Kenneth Lyftogt's three-volume series *Iowa and the Civil War* have often drawn on and synthesized these individual studies.[13]

While each of these works has contributed to our understanding of Iowa during the Civil War era, they represent a beginning and not an end. The work of historians on this subject is only expanding as our views of who is worthy of study continue to widen. Also, rather than running out of materials and topics to research and write about concerning the Civil War era, historians continually uncover more of what was once discarded and forgotten by many. Some of the most striking research being done by historians today on this transformative period is on how Black Iowans fought for equal rights by petitioning to repeal Iowa's Black laws, organized Colored Conventions to leverage Black political power, and petitioned for further rights through community engagement and participation in social organizations.[14] As a result, the next 175 years look bright for the study of Iowa during the Civil War era.

Immigration to Iowa: A Brief History & Historiography

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NATIVE PEOPLE HAD LIVED IN IOWA for thousands of years before Europeans first set foot in it and can be considered the state's first immigrants. Millions of others have come to Iowa since the 1830s—the removal of Iowa's original inhabitants in the 1840s opened its prairies for

13. Thomas Baker, *The Sacred Cause of Union: Iowa and the Civil War* (Iowa City, 2016); Kenneth Lyftogt, *Iowa and the Civil War, Volume 1: Free Child of The Missouri Compromise, 1850–1862* (Iowa City, 2018); Kenneth Lyftogt, *Iowa and the Civil War, Volume 2: From Iuka to the Red River, 1862–1864* (Iowa City, 2020).

14. For research on Iowa's participation in the Colored Conventions movement see some of the resources discovered by the Iowa Colored Conventions Digital Project at www.coloredconventions.org. For examples of the work being done on topics of race, gender, and Iowa communities, see Brie Swenson Arnold, "An Opportunity to Challenge the 'Color Line': Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Women's Labor Activism in Late Nineteenth-Century Cedar Rapids, Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 74 (2015), 101–41; Dwain Coleman, "Still in the Fight: The Struggle for Community for African Americans in the Upper Midwest," (MA thesis, Iowa State University, 2016).

settlement. People came to Iowa seeking economic independence, fleeing unemployment, hunger, or political or religious repression.[1]

The first great wave of American and European immigrants to Iowa came before the Civil War. Most were from northern states, but many thousands were foreign-born. They included the Dutch, Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, and Irish, as well as the Amish and those who settled in the Amana Colonies. Historian Dorothy Schwieder has immigration as a key theme in her *Iowa: The Middle Land*. Migrants made Iowa, providing cultural diversity, ideals, and religious and educational institutions. Between the Civil War and the Great Depression, a greater variety of people migrated to Iowa, including African-Americans, who fled slavery and sought better lives in Iowa, and Southern and Eastern Europeans, such as Italians and Russian Jews. From 1924 to 1965 immigration to the United States was restricted. The numbers of migrants from Italy and Russia fell drastically; almost all Asian immigrants were barred. Iowa's foreign-born population fell from 9.4 percent of its residents in 1920 to only 1.4 percent in 1970. The Great Migration of African-Americans from southern states into northern and western states mostly bypassed Iowa though, with migrants drawn to jobs in larger cities. Since the 1970s, when refugees first came to Iowa from Southeast Asia, the state has seen a growing diversity of migrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia.[2]

The two largest migrant groups in the nineteenth century were from Ireland and Germany. The Irish first came to Dubuque as miners in 1830. Many more came in the 1850s fleeing English oppression and the potato famine, settling across the state. Germans first reached the state in the 1830s. Davenport became a destination for many who had

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1. Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, *To Their Own Soil: Agriculture in the Antebellum North* (Ames, 1987), 76–80.

2. Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land* (Ames, 1996), chapters three, seven and eleven; Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History* (New York, 2020), 2: 803–05; Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics On the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 2000, Working Paper No. 81" (Washington, D.C., 2006), table 14. Foner's book also has a strong focus on immigration. *The Palimpsest* dedicated its April 1962 issue to immigrant groups from western and northern Europe, but more recent migrants have not received as much coverage in Iowa's history journals. Iowa's population grew very slowly during the period of immigration restriction, only 17.5% from 1920 to 1970, see Leland L. Sage, *A History of Iowa* (Ames, 1974), 310. The state's population has also grown slowly since 1970, the result of being a mature farm state with an often stagnant economy and few cities to attract immigrants. In 2018, 6 percent of Iowa's residents were foreign-born, see www. Americanimmigrationcouncil.org /research/immigrants-in-iowa.

