

Book Notices

Letters from New France: The Upper Country, 1683-1783, translated and edited by Joseph L. Peyser. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992. xv, 248 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JAMES W. OBERLY, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE

Joseph L. Peyser has collected a set of documents and letters written by French settlers, traders, and officials in the western Great Lakes region, or the "pays d'haut." Many of the documents come from the editor's work with historic Fort St. Joseph near present-day Niles, Michigan. The focus of the book, however, extends beyond the relations between the French and their Miami and Potawatomi neighbors on the St. Joseph's River. Several of the letters shed light on the war against the Mesquakie, a topic of interest to readers of this journal. A separate chapter contains letters that illuminate the war between the French and Miamis and the English-allied Chickasaws over control of the lower Mississippi River.

Peyser provides each chapter with a brief introduction. Each letter or document also contains an annotation, as well as a footnote showing the source for the document. The volume very much lives up to the standards expected of documentary editing today. The letters in this volume can also be read with profit in conjunction with Richard White's recent *The Middle Ground*. Several of the themes outlined in White's volume can be seen in the documents that Peyser has prepared.

The Wedding Dress: Stories from the Dakota Plains, by Carrie Young. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992. 126 pp. \$16.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ELIZABETH HAMPSTEN, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

Births, deaths, marriages, a murder, bachelor farmers, seamstresses, midwives, farm workers, high school kids at a dance—the stories from the thirties and forties that Carrie Young tells in *The Wedding Dress* are the sort that linger in the memories of families and com-

munities. They are good to hear out loud and are rich in information about how things are done (how, for instance, a Minneapolis dress shop is managed, or how bachelor farmer brothers adjust to a wife).

"Haunting," "tragic," "enigmatic," and "luminous" is how the dust jacket describes the stories, and while the words apply, Carrie Young nevertheless resists, I think, telling *all* of any story. The two widowed farmers in "The Sins of the Fathers" are embarrassed for having impregnated their wives before they married. One is the father of two sons, the other jealously guards the virtue of two daughters. The young people go to a dance, the car breaks down, and when they do get home their fathers insist on immediate weddings. Eight months and three weeks later a baby is born to each pair, but, because of Navy service in World War II, "the Mulhellen boys themselves didn't know they had become fathers . . . [and] didn't meet their sons until the little boys were almost three years old." The narrator's sticking to surface information does not seem quite enough for such imposed biological destiny; day-by-day details are so rich one longs to pierce further beneath the surface.

Immigration and Ethnicity: American Society—"Melting Pot" or "Salad Bowl"?, edited by Michael D'Innocenzo and Josef P. Sirefman. Contributions to Sociology 97. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992. xi, 344 pp. Tables, charts, notes, index. \$45.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PHILIP E. WEBBER, CENTRAL COLLEGE

Even though this book does not offer a specific Iowa focus, readers of the *Annals of Iowa* interested in the state's patterns of ethnicity may well wish to become familiar with this volume. Ours is certainly a state in which it would be possible to test the limits of the more conventional "melting pot" and currently more favored "salad bowl" metaphors for ethnic variety in American society.

The first section, "Preserving Ethnic Identity," includes an essay on Holland, Michigan's Tulip Festival that invites comparison with situations in Pella and Orange City. Equally important for an understanding of ethnicity in the state are papers on such topics as mobility and ethnicity, politics and ethnicity, and the mechanisms and dynamics of ethnic self-identification.

The second group of essays, on the varieties of social and cultural experiences of immigrants and ethnics, includes several studies based on literary sources, including Willa Cather's *My Antonia*.

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