

it was in other midwestern states, Lee and Cox clearly demonstrate that a strain of radicalism pervaded a number of counties, towns, and cities in the state. Moreover, their scholarship underscores similar findings made by other scholars that reveal the presence of a notable level of radicalism that manifested itself in the largely rural central part of the country and in other regions as well, especially at the turn of the twentieth century. Jon Lauck, in *The Lost Region* (2013), has encouraged more midwestern scholarship in order for the region to be on par with the well-developed historical focuses that one can find in the history of the South, New England, and the West. *When Sunflowers Bloomed Red* is a welcome addition to the history of the American Midwest that should have appeal to students, scholars, and general readers.

The Rural Schools of Madison County: A Vanishing Heritage, by Ronald Howell. Winterset, IA: Ronald Howell, 2019. 254 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$44.00 paperback

Reviewer Franklin Yoder is an adjunct professor of history at the University of Iowa. He is the author of *All in One Room: A History of Country Schools in Johnson County, Iowa* (2018).

The history of rural schools in Madison County, Iowa, is well documented in Ronald Howell's account of these now defunct institutions. Books about rural schools often focus on personal memories of former students and teachers or they emphasize data about schools. Howell has included both approaches in this history by integrating each of those elements in this work.

The initial chapters cover a variety of topics related to rural schools. In addition to a brief history of rural school laws, the reader will find chapters on topics ranging from descriptions of outhouses to school fires and celebrations. The chapters in this section include anecdotes and historical documents that enrich the text.

The largest section of the book is devoted to histories of individual schools. Grouped by township, an account of the early history of each school provides data about the building along with one or two photographs. In a few instances, current photos of the school building are also included. This section of the book will be especially interesting to former students and teachers of the Madison County schools but of less interest to the general reader.

Photographs throughout the text add a visual dimension that gives readers a taste of how rural schools and students appeared. The amount

of data and information about each school is impressive and certainly represents many hours of research and data collection. This book adds to the list of books that tell the story of rural schools in Iowa.

Old-Fashioned Modernism: Rural Masculinity and Midwestern Literature, by Andy Oler. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2019. xi, 234 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

C. Elizabeth Raymond is Grace A. Griffen Professor of History at the University of Nevada, Reno. She is a scholar of American landscapes and sense of place, U.S. regionalism, and American women's history.

In *Old-Fashioned Modernism*, Andy Oler makes an argument considerably broader than his subtitle suggests. While the subject of his book is the depiction of masculinity in a range of (mostly) twentieth-century novels from the official twelve-state census district of the Middle West, his conclusions range beyond fiction into matters of contemporary and historical regional identity. At its heart this is a consideration of how midwestern literature “counters the simple binary of progressive urbanity and retrograde rurality . . . [by] imagining the Midwest as a comparatively inclusive middle ground that joins past and future” (6). Oler shows the reader how this was done by examining a series of twentieth-century novels “from the Great Lakes to the Great Plains” (6).

His study begins at the historical moment when American masculinity itself was in transition. The nineteenth century had traditionally measured manhood in terms of character and self-control. By the early twentieth century, however, this model was decidedly old-fashioned. In fiction and in fact, it was being displaced by a newer, personality-based male ideal that defined success in terms of wealth and corporate expansion (47). At this “disorderly modern moment” (14), Oler suggests, midwestern writers forthrightly depicted the challenges faced by both men and women responding to a changing society.

The works he analyzes foreground the experiences of men. *Old-Fashioned Modernism* begins with Sherwood Anderson's 1920 *Poor White*, then moves to Dawn Powell's *The Story of a Country Boy* and Lorine Nie-decker's multimedia poem *Next Year or I Fly My Rounds, Tempestuous* (both 1935). The Great Plains are represented by William Cunningham's *The Green Corn Rebellion* (1935) and *The Home Place* by Wright Morris (1948). *Not Without Laughter* (1930), Langston Hughes's semi-autobiographical novel, extends the argument beyond the rural and small town Midwest to include urban Chicago. That novel offers a view of black