

Voices of American Homemakers. Edited by Eleanor Arnold. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, [1993]. Pp. 295. Illustrations. Clothbound, \$25.00; paperbound, \$10.95.)

The National Extension Homemakers Council (NEHC) commemorated its fiftieth anniversary in 1986 with a national oral history project modeled on the successful Indiana Extension Homemakers Association oral history project, *Memories of Hoosier Homemakers*. One product of this nationwide effort is *Voices of American Homemakers*, originally published by the NEHC in 1985 and recently reprinted in hardback by Indiana University Press. Eleanor Arnold, who directed the Indiana project and edited the six-volume *Hoosier Homemakers* series, brought her valuable experience to the same roles in the national undertaking. Supported by two grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the project involved collaboration between professional historians and the numerous volunteers who gathered over two hundred oral histories of rural women from thirty-seven different states. Transcripts of interviews will provide historians with rich primary sources on the lives of rural women.

Voices of American Homemakers, like the *Hoosier Homemaker* volumes, is comprised of a series of interview excerpts arranged by topic. The book has four major sections, each with additional thematic divisions. "The Homemaker and Her Life" provides information on growing up, education, courtship, marriage, childbirth, and childrearing; "The Homemaker and Her Work" covers a variety of housekeeping tasks and the changing technologies associated with these chores; "The Homemaker and Her Organization" offers data on the "Home Ec" clubs and lessons, the extension agents, and the benefits of club membership; and "The Homemaker and Herself" contains lengthy interviews with four women.

Voices of American Homemakers reflects both the strengths and weaknesses of the *Hoosier Homemaker* series. Like the Indiana volumes, the national collection offers revealing recollections of rural customs, communities, lifestyles, and values. The straightforward and often eloquent words of the rural homemakers reaffirm the worth of oral history as a method for recording life experiences of ordinary people. Similar to the *Hoosier* volumes, however, this collection deals with growing up, courtship, and childbirth without providing much insight on either sexual attitudes or behavior. The closest this volume comes to addressing these issues is a Nebraska woman's recollection of a birth control discussion at a meeting in 1938 and the remark by an Alabama woman: "I didn't have any family planning at all, and I don't think six children was too many" (p. 97).

Although the plethora of brief excerpts occasionally overwhelms the reader of the *Hoosier* volumes, a rough chronological



WOMAN EXAMINES PICKLED GOODS FOR PURCHASE AT COUNTY FAIR

ordering of recollections under most topics provides a coherent sense of change over time in rural Indiana. Such coherence is lacking in *Voices of American Homemakers*, where there is neither a chronological arrangement nor a regional organization of excerpts within the topical framework. The various sections thus present a jumble of reminiscences that require the reader to determine the significance of geographical and generational differences with little help from the editor. Although clearly less successful than the more cohesive Indiana series, *Voices of American Homemakers* nonetheless serves as an engaging introduction to the valuable data gathered in the national project. It is hoped that other states might eventually produce series like Eleanor Arnold's fine *Hoosier Homemakers*.

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"Daddy's Gone to War": The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children. By William M. Tuttle, Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pp. xiv, 365. Tables, notes, notes on sources, index. \$30.00.)

The fifty-year anniversaries of World War II have sparked all manner of commemoration and memory. Most have focused on those who fought the war in uniform, with some attention to such home front contributors as "Rosie the Riveter." William M. Tuttle, Jr., brings an overlooked group to the forefront by demonstrating how important the war was to children and how important it remains in the lives of Americans who were children fifty years ago.

"Daddy's Gone to War" ranges widely, exploring the meaning of absent fathers, working mothers, latchkey children, war games, entertainment, health care, school, racial conflict—all from the perspective of Americans born between 1932 and 1945. Tuttle builds his analysis on a mountain of primary and secondary historical sources (and includes very helpful endnotes), on the scholarly literature in the social sciences, particularly psychology, and on oral history interviews and letters from 2,500 Americans who responded to his call for memories of the war.

The strength of Tuttle's book is to bring together two issues of great interest—World War II itself and the consequences and memories of it for a particular generation of Americans. Tuttle shows the searing effect of the war in its red, white, and blue patriotism and sacrifice, its sex-role stereotyping, and its nightmares induced by fears of death and separation from fathers. For children of this generation this war lasted until long after 1945 because they faced the Cold War, Vietnam, civil rights, the feminist movement, and