

*Camp Dodge*, by Mary L. Jones and Michael Vogt. Images of America Series. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2009. 127 pp. Illustrations, bibliography. \$21.99 paper.

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*Camp Dodge* is a piece of pictorial nostalgia, depicting the home of the Iowa National Guard (ING) from 1905, when the state first purchased land to establish a permanent camp for the ING, through 2008. Prior to 1905, the ING held its annual training encampments at temporary sites scattered across the state. Acquisition of Camp Dodge gave the ING the opportunity to create a facility provided with permanent barracks, stables, cooking facilities, and training areas. The ING continues to use the camp to the present day.

The authors provide a brief, two-page overview of the book and the history of the camp. Thereafter, they initiate each chronologically arranged chapter with a single-paragraph introduction. All chapters are organized in the same format: plenty of photographs with brief explanatory captions. Some of the photographs are interesting, even intriguing, but because the introductory paragraphs provide little historical information on the ING, readers gain little from the photo captions as there is no substantive context within which to evaluate the photographs. Unfortunately, many of the photographs are pedestrian and repetitive, especially the frequent shots of the large swimming pool at the center of the camp. The authors even provide a shot of where the pool *used to be*.

During the two world wars, the federal government took control of Camp Dodge for use as a training ground and induction center. The authors tell us little about how the army used the camp, a notable omission because hundreds of thousands of men passed through the camp in 1917–18 and 1941–45, and their experience differed considerably from that of the Iowa Guardsmen in peacetime. Photo captions in the World War I chapter, four in all, suggest that the wartime camp had a significant impact on nearby Des Moines and smaller communities in the area, but much more could have been said about the presence of more than 100,000 men in the area.

These chapters in particular demonstrate the fallibility of the theory that a picture is worth a thousand words. Here we see that pictures are pictures; if we are to understand what they mean, beyond experiencing a momentarily nostalgic moment, then we must be told something about them. Most of *Camp Dodge* suffers from the absence of explanation and analysis.