

steads, an effort to provide homes to underemployed Iowa miners, was a poor model of a new way to live in the state. The project did, however, accomplish its core mission — giving meaningful work to desperate Iowans.

Perhaps the biggest limitation of the book is its relentless focus on the administration of these work relief programs in a single state. There's too much about how the programs were established and directed here in Iowa and not enough about the real impact of what was accomplished. Were Iowans pleased with their new murals? Did they enjoy their new state parks? Did they visit their new art centers? Were the cultural programs in Iowa different from those in other states? That information is hard to find in this book.

On balance, however, Narber is to be applauded for bringing attention to the impact of the New Deal on Iowa beyond its farms and its factories. Many will question his very broad definition of the term *culture*, but few will disagree with the underlying value of all of these programs — getting people back to work as quickly as possible. That is the true impact of the New Deal on Iowa.

*Negotiating Relief: The Development of Social Welfare Programs in Depression-Era Michigan, 1930–1940*, by Susan Stein-Roggenbuck. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008. xi, 252 pp. Maps, tables, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$9.95 CD.

Reviewer Joan Gittens is professor of history at Southwest Minnesota State University. She is the author of *Poor Relations: The Children of the State in Illinois, 1818–1990* (1994).

In *Negotiating Relief*, Susan Stein-Roggenbuck examines Michigan's aid to the poor at the height of the Great Depression, carefully charting the complicated interplay between rival groups who felt that they were best suited to decide the nature of relief and who was deserving of it. She focuses on four Michigan counties that represent urban and rural divisions, as well as geographical and economic variations, in the state.

The title *Negotiating Relief* is an apt summary of what she found in the documents. At every level of relief, there was tension and a struggle for control. In one major rivalry the new federal officials charged with implementing New Deal programs such as Federal Emergency Relief, Aid to Dependent Children, and Old Age Assistance confronted local officials — the established administrators of such county resources as the infirmaries (formerly poor houses) and mothers' pension programs. The local administrators, who were overwhelmingly male and businessmen or farmers, felt that they were more familiar with the circum-

stances of those requesting help and best qualified to judge the worthiness of the applicants. They saw it as their responsibility to husband local resources and keep the tax burden as low as possible. While they welcomed the possibility of added state and federal funds, they resisted the loss of "home rule" that went with it. By contrast, the federal relief workers not only threatened local autonomy with federal rules and regulations; they also had different attitudes about the causes of poverty, how to define the deserving poor, and the issue of who was best qualified to deal effectively with those in need. These differences between local officials and the newcomers were further exacerbated by the federal officials' advocacy of social work training for relief workers, while local officials felt strongly that a business perspective was the best preparation for dispensing relief. Underlying the tensions between the two points of view were gender differences. Virtually all of the local poor relief officials were men, while many of the federal relief workers were female. There were even tensions between different groups of social workers, including disagreements over the efficacy of unionizing their profession. And, at another level, the recipients of assistance, vulnerable though they were in relationship to relief workers, added their own level of negotiations to the story of relief, trying their best to make a sometimes unresponsive system fit their needs.

Stein-Roggenbuck's story is superbly organized and told in clear, unpretentious prose. She takes a tangled story of confused and overlapping agencies and crafts it into a lucid monograph, making what might have been a deadly dull rendering into a vivid account of how relief played out on the local level. In her introduction she states that she has chosen not to preference any one set of ideas among the contestants but to present the various sides evenhandedly, and she remains true to this, though clearly her greatest sympathy lies with the recipients of relief, whose stories she tells through her use of case work documents and other sources. The one aspect that needed more convincing proof was her sympathetic assertion that the local overseers of the poor could be seen as fighting for democracy against the onslaught of centralizing government. There was nothing in her telling that rendered these officials particularly democratic. They were local, yes, and suspicious of social work professionals and New Deal assumptions and theories, but they come across as more autocratic than democratic, particularly in regard to their fellow townspeople in need.

What is most impressive about *Negotiating Relief* is that it details the way relief policies played out in daily practice without succumbing to the confusion that was so much a part of the story of poor relief, dispensed as it was by so many agencies at all government levels. The

author incorporates other historians' work in a graceful and enlightening way, putting her work into the broader context of the history of poor relief and social welfare. Readers of state and local history will appreciate her extensive use of county records and other local documents and her ability to tell a story that is both convincing local history and a case study that adds understanding to the broader history of social welfare and the New Deal Era.

*Mamie Doud Eisenhower: The General's First Lady*, by Marilyn Irvin Holt. Modern First Ladies Series. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007. xiv, 189 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer John Robert Greene is Paul J. Schupf Professor of History and Humanities at Cazenovia College. His books include *Betty Ford: Candor and Courage in the White House* (2004) and *Presidential Profiles: The Nixon and Ford Years* (2006).

As a teenager becoming interested in history, I was thrilled when my grandparents asked me to accompany them on their yearly vacation jaunt to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. On the obligatory tour of the home first used as a presidential getaway, then as a retirement home, for the first couple of the 1950s, I was taken aback by its bright pink décor and the frilly accoutrements. I judged that the proprietor of that home, Mamie Doud Eisenhower, was as shallow and frilly as was her home. Marilyn Irvin Holt's fascinating new biography shows me just how wrong I was.

Mamie had a nine-year tie to the state of Iowa. She was born in 1896 in Boone, where she lived for less than a year, when the DouDs moved to Cedar Rapids. There they lived until 1905, when they moved to Colorado, where Mamie continued her early life as a privileged debutante. The moderately wealthy family wintered at San Antonio, where Mamie met a young lieutenant stationed at Fort Sam Hill. Of Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mamie was clear: "I wanted that man" (9).

More than half of Holt's book deals with Mamie's pre-White House career. That is appropriate, particularly given Holt's overriding thesis — that, "in effect, Mamie Eisenhower's years as an army wife laid the foundation for her approach to the role as first lady" (xii). Mamie learned that the behavior and decorum of the spouse of a career officer was central to his advancement. She then perfected the role, using her parties, personal touch, and gift for the intimately political, to help Ike rise to the top. She was a true political partner, yet she was initially cool towards the general's decision to run for the presidency in 1952. Still, when he made his decision, she presented a