

If You Don't Outdie Me. By Dillon Bustin. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982. Pp. 136, preface, black and white photographs, indexes to photographs and diary entries. \$20.00 cloth, \$12.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Harry Hammerdinger.

If You Don't Outdie Me is an interesting historical analysis of a community, using a photographer's photographs and journal entries. Dillon Bustin examines the history of Brown County, Indiana chiefly through the records of photographer Frank Hohenberger. Bustin also uses newspaper accounts, census data, histories, and interviews to add depth to his analysis.

Although the book focuses on the Brown County of 1920-30, Bustin presents the earlier history of the County to explain that decade. Located in southern Indiana, Brown County was settled relatively late because its hilly terrain made it inaccessible and less attractive for farming. After 1870 Brown County did not change as rapidly as its neighbors because the County did not attract industrialization. The railroad crossed only one corner of the County and it had few natural resources. The population dropped and by 1930 was only half of what it had been in 1880. Because of its retention of traditional folklife yet proximity to Indianapolis and Chicago Brown County became an artist community after the turn of the century. Hohenberger settled in Brown County in 1917 with the intention of being a nature photographer but after a few years he became more interested in the people and developed into an ethnographic photographer.

After his death in 1962 Hohenberger left behind 8,000 negatives and a 573 page journal. He had become fairly well known by photographs published in popular magazines and a successful mail order business for his prints. The photographs in **If You Don't Outdie Me** are printed from the original negatives and are generally well reproduced. The integrity of the photographs was maintained by not cropping them. By closely examining any one of the photographs, the reader can appreciate the wealth of ethnographic information recorded.

The key issue of the book is how outsiders view a "backward" community. Usually, the urban middle-class

sees the rural natives either as folk philosophers removed from culture's contamination or as comic hillbillies. Bustin examines how the artists and tourists adopted these views and how the natives reacted to them. Hohenberger was also an outsider and always remained one, but he had a genuine interest in learning about the local people. Consequently, he recorded dress, beliefs, stories, and social activities with a sympathetic eye. It is this interest that makes Hohenberger's record so much more valuable to folklorists than those of the artists and tourists.

The reader obtains a fuller understanding of the ethnography from the description of Hohenberger. The second chapter is a biography of him and in other chapters he is seen in relationship to some of the natives. Knowing that Hohenberger was a private man who lived alone most of his life helps one understand why he focused on the individualists of the community.

An aspect of the book which may disturb folklorists is the connotation of some passages. At times Bustin's wording reflects a stereotypic and romantic view of the folk. Examples are, "Only in the recent past has anyone with social advantages tried to hunker down with a hillbilly and listen carefully to his or her story" (p. vii) and, "Their colorful folk methods had finally been accosted by a piece of paper" (p. 122). While such statements will not bother the general reader, the folklorist who is sensitive to their implications may find them objectionable.

Overall, **If You Don't Outdie Me** is a good description of Brown County in the 20's and the forces which led up to that time. The analysis is intelligent but readable and avoids jargon. The book concentrates on the historic and cultural aspects of the community as opposed to looking at Hohenberger's work in terms of the history of photography. Folklorists and interested general readers will find this study of local history utilizing historic photography informative and useful.