

The Editor's Perspective

A HISTORICAL JOURNAL facilitates conversation. That, I believe, is its primary purpose. All too often, though, journals don't look like that's their goal. Articles appear to be the last word on their subjects; book reviews seem to set up reviewers as authorities who are arbiters of the fate of books. Actually, though, articles and reviews should *begin* conversations, not end them.

Even the "New on the Shelves" lists of materials available in the State Historical Society's collections are not meant to be static lists. Rather, we hope you will peruse them for materials of interest to you and then seek out those that suit your research or personal interests.

I'm making a few modest changes beginning with this issue of the *Annals of Iowa* that I hope will make the journal slightly more interactive. The first is this column, which will henceforth appear at the beginning of each issue. It's my opportunity to speak directly to you, the readers of this journal, and for you to hear the voice of the person who is largely responsible for the shape and direction of the journal but is mostly hidden from your eyes and ears. I also want to invite you to respond to what you read here and in the rest of the journal. If you do, I will try to include your voices here as well.

Second, I have moved the biographical information on contributors to the journal from the back of each issue to the inside front cover—along with the descriptions of the articles "In This Issue." The authors deserve this more prominent placement, and—in keeping with the conversational tone—readers deserve to know something about the people who speak to them from these pages.

Finally, you'll note one more modest change in the book review section. Reviewers now are identified not merely by their institutional affiliation but have the opportunity to offer some record of their experience that relates to the book they have re-

viewed. This not only establishes a reviewer's credentials as a reviewer of the book under consideration; it also gives you information to use as you read the review. Sometimes such biographical information suggests why a reviewer emphasizes the things she or he does in the review. That information, which is often bibliographical, serves another important interactive purpose. Reviewers are often too modest to mention their own related publications in the body of their review. Now readers of a review can see what a reviewer may have written on the subject and look it up if they want to know more.

Thank you for being part of the conversation that this journal seeks to enliven. Now, let us hear from you.

—Marvin Bergman, editor

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.