

A recent Wenner Gren Foundation conference on contemporary activist anthropology helps put earlier action anthropology in perspective (see Les W. Field and Richard G. Fox, eds., *Anthropology Put to Work* [2007]). Participants asked and answered a question that Tax's students surely confronted: "How do activist anthropologists survive in academia?" The answer: publish well-theorized ethnographies that advance knowledge. As current activist anthropologists have shown (see, in addition to *Anthropology Put to Work*, Luke Lassiter, *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography* [2005]), a collaborative, politically activist approach can produce better ethnographies. Tax was right in theory, if not in practice. But conference participants also warned that failing such production, activist anthropologists will find themselves working for the government or private NGOs, or as pens for hire for activist groups. Had Tax and his students lived to be twenty-first-century anthropologists, they probably would have felt right at home.

*The Iowa Master Farmer Award History Book: A History of the Prestigious Award, Its Winners, and a Century of Iowa Agriculture.* Des Moines: Iowa Master Farmer Foundation, 2007. 397 pp. Illustrations, appendixes.

Reviewer John J. Fry is associate professor of history at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois. He is the author of *The Farm Press, Reform, and Rural Change, 1895–1920* (2005).

Each year, *Wallaces' Farmer*, a monthly farm journal aimed at farmers, presents the Iowa Master Farmer Award to a select group of Iowa farmers. Awards are given on the basis of the individuals' success in farming and service to their community. Occasionally, the publication also presents the Iowa Master Farmer Exceptional Service Award to nonfarmers who have dedicated their lives to the service of farming, such as extension agents and university professors. Awards have been presented each year since 1926, with brief interruptions during the Depression and World War II. By 2007, 410 Iowans had been honored.

This book reproduces the articles from *Wallaces' Farmer* that announced the award winners. The articles give brief biographies of recipients and descriptions of their farm operations, family, and community activities. The book organizes the articles in chapters roughly by decades. Each chapter begins with an introduction that traces the major developments in agriculture, technology, the economy, and other national and international events during the period. Each chapter also presents a table of "Iowa Farm Facts" for the first year represented in the chapter, including the number of Iowa farms, acreage, and production and price information for livestock and crops. The

articles provide a personal look at individual Iowans, painting a complex human picture of the development of Iowa farming over the past 80 years. The introductions and statistics present a more dispassionate narrative, mainly drawing on information that is available elsewhere. The book concludes with appendixes that list award winners by last name, year, and county.

*Forty Years of Growth and Achievement: A History of Iowa's Community Colleges*, by Jeremy Varner, edited by Janice Nahra Friedel. Des Moines: Iowa Department of Education, 2006. 114 pp. Maps, illustrations, tables, graphs, notes, appendixes.

Reviewer Thomas Burnell Colbert has taught at Marshalltown Community College since 1981. He has researched and written about various topics in Iowa political and agricultural history and is a past member of the State Historical Society Board of Trustees.

In 1918 the first junior college in Iowa was established in Mason City. The fewer than 40 junior colleges that existed nationwide offered the first two years of general education courses required for a bachelor of arts degree. In 1927 the Iowa General Assembly authorized local school districts to create junior colleges with voter approval. By 1930, 32 such colleges existed in Iowa. Thereafter, a story of ups and downs began. The Great Depression and World War II affected enrollments, but with the availability of funding for education from the GI Bill when the war ended, the number of students increased and a new stability evolved.

Mostly local students constituted the clientele for the colleges, which were attached to local high schools and drew their instructors from the high school faculties. However, in 1957 when the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik I*, federal money became available to establish local post-high school vocational-technical training through the National Defense Education Act. Then in 1965 Senate File 550, championed especially by Senator John "Jack" Kibbie, passed the Iowa legislature. That legislation allowed vocational-technical schools to unite with junior colleges. Thus began the Iowa community college system that operates today.

This book focuses on the establishment and growth of the present-day community colleges in Iowa. By no means a definitive rendition of the story of Iowa's community colleges, the book is a generally mundane, limited overview of what has transpired especially since the enactment of Senate File 550. Divided into three parts — "The Early Years," "Community Colleges in Transition," and "Evolving into a System of