

booking country and pop concerts. As Leslie terms it, recent fairs have offered “new traditions,” a paradoxical term that encapsulates the fair’s longstanding tension between promoting innovation and hailing the virtues of traditional rural life. Today, Leslie writes, the fair “has become a touchstone throughout the country for the largely lost connection to our agrarian past” (21).

Iowa State Fair is beautifully produced and lavishly illustrated, with more images than pages. Leslie makes good use of photographs, postcards, and advertisements to evoke vividly the fair’s growth. His additional evidence consists primarily of journalistic accounts of the fair and the fair’s own promotional material. Historians will note the absence of archival sources and historiographic debates, but general readers will find Leslie’s narrative engaging.

One Day for Democracy: Independence Day and the Americanization of Iron Range Immigrants, by Mary Lou Nemanic. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007. xvii, 252 pp. Map, illustrations, color plates, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Frank Van Nuys is associate professor of history at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. He is the author of *Americanizing the West: Race, Immigrants, and Citizenship, 1890–1930* (2002).

Mary Lou Nemanic’s brief study of how immigrants alternately shaped and were shaped by Fourth of July celebrations in the Iron Range communities of northern Minnesota is both a personal and scholarly work. She and her husband, a native of the area, have devoted years to traveling the region collecting the photographs and oral histories that provide the foundation for this engaging book. Nemanic draws on a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, cultural studies, folklore studies, history, mass communication, and sociology, to examine a century of Front Range Independence Day celebrations. For her, the Fourth of July is “a cultural text or cultural artifact” (17) that demonstrates how immigrant groups have developed American identities that strongly reflect ethnicity and class while also making accommodations to the unrelenting pressures of mass culture.

The author uses the historical background of the American Revolution and early nineteenth-century Independence Day festivities to situate her twentieth-century Iron Range celebrations within rowdy Old World carnival traditions of resistance. Native-born members of the middle class were equally determined to transform the holiday into a venue of unity and decorum, an impulse given significant impetus during an era of labor strife in the first two decades of the 1900s.

"In this repressive era," she writes, "the Fourth of July was indeed a day of democracy when workers could freely express themselves, control the public streets, invert the order of everyday life, make fun of the privileged, and get gloriously drunk" (84). By the time of the Great Depression, however, Fourth of July celebrations in the Iron Range had become decidedly less connected to carnival traditions, increasingly patriotic, and more heavily influenced by mass culture and consumerism, with activities centered on children and families. Mass culture affected the region even more profoundly after World War II, signified by Independence Day queen contests that affirmed "values that equated democracy with capitalism and conflated citizenship with consumption" (133). As working-class immigrant generations gave way to middle-class ethnics, the desire to reflect shared national values as good Americans affected the tone of Fourth of July activities in the Iron Range.

Yet here is where Nemanic's investigation turns postmodern scholarly assumptions about the overwhelming power of mass culture on their heads. Despite the massive pressures to conform to acceptable middle-class consumerism and consensus, the boisterous and irreverent legacy of earlier celebrations survived and adapted. "Callithumpian parades," clown bands, and cross-dressing have persisted right up to the present day as essential parts of Iron Range Independence Day rituals. Even the intensification of national security concerns in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks elicited humorous and sarcastic portrayals reminiscent of the Old World carnival traditions of the Iron Range.

For scholars and anyone interested in Iowa and the Midwest, *One Day for Democracy* should inspire reflection on the meanings we attach to commemoration of Independence Day and other holidays. Is the Iron Range unique in its enduring carnivalesque traditions, or have other places also maintained alternative ways of interpreting American identity? I am uneasy with Nemanic's characterization of "Progressive reform" as "a major movement to Americanize immigrants" (88) when Americanization was but a small part of the vastly complex phenomena historians have labored to describe as Progressivism. The author also tantalizingly includes Native Americans' participation in Iron Range Fourth of July celebrations in the 1890s, yet does not carry that theme into the twentieth century. These minor quibbles aside, *One Day for Democracy* is an exciting contribution to our evolving understanding of how Americans of all backgrounds celebrate themselves and their sense of nationality.