left home to avoid required military service. Political repression led to the emigration of many more. In 1895 there were 132,347 German-born Iowans, making them the largest foreign-born population. The Irish were second with 33,006 inhabitants. Germans and Irish have received lots of attention. Mark Wyman's *Immigrants in the Valley: Irish, Germans, and Americans in the Upper Mississippi Country, 1830–1860* is an important survey. An issue of the *Palimpsest* was dedicated to the Irish in Iowa in February 1964; a number of articles have been dedicated to the Germans. The best recent survey of the Irish is Timothy Walch's *Irish Iowa*.[3]

The Amish and the Amana Colonies have attracted plenty of historical attention. A German communal society migrated to Iowa in the 1850s, settling west of Iowa City in a collection of villages that became known as the Amana Colonies. Peter Hoehnle's short *The Amana People: The History of a Religious Community* supplements the more detailed account by Barbara Selzer Yambura and Eunice W. Bodine, *A Change and a Parting: My Story of Amana*. More than sixty articles, dissertations, theses, and books were written on Amana from 1952–86. The Amish are a highly religious and distinctive community, who lived a pastoral life isolated from outside influences. This group has been well-studied. The most important work is by Dorothy and Elmer Schwieder, whose book *A Peculiar People: Iowa's Old Order Amish* is the standard account.[4]

Dutch immigrants came to Iowa in the 1840s, settling near Pella. They left the Netherlands because of agricultural failures and sought religious freedom. Eight hundred settled near Pella, buying 47,000 acres. In the 1870s another group migrated to northwest Iowa, as land

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3. Homer L. Calkin, "Settlers on the Iowa Frontier," *Palimpsest* 45 (1964), 48–55; Mark Wyman, *Immigrants in the Valley: Irish, Germans, and Americans in the Upper Mississippi Country, 1830–1860* (Chicago, 1984), 64–70; Thomas P. Christensen, "A German Forty-Eighter in Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 26 (1945), 245–53; *Census of Iowa for the Year 1895* (Des Moines, 1896), 306–07; Timothy Walch, *Irish Iowa* (Charleston, SC, 2019).

4. Peter Hoehnle, *The Amana People: The History of a Religious Community* (Iowa City, 2003), 7–24, 29–33, 47; Barbara Selzer Yambura with Eunice W. Bodine, *A Change and A Parting: My Story of Amana* (Ames, 1960), 28–32; see Patricia Dawson and David Hudson, *Iowa History and Culture: A Bibliography of Materials Published Between 1952 and 1986* (Ames, 1989), 111–13. The April 1971 *Palimpsest* is dedicated to the Amana colonies. Elmer Schwieder and Dorothy Schwieder, *A Peculiar People: Iowa's Old Order Amish* (Iowa City, 2009), 4–24, 37–43, 51–52, 69; "The Amish," *Goldfinch* (Spring 1975), 1–4. J. F. Swartzendruber, "An Amish Migration," *Palimpsest* 17 (October 1936), 342–57, is an excellent firsthand account of immigration and settlement. The March 1959 *Palimpsest* is dedicated to Iowa's Mennonites.

had become too expensive around Pella. The Dutch have attracted sustained historical attention, with Jacob Van der Zee's 1912 *The Hollanders of Iowa* being the basic, though elderly, book on the subject. A variety of articles on the Dutch have been published since the early twentieth century. The most recent of these is Andrew Klumpp's article in the *Annals* in January 2020, with one of the earliest by Cyrenus Cole in 1895.[5]

Scandinavians also came to Iowa in large numbers. Norwegians left a country with little good farmland, lured by better economic opportunities in America. Swedes fled high taxes, bad harvests, and limited options. Letters home brought additional migrants. In 1895 the state had 27,428 people born in Norway and 31,085 from Sweden. Both groups outnumbered immigrants from England. These two immigrant groups have not been ignored, with many articles, and some books, published in Iowa historical journals. *The Palimpsest* dedicated its May 1966 issue to Swedes and its August 1959 issue to Norwegian immigrants.[6]

Several thousand Italians also came to Iowa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, fleeing prolonged economic difficulties at home. Most settled in Des Moines or in the coal fields in central Iowa. Italian immigration has received relatively little attention from those studying the state.[7]

Iowa's Jewish population has always been small, a fraction of 1 percent of the state's residents. Keokuk had the state's largest Jewish population in the mid-nineteenth century. Small clusters of Jews lived in Burlington, Ottumwa, and Muscatine. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries thousands of Jewish immigrants came to Iowa, fleeing persecution in Russia. By 1918, 16,000 lived in the state. The Jewish

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5. Robert P. Swierenga, ed., "A Dutch Immigrant's View of Frontier Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 38 (1965), 81–118; Ronald D. Rietveld, "Hendrick Peter Scholte and the Land of Promise," *Annals of Iowa* 48 (1986), 135–54; Jacob Van der Zee, *The Hollanders of Iowa* (Iowa City, 1912), 123–32; Cyrenus Cole, "A Bit of Holland in America," *Midland Monthly* 3 (February 1895), 115–28; Andrew Klumpp, "Colony Before Party: The Ethnic Origins of Sioux County's Political Tradition," *Annals of Iowa* 79 (2020), 1–34.

