

The Lendt book has numerous shortcomings. At times it is more a study of a few Copperhead papers than an analysis of the press as a whole. Moreover, the author frequently fails to use either the best or latest monographic literature. Instead he often turns to a college-level textbook, *The United States*, by Hofstadter, Miller and Aaron, even using the 1957 edition! Errors and confusing statements mar the text. For instance, he writes on page 99 that editor Henry Clay Dean "was a Methodist preacher and Chaplain in the U.S. Senate during part of Pierce's administration. [1853-1857] When the Methodist Episcopal Church split on the question of slavery in 1844, he retired from the ministry and returned to law." The latter sentence, of course, seemingly contradicts the former one.

Demise of the Democracy: The Copperhead Press in Iowa is a photo-offset reduction of Lendt's original typescript. Although this concept of publishing is excellent, bringing into general circulation studies that might forever be lost, in Lendt's case it merely reinforces this reviewer's impression that the end product is still an unedited master's thesis. Considering the limitations of Lendt's work, it might have paid him to condense his essential points in an article-length piece on the Copperhead press as he did with "Iowa and the Copperhead Movement" for the Fall 1970 issue of the *Annals of Iowa*.

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Mine, by Ransom Jeffery and John Keeble. New York: Grossman Publishers Inc. 1974. pp. 280. \$7.95.

There is a new and unorthodox Iowa in Ransom Jeffery and John Keeble's recent collaborative novel. Gone is the Iowa of farmers struggling with the land, of settlers fighting the weather.

Gone are the virtues of taming nature and enduring immigrants' hardships. Rag and St. James, *Mine's* two protagonists, are of the generation that is the fruit of those earlier battles. They are young men freed from the traditional rural modes of searching for food, clothing, and shelter. They work at occasional jobs, deal some drugs, think about school. They are, for lack of a better term, Iowans of the counter-culture. And while they live in Iowa City, Hills, and Oasis, one gets the feeling that they could and would be found anywhere in America in 1974.

The blurb on *Mine* describes the novel as a double-concerto. It is that. The book is an exchange of two alternating first person narratives which overlap more or less successfully as the story moves along. Rag, originally from Florida, and St. James, born in Hills, spin out a tale which involves, as its basic structure, a shipment of marijuana into Iowa City and the search for that shipment when it becomes "lost." The hunt for the shipment is the backdrop for a kind of Faulknerian gothicism in which Rag (to my mind the more enjoyable and better written narrator) and St. James must confront manhood, friendship, and the possibilities of evil.

Concern about drugs, double-dealing sex, and freaked-out friends that motivate Rag and St. James are a far cry from the woes of the people in Hamlin Garland or Ruth Suckow's Midwest or, to use a more recent example, from the 30s Iowa that Curtis Harnack remembers in His *We Have All Gone Away* (1973) [reviewed in the Spring, 1974 *Annals*]. I sometimes found it difficult to care about Rag and St. James and their friends, difficult to find a basis for empathizing with their lives. Too often, the emotional impact of the novel goes up in the smoke of the joints everybody in the book is constantly smoking.

Yet while the struggles in *Mine* are a far cry from the more traditional rites of passage, this new Iowa, more because of than in spite of its whiff of hippie decadence, is an authentic one. Jeffery and Keeble, who were both students at the Iowa Writers' Workshop and who have both lived on Iowa farms, are accurate observers of the Iowa scene. There are no cheap shots in *Mine*. One can draw a map of the Iowa City-Hills area from this novel. One can taste much of the flavor of the Midwest in the authors' description of the fields, woods, streams, towns, and storms that

they both know thoroughly. More important, Keeble and Jeffery are perceptive enough to see beneath or through the dope-screens. In scenes such as the killing of St. James' son, the rape of St. James' mother, and Rag's reaction to the death of an old bartender buddy, Jeffery and Keeble remind us that Rag and St. James are demeaned when reduced to the level of their external habits.

In *Mine*, the land, Iowa, stands as a given which stretches back to the time of Garland and the other early Iowa writers. It is the characters who stalk the land who have changed in ways unimaginable to Iowans of even a decade ago. And yet, there is a sense of midwestern sadness and loss in *Mine* which links it emotionally to the earlier stories of those who came to the Midwest and struggled with the region. It is Rag, the Floridian, who feels this sadness most acutely. About a third of the way through the novel, he reflects on his feelings about Cully and Cream, two local thugs out to get his stash, by saying:

Their appetites plague all civilizations. They devour vestiges of hope so that life to them actually appears to be nothing more than a game in which both losers and winners have the right to inflict pain. And it was this sort of mindlessness which moved me to the country with the desire of finding a periphery, not so much to observe but to insulate.

Rag and St. James both discover, in their own frame of reference, what the early farmers found out about the land. There is no periphery. There is no insulation. What makes Rag and St. James worth caring about is that, despite this knowledge, they both want to overcome mindlessness, to be, in terms they would not use, honest and moral men.

"Iowa is beautiful," says coy and naive Annie, the drug runner and lover. Rag and St. James go further. Iowa is beautiful but it is a difficult paradise. Accepting the limitations of Iowa's contemporary paradise-seekers is at the core of the thrust of this book.

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