

tarian, featuring native trees and shrubs near the house and a chicken coop, large shed, and vegetable garden at the rear. As families either moved to the cities or their homes were absorbed by the cities, they added driveways and did away with the chicken coop in favor of a garage. In the nineteenth century, families built fences around their homes to keep grazing stock from invading the house. A century later, those fences have become the backdrop for climbing plants. Nineteenth-century outdoor space did not include much grassy area because mowing was an arduous chore that men would not want to do after a long day in the fields, but by the 1960s, families preferred more green lawn as technology made it easier to mow it.

Somerville demonstrates that people's relationship to their outdoor space is a reflection of the history of Wisconsin and of the nation as a whole. For instance, urban Wisconsinites largely gave up vegetable gardening at the beginning of the twentieth century, but, like most Americans, they returned to growing vegetables during World War II. Also, as old homesteads were subdivided and homes became closer to one another, gardeners who had previously preferred lower plants so they could talk over the fence now favored vines to be used as screens for privacy.

Probably because the summer months are so short, the people of Wisconsin cherish their outdoor space and their relationship to natural things. Somerville lets us hear the voices of hardy Wisconsin women as they envision their space, challenge their environment, and conceptualize their lives. The result is that the people of the past help us to enjoy our outdoor space today so much more. *Vintage Wisconsin Gardens* is filled with all sorts of imagery—drawings, paintings, photography, and even needlepoint—to give contemporary observers clear insight into Wisconsinites' outdoor domestic space. The book is valuable for any gardener of the heartland who wants to know what nineteenth-century women planted, how they laid out their gardens, or just what they considered to be beautiful. This book is a must for every vintage gardener.

Always Put in a Recipe and Other Tips for Living from Iowa's Best-Known Homemaker, by Evelyn Birkby. A Bur Oak Book. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012. xvi, 203 pp. Illustrations, recipes. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Abby Stephens is a Ph.D. candidate in American studies at Purdue University. She is working on a dissertation on twentieth-century rural women.

Much has been written about changes in twentieth-century agriculture, but scholars and writers have only recently turned their attention

to the significance of agricultural transformations for women. Evelyn Birkby's new book provides heartwarming commentary on the changing meanings of rural womanhood in the post-World War II rural Midwest. In earning the moniker of Iowa's best-known homemaker, Birkby has authored a weekly newspaper column since 1949 and worked as one of Shenandoah's celebrated radio homemakers since 1955. Birkby's latest book includes selections of favorite columns and recipes and fresh commentary on more recent experiences such as growing older, preserving and sharing the history of Iowa's radio homemakers, and acting as an inspiration for one of Fannie Flagg's fictional characters.

Although all of Birkby's columns are available digitally through the Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa, scholars in women's history, food studies, midwestern and Iowa history, and rural and agricultural history will appreciate this selection of columns for its accounts of the daily trials and achievements of mid-twentieth-century farm women. The columns provide an autobiographical folk history of a sort, allowing readers to step into the southwestern Iowa world of Birkby and her family. A particular strength is the book's "Farm Life" section, with columns about Birkby's life on farms near Sidney, Iowa: caring for livestock, preserving and preparing food, keeping house, and sharing with and supporting neighbors and friends. Through her firsthand commentary, Birkby offers one lens through which to view the recent history of Iowa's rural women.

The Iowa Lakeside Laboratory: A Century of Discovering the Nature of Nature, by Michael J. Lannoo. A Bur Oak Book. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012. 98 pp. Photographs, maps, appendixes, index. \$19.00 paper.

Reviewer Rebecca Conard is professor of history and director of the public history program at Middle Tennessee State University. She is the author of *Places of Quiet Beauty: Parks, Preserves, and Environmentalism* (1997).

According to the author, biologist Michael Lannoo, this slim volume was conceived as a commemorative publication during Iowa Lakeside Laboratory's centennial year, 2009. As such, the book is best described as a nicely illustrated chronicle in which Lannoo demonstrates the staying power of a good idea. Iowa Lakeside Laboratory had its genesis in 1908, when Thomas Macbride approached the State University of Iowa Alumni Association about purchasing a five-acre tract on the shore of West Lake Okoboji as the site for a natural sciences field station. As Macbride explained at the time, the morainic topography of the Iowa lakes region held an unusually rich variety of flora, fauna, and