

Book Reviews

Ding: The Life of Jay Norwood Darling, by David L. Lendt. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979. pp. 173. Photographs, reproductions of cartoons, notes, index. \$10.95.

There are some people whose life stories seem to capture the mood and events of their time in large. One such person was the distinguished cartoonist and conservationist, Jay Norwood Darling. Born in 1876 in Norwood, Michigan, Darling's cartoons were so famous by 1911 that a newspaper facetiously said the Philadelphia centennial was timed to coincide with Darling's birth. Not content to remain a critical observer, Darling labored long and hard with more than his pen to organize a popular conservation movement. He served for two years as the controversial chief of Roosevelt's conservation agency and devoted his life to leading many conservation causes.

David Lendt's readable, but scholarly biography fills a need for a history of Darling that stretches far beyond the borders of Iowa. His work places the two-time Pulitzer prize winner squarely in the ranks of the best and most popular cartoonists in the United States during the half century of his productive cartooning life. It also details Darling's trailblazing work in the creation of public and private conservation groups and his rejuvenation of the federal Bureau of Biological Survey when he was appointed its chief in 1934.

Under Lendt's pen, Darling emerges as a complex, compassionate, often difficult man who held himself and his fellow men to a high standard. He also presents a fascinating portrait of a highly intelligent and capable midwestern minister's son who became a fighter and a mover in national politics when Iowa was still part of the vanishing frontier.

As Lendt shows, Darling possessed a gift for posing complex national and international issues in common-sense terms. His cartooning technique was to proceed from the known to the unknown. He showed his reader unfamiliar territory from familiar turf—the rest of the world from good old Iowa. His cartoons reveal Darling as an able student of the political process. But it's an even greater credit to his astuteness that Darling sensed that his exposure as a political cartoonist perhaps allowed him more influence than would a career in the U.S. Senate—an option urged by those who appreciated his popularity and administrative ability.

Darling left cartooning for appointive office only to advance his beloved cause of conservation and wildlife protection. The opportunity was offered to him by a man for whom he had little regard—President Franklin Roosevelt. It was an uphill battle as Darling, chief of the Biological Survey (forerunner of the Fish and Wildlife Service), swept out

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do-nothing bureaucrats and independently maneuvered six million dollars from congressional coffers to establish the beginnings of the federal wildlife refuge system.

Lendt's book is far from a chauvinistic recitation of the life of one of Iowa's favorite sons. The author, an administrator at Iowa State who holds a Ph.D. in higher education, fuses together many aspects of Darling's personality and interests to delve into the personal motivations, the successes and failures of a man whose life was larger than life. The result is a rich, but dispassionate, account of a rural American shaped by and shaping the growth of this country in the nineteenth century.

Darling espoused the most progressive, liberal notions of conservation, and at the same time through his syndicated cartoons brought the views of a conservative, often reactionary farm state to the front pages of America's most sophisticated urban newspapers. Both audiences loved him. The paradox merits pondering.

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Gordon Gammack: Columns from Three Wars, by Gordon Gammack, edited by Andrea Clardy. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979. pp. ix, 150. Photographs. \$10.95.

This book is about the traditional business of wars—men and boys of various nations killing each other, or trying to do so. But mostly it tells of their lifestyle while doing it, rather than of the killing itself.

The book consists of several hundred columns selected from those Gammack sent back to his newspapers from the combat zones of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Gammack was at the "front" of each of these conflicts and was present at their finales: the reoccupation of Paris; the exchange of prisoners at Panmunjom; and the arrival of American prisoners from Hanoi at Clark Air Base, the Philippines. He wrote masterfully of it all. The first of Gammack's columns quoted was written in 1943, the last in 1973.

The columns appeared originally in the *Register* and the *Tribune* at Des Moines, Iowa. Gammack was an ace reporter for the papers when sent to Africa and Europe for the world war. At the end of that war he became a front page columnist for the *Tribune*, but took time out for the wars in Korea and Vietnam. He had come to the Des Moines

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