

“ethic of equality” (68) or her “egalitarian etiquette” (198), meaning that Addams was brought up to treat all people, regardless of their class, politely. Although she never completely lost her sense of social and cultural superiority, her Hull House experiences made her more aware of the perspectives of others. That, in turn, made her a leading commentator on the social issues of her day. She helped to open up the new career of social work to women and was one of the founders of Progressive reform, a prominent feminist, a peace advocate when that was unpopular, and an eventual recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Readers who spend time with this book will be well rewarded with some vivid pictures of rural and urban life in the Midwest, as well as insights into one of the most remarkable women in American history. This book is a “good read.”

Steel Trails of Hawkeyeland: Iowa's Railroad Experience, by Don L. Hofsommer. Railroads Past and Present Series. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. xiii, 353 pp. Illustrations, list of acronyms, notes, bibliography, index. \$75.00 cloth.

Reviewer Rebecca Conard is professor of history and director of public history at Middle Tennessee State University. In 1990–91, she directed a statewide survey of railroad architecture for the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office.

Don Hofsommer has been studying and writing railroad history since the mid-1970s. Much of his research has focused on railroads important for the economic development of the upper Midwest. His publications record is unmatched. Given the complexity of Iowa's railroad history, it is doubtful that anyone else could have delivered such a wealth of information in one volume. The sheer fact that Hofsommer managed to produce a richly illustrated book that can be physically handled with relative ease is both remarkable and commendable.

Steel Trails of Hawkeyeland is the fifteenth book to be published by Indiana University Press in its Railroads Past and Present Series and the first to tackle the entire railroad history of a single state. Hofsommer approaches his subject chronologically, although that is not obvious just by scanning the chapter titles. Thus, “Beginnings” (chap. 2) chronicles the westward extension of railroads from Chicago to the Mississippi River from 1848 to 1860; “War” (chap. 3) demonstrates that the “westerling process, while slowed, did not stop” between 1860 and 1865; “Recovery” (chap. 4) details the development of “Iowa's rail grid” between 1865 and 1873, with a predominant east-west axis, representing lines that connected the farms and towns of Iowa, and beyond, to Chicago's stockyards, factories, and distribution centers.

"Panic" (chap. 5) treats the effect of the Panic of 1873 on rail expansion for the remainder of the decade, followed by "Optimism" (chap. 6) in the 1880s, when Iowa's farm production and agriculture-based industry surged. So, too, did coal production, which fueled trains that moved a rapidly increasing volume of agricultural products and merchandise out of, into, and around the state.

Chapter 9, "Belle Epoque of Steamers," typifies the author's chapter development style. It covers the 20-year golden age of passenger service from the end of the Spanish-American War through World War I. Although east-west trunk lines still predominated, vertical and diagonal lines and interurban routes connected Iowans throughout the state to Minneapolis-St. Paul, Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, and points beyond. Railroads entered into long-term agreements to expedite passenger trains through the trans-Mississippi West. The Chicago & North Western's *Overland Limited*, for instance, advertised passenger service from Chicago to Oakland in just 67.5 hours, stopping in Iowa at Clinton, Cedar Rapids, Boone, and Council Bluffs. Hofsommer points out that not all of the famous "named trains" stopped at Iowa stations and not all passenger trains included sleeping and dining cars. "But in the aggregate, Iowa's passenger train numbers were astonishing" (76), he writes, and goes on to catalog the daily passenger train density for various cities and towns in 1916. Then follows a lively discussion of train passengers—tourists, business travelers, college students, high school athletic teams, and the occasional celebrity, such as wrestler Frank Gotch, evangelist Billy Sunday, presidents and politicians. Passengers departed from and arrived at depots, and here Hofsommer's discussion focuses on Iowa's "countless country depots" as well as the hotels and lunchrooms that sprang up beside them. He states that "Iowa had no massive passenger stations" on the order of those in Chicago and St. Louis, which is true, but he might have pointed out that Chicago-based architects were prominently represented among Iowa's architect-designed depots, adding a visible cultural layer to the economy that flowed through the metropolitan corridor linking Iowa to Chicago. Hofsommer closes the chapter with a wonderfully detailed description of the bustle that made depots the center of activity in Iowa's towns and cities: the web of day and night trains that moved mail, small packages, money, and other valuables; the express business that grew in tandem with railroads; the traveling salesmen and local merchants who were integral to the distribution system; the "T-town" system of town development that connected Main Street with the local railroad; and the robbers, vandals, and hoboes that railroads inevitably attracted.

