

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

geologic formations. He and fellow naturalists Samuel Calvin and Bohumil Shimek had been studying the region since the early 1890s. The association agreed, funds were quickly raised, and Lakeside offered its first courses in the summer of 1909 with students from 14 Iowa colleges and universities attending classes that combined instruction with field research.

Lannoo charts the vicissitudes of Lakeside from its launch to the present. For the first decade, funding came from stockholders and private donors (mainly Macbride), but by the late 1910s this was insufficient to cover operating costs. Thus, in 1918, the State University of Iowa (SUI) agreed to assume responsibility, and for the next decade Lakeside operated as a pure research institution under the auspices of the SUI Graduate College. The offering of summer courses resumed in 1929, and significant changes followed: Lakeside was expanded from 5 to 95 acres; and the Lakeside Laboratory Association gifted the entire property to the State of Iowa under the joint control of SUI and the State Conservation Commission, which, with federal assistance through the Civilian Conservation Corps, constructed a new campus of rustic-design stone buildings (now on the National Register of Historic Places). After World War II, Lakeside entered a long period of stability. From the 1950s through the 1980s, the curriculum grew, a cadre of faculty provided remarkable continuity, the campus expanded to its present size of 147 acres, and another reorganization placed Lakeside under the auspices of the Board of Regents. When, in the early 1990s, funding cuts to the three regents universities threatened Lakeside's future, Okoboji community leaders stepped in to create the financial security that has ensured its continuation into a second century.

Lannoo's narrative is based in large part on Debby Zieglowsky's well-researched article, "Thomas Macbride's Dream: Iowa Lakeside Laboratory," published in the *Palimpsest* in 1985, and two key reports on the status of Lakeside produced during Richard Bovbjerg's long tenure as director (1964–1989). However, Lannoo brings the story up to date, and Jane Shuttleworth contributes a brief chapter on the "Friends of Lakeside Lab," which now plays a large role in Lakeside's operation and maintenance. A series of useful appendixes chart the growth and change in Lakeside's curriculum from 1946 through 2010. Altogether, *The Iowa Lakeside Laboratory* presents the essential story of a truly distinctive place and a significant state asset.