6. C.J.A. Ericson, "Memories of a Swedish Immigrant of 1852," *Annals of Iowa* 8 (1907), 1–7; Ardith K. Melloh, "New Sweden, Iowa," *Palimpsest* 59 (1978), 2–19; Homer L. Calkin, "The Scandinavians," *Palimpsest* 43 (1962), 161–68; *Census of Iowa for the Year 1895*, 306. Ericson's memoir and that of Norwegian immigrant Elizabeth Koren are excellent first-hand accounts. See David T. Nelson, ed., *The Diary of Elisabeth Koren, 1853–1855* (Northfield, MN, 1955).

7. Maureen McCoy and William Silag, "The Italian Heritage in Des Moines," *Palimpsest* 64 (1983), 60–67; Dorothy Schwieder, "Italian-Americans in Iowa's Coal Mining Industry," *Annals of Iowa* 46 (1982), 263–78.

population of Iowa has received some attention recently, with important articles from Michael Bell and Shari Rabin.[8]

Iowa's African-American population was only about 1,000 people before the Civil War; this number grew to almost 20,000 by 1920. Until the 1970s African-Americans made up less than 1 percent of the state's population. Iowa's African-American residents have received more attention since the 1980s. James Hall published a good overview of Black migration to the state. An invaluable guide is *Outside In: African-Americans in Iowa, 1838–2000*, with chapters on topics from military service to farming. Leslie Schwalm's *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest* is a comprehensive review of the era. *Buxton: A Black Utopia in the Heartland* discusses the southern origins of many Black mine workers. William L. Hewitt's 1989 article on Sioux City is a useful study of migration, race, and employment. Black communities in Des Moines, Waterloo, and elsewhere need significant further attention.[9]

Immigrants from Mexico began to move to Iowa in increasing numbers in the 1910s and 1920s. They came to Iowa to work on farms and railroads, fleeing the Mexican Revolution and seeking work. By 1920, Iowa had more than 2,500 Mexican inhabitants. The literature on Mexican immigrants to Iowa is pretty sparse. Several important articles in the *Annals* by Omar Valerio-Jimenez, Janet Weaver, and Nathaniel Otjan have begun to explore the Latinx experience in the state but their history is very incomplete.[10]

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8. William J. Petersen, *The Story of Iowa: The Progress of an American State* (New York, 1952), 2: 745–46; Shari Rabin, "'A Nest to the Wandering Bird': Iowa and the Creation of American Judaism, 1855–1877," *Annals of Iowa* 73 (2014), 101–27; Michael J. Bell, "'True Israelites of America': The Story of the Jews of Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 53 (Spring 1994), 85–127.

9. Leslie A. Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009); Willis Goudy, "Selected Demographics: Iowa's African-American Residents, 1840–2000," in *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838–2000*, ed. Bill Silag (Des Moines, 2001), 28; James L. Hill, "Migration of Blacks to Iowa, 1820–1960," *Journal of Negro History* 66 (Winter 1981–82), 289–303; William L. Hewitt, "So Few Undesirables: Race, Residence, and Occupation in Sioux City, 1890–1925," *Annals of Iowa* 50 (1989), 158–79; Dorothy Schwieder, Joseph Hraba, and Elmer Schwieder, *Buxton: A Black Utopia in the Heartland* (Iowa City, 2003).

10. Omar Valerio-Jimenez, "Racializing Mexican Immigrants in Iowa's Early Mexican Communities," *Annals of Iowa* 75 (2016), 1–46; Janet Weaver, "From Barrio to 'Boicoteo!': The Emergence of Mexican American Activism in Davenport, 1917–1970," *Annals of Iowa* 68 (2009), 215–54; Nathaniel Otjen, "Creating a Barrio in Iowa City, 1916–1936: Mexican Section Laborers and the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad Company," *Annals of Iowa* 76 (2017), 406–32. The

After the Vietnam War, refugees from Southeast Asia came to Iowa. The most well-known of these groups was the Tai Dam. Other refugees also came, including Thais, Laotians, Hmong, and Vietnamese, their immigration encouraged by Iowa Governor Robert Ray. These people have received very little historical attention. *The Annals* has not published any articles on their history, though two now-defunct Iowa journals published brief articles. Matthew Walsh dedicates much of his book on Robert Ray to the story of these refugees—this is the best source for their story.[11]

