

up the reasons for Foley & Lardner's longevity, Langill notes, "The firm has held to its original mission of serving business clients, whatever their changing legal needs" (185).

This well-researched and informative book affords a blueprint for the study of other law firms. Hopefully, Langill's fine work will inspire similar monographs on representative law firms in Iowa.

An American Quality Legend: How Maytag Saved Our Moms, Vexed the Competition, and Presaged America's Quality Revolution, by Robert Hoover and John Hoover. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993. xv, 239 pp. Illustrations, index. \$21.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ERIC PETERSON, BOUTON, IOWA

Maytag is among Iowa's largest, most famous, and socially most significant businesses. It grew through an intriguing mix of innovation, high quality products, uneven leadership, and luck. Founded in Newton in 1893 as a farm implement maker, it almost failed. One of its owners, F. L. Maytag, improved its products, bought out his partners, and renamed the firm after himself. In 1907 it began to make wooden washtubs as a seasonal sideline. By the 1920s, Maytag sold almost as many washers as all of its competitors combined, and its power washing machines changed American domestic habits. Under non-family leaders since 1962, the Maytag Corporation has become a global, diversified appliance manufacturer.

This book is not primarily aimed at scholars. The authors, a retired Maytag public relations director and his son, who wrote a previous book on business leadership, try to extract lessons for managers from Maytag's history. From a historian's viewpoint, the result is a brief, oddly organized text tinged with management jargon, hyperbole, occasional muddy writing, and minor errors. The analysis of Maytag's "quality culture" is interesting, but the work lacks notes on sources, gives little evidence of thorough, independent research, and has only limited scholarly value.

Still, this amply illustrated volume holds information on a number of topics in Iowa history: it touches on the talents, foibles, and conflicts of three generations of the Maytag family; it covers Maytag marketing and technology; it sketches the impact of the company on its home town and the impact of its machines on the nation. Finally, it demonstrates that Maytag's history contains much material for further study.

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