

Prisoners on the Plains: German POWs in America, by Glenn Thompson. Third ed. Holdrege, NE: Phelps County Historical Society, 1993. v, 292 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$49.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY EDWARD J. PLUTH, ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY

The fiftieth anniversary of World War II initiated many commemorative historical projects. *Prisoners on the Plains* is the result of one such effort. It is the story of Camp Atlanta, a German POW camp located near the town of Holdrege in Phelps County, one of five in Nebraska. Like many of the 155 main POW camps established during the war, including those at Algona, Iowa, and Concordia, Kanŕas, Camp Atlanta housed several thousand German POWs and opened branch camps to facilitate the employment of the POWs principally in agricultural work. The main feature and value of the book is the wealth of information provided about the varied facets of the camp's history, often told through the recollections of community residents and former American military personnel and POWs. Although stressing this local focus, Thompson connects these experiences to their larger national context.

As local history, the work is written for a general audience. It is ably researched and includes numerous photographs, but is primarily descriptive and lacks analysis. As evidenced by the misleading subtitle, assistance from an editor would have offered several benefits: better organization, reduction of repetitive information, and tempering the author's penchant to include all of his research data in the narrative. Apart from these problems, however, *Prisoners on the Plains* provides a readable and informative account of a unique and almost forgotten home front experience. The book should appeal to a broad regional audience, especially to those who remember such camps or who want to learn about them.

Twin Cities: Then and Now, by Larry Millett with new photography by Jerry Mathiason. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1996. x, 204 pp. Historic and contemporary photos, maps, notes, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY DON DRAKE, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Architectural critic/historian Larry Millett's *Twin Cities: Then and Now* places historic "street systems" in Minneapolis and St. Paul from the 1880s to the 1950s opposite 1995 photos by architectural photographer Jerry Mathiason from the same vantage point. Millett identifies streets as an "incomparable framework for looking at the urban past" (4). He

selected post-1880 views that were "lively and interesting," avoided the "usual suspects," and dramatized change (5). Millett's lesson is simple: "cities, like the people who build and occupy them, need to maintain their sense of continuity" (8).

Although no new ground is broken here, rarely—if ever—have we had such a compelling *visual* statement under one cover of the devastating changes in our twentieth-century cities. One needs little imagination to see what we have lost in our quest for modernization and in our flight from the nineteenth-century cities. The face-to-face interaction in the earlier photos has given way to freeways, parking lots, and cold, faceless, urban streets. While this book is about the Twin Cities, it is no stretch to see the same patterns in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, or other cities of the Midwest. The value of this book, even to those who do not know the Twin Cities, is that it readily helps us see similar changes in other midwestern cities. The cumulative impact of 72 side-by-side comparisons raises all sorts of questions about what we have become and offers some visual clues for those who would help restore the communities that have been fragmented by "progress."

Sources for the History of Agriculture and Rural Life in the Iowa State University Library, compiled by Glenn L. McMullen. Ames: Iowa State University Library, 1996. vi, 128 pp. Index.

REVIEWED BY EARL M. ROGERS, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Iowa State University Library's Special Collections Department, under successive heads Stanley Yates and Glenn L. McMullen, has collected manuscript, archival, and other source material on agriculture in Iowa and the United States and to a lesser extent other countries. This printed guide describes 393 collections of personal papers and organizational records in the department's Archives of American Agriculture and the University Archives. The fifteen categories include collections on a wide spectrum of farm organizations and their leaders, scientific research and conservation, related businesses from seed companies to the defunct Rath Packing Company, congressmen and U.S. Department of Agriculture officials from Tama Jim Wilson onward, remarkable farmers such as Roswell Garst, and significant Iowa State University departments and professors. An electronic version of the guide, with planned updates, is available on the World Wide Web: <http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/agric/tc.html>

Few guides, printed or electronic, so thoroughly describe primary sources on agriculture at any repository. This guide will be essential

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