

Kuntz could not afford to make prints from the negatives—numbering over 2,000—and so they languished until 2002. Then Kuntz, dying of prostate cancer, began digitizing the negatives. This book contains 76 of his photos. His subjects range from family portraits to people at work and play to streetscapes and nature scenes.

Jim Heynen, a noted author of poems, short stories, and novels, contributed the text accompanying the photos. Each photo has a brief title but little additional explanation. The text includes Heynen's musings on life in that era, lists of current events for each of the four years covered by the volume, speculation on what the subjects were thinking then or what they might think of people viewing their images today, quotations from an interview conducted by Rex Wood with Kuntz shortly before the photographer's death, and remembrances by Kuntz's wife and children.

This slender volume is wonderfully evocative of an era gone by. Kuntz was a fine photographer even as a novice. His subjects were the everyday, not the dramatic. His photos capture the mirth of children at play, neighbors coming to visit, farmers harvesting crops, railroad workers maintaining track, and people self-consciously going about their activity while having their pictures taken. Readers will find hints of the world war that erupted in this era—Kuntz in uniform and a few signs or posters on walls and windows—but the photos suggest that much of Americans' daily routine, especially in rural areas, was little changed by war. Heynen's text reminds readers of the global events that cast a shadow over that era, speculates on what Kuntz's subjects may have been thinking, and serves as a mirror in which we see concerns of our time.

One might ask for more. Historians would certainly like to know more of the context for the photos. The lover of literature would wish that more of the photos were accompanied by Heynen's insights. The photographer might want to see more of the world Kuntz captured with his Argus. Nevertheless, this book will delight and instruct those who want to remember or to learn about small-town Iowa in the era of World War II.

The Great Plains during World War II, by R. Douglas Hurt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008. xiii, 507 pp. Illustrations, graphs, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Michael W. Schuyler is professor emeritus at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He is the author of *The Dread of Plenty: Agricultural Relief Activities of the Federal Government in the Middle West, 1933–1939* (1989) and "Great Plains Agriculture in the 1930s," in *The Great Plains Experience* (1978).

R. Douglas Hurt is one of the nation's preeminent historians of the Great Plains experience. In this book he brings together in one volume previous but limited scholarship with extensive new research to illuminate the history of the people in the Great Plains during the Second World War. Hurt defines the Great Plains as including the following states: North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. The book focuses on the region's social and economic history with only occasional references to politics. The author used government documents, but relied heavily on oral interviews, newspapers, and extensive archival collections to illuminate what happened to people at the grassroots level. The book is divided into 12 topical chapters that usually begin with a background discussion of the state of the nation in 1939 and conclude with an analysis of the immediate aftermath of the war's ending in 1945. The chapters include an introductory chapter and one covering the isolationists' opposition to entering the war, followed by chapters titled *The Work of War*, *Women at Work*, *The Home Front*, *Rationing*, *The Farm and Ranch Front*, *Agricultural Labor*, *Military Affairs*, *Internment*, *Prisoner-of-War Camps*, *Indians in Wartime*, and *War's End*.

Hurt's thesis, clearly stated but artfully nuanced, is that although the war brought about many immediate and tumultuous changes and accelerated many trends that were already apparent, the war did not permanently transform the Great Plains as it did other regions of the country, such as the Far West. The war resulted in unprecedented prosperity as the federal government poured millions of dollars into the Great Plains economy, particularly for military and industrial construction that resulted in a booming economy and new job opportunities for farm laborers, women, and minorities—especially African Americans, Mexican Americans, and American Indians. In spite of improved economic conditions, however, the author emphasizes that sexism, racism, economic greed, and egregious violations of civil liberties were manifest throughout the war. The war exposed many contradictions in American life, led to the mass migration of people moving to new jobs, and often resulted in hardship and suffering. Often, the government's patriotic appeal for sacrifice was trumped by personal convenience and economic self-interest. When the war ended, so did many of the job opportunities that had been created as a result of the war effort. Women and minorities were usually the first to lose their jobs and the economic advances they had made during the war. Their battle for economic, political, and civil rights would await another day. Ultimately, with the end of the war, the Great Plains remained primarily an agricultural region with a dominant agricultural economy.

This is an outstanding book that will be of interest not only to professional historians but also to general readers with an interest in the history and development of the Great Plains. The author not only provides new information; he also provides a meaningful synthesis of previous scholarship. By design he spends very little time on political history, but provides a comprehensive view of the economic and social history of the Great Plains during the war. It is the only available book that covers the individual topics in such depth. Hurt's narrative approach, using the words and remembrances of people who lived through the period to tell the Great Plains story during the war, makes the book an extremely enjoyable read. He focuses not only on what happened in the region's major cities, such as Wichita or Tulsa, but on how the war affected the lives of farmers and people who lived in small towns throughout the Great Plains states. Among the book's most engaging and informative chapters are the ones on internment and prisoner-of-war camps and the one on Indians in wartime.

The research the author completed for this book is outstanding, with 47 pages of exhaustive endnotes, a 20-page bibliography, and a detailed index, which is especially valuable for readers looking for particular information about events and developments in their own states. This is history at its best—both scholarly and fascinating reading—and is indispensable for our understanding of the Great Plains experience during the Second World War.

It's Our Day: America's Love Affair with the White Wedding, 1945–2005, by Katherine Jellison. CultureAmerica Series. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008. xi, 297 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Carole Srole is professor of history at California State University at Los Angeles. She is the author of *Transcribing Class and Gender: Masculinity and Femininity in Nineteenth-Century Courts and Offices* (forthcoming, 2009).

Katherine Jellison's *It's Our Day* is a delightful read for brides and grooms as well as a useful monograph for scholars. Her exploration of how the consumer culture promoted formal weddings focuses on how "standards for celebrating weddings" were developed and maintained. She explains how an upscale ceremony has become the norm, even as it adjusted to changing demographics and ideologies. Consumerism drove the ideal of the fairy-tale event as the bride's "day" to be pampered like a Cinderella princess by aping the lavish styles of the affluent.

World War II weddings set the stage for the decline of the informal celebrations that mixed modest gowns from local dress shops