

After the war, students returned, building resumed, and, particularly during the chancellorship of Clifford Hardin (1953–1968), the university sought to become a research center funded heavily by federal dollars. Other major changes occurred during the Hardin years: the role of Nebraska Educational Television expanded; the University of Nebraska Press became a leader among university presses; a Kellogg grant led to construction of a continuing education center (later renamed the Hardin Center); and the Sheldon Art Gallery was built. With the merger of the University of Nebraska and the University of Omaha in 1968, Hardin was named the first chancellor of the University of Nebraska System.

Hardin's successors faced problems similar to those on other campuses, including student unrest, faculty concern over shared governance, public disenchantment and declining state financial support, arguments over quality and access, and the growing role and cost of technological change. During the past quarter-century, these problems made administrators' lives and careers more difficult and shorter at the University of Nebraska as they did elsewhere.

Football's role at the university is discussed from the first game on campus in 1889 to the glories of the Devaney and Osborne eras. So little attention is paid to any other extracurricular activities that one might wonder if there *were* any other sports or cocurricular activities.

Knoll's history is readable and informative, attractively designed, and enhanced with a fine selection of photos. It is the first work to deal with the University of Nebraska "system" and will take its place among the growing body of writings about public higher education.

Beneath the Whispering Maples: The History of Simpson College, by Joseph W. Walt. Indianola: Simpson College Press, 1995. xvii, 856 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY CARROLL ENGELHARDT, CONCORDIA COLLEGE

Beneath the Sheltering Maples is a consummate insider's account written by an emeritus professor of history who served for forty years at Simpson College. Professor Walt is indebted to previous college historians who, faced with a paucity of sources caused by a 1918 fire, assembled files of college catalogs, newspapers, and yearbooks which he has supplemented by industriously mining Indianola, Warren County, and other newspapers. The latter allow him to explore in detail town-gown relations, which were often close but sometimes strained by constant fund-raising and the student activism of the late sixties. Thanks to the author's conviction that "people are important,"

almost everyone connected with Simpson's history is included, often with lengthy biographical sketches; these individuals are easily found through the detailed, accurate index.

Professor Walt chronicles with gentle humor Simpson's story from its origins in 1860 as a frontier Methodist academy—the Indianola Male and Female Seminary—which became Simpson College by 1867. The academy, surviving until 1925, a short-lived Law Department, a shorter-lived Engineering Department, unfulfilled plans for a Medical Department, and President Alexander Burns's dreams of a Methodist university during the 1870s demonstrate that frontier colleges such as Simpson were never purely liberal arts schools. Nonetheless, Simpson achieved maturity as a liberal arts college under Charles E. Shelton (1899–1910), the strongest president of the first half-century; he modernized the curriculum, landscaped the grounds, and financed several buildings with successful fund drives.

Although generally blessed with good enrollments, low tuition charges to ensure the education of deserving Methodist youth led to almost annual deficits, regular financial crises, constant fund drives, and, during the early years, several miraculous deliverances through revivalistic appeals in baccalaureate sermons. Walt's honest account makes it clear that the institution's uncertain finances throughout its history have led to low faculty salaries and sometimes to academic weaknesses among a mostly Iowa student body. The college's financial uncertainty became especially worrisome by the 1970s. Indeed, not until the presidency of Robert Edward McBride (1979–1987) was an efficient budgeting process developed, which eliminated the chronic annual deficits and improved academic quality.

Walt's engagingly written account, supplemented by many full-page illustrations and four sections of photographs, will serve well as a standard institutional reference work. In addition, it is a good source of information for students of Iowa history interested in Indianola, central Iowa, Methodism, and education, as well as for scholars of American higher education researching small, church-related colleges. Walt's strengths are his weaknesses, however. His industrious research, narrow institutional focus, and detailed individual biographies sometimes overwhelm the general reader. Although people are important, institutional histories are more than the sum of all the individuals who ever attended, taught, or served. What is Simpson's institutional biography? How is it similar to or different from other denominational schools? Greater attention to mission, a topic of interest for other denominational colleges, would help answer these questions. More analysis of how Simpson conceived its mission historically and how this was connected to both Methodist and general

higher education would also increase the book's value for general readers and educational historians.

Bess Streeter Aldrich: The Dreams Are All Real, by Carol Miles Petersen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. xix, 237 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$35.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY CHERYL ROSE JACOBSEN, WARTBURG COLLEGE

Drawing on Bess Streeter Aldrich's extensive professional writings, private correspondence, public interviews, day journals, and ledgers, as well as on interviews with Aldrich's children and friends, biographer Carol Petersen produces an affectionate portrait of the popular, early twentieth-century midwestern writer. The Bess Streeter Aldrich who emerges was Victorian in her sensibilities, shrewd in business, reflective about her craft, and ambitious. Petersen also argues that the writer's life can be seen in the written legacy—both of which can be understood as "exemplars of the Romantic Realist" (xvii).

Born in Cedar Falls, Iowa, in 1881, Aldrich drew extensively on the pioneer heritage of Iowa and Nebraska and of her own family for novels and short stories about the settling of the Midwest. Petersen identifies Aldrich's paternal grandfather as the "archetypal pioneer" of her novel *Song of Years*. Similarly, Aldrich's maternal ancestors reappear in *A Lantern in Her Hand*. In both instances, the "family histories-cum-legend blend the reality and romance that Aldrich confronts in her stories" (5). The "reality" part of this equation was the result of Aldrich's extensive research in primary accounts and historical documents prior to writing a novel. For *Song of Years*, Aldrich used documents collected by a Cedar Falls local historian of early settlement days, her grandfather's letters from his years as a state legislator, and oral histories of family members. Aldrich undertook similar historical research for *A Lantern in Her Hand*, although she solicited the information through the medium of radio following a talk about "The Pioneer in Fiction."

By the 1920s and 1930s, Aldrich's popularity grew among a partisan readership who preferred her emphasis on "such basic values as home, love, and family" over fiction usually characterized as naturalistic or, at least, focused on the darker aspects of life. Most of Aldrich's writing appeared in magazines such as the *American Magazine*, *Ladies Home Journal*, or *McCalls*. She noted that her success depended directly on her study of the market and what would sell, especially to women readers (41). In the decades of world war, urbanization, and depression, fiction that affirmed "decency" and the "safety

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