

War II, and after. Although he did a great deal to promote the growth of Southern Illinois University, he had, according to Hartley, little interest in higher education.

The greater part of this biography concentrates on Powell's personal financial activities. According to Hartley, Powell was "a virtual moneymaking machine" (143). He made money in very small amounts; he made money in very large amounts. Most of his income came from racetrack investments and related activities. He was a major figure in securing passage of two laws passed in 1945 and 1949 that eliminated restrictions against pari-mutuel betting for harness racing. Shortly afterwards Powell purchased, in his wife's name, nearly 17,000 shares of Chicago Downs for ten cents a share. In four years it paid him a return of approximately 4,000 percent! Similar investments and consultant arrangements followed, and when he died he owned stock in seven horse-racing enterprises. He defended his stock holdings, claiming, apparently with a straight face, that income from them freed him "from bribes or acting in any way in conflict of office" (41).

Powell is best known for the \$800,000 in cash that was discovered at his death in his suite in a hotel in Springfield. It was widely believed that the money was in shoeboxes, although in fact most of it was in suitcases, envelopes, and strong boxes. No one has ever explained satisfactorily where the money came from or how it came to be in Powell's suite. Hartley registers his suspicions about the questionable behavior of a small group of Powell's associates and friends immediately upon his death and speculates about what actually happened. The Internal Revenue Service launched an investigation, charging tax fraud, and ultimately settled for nearly half of the \$3.3 million in Powell's estate.

Hartley's treatment of Paul Powell reads almost like a mystery novel as he tracks the money. However, he pays little attention to Powell's role in dealing with the impact of New Deal legislation on the state legislature during the 1930s or to the problems facing Illinois during World War II and after. The result is a delightful book that probably will not completely satisfy serious students of state government and Illinois history.

*In Search of Donna Reed*, by Jay Fultz. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998. xi, 236 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$25.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY M. ALISON KIBLER, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

This entertaining biography shatters the stereotype of Donna Reed as a sweetly submissive wife and mother. Her famous television show,

*The Donna Reed Show* (1958–1966), established her as a caricature of traditional family values, but her life and career, as Jay Fultz reveals, were far more complex. She was an Iowa girl and a Hollywood star, a devoted mother and ambitious professional, a sex symbol and a maternal figure on screen, and a symbol of conservative values and a pioneering liberal political activist.

Fultz carefully traces Donna Reed's upbringing in Iowa. She was born Donnabelle Mullenger in 1921 to Hazel (Shives) and William Mullenger in Denison, Iowa. Her family's farm life was comfortable, but difficult. The Mullengers lived without electricity until the early 1930s and cooked on a wood-burning stove. Donna Reed worked hard on the farm, earned good grades, and dreamed of a career in show business. With several beauty pageants and school plays under her belt, she moved to Los Angeles in 1938, where she lived with her eccentric Aunt Mildred and enrolled in radio courses at Los Angeles City College. Being named the campus queen at her college launched her movie career, which eventually included *It's a Wonderful Life* and *From Here to Eternity*.

Donna Reed's private life was not as traditional or as tranquil as the family life she portrayed on her hit television show. Her first marriage in 1943 ended in divorce after only a year and included an illegal abortion. Donna Reed's subsequent union, to producer Tony Owen, lasted 15 years but was stormy much of the time. The Owens had two adopted children and two biological children who recall tension between the parents and the overriding pressure of their mother's career. Donna Reed was married to Col. Grover W. Asmus from 1974 until her death in 1986.

This biography also unfolds the fascinating transformation of Donna Reed's politics. She developed a feminist consciousness, often objecting to the trivial dramatic roles reserved for women, and she emerged as a leader of the antiwar movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the disapproval of many family members, she was active in Another Mother for Peace as a researcher, fund-raiser, and public speaker.

Although Fultz largely succeeds in dispelling the myth of Donna Reed as an eternally comforting mother, he sometimes falls back into the trap of confusing the fictional and real woman. He emphasizes that Reed was primarily a "wife and mother" without explaining fully how Reed arranged for the care of her children while she worked long days on the set; and readers do not find out much about what role Reed herself played in the deterioration of her marriage to Tony Owen (117). In addition, Fultz's admiring portrayal of her Iowa lineage is, at

times, clichéd, including images of "mile-high apple and cherry pies" (13). These gaps (some of which may understandably be based on limited sources) contribute to the sense that Fultz's Donna Reed is, like the fictional wife on *The Donna Reed Show*, too good to be true. Tantalizingly thin in some parts, Fultz's biography nevertheless offers important corrections to the often simplistic perceptions of Donna Reed and convincingly shows readers her larger political and historical roles.

*My Iowa Journey: The Life Story of the University of Iowa's First African American Professor*, by Philip G. Hubbard. Singular Lives: The Iowa Series in North American Autobiography. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999. xvi, 193 pp. Illustrations, index. \$22.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ROLAND L. GUYOTTE, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MORRIS

As its title indicates, this modest memoir records the career of the University of Iowa's first African American faculty member, Philip G. Hubbard, appointed as assistant professor in the Department of Hydraulics and Mechanics in 1954. Hubbard advanced to full professor, founded two companies, consulted with the likes of the Office of Naval Research, the General Motors Institute, and the Agency for International Development, and became dean of academic affairs in 1965 and vice president for student services in 1972 before retiring in 1991. But this book is much more than an academic success story.

Writing carefully, like the engineer he is, Hubbard emphasizes both family and profession, quietly reminding readers of the centrality of race. His first sentence points the way: "Our family origins are in the Bible Belt of small-town north central Missouri, and my childhood was strongly influenced by an emphasis on religion, a work ethic, and a discriminatory restriction of opportunity" (3). When the family moved to Des Moines, his schoolteacher mother found work only as a clothing store elevator operator because the public schools, though desegregated, did not hire black teachers. Hubbard learned to climb steps to the balcony in movie theaters and to swim at the YMCA only on late Saturday afternoons. As a University of Iowa undergraduate in the early 1940s, he was easily exempted from compulsory ROTC "apparently because the army was not interested in recruiting minority officers" (45). A decade later, as a newly minted Ph.D. contemplating a job at Northwestern University's Institute of Technology, Hubbard discovered that a real estate agent would show his family only homes that "were badly run down and in unattractive neighborhoods" (85). He declined the offer.

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