

Civil Rights movement, the chaotic Democratic Convention of 1968, and the E.R.A. crusade in six pages. Most alarming is the research. There are no footnotes. The bibliography has no mention of the vast periodical literature on Illinois. It has no citations for significant recent studies such as John Mack Faragher's *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (1986) or Milton Derber's *Labor in Illinois: The Affluent Years, 1945-1980* (1989). Although she mentions Richard J. Jensen's *Illinois: A Bicentennial History* (1978), she makes no effort to incorporate his provocative thesis about "modernizers" versus "traditionalists" into her story.

Carrier admits that her book is just a beginning, and so it is. It will delight the general audience. But a caveat is in order. Because of its loose ends and paucity of historical research, college and university students will find little use for this book, and scholars will find nothing new in it.

Hard At Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940, edited by Kathryn Grover. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: Strong Museum, 1992. vi, 262 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY BENJAMIN HUNNICUTT, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Hard at Play is the third in a sort of series of books published by the Strong Museum and edited by Kathryn Grover. The previous books, *Dining in America, 1850-1900* and *Fitness in American Culture*, were published following special exhibits at the museum on their respective topics. *Hard at Play*, by contrast, resulted from a symposium sponsored by the museum, "American Play, 1820-1900," held in late 1987, which was followed by three exhibits.

Like a good museum special exhibit, Grover's book is organized around a simple theme—"the interpretation of the history of leisure pursuits and children's play"—a theme she develops by relying on arguably the most influential play theorist of this century, the historian Johan Huizinga. Grover notes in the introduction that in "this society" we generally define leisure and play negatively, as the absence of work. Huizinga, in *Homo Ludens*, questioned this modern tendency to oppose leisure/play and work as opposites. Taking his cue, Grover sets out to show that the "scholarly study of leisure and play is serious stuff indeed." Incidentally, Huizinga also argued that play transcended the serious/non-serious dichotomy, and that the serious study of play is a paradoxical undertaking, one that raises

the question: "Is what the player understands about play the same as what the observer understands?" Most people understand Huizinga's collapsing of dichotomies as an effort to make work more playlike. But Huizinga's clear meaning is that work is the weak sister of the two, arising out of play. It is in play, positively defined, that apparent opposites—serious/non-serious, purpose/thing-for-itself, freedom/duty, autonomy/community, gift/exchange—unite "for the time being." Still, Grover's attempt to rescue leisure from the trivialization it has suffered for the past fifty years is commendable. Founding her editorial efforts on Huizinga's observation that play is a condition rather than an activity—more being than becoming—has borne fruit.

The essays in the collection are somewhat uneven and eclectic—the contributors to the volume have not always followed Grover and the museum's direction—but there are several outstanding short essays that will delight and surprise the general reader and add to the teacher's reading list. The use of ethnographic methods to produce up-to-date cultural histories of leisure and play is certainly one of the book's strong points. In "Children's Play in American Autobiography, 1820–1914," Bernard Mergen explains that the "inner history of childhood . . . requires the methods of the literary critic and the ethnographer." Shirley Wajda, in "A Room with a Viewer: The Parlor Stereoscope, Comic Stereographs, and the Psychic Role of Play in Victorian America," makes perhaps the best use of ethnographic methods to reveal how the leisure use of parlor stereoscopes and stereoscope pictures illustrates the transformation from Victorian to "modernist" culture. The Victorian parlor, an emphasis on character, and societal imperatives gave way to the modern living room, an emphasis on "personality," and self-development. The "disintegration of the socio-spatial-spheres" and the expelling of "serious pursuits" from the home are given tangible form in the series of stereoscopic images that start with Victorian didactic, uplifting, and challenging images and end with the Sears, Roebuck "comic series" that appeared in the company's catalog in 1904.

The other essays in the volume—Glenn Uminowicz's "Recreation in a Christian America: Ocean Park and Asbury Park, New Jersey," David Gerber's "The Germans Take Care of Our Celebrations," Dwight Hoover's "Roller-Skating toward Industrialism," Colleen Sheehy's "American Angling," Russell Gilmore's "Another Branch of Manly Sport: American Rifle Games, 1840–1900," Madelyn Moeller's "Ladies of Leisure: Domestic Photography of the Nineteenth Century," Andrew Gulliford's "Fox and Geese in the School Yard: Play and America's Country Schools, 1870–1940," Donald Mrozek's excellent "The Natural Limits of Unstructured Play, 1880–1914," and James

Wilder and Robyn Hansen's compilation "A Glossary of Outdoor Games"—advance Grover's agenda and show the historical complexity of play and leisure, their social function, and how they embody and transform class, gender, and ethnicity.

One of the book's major contributions is to remind readers of the "leisure revolution" that occurred during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and of the time when leisure competed with work for the attention of the nation. It is refreshing to be reminded that work has not always been the Thing-for-itself, but was once primarily a means to other ends—a way to get necessities and then to get leisure to do "better" and "higher" things.

The Opera Houses of Iowa, by George D. Glenn and Richard L. Poole. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993. xiv, 190 pp. Illustrations, references, appendix, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY TRACY A. CUNNING, LOUIS BERGER & ASSOCIATES

The Opera Houses of Iowa is the latest in a series of works devoted to this once ubiquitous building type, and is the culmination of George Glenn and Richard Poole's twelve-year study of the history of theater in Iowa. To document the state's opera houses, whether standing or long gone, they compiled information from mail questionnaires, on-site inspection, oral informants, and miscellaneous published and unpublished histories.

In a field of history so dominated by big-city theaters and stars of the stage and screen, Glenn and Poole underscore the opera house's importance in the cultural life of small and medium-sized Iowa communities between 1850 and 1915. Except in the most populous Iowa cities, the opera house was not only a theater but also a general entertainment facility where one could attend dramatic shows, concerts, dances, lectures, political rallies, school graduations, athletic events, and eventually motion picture shows. The multipurpose nature of the opera house and the variety of its physical form constitute the basic message of this work, one that undoubtedly has parallels in other midwestern states.

The Opera Houses of Iowa is divided into two parts. The first covers the physical forms of Iowa opera houses; the scenery, performers, and performances commonly associated with them; and, very briefly, the opera house as community gathering place. The second part, the lion's share of the book, is a catalog of more than three hundred opera houses known to have existed in the state. It is an alphabetical listing by town, including dimensions of the building and auditorium,

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