area.

*Many Danes, Some Norwegians* is not only a fascinating glimpse into the daily activities, thoughts, and feelings of an ordinary woman; it also lends depth and personality to larger themes in immigrant, regional, and women's histories with which we are more familiar. In Miller's words, we hear how religious faith helped those of her era approach and construct their new lives in America. For Miller, being surrounded by other Danes was not just of practical benefit, but also buoyed her emotionally and spiritually, as did the Danish-language church. Through her record, we witness the rhythms of farm life in this era, and how they were shaped by seasons, by visits from friends and family, and by illness. This simple diary is a treasure both for scholars and for descendants of Scandinavian immigrants throughout the Midwest; it lets us know an immigrant woman, giving meaning to other, more distant histories.

*Kate M. Cleary: A Literary Biography with Selected Works*, by Susanne K. George. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. xiii, 250 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY BERNICE E. GALLAGHER, LAKE FOREST COLLEGE

Kate McPhelim Cleary (1863–1905) developed her creative talents and produced a voluminous and significant body of literary work despite staggering personal, physical, and social obstacles. Born to Irish immigrant parents in New Brunswick, Canada, Cleary wrote and published throughout her poverty-stricken youth in Chicago and then continued her successful literary efforts after she married and moved to a prairie home in Hubbell, Nebraska. Cleary's work was regularly featured in midwestern newspapers and national magazines, praised by readers and critics alike, and provided money that was desperately needed for her family's survival. Around the time of Cleary's death, Houghton Mifflin was preparing to publish a collection of her short stories that her editor said "showed many aspects of western life better than any stories I have seen" (101). Cleary's strongest contribution to American literature would lie in such stories and sketches—realistic tales about lives, customs, personal and social concerns of prairie folk, gentle satires about social pretensions and the universal battles between the sexes, and inspirational prose defending the simple midwestern values of sincerity and self-reliance. What seems truly exceptional, however, is that

Cleary produced such an astounding literary output despite her burdens of family life, poverty, social restrictions, and ill health that included both morphine and alcohol addiction.

Author Susanne K. George argues successfully that Cleary's life and work are inextricably connected. The diligently researched biography tells a compelling story of the struggles of a remarkable writer and reveals much about nineteenth-century midwestern life. The extensive bibliography of Cleary's work makes this author accessible to scholars and the public for the first time. The selected works of Kate Cleary include some of the best examples of her writing and present a valuable addition to the American literary canon.

*Let My People Go: Cairo, Illinois, 1967-1973*, edited by Jan Peterson Roddy, photographs by Preston Ewing Jr. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996. xxvi, 98 pp. Illustrations, notes, chronology. \$49.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY DARREL E. BIGHAM, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA

This book evolved from a photographic exhibit by Preston Ewing Jr. depicting seven years of racial strife in Cairo following the suspicious death of a young black man in July 1967. A strong grass-roots movement emerged during those tumultuous years. In 1973 the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights issued two reports on race relations in the city, and federal courts upheld the right of local African Americans to engage in protest activities.

Ewing took thousands of photographs while president of the local NAACP. Jan Peterson Roddy, professor of cinema and photography at Southern Illinois University, selected the approximately one hundred photographs that form the core of this "photonarrative" and wrote the preface. Two others comment briefly on growing up in Cairo and on photography in civil rights history. This material is supplemented by quotations gathered by graduate students in sociology from six persons active in the protest movement.

If seen as an impressionistic visual reminder of a phase of the civil rights movement, *Let My People Go* achieves its purpose. Despite its advertisement, though, this is not history. The introductory essay is unreliable and superficial. Nowhere will the reader learn much about Cairo's unusual history—as the "city of America" with a highly checkered history. (Why, for instance, did the city's population—15,000 at its peak in 1920—drop from 9,400 to 4,700 between 1960 and 1990, when 55 percent of the people were African Ameri-

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