From the 1980s until today immigrants came from Latin America, often to work in meatpacking plants. Packers also hired those from countries such as Laos and Ethiopia. The influx of newcomers added a diverse mix of people from around the globe to Iowa, transforming some Iowa towns, such as Storm Lake. Deborah Fink's important *Cutting Into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest* tells the story of Latinx employees at a plant in Perry in the mid-1990s. Art Cullen's *Storm Lake: Change, Resilience, and Hope in America's Heartland* dedicates large parts of later chapters to the immigrant experience.[12]

The state has also attracted refugee populations from Bosnia, Sudan, Somalia, Burma and Congo. All of these people fled conflict or civil wars. They came to Iowa seeking religious freedom, security, and economic opportunity—the same reasons people have come to the state for almost two hundred years. Coverage of these new immigrants has been almost entirely in the *Des Moines Register* and other papers in the state. Most immigrant groups that came to Iowa before the Civil War, from the Dutch to the Swedes and Irish, have received substantial attention from historians and writers. More recent groups, including Italians, Jews,

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Iowa Women's Archive, part of the University of Iowa Libraries, has collected the stories of Latina and Latino migrants in Iowa for their "Migration is Beautiful" project. See migration.lib.uiowa.edu.

11. Jon Bowermaster, *Governor: An Oral History of Robert D. Ray* (Ames, 1987), 237–41; Siang Bacthi, InNgeun Baccam Soulinthavong, and Jack Lufkin, "'So We Stayed Together': The Tai Dam Immigrate to Iowa," *Palimpsest* 69 (Winter 1988), 163–72; Matthew Walsh, "Iowa SHARES and the Cambodian Refugees," *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* 92 (2011), 100–09; Matthew Walsh, *The Good Governor: Robert Ray and the Indochinese Refugees of Iowa* (Jefferson, NC, 2017).

12. Deborah Fink, *Cutting Into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998), 192; Patricia Cohen, "Immigrants Keep an Iowa Meatpacking Town Alive and Growing," *New York Times*, nytimes.com, accessed 12/20/2020; Art Cullen, *Storm Lake: Change, Resilience, and Hope in America's Heartland* (New York, 2018).

African-Americans, and a wide variety of people from Latin America, Africa, and Asia need more study.[13]

The history of Iowa and its immigrants has been neglected in recent decades. Even state government struggles with the widespread belief that Iowa is a boring place where nothing of interest has ever occurred. When Governor Kim Reynolds declared March 2021 "Iowa History Month," she wore a shirt that said "Iowa: History Happens Here," an optimistic slogan which may highlight that much of the country sees Iowa as "flyover country." The state is viewed as a flat homogenous midwestern place, full of white people. Unfortunately, Iowa's reputation has not attracted much attention from historians of immigration because it is regarded as a state without much to study. It lacks big diverse cities, and it is often seen as a static, insulated, provincial backwater, like most of the Midwest. Nevertheless, historians, social scientists, journalists, and others should pay more attention to the topic, as Iowa is rapidly diversifying. Its nonwhite population has doubled since 2000, to 15 percent of the state's total. It remains one of the least racially and ethnically diverse states in the country, even if it is a place of significant religious diversity.[14]

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13. See Kalle Eko, "The Sudan Project: Being Sudanese American in Iowa," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 4/20/2011; Andrea May Sahouri, "'Putting My Heart in People's Lives': Barwaqo Aden finds Calling in Local Somali Community," *Des Moines Register*, 1/1/2020; "Why They Come to Iowa—A Closer Look at Immigration in Iowa," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 9/6/2014.

14. "Iowa History Month," Iowa Culture (website), accessed 5/1/2021, iowaculture.gov/history/IowaHistoryMonth; Kristin L. Hoganson, *The Heartland: An American History* (New York, 2019), xiv–xv, xxii–xxiii; www. census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kprof00-ia.pdf; www. census.gov/quickfacts/IA. The "white alone" population has fallen from 92.6% in 2000 to 85% in Iowa's 2019 census estimate. Nonwhite is defined as "white alone, not Hispanic or Latino." See "Racial & Ethnic Diversity" rank, under "Detailed Findings," at Adam McCann, "Most & Least Diverse States in America," wallethub.com/edu/most-least-diverse-states-in-america/38262, accessed 5/1/2021, for an analysis that shows Iowa as the least diverse state in the Midwest. This analysis counts nonwhites as the Census Bureau calculates. Maine, Vermont, West Virginia, New Hampshire and Montana—all rural states without big cities, mostly bordering Canada—have less racial and ethnic diversity than Iowa, according to this analysis. The only midwestern state that ranks outside the bottom 25 in this diversity ranking is Illinois. Most of the top ten states with the greatest "religious diversity" are in the Midwest though.