

No One Is Above the Law: The Story of Southern Iowa's Federal Court, by George Mills and Richard W. Peterson. Des Moines: Historical Society of the United States Courts in the Eighth Circuit, [1994]. ii, 177 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography. \$10.00 paper.

REVIEWED BY LAWRENCE H. LARSEN, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY

No One Is Above the Law is a functional history of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Iowa from its creation in 1882, when Congress divided Iowa into Northern and Southern Districts, to the present. Mills is a journalist and author, and Peterson has been a part-time Magistrate Judge in the Southern District since 1970. Peterson, addressing the scope of federal legal questions in Iowa, writes, "Vast in number and of an unlimited variety that has described a full spectrum of constitutional and societal issues, the litigation of more than fourteen decades in the district's federal trial court has during its years of service mirrored the social, economic and political dynamics of the Hawkeye State" (4).

The book contains informative biographical profiles of all eighteen past and present Southern District judges, with accounts of their most important and interesting cases. There are also sketches of the two Iowans who have served on the United States Supreme Court, Samuel Freeman Miller (1862-1890) and Wiley Rutledge (1943-1949). Other features include essays on the origins of Iowa, the federal courts, and the Southern District, plus pictures of judges and courthouses, workload statistics, and enumerations of judges and various court officers. Of unquestionable value, *No One Is Above the Law* should be available in every Iowa library.

The Chalk Dust Report, by Margaret Di Paul. Iowa City: Rudi Publishing, 1993. viii, 165 pp. Illustrations. \$10.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY SANDRA D. HARMON, ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

The Chalk Dust Report is a charming memoir of a first-grade teacher whose career spanned the midsection of the twentieth century from the 1930s to the 1970s. Margaret Di Paul began teaching in the midst of the Great Depression in 1934 in a rural Iowa one-room school before she had received any formal teacher training. After obtaining her two-year diploma from Iowa State Teachers College, she used her teaching credentials as a means of seeing the United States. Her subsequent career took her to eighteen different classrooms in large and small urban and rural schools in ten states, with time out to complete her B.A. degree and to marry. Her *Chalk Dust Report* is a collection of

vignettes of those classrooms and communities, all told in a highly readable, lively manner. Within the stories, she touches on some of the national and local problems that faced the schools where she taught.

The book's value as a historical document is somewhat diminished by the use of fictional names for the communities in which the author lived and worked, a device that seems unnecessary, especially when photographic reproductions of several teaching contracts display the name or number of the school district. One of those contracts provides for the dismissal of the teacher upon marriage, and another requires a loyalty oath, two important and interesting issues the author does not touch on in the text itself. However, readers, especially teachers, will find much to relate to and enjoy in this memoir.

"This Is Herb" with The Way It Was, by Herb Plambeck. Ames: Sigler Printing and Publishing, 1993. xv, 312 pp. Illustrations. \$12.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY ELAINE H. EDWARDS, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Herb Plambeck's career as an agricultural journalist covers nearly six decades. *"This Is Herb" with The Way It Was* is a compilation of columns Plambeck wrote from 1978 through 1993 for the farm journal *Wallaces' Farmer*. The wealth of people Plambeck met during his career provided him with a plethora of material for his columns. The results of interviews with many of Iowa's senior citizens, the book is a who's who of Iowa agriculture over the past century. Plambeck covers everything from Iowa's seed corn trains in 1905 to 107-year-old Edith Smith's remembrances of Christmases in the 1880s to recent Farm Progress shows. The articles appear chronologically in the book as they appeared in the magazine. Just about anything connected with Iowa agriculture—from the different types and breeds of livestock to crops to farm safety and education—is included, as well as the fun and games and heartaches of farm life. Columns on politicians, farm organizations and businesses, farm women, and major agricultural events are all included in Plambeck's book.

The book gives a sampling of the changes that have occurred in Iowa agriculture. It offers brief anecdotes of both major events and minor incidents in Iowa agriculture. Some of those interviewed by Plambeck are well known in agricultural circles, while others perhaps had only an interesting story to tell. Whatever the case, the book provides a glimpse of Iowa's rich agricultural history. For historians, the book provides a starting place for finding out little nuggets of information on Iowans.

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