

Iowa girls were virtually alone in the nation in having an opportunity to play competitively. Yet for all the passion and support for the game, the principle of equality did not extend beyond the gym. Despite parity on the courts, local notoriety, and heroine status, the doors of equal opportunity were shut to all but a notable few once a girl left high school. Nor did community pride and boosterism produce better education. Winning teams did not convert into successful bond issues to hire more teachers, construct better science labs, or even build new gyms. A state championship was often not enough to maintain the existence of a school, or even a town, as attested to by the unfamiliarity of many names on the state tournament list. Certainly the game had an important, positive impact on the players and, for a time, on fans and communities. But the fact that it did not translate into a more equitable Iowa society is something that needs more extensive analysis. There are several related issues. Why did male coaches take over the profession in the 1940s? Why was the Girls Athletic Union so slow to place women on its boards? Why did Iowa educators and school boards reject the arguments of female physical education leaders who were opposed to competitive sports? Perhaps it is significant that in the list of ten reasons why basketball survived in Iowa, none specifically addressed the improved status of women in society.

The larger historical context might also help explain what occurred in the state. A discussion of the ideas of Patricia Vertinsky, Allen Guttman, Susan Cahn, and Monys Ann Hagen would introduce readers to the questions of "social control," athletic eroticism, gender hierarchy, and the intent of welfare capitalism in the industrial leagues. A century of basketball would provide an excellent framework in which to analyze these topics.

*Neighbors: A Forty-Year Portrait of an American Farm Community*, by Archie Lieberman. San Francisco: Collins Publishers, 1993. 157 pp. Photographs. \$40.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY TOM MORAIN, LIVING HISTORY FARMS

*Neighbors* is a love story. In 1954 photographer Archie Lieberman drove to Scales Mound, Illinois, on a photo assignment and fell in love with the community, its people, and their way of life. He returned with his camera over and over and finally even moved there himself when a farm came up for sale. *Neighbors* is a loving chronology of both continuing traditions and inexorable transitions that have occurred in

this and other midwestern farm communities during the past four decades.

The book combines Lieberman's photos with interviews of Scales Mound residents. Lieberman's own words appear only in short transition paragraphs providing background information for the oral histories. The main text is in the words of community residents themselves as they tell their life stories and explain their perspectives on the land and their relation to it. The power of their narration lies in the commonplace details—what they like to do, the chores that fill their days, the principles they live by.

Lieberman moves through the community a family at a time, letting them tell their own stories in their own words. Germans for the most part, the neighborhood is a conglomerate family of Hoppes, Schaps, Grubes, Boettners, Eversolls, and Hammers. We see the Hammer family in most detail. We watch young Bill Hammer grow up through the book. His mother measured his growth with paint marks on the barn door, and in a panel at the end of the book, we see Bill at ages 14, 18, 29, and 44, evolving from a lanky, blond teenager into a stocky weathered cattle farmer. We also see Dorothy Hammer, Bill's wife, measuring their son Jim on the same barn door. Lieberman has stayed long enough to catch the cycle come full circle.

The photos are in black and white, and many are dark. Lieberman includes few landscapes. The pictures are portraits of people captured in the rhythms of community life. Work—the seasonal cycle of planting and harvest—frames the lives of the farming community. Bill recalls a childhood devoted to work: "As far as going out and playing games—baseball, or going fishing, or anything like that—we never did. It was the routine of doing the work and going along. Why, I'd be so proud if I got so I could load some bales, help him out! Then the next year I'd be that much older and then I could load half the load, and pretty quick I was loading the whole works!" (69) For the women, it was much the same. Bill's parents' relationship was cemented in their farm partnership. "I guess if you fall in love with a man, and you get married to him, it's mostly being with him and helping him that counts," reflects Bill's mother. "When I was a teenager I never did think about what I was going to do. It didn't matter until Bill came along. I've always been glad that I was with Bill. I've always felt needed" (59).

The book promotes the traditional mythology of the rural Midwest: farming produces a wholesome people, and modern changes threaten this lifestyle. Given that less than 2 percent of Americans are currently farmers, the impact of whatever changes occur in the rural Midwest will not generate great ripples throughout American society.

Nevertheless, *Neighbors* offers a useful counterpoint to the direction that modern society seems to be heading. On the other hand, fulfillment in *Neighbors'* scheme comes in accepting one's given place in the social order—doing men's work or women's work in the family business, the home, or the farm—and supporting the institutions that give the community structure. The benefits of stability are purchased by the discipline of conformity within a rather narrow range of choices. Readers of *Neighbors* should keep that cost in mind.

*Cottonwood Roots*, by Kem Luther. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993. 152 pp. Maps, bibliography. \$20.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY SUZANNE L. BUNKERS, MANKATO STATE UNIVERSITY

In *Cottonwood Roots*, Kem Luther tells the fascinating story of his search for his genealogical roots, beginning from his birthplace in Broken Bow, Nebraska, and traveling across the Midwest to Pennsylvania and New York. His journey is both literal and figurative: he is searching not only for courthouse records and tombstone inscriptions but also for some sense of who ancestors such as Ebenezer and Aurilla Wait Luther might have been. The book is divided into three sections, each containing a series of chapters in which the author recounts family stories and imagines what the lives of his ancestors might have been like.

Luther presents an engaging and fluid narrative. Employing the metaphor of the safety rope used by midwestern farmers of the past to get to and from their livestock during winter blizzards, he explains early in the narrative, "I do not know what highways of the spirit I will travel. There is a danger that I could lose my way in the conceptual storms. As long as I can see the ancestral line in the family history, however, I know where my purpose lies. If I cannot see the larger end, if I cannot turn like the needle of a compass to the direction in which I should go, I can always hand-to-hand it down the line of ancestry, son to father, until I have regained my sense of direction" (5).

I appreciate *Cottonwood Roots* for its methodological insights into genealogical research. The author explains the value of courthouse indexes; he discusses effective strategies for searching backward and forward in one's ancestral lines; he acknowledges the subtle relationships that the genealogist develops with the individuals who are the object of his or her research.

I also appreciate *Cottonwood Roots* for its philosophical insights. Luther analyzes the implications of landscape on the psyche; he as-

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