

Two changes that would help the readers of any future editions would be, first, more variety in the contemporary photographs. While informative and serviceable, author Bohi's depot pictures are relentlessly repetitive three-quarter oblique views that become as standardized as many of the buildings they portray. Surprisingly, in a book devoted to the importance of architectural details, there is not a single photographic closeup of one piece of ornamentation. Second, the biggest help to the reader would be the addition of footnotes. It is this major omission that prevents this book, as helpful as it is to students of railroad architecture, from being fully accepted as a piece of serious scholarship.

*Pella Dutch: The Portrait of a Language and Its Use in One of Iowa's Ethnic Communities*, by Philip E. Webber. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988. ix, 163 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$14.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY SUZANNE SINKE, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

You don't have to be Dutch, or a linguist, to enjoy Philip Webber's *Pella Dutch*. In fact this work is, in many ways, best suited for "seriously interested nonspecialists" (102). As the subtitle indicates, this is a portrait not only of the form of Dutch spoken in Pella, but also an exploration of community history and the attitudes of townspeople towards ethnicity in this, Iowa's oldest Dutch-American settlement. The book is divided into three sections which reflect this broad scope: people, culture, and language.

Philip Webber, a professor of German and teacher of Dutch at Pella's Central College, uses a series of questionnaires and interviews as the core of his linguistic research. In addition, he draws on secondary and archival material to illustrate how aspects of community history have had an impact on the language. His insights into the waning vitality of Pella Dutch are predictable, though his discussion of which persons are most likely to continue using the language is less so.

As a sociolinguistic work, *Pella Dutch* cries out for comparison with Jo Daan's *"Ik was te bissie . . .": Nederlanders en hun taal in de Verenigde Staten* (1987), a study similarly based on interviews with Dutch-Americans, though not confined to one community. Whereas Daan offers an extensive array of statistics from her research, and places the results firmly within the context of existing sociolinguistic theory, Webber keeps both the quantitative data and the theoretical discussion to a minimum. Instead, he frames the study of vocabulary, grammar, conversational style, and humor in anecdote. Further,

Webber's investigation into Pella's history and culture is cursory. The result is that *Pella Dutch* is easily accessible to a broad audience, yet less satisfying on a more academic plane.

*More Han Ola og Han Per*, by Peter J. Rosendal. A bilingual edition edited by Einar Haugen and Joan N. Buckley. Bur Oak Book. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988. xxvi, 167 pp. Illustrations. \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY LEIGH D. JORDAHL, LUTHER COLLEGE

For almost twenty years (1918–1935), readers of the widely circulated Norwegian-American newspaper, the *Decorah Posten*, were regaled by the outrageous antics of Ola and Per. Per was the major character; excitable, baffled by strange American ways and always ready to speak his mind, he reacted dramatically to every situation. Polla, his "city girl" wife, had a mother who was the stereotype of the disagreeable mother-in-law. Lars, Per's newcomer older brother, was an "educated fool," more of a nuisance than a help on the farm, and much given to his bottle of moonshine. Ola, Per's neighbor and daily buddy, was easygoing, jolly, not very bright, utterly baffled by new technology, and dependent on Per for advice. The characters all spoke a form of Norwegian mixed with Norwegianized English, referred to by other Norwegians as "Spring Grove Norse." Their lives as recorded by humorist Peter J. Rosendal were filled with events that, however outrageous, never failed to delight *Posten* readers. As a comic strip, *Ola og Per* was of a quality equal to that of the well-known contemporary English language strips *Andy Gump* or *Bringing Up Father*.

Oxford University Press published a volume of earlier strips under the title *Han Ola og Han Per*. This volume includes 331 strips published between 1926 and 1935, and represents Rosendal's work at its creative best. Splendidly edited, this bilingual edition includes two excellent introductory essays by the editors. Anyone with an interest in Norwegian-American ethnicity or, for that matter, in the technological revolution that was so radically transforming all rural life during the 1920s and 1930s will find this a thoroughly rewarding volume. So attractive is the format that this collection would also make a splendid gift to pass on to a friend who might appreciate a delightful out-of-the-ordinary book.

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