

*Uncle Henry Wallace: Letters to Farm Families*, edited by Zachary Michael Jack. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008. xviii, 199 pp. Illustrations, notes. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Virginia Wadsley is an independent scholar and freelance writer in Des Moines. She has conducted research for the Wallace family, made presentations about their family history, and is working on a book on the work of Uncle Henry's wife and daughter with *Wallaces' Farmer*.

Fourth-generation Iowa farmer's son Zachary Michael Jack has republished open letters by Iowa agricultural editor Uncle Henry Wallace (1836–1916) that originally appeared in *Wallaces' Farmer* and then in book form by popular demand. Fascinated with Wallace's Victorian character development messages, which have "remained uncannily true" although "sometimes dated in their particulars" (xiv), Jack chose selections from *Uncle Henry's Letters to the Farm Boy* (1897), *Letters to the Farm Folk* (1915), and the three-volume *Uncle Henry's Own Story of His Life* (1917–1919), plus several memorial tributes and will excerpts. The edited arrangement moves from moral exhortation to "cautionary tales" and continues with expository advice. Jack's introductory material is the story of his own journey with Uncle Henry as well as a brief biography of the man he describes as "preacher, farmer, editor, philosopher, lecturer, counselor, friend, everyman" (1) and mistakenly calls the "scion," rather than forefather, of the "most famous farming family in American history" (xi).

Jack's purpose is neither biographical nor scholarly. Instead, the book is designed to complement Richard S. Kirkendall's *Uncle Henry: A Documentary Profile of the First Henry Wallace* (1993) and Russell Lord's colorful if not entirely accurate *The Wallaces of Iowa* (1947). Although the introductory setup perhaps relies too much on Lord and tends toward adulation rather than critical analysis, Jack rightly allows the letters themselves to reveal the soul of the "man of alluring and illuminating contradictions" (xv). Readers will be drawn into the Victorian ethos as the "hobbledehoy's" parents, chums, social life, brain food, and habits are discussed and then be led to contemplate twenty-first-century issues as "commercial morality" is criticized. This is a book for smiles and reflection with universal appeal.

*The Life and Legacy of Frank Gotch: King of the Catch-as-Catch-Can Wrestlers*, by Mike Chapman. Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 2008. xi, 149 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Randy Roberts is distinguished professor of history at Purdue University. His books include *Jack Dempsey, the Manassa Mauler* (1979); *Papa Jack:*

*Jack Johnson and the Era of White Hopes* (1983); and *Winning Is the Only Thing: Sports in America since 1945* (coauthor, 1989).

In an age before professional wrestling became a branch of acting, Frank Gotch was the master of the sport. Between 1908 and 1913 he ruled the professional sport as heavyweight champion. After winning the title in a two-hour marathon match against George Hackenschmidt, the reigning champion, Gotch became a sports celebrity. He was friends with former heavyweight boxing champion James J. Jeffries, twice visited President Theodore Roosevelt in the White House, and was courted by Iowa Republican politicians to run for governor. He toured the country in plays, flirted with a career in the movies, and thoroughly capitalized on his fame through the medium of advertising. After retiring from professional wrestling, he traveled with the Sells-Floto Circus offering \$250 to anyone who could last 15 minutes in the ring with him. He died in 1917 at the age of 39.

Gotch was one of Iowa's premier athletes. Born in Humboldt and raised on a farm, he developed tremendous body strength, but what really separated him from most other wrestlers was his interest in the science of the sport. As he mastered technique, he mastered opponents. His style was aggressive, occasionally dirty, and always relentless. His style and popularity did much to legitimize the sport. The singular tradition of wrestling in Iowa owes much to the career of Frank Gotch.

In his brief overview of Gotch's career, Mike Chapman provides the basic facts of the wrestler's life and tries to separate the legends from the realities. Certainly he demonstrates the crucial impact Gotch had on the sport of wrestling, and although he does not devote much space to the role the wrestler played in American culture, he does make it clear that it is a subject worth more study. In some ways, Gotch was as important as such boxers of the era as Jack Johnson, Jim Jefferies, and the young Jack Dempsey.

*Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War*, by Kimberly Jensen. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008. xvii, 244 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$65.00 cloth, \$30.00 paper.

Reviewer Kathleen Scott will receive her Ph.D. in American studies from The College of William and Mary in May 2009. In her dissertation she analyzes how dominant race, class, and gender ideologies inflected dietitians' quest for professionalization during World War I. She has also directed the Oral History Program at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc.

Kimberly Jensen's new book, *Mobilizing Minerva*, is an important contribution to the field of U.S. women's military history. Her analysis