

thirty-seven of the forty-eight states passed educational restrictions. These restrictions took two forms: laws against teaching mostly elementary-level students in the German language and efforts to require all students to attend public schools. The anti-German language laws were directed at German Lutherans, primarily; the compulsory education bills were directed at Catholics. Ross provides a detailed description of the passage of the laws in Nebraska, Oregon, and in the territory of Hawaii that were challenged in the courts. He also discusses the efforts made by those affected by the laws to defeat them. Finally, he details the groups who mobilized to challenge the laws.

Readers of the *Annals of Iowa* will be particularly interested in Ross's able treatment of the Bartels case. On April 10, 1919, the Iowa legislature "expressly prohibited the use of any language other than English for secular subjects in any public or private school and provided that foreign languages could be taught above the eighth grade" (109). August Bartels of Bremer County was convicted of violating the law in January 1920 and was fined \$25. The Iowa Supreme Court confirmed Bartels's conviction when it heard the case. The United States Supreme Court considered the Iowa case along with cases from Nebraska and Ohio. On June 4, 1923, it invalidated all three state laws that restricted teaching in German. The decision, known as *Meyer v. Nebraska*, was written by conservative justice James C. McReynolds.

*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, a 1925 Oregon case, and *Farrington v. Tokushige*, a 1927 case from the territory of Hawaii, are the other cases that form the heart of Ross's book. In each, Ross provides a detailed treatment of the context for the passage of the legislation and the issues involved in the litigation. In a concluding chapter, Ross gives a fine summary of the constitutional significance of these cases.

This is a first-rate book. Perhaps the author could have analyzed more extensively the extent of nativism in the various states, but that would have meant a much longer book. Those interested in nativism, the evolution of the Supreme Court's commitment to civil liberties, attacks on parochial education, and the history of the Midwest will want to read *Forging New Freedoms*.

*Great Cars of the Great Plains*, by Curt McConnell. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995. xiii, 267 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendix, index. \$40.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JACK LUFKIN, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

This book offers readers a regional portrait of the competitive, infant automobile industry before the age of giant car makers, mass assembly techniques, and a paved highway system. Beginning in the late 1890s,

thousands of enterprising Americans, many of whom built wagons and carriages, started designing and manufacturing horseless carriages. Historians usually accord these small, short-lived makers a cursory review in general surveys of automotive history. Yet, as the author argues, they introduced a number of innovations later used and adapted by larger companies such as Ford and General Motors.

This deliciously illustrated book contains thoughtfully placed photos and period advertisements. It is structured with a general introduction followed by a chapter on each of five midwestern or Great Plains makers—Great Smith of Kansas, Luverne of Minnesota, Patriot of Nebraska, Spaulding of Grinnell, Iowa, and Moon of Missouri. The introduction offers some helpful interpretive generalizations about the auto industry. McConnell asserts that smaller auto companies often led in making special cars for special needs. Spaulding, for example, marketed a car with a fold-down camper-style bed; Moon introduced the “Diana” roadster that catered to women buyers, meaning it was theoretically easier to drive. The author also maintains that local auto makers stimulated interest in autos in general. Buyers would be more likely to purchase their first car from a locally known vendor.

At its best, the book gives readers a narrative biography of each company’s founders, a taste of the history of the community where the makers resided, and insight into the daily activities at the plant and company offices. McConnell effectively demonstrates how a new industry with no past blueprint to follow spurred innovative product ideas, demonstrated the product’s superiority, and endeavored to create demand. Luverne’s makers, for example, encouraged customers to come into the factory and assist in the assembly of the car to learn how it operated. (Imagine such an offer today!) There are innumerable examples of companies staging publicity stunts to demonstrate their automobile’s durability. Spaulding cars took part in transstate races against mail trains, and the Great Smith sponsored climbing feats up Pikes Peak and over rugged roads.

Students of Iowa history will find the Spaulding essay well-written and informative. It is a solid narrative overview of the company’s beginnings, short life, and rather sad and abrupt demise. Unlike the sometimes ponderous Great Smith essay, the Spaulding essay does not include tedious technical detail concerning engine and chassis construction and design. The other essays all have some connection to Iowa and will prove useful to students of early automotive history. The author thankfully eschews “car buff” nostalgia found in similar books, but the book would have been much stronger had it included a strong concluding chapter comparing the five companies and following up on some salient points offered in the introduction. Readers

might ask why McConnell chose to profile these five car makers over thousands of others. One must assume that they typified the general trends he discussed.

*John L. Lewis: Hard Labor and Wild Justice*, by Ron E. Roberts. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1994. viii, 223 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$23.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PETER RACHLEFF, MACALESTER COLLEGE

Few labor leaders have been accorded space in America's public pantheon of heroes. John L. Lewis is probably the best known of the lot—and the most controversial. Ron Roberts has done a fine job of presenting Lewis's life within its changing historical context, and Kendall/Hunt has produced a handsome book, richly illustrated with photographs and cartoons that add to the reader's comprehension of Lewis.

Lewis, who was born in Lucas, Iowa, led the United Mine Workers union for four decades and masterminded the creation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the mid-1930s. At that time, he got more press than President Roosevelt himself. Lewis was a very complex figure, able to cooperate with Republicans (he endorsed Wilkie in 1940) and communists (he hired hundreds of them as organizers in the 1930s). He provided militant leadership for his rank-and-file membership, yet often used the union as a personal fiefdom in which he found places for his family and friends.

There have been several earlier Lewis biographies—Saul Alinsky, *John L. Lewis: An Unauthorized Biography* (1949); Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis: A Biography* (1977); and Robert Zieger, *John L. Lewis, Labor Leader* (1988)—but this one comes closest to capturing Lewis's complexity. Professor Roberts benefits from personal insight unavailable to Lewis's previous biographers. Like Lewis, he hails from Lucas, part of the third generation in his family to be born there. Roberts's understanding of Lucas and the cultures (especially Welsh) that shaped the values and attitudes of coal miners gives him a major clue to Lewis's character. Roberts has also taken advantage of his familial and community ties to interview people who knew Lewis and could offer insights into his roots.

*John L. Lewis: Hard Labor and Wild Justice* opens in the early nineteenth century with the radical transformation of the Welsh countryside by coal mining and modern industry. Lewis's family would leave this place to come to the United States, eventually settling in Lucas, Iowa, which was being similarly jolted by the forces of modern industry. There, in the late 1870s, miners helped plant a seed of trade unionism, which grew from the Knights of Labor to the United Mine

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