

overtaken the younger adults, and the excitement of shopping trips to urban malls and the local absorption of media culture lay bare the dissolution of the contained rural community.

This book presents an authentic, nonromantic rural Iowa that may be too real for those looking for the comforting agrarian images of fortitude, independence, and plenty. Although Schwartz has culled her photographs and interviews to present a coherent story, it is as close to being the raw data of ethnographic fieldwork as we find in published form. The documentary quality of the book underscores its authenticity. It also limits the analysis, even as it invites readers to their own understanding—or to arguments.

And I do argue with some points that seem uncritically presented. The common belief that Iowa farmers were once independent of the capitalist marketplace does not fit with historical facts. The material on the rise of external influences is presented as if there were prior pristine rural sentiments independent of wider social messages—as if the traditional church, for example, did not constitute an external influence. While middle-class rural people tend not to acknowledge the saliency of social class, the omission of the voices of rural poverty feeds into its own myth.

But my arguments arise out of the richness of the description. This is a book to think about, to argue with, and to put into various theoretical frameworks. Anyone who reads it will come away with a deeper and more active understanding of rural Iowa.

Black Eagle Child: The Facepaint Narratives, by Ray A. Young Bear. Foreword by Albert E. Stone. Singular Lives: The Iowa Series in North American Autobiography. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992. xv, 261. Illustrations. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY FRED MCTAGGART, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

In the early 1970s, when I undertook a study of Mesquakie stories for my Ph.D. dissertation, Ray Young Bear, a.k.a. Edgar Bearchild, had just returned from Pomona College and was enrolled as an undergraduate at the University of Iowa. My somewhat naive goal, presented many times to Young Bear, was to put the stories of the Red Earth People in a meaningful context so they could be preserved by the Mesquakies and understood by the Euro-American culture. As Ray politely declined to collaborate officially in my project, I was struck by his strong ties to home and family. He seized every possible opportunity to accompany me on my trips to the

Tama settlement. Instead of answering my direct questions, Ray and other Mesquakies dangled before me indirections, riddles, challenges, ambiguities, and puzzles that I later came to accept as meaningful gifts. Twenty years later, after reading the *Black Eagle Child* narrative, I feel indebted again to Ray Young Bear for his artful job of putting the pieces of the puzzle together. As a fictional narrative, *Black Eagle Child: The Facepaint Narratives* is not nearly as dense as Young Bear's excellent poetry. For those of us who have struggled with the poetic images, viewing Mesquakie life as through a glass darkly, the fictional account provides a welcome emergence into the light of day.

Although many of the characters are fictional composites, the narrative is actually a thinly disguised autobiographical account that follows the narrator, Edgar Bearchild, from his groping adolescence in the 1960s through a brief stay at Pomona College and finally his return to the Black Eagle Child (Mesquakie) settlement to become a man made of words. For those who wish to understand a tenacious traditional culture that exists within the heart of Iowa, Young Bear gives a detailed description of what it's like to be a Mesquakie—the poverty of everyday existence versus the richness of sacred traditions, the proud heritage of family versus the pettiness of tribal politics. Interwoven with ordinary and extraordinary experiences of the present day (with allusions to the Doors, Alfred E. Neumann, and Bonnie and Clyde) are stories from the past and distant past: historical accounts of the founding of the settlement, a family legend told by his uncle Carson Two Red Foot, Winter stories narrated by his grandmother, references to myths and creation stories that continue to guide roles, attitudes, values. Through drummer and singer Pat "Dirty" Red Hat, we are introduced to the cryptic complexity of Mesquakie song and the role of creativity in a traditional community. My favorite section is Edgar Bearchild's moving account of the first four places in his life—stories I heard in bits and pieces twenty years ago, now revealed in all their power.

As one who has traveled the roads of the Mesquakie settlement, I am impressed by the sense of place conveyed by Ray Young Bear. The reader is allowed to experience all of the intricate geography of the settlement, blended with historical awe for what transpired in a special place at a certain time in history or prehistory. By no means does Ray Young Bear romanticize the people who often seem trapped in a world of poverty, alcoholism, and family scandal, but he does present a view of his people's spirituality that is too easily missed by outsiders. All packed for a trip to South Dakota, Edgar's father is so encouraged by the arrival of a thunderstorm

that he leaves the station wagon to charge into the field to pray and throw tobacco to the spirits, much as a Euro-American male might rush back into the house to watch two more minutes of an important college basketball game. In the middle of a drunken adolescent scene at the powwow grounds, Ted Facepaint has the eloquence and maturity to utter, "Tomorrow evening, revived by rain, thunder, and lightning, the new Red-hatted Grandfather will stand by the forest's edge" (83).

While not wishing to detract from the artistic creation, I am impressed by the book's accomplishment as an autobiographical document. For those who study literature, *Black Eagle Child* presents stories in their fullest context for understanding of meaning and function. For anthropologists, the book offers a many-faceted view of a traditional culture. Readers experience, for example, a Ghost Feast and adoption ceremony with more vividness than any documentary film could provide. For historians, Young Bear offers not just a Mesquakie version of the events of the past one hundred years but a convincing account of the way history guides life in a traditional culture. For anyone who simply wants to learn, *Black Eagle Child* is a revelation, "a true encounter with a mysterious force . . . impervious to bullets, sacred incense, and admissions of poverty."

Iowa: Perspectives on Today and Tomorrow, by Robert James Waller. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991. xiii, 322 pp. Diagrams, notes, appendix. \$27.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY GARY HEATH, MOUNT ST. CLARE COLLEGE

Robert James Waller, former dean of the Business College at the University of Northern Iowa and currently professor, grew up near Rockford, Iowa, on a farm. Although his book focuses on the economic future of Iowa, drawing on interviews and library research across the state, he incorporates a good deal of anecdotal history derived from his many years here. Particularly revealing are his comments on how farm life has changed and his observations on how politicians and Iowa Department of Economic Development officials go about planning our economy. Anyone interested in Iowa business history would find this book especially appealing.

Professor Waller takes Iowa economic planners and politicians to task for thinking almost exclusively in quantitative terms, for equating economic growth with the good life. He asks: What are we trying to do with our economy? Stimulate consumers to ever higher

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