

Alex Haley's *Roots*, and the combined efforts of Robert Blakeslee Gilpin, Edward J. Blum, and Sarah Hardin Blum to dissect Robert Penn Warren's interrogation of the John Brown myth all succeed admirably in this regard.

Perhaps Iowa's fading historical connection to John Brown or other war-era notables will make such discussions more relevant to those interested in Iowa history. More likely, Iowa's broader participation in the national obsession with the Civil War—on display every summer in Keokuk's reenactment of a battle the state never actually staged—ensure that *Myth and Memory* will find as many interested readers in Iowa as it will elsewhere.

Eber: Pioneer in Iowa, 1854–1875, by Ronald H. Stone. Iowa City: Press of the Camp Pope Bookshop, 2008. xii, 235 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, index. \$25.00 paper.

Reviewer Douglas Firth Anderson is professor of history at Northwestern College, Orange City, Iowa. His research, writing, and teaching focus on the history of the American West.

Eber Stone (d. 1875) was a pioneer settler of Humboldt County. A native of western New York, he brought with him experience as a teacher and school superintendent as well as commitments to "scientific" agriculture, temperance, antislavery, and nondenominational Protestantism. Between his arrival in 1854 and his death 21 years later from typhoid, he led in the development of Humboldt's public school system and its agricultural society. Stone made annual reports to the Iowa Agricultural Society beginning in 1864, and he also wrote essays on education and Humboldt County. His publications, together with his local office holding (secretary of the Humboldt County Agricultural Society, chair of the Board of County Supervisors, county superintendent of schools), provide ample evidence of his role as an articulate spokesperson for Humboldt's "free government" (Republican), agricultural potential, and aspirations for "culture and refinement" (198).

Ronald H. Stone — a great-grandson of Eber — has sought to construct a book that goes beyond a genealogy of interest only to family members and a local history that provides documents and data uncritically and with little historical context. Yet, what the great-grandson said of his forebear ironically also applies to him: "His reach exceeded his grasp" (182). Compared to, say, Judy Nolte Lensink's study of Emily Hawley Gillespie in "*A Secret to Be Buried*" or Thomas J. Morain's study of Jefferson, Iowa, in *Prairie Grass Roots*, Ronald Stone's

book is less a critical narrative than a gathering of historical data about an individual and his local social context.

The book begins with an introduction that provides background on Stone; thereafter, the chapters are organized by year. Curiously, there is no discussion of when Eber was born. Most of the documents presented fall into two groups: Eber's boosterish reports, and letters from relatives outside of Iowa. Background is provided, but analysis is uneven, at best. At times, it is not clear what the connection is between the historical background provided and Eber's life and thought. Moreover, the author's familiarity with Iowa, frontier, and American Indian historiography is thin and outdated (there is no bibliography). Among other things, this leads to an unreliable summary of Inkpaduta and the Spirit Lake Massacre, for which MacKinlay Kantor's 1961 novel *Spirit Lake* is cited as "the most detailed" historical account (66).

The author seems to assume that Eber Stone's historical significance — "one pioneer as presented in documents" (xi) — can be taken for granted. Historians, however, must be advocates for the dead; that is, a case must be made for historical significance by constructing narratives that revivify in some fashion the elusive past. Neither Eber Stone nor early Humboldt County society and culture come to life in this book. Nevertheless, an index makes this volume of some reference value for Humboldt County history.

Norwegians on the Prairie: Ethnicity and the Development of the Country Town, by Odd S. Lovoll. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press in cooperation with the Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2006. xvii, 321 pp. Maps, chart, tables, illustrations, notes, index. \$32.95 cloth.

Reviewer Dag Blanck is director of the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, and also teaches at Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden. He has written extensively about Scandinavian immigrants to the United States.

For many years, Odd Lovoll has been the leading historian of Norwegian American history. His magisterial two-volume set, *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People* (1984; rev. ed., 1999) and *The Promise Fulfilled: A Portrait of Norwegian Americans Today* (1998), is a unique history of a European immigrant group in that it focuses not only on the history of Norwegian immigration to the United States during the classic immigration era in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but also deals with subsequent developments in the Norwegian American community until the end of the twentieth century.