

What the author does best, though, is evoke the cultural milieu and rural experiences of an era still largely agricultural in outlook, but also caught up in the process of transformation toward an America dominated by agribusiness, consumerism, and a suburban-like community structure. There in the 1940s we are privy to "bean-shooting wars" in the movie balcony, binder races in the oat field, runaway horse teams on the roads, outhouses tipped over at Halloween, and scrap metal drives during the war. We cannot fault the author for showing the recent past of the rural community at its best and most virtuous, because in the wide-eyed wonderment and innocence of a thirteen-year-old boy, anything and everything was possible.

Carrier on the Prairie: The Story of the U.S. Naval Air Station, Ottumwa, Iowa, 1942-1947, by Elsie Mae Cofer. Ottumwa: Hawley Court Press, 1996. 310 pp. Illustrations, maps, charts, tables, references, notes, appendixes, glossary, index. \$25.95 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY GEORGE WILLIAM MCDANIEL, ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY

Ottumwan Elsie Mae Cofer has written an interesting account of the Ottumwa Naval Air Station during World War II. Cofer's research is extensive and includes interviews with people who had served at the station. At peak times the station maintained a population of about 3,500, larger than many towns in Iowa. Included in this number were WAVES, and it is an asset of this book that Cofer includes the important roles these women played at Ottumwa. She discusses the daily life of the thousands of men and women who served there, and she also discusses the impact of the navy and the station on the city of Ottumwa and the surrounding communities.

The book is filled with data, from the price paid for land, to prices at the Ship's Store, to the names and ranks of personnel at all levels, to the numbers of airplanes, to the scores of sporting events. At times, readers may feel they are flying through clouds of facts and hope for clearer air.

There are many photographs, some maps, and miscellaneous charts and tables. Several appendixes, notes, a glossary, references, and an index are helpful. One table I missed, however, would indicate the total numbers of men and women who served in Ottumwa and how many became naval pilots and saw combat service. Finally, there was one factual error important to this reader: St. Ambrose College is in Davenport, Iowa, not Dubuque (189).

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