

Iowa's Ethnic Roots, edited by Ron E. Roberts. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1993. x, 168 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, references, bibliography. \$21.95 paper.

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To satisfy requirements for a sociology class taught by Ron Roberts at the University of Northern Iowa, thirteen undergraduate students wrote essays on the ethnic roots of Iowa families and communities. This book, representing the class's collective efforts, is a credit to the students and their teacher, and it reflects well on the publisher, who produced an attractive, if unconventional, volume. It will surely be a valued keepsake for all of its contributors.

A more accurate title for the book would have been "Ethnic Roots of Iowa Families and Communities," since presenting a study of ethnicity in Iowa lay beyond the scope of the class's assignment. Three essays deal with the ethnic character of Iowa towns: Jack Dostal's on the Bohemians in Protivin, Karen Brown's on the Germans of State Center, and Holly Mahan's on the Irish in Dubuque. The essay by Clint Boddicker treats ethnic issues related to the 1918 gubernatorial election, when anti-German sentiment ran strong. The rest of the essays present individual or family portraits: Darcie Novotny on four Czech women, Nicole VanCleave on two Danish women, Sarah Stumme on Norwegian immigrants, Sarah Mary Ross on an African-American woman in Waterloo, Heather Martin on Scots in Battle Creek, Allison L. Hartman on War Eagle and Sioux traditions, Barry White on his own family in Shellsburg, and Natalie Martin and Jennifer Rupp on their German ancestors.

The essays vary in length and display a wide range of differences in character and quality, as one would expect in papers written for a class assignment. For the most part, they are well written, although one winces at "Lily gave birth to she and Lee's second daughter" and is puzzled by the failure to use marks to identify long quotations in the same essay. One might be permitted a moment of amusement, too, when reading that one ethnic group "stuck to their language vivaciously."

It would be inappropriate in this journal to offer critiques of the individual essays by the young scholars. It is not inappropriate, however, to note that their teacher, Ron Roberts, contributed two fine essays, "Recovering Some Lost Memories, Dusting Off Lost Roots" and "How Green Was My Slag Heap: Adventures of Welsh Miners in Nineteenth Century Iowa." Both broaden and deepen the reader's knowledge of ethnic groups in Iowa's past.

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