Hofsommer covers not only the expansion and heyday of railroads in Iowa; he charts the decline as well, beginning with the "Uncertain Prosperity" (chap. 11) of the 1920s, when trucks began cutting into railroads' freight tonnage. Railroads experienced "Their Finest Hour" (chap. 13) during World War II, when the federal government relied on railroads to meet the wartime emergency with relative efficiency. Once the wartime boom subsided, however, the 1950s and 1960s brought "Winds of Change" (chap. 16) and "Gathering Clouds" (chap. 17), when multiple factors precipitated a period of bankruptcies, mergers, and acquisitions. "Nervousness" (chap. 18) gave way to the "Darkest Midnight" (chap. 19) in the 1970s, when passenger service all but disappeared and the federal government finally intervened to shore up the rail industry with the Railroad Revitalization and Reform Act of 1976. From a peak of about 10,000 miles of track in the 1910s, Iowa's trackage fell to around 3,000 miles.

Each chapter is densely packed with facts, figures, names, and dates. However, chapters are relatively short (10 to 15 pages) and amply illustrated with photographs, tables, and other images, which makes for easier reading. Many of the approximately 200 black-and-white photographs are from the author's personal collection, and they go well beyond the standard engine-and-train shots to provide a sense of the changing urban, rural, social, and economic contexts through the decades. Thoughtfully written captions enhance their informational value, and illustrations are appropriately integrated into the text in an attractive layout. Unfortunately, there are very few maps and none to illustrate the incremental development of Iowa's railroad system. Considering that, at its peak, Iowa was fourth in the nation in number of miles of track, this is a consequential omission. Chapter by chapter, Hofsommer details rail expansion in the narrative by listing extensions from Towns A and B through Towns X, Y, and Z. Not only does this repetition become hypnotic, but readers without a complete mental map of Iowa's cities, towns, and crossroads communities will have difficulty envisioning the geography of railroad expansion within Iowa and in relation to the nation as a whole. It is harder still to envision the gradual dismantling and rearranging of Iowa's rail system in the post-World War II decades.

Writing a comprehensive railroad history for any state presents an organizational challenge. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to construct a readable narrative without leaving out important elements. By adopting a chronological approach, in which disparate information is packed into relatively brief chapters, Hofsommer necessarily relies on the flow of time to be the connective thread. His chapters tie Iowa history to the

national economic and political context in broad strokes, and he demonstrates the importance of railroads to local economic development within the state, but important aspects of social and cultural history are left untouched. For instance, he says very little about labor except in the larger context of railroad operating expenses and revenue; racial discrimination and the roles of women are not addressed at all. The relative lack of thematic development is reflected in the index, which emphasizes the names of towns and railroad lines. These criticisms aside, Hofsommer has delivered a handsome book that will provide a satisfying context for those who are interested in the complex minutiae of railroad history, and it will appeal to those with an interest in Iowa's local history. For the next generation of railroad history scholars, it provides a much needed statewide context on which to build.

Soldiers Back Home: The American Legion in Illinois, 1919–1939, by Thomas B. Littlewood. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004. xvi, 187 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$40.00 cloth.

Reviewer Christopher Nehls recently earned a Ph.D. in history at the University of Virginia with a dissertation on the American Legion and nationalism between the world wars. His article on post-World War I attempts by members of the American Legion to enforce patriotism in Iowa will appear in the *Annals of Iowa*.

Since the late nineteenth century, veterans have played a vital role in American political and civic life. Despite their importance, veterans and veterans' organizations remain woefully understudied in historical scholarship. Thomas B. Littlewood's *Soldiers Back Home: The American Legion in Illinois, 1919–1939* provides a valuable examination of the largest and most influential veterans' organization of the twentieth century. Littlewood focuses on the organization's founding generation of World War I veterans, whose ideologically conservative patriotism shaped American political culture for the remainder of the century. His focus on Illinois enriches a slim literature by offering insight into how the Legion organized and operated at the grassroots, where its impact on politics and political culture was the greatest.

Littlewood, professor emeritus of journalism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, became interested in the Legion after observing its political influence in Illinois, first as a reporter in Springfield after World War II and then while writing a biography of former Illinois governor Henry Horner. Propelled by that interest, he sought to understand how an organization dedicated to becoming a nonpartisan yet powerful political force integrated itself into state-level politics. Littlewood delves into the many personalities who peddled their Le-