

The Omahas' new struggle centered on land called Blackbird Bend, largely defined by the shifting of the Missouri River channel between 1867 and the early 1970s. To help make their case, an "occupying force" of twelve carloads of Indians moved onto a portion of Blackbird Bend, pitched several teepees, and displayed a large framed copy of the 1854 treaty on which their claim was based. This occupation followed the pattern set by Indian activists around the country, most notably by AIM at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. A suit by one of the former Iowa owners of the land resulted in a court order requiring the Omahas "to vacate the land pending further hearings on the question of title to the property" (96). The Indians reoccupied the Blackbird Bend lands in the spring of 1975. Scherer observes that, "whatever AIM presence may have remained from 1973 was no longer visible in 1975, and the tribe presented a unified and cohesive front in asserting its right to the land" (97).

Scherer answers many questions about the Omahas' efforts to regain lost sovereignty and territory. However, his study lacks needed context. For example, how did the Omahas' efforts fit into the larger context of post-World War II Indian activism generally, and specifically the rise and fall of AIM's influence? How successfully did the other states included in the PL-280 mandate—California, Minnesota, Oregon, Wisconsin, and, in 1958, Alaska—respond to termination?

The Omahas did not regain all of the lands they claimed, but, "on a more positive note," Scherer concludes, "it may certainly be said that the struggle for Blackbird Bend represents one of the most significant steps taken by the Omaha Tribe in the last few decades to resurrect itself as a vibrant and economically viable political and cultural entity. . . . the Omahas take a measure of satisfaction in the fact that a portion of the land that they recovered in Iowa is now the site of the tribe's successful gaming operation, CasinOmaha" (113). Whether or not the casino turns out to be the Omahas' modern bison remains to be seen.

Alone among Friends: A Biography of W. Robert Parks, by Robert Underhill. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1999. xvii, 315 pp. Illustrations, tables, graphs, notes, chronology, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY STOW PERSONS, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, EMERITUS

W. Robert Parks was president of Iowa State University from 1965 to 1986. The author of this biography is an emeritus professor of English and speech at the same institution. The title of the book was apparently chosen to convey the author's impression that the president of a

university is necessarily an isolated and lonely figure, although in this case President Parks rightfully enjoyed the admiration and friendship of the university community. Parks is now retired, but the book reads like a campaign biography. This is of course the biographer's fault and not his.

The decades following World War II were the great takeoff period for American higher education, when, along with the phenomenal growth of all public colleges and universities, the agricultural and mechanical colleges and teachers colleges were converted into universities. At Iowa State, Presidents Hilton and Parks were the leaders who brought about this transformation. But since this was going on in so many places, readers are entitled to a detailed account of how it was done at Iowa State. Such an account is missing. Hilton was a local ag boy, rough and ready, while Parks was more sophisticated—an outsider with experience in Washington and Wisconsin, a political scientist who worked his way up through administrative offices while earning the confidence of faculty and administrative colleagues by seeking advice and showing good judgment and a willingness to compromise.

The foundation of any respectable American university is solid undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts and sciences. Achieving this status at Iowa State and Northern Iowa involved reversing the traditional Iowa policy of allocating separate and specialized functions among the three state institutions and preventing duplication of functions. Legislators and Regents had to be convinced of the merits of such a transformation and to be willing to assume the costs involved. Here the persuasive power of institutional leaders was crucial, and Parks met this test with skill and determination.

But this is not the principal emphasis of the present biography. Rather, the focus is on Parks's internal policy of consultation and compromise. It is understandable, perhaps, that a former head of a large department in the university should be impressed with these qualities, but he neglects what was surely the major significance of Park's presidential tenure. There are chapters on the campus uprising of the Vietnam era, on race relations, on intercollegiate athletics, and on university extension programs, in each of which the president's management skills are exhibited. But a detailed account of how the university was transformed is missing.

Preoccupation with personality rather than behavior is apparent in the biographer's methods of research. His principal sources are interviews, with Parks himself and with a score of friends and associates. These recollections invariably focus on personality. All is sweetness and light. The president with the longest tenure in the history of ISU

must have left an enormous collection of official papers, but there is no indication that such a collection was used, and indeed there is no reference to the use of the university archive save in the chapter on athletics. Robert Parks deserves a better biography.

A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community, by Robert R. Archibald. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999. 224 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$46.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY CAROL KAMMEN, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Robert Archibald invites readers of *A Place to Remember* to go along with him on three journeys. In this age of memoir and self-examination, the first is an invitation to join him on his return to Ishpeming, on Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where he was born. Here, where Archibald goes to write, he encounters the ghosts of his own past—some of whom are still quite alive. He examines changes in the community, especially looking at its decline after the iron mine closed, people moved away, and the town acquired its faded quality. He recalls old friends, makes new acquaintances, renews contacts. He ponders his own family's background, his ethnic heritage stemming from both Irish and Italian immigrants, and the complexity of those who have stayed on, continuing lives that he remembers being stuck at one particular time—the time when he left Ishpeming to make his way in the world. In this journey, Archibald mines oral resources: those comments remembered, local phrases, conversations, and investigation of the secrets of the past by means of questioning those who were there, those who had a reason to know, or to have some understanding.

Archibald recounts his own journey from the Upper Peninsula. He attended graduate school in New Mexico and worked there and in Wyoming. He became the director of the Montana Historical Society and finally landed in St. Louis as the CEO and director of the Missouri Historical Society (MHS). His trajectory has been as seeker and student, as employee of a state agency, and currently as the director of a private historical society whose roots go back to an elite private men's organization.

The second journey Archibald takes the reader on concerns Don Carlos DeLassus, a man of the nineteenth century who moved from France and a military career to the New World and to less than satisfactory situations and conditions. Archibald has worked long to figure out DeLassus's trajectory, and we learn about DeLassus as Archibald unfolds his discoveries. In this journey, there are sites to visit—though

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