

Although *Radio Priest* does not have the same literary quality as Brinkley's *Voices of Protest*, it does provide a more detailed picture of the famous priest. In writing the book, the author uses the recently opened Coughlin files in the archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit and synthesizes an impressive number of oral interviews and other research conducted over a period of more than twenty years. The writing and publication of the book also capitalizes on current events, as the title suggests. The movement for a third party, the increasing relevance of talk radio to political events, and the reported incidents of violence perpetrated by fringe movements were all present in Father Coughlin's day.

But that is not to say that the author is completely persuasive in labeling Coughlin the "Father of Hate Radio." To fully prove his claim we need to know more about how Coughlin compares with contemporaries (like FDR) and others since who have used radio for political purposes. Put simply, too much history from 1942 to the 1980s is left unexplained. One suspects that the exigencies of marketing the book interfered with the writing of its thesis. I highly recommend the book, however, to all those who study the period, because no better biography of Coughlin exists. Some Hoover scholars will be especially interested in those pages that mention the former president and his most vocal critic. Most noteworthy are the book's explorations of anti-Semitism and anti-Communism and its discussion of Catholic teachings on social questions.

Mrs. Ike: Memories and Reflections on the Life of Mamie Eisenhower, by Susan Eisenhower. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1996. xix, 392 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$26.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY BARBARA MCGOWAN, RIPON COLLEGE

Mrs. Ike is a biography of Mamie Eisenhower written by her granddaughter, Susan Eisenhower. Not surprisingly, the book, which concentrates on private life and draws on numerous family letters and personal interviews, presents Mamie as a devoted wife, loving mother and grandmother, and gregarious friend. Susan, who is president of the Eisenhower Group (a family-run foundation) and chair of the Center of Post Soviet Studies, states rather defensively that Mamie's virtues are no longer valued by American society, but that Mamie herself was always "centered, confident and unapologetic about who she was" (xvii).

Mamie Geneva Doud was born November 14, 1896, in Boone, Iowa, to John Doud, a prosperous manager of a family-owned meat-

packing business, and Elvira Carlson, the daughter of successful, religious Swedish immigrants. Shortly after Mamie's birth, the family moved to Cedar Rapids, and a few years later to Denver and Colorado Springs. By the age of 36, John Doud was reportedly a millionaire and already semiretired. His family divided their time between Denver, Colorado Springs, and later San Antonio, where the adolescent Mamie would meet and marry a young army officer, Dwight Eisenhower. Mamie's childhood was sheltered and privileged but marred by the early death of her sister Eleanor and the oppressive religiosity of her mother's family. She received little formal education beyond the eighth grade; and despite granddaughter Susan's claim that Mamie was exceptionally bright and unaffected by her lack of schooling, the lasting impact seems to have been a lifelong disinterest in issues and concerns outside of her private circle of family and friends.

Taken on her own terms, Mamie was a private person and a traditionalist. However, she was not domestic in the sense made famous by the stereotypical 1950s housewife. Mamie grew up with servants and appears to have had domestic help most of her married life. Most of her friends were childless, and Mamie herself—who lost her first son at the age of three to scarlet fever and meningitis—raised one child, John. By all accounts, she was a loving if overprotective mother, but John was often sent away to camps and boarding schools and spent every summer with his grandparents.

By her own admission, Mamie—who married while still in her teens—had a hard time adjusting to the uncertainties of army life and spent a lot of her early married life living with her parents instead of her husband. In addition, her father provided lifelong financial help to the Eisenhowers so that Mamie could live comfortably while her husband drew an army salary. Both Eisenhowers, Mamie and Ike, enjoyed an extensive social life while stationed in places as far flung as Washington, D.C., Paris, the Philippines, and Fort Lewis, Washington. The frequent separations and the lively social life enjoyed by both often caused friction in the marriage. There is no evidence, though, that either was unfaithful, and Susan does argue rather convincingly that Eisenhower's alleged wartime "affair" with Kay Summersby was nothing more than a friendship between coworkers.

Obviously, Susan Eisenhower is not a professional historian, and clearly she loved and admired her grandmother. But despite Susan's best efforts and considerable writing skills, the Mamie that emerges from this book is not one likely to win much interest from future political historians. Mamie appears to have been a nice, fun-loving woman who enjoyed her friends, loved her family, suffered from various annoying but not disabling ailments, and had no interest

whatsoever in politics, history, or public life. Her tenure as First Lady was spent attending numerous receptions, visiting with grandchildren, watching soap operas, and decorating the family farm at Gettysburg. On the other hand, Mamie's life story does throw some light on the varieties of middle-class experience in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her family was both intensely religious and very modern at the same time. Despite her family's wealth, little attention was paid to their daughters' education. Also, Mamie's sister was divorced and remarried with Mamie's support.

Main Street Revisited: Time, Space, and Image Building in Small-Town America, by Richard V. Francaviglia. American Land and Life Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996. xxiv, 224 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY GERALD A. DANZER, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

Main Street Revisited is a thoughtful compilation of observations and illustrations from the extensive files of a historical geographer who has been studying the major commercial streets of America's towns for thirty years. He marshals an array of resources under three major rubrics — time, space, and image — with each division making a major point. First, Main Street has changed over time. Each era, including our own, has used the broad avenue in its own way, contributing to its character, look, and reputation. Spatial considerations are also important, giving each variant of the general phenomenon a peculiar appearance, status, and sense of place. Finally, placing Main Street in the broad context of American culture, this study ably documents how Main Street became an American icon.

The key to the book is section three, where we discover that the person who unlocked the secret attractions of Main Street was Walt Disney. Main Street USA in Disneyland, a product of the early 1950s, used certain aspects of the thoroughfare in its prime, from about 1890 up to 1920, to reassure a later generation of its roots, its heritage, and its destiny. If the prospective reader wants to quickly grasp the relevance of the book, the best advice is to read part three first, understand Disney's contribution, then go back to the foundation chapters on time and space.

Before returning the volume to the shelf, however, readers will want to spend some additional time with *Main Street Revisited*. First read, or reread, Wayne Franklin's succinct foreword, which develops the context for the study. Then return to the sixteen axioms about Main Streets that the author uses throughout the book to pull his

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