

correspondence exists with religious of other congregations on school issues. The provincial files covering Brother Ephrem's educational directives therefore merit further study.

Brother Philip Armstrong deserves great credit in presenting Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer to a wider audience without placing him on a pedestal. Finally, this book confirms Ephrem as the second founder of the Congregation of the Holy Cross.

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*A Community of Memory: My Days with George and Clara.* By Jeff Gundy. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996. Pp. xvi, 158. Illustrations. Paperbound, \$14.95.)

"What is here is not complete, not satisfactory, not to be trusted" (p. xvi), Jeff Gundy warns at the end of his preface. His statement simply recognizes that some information about his subject, his family's migration from Alsace to America and its experiences here, eluded him. Undaunted, Gundy opines that absent facts, such as the dates when people left Alsace and got to Illinois, are "mere history" (p. 11), and his book is not confined by history's factual limits. The volume makes considerable use of historical research but also belongs to imaginative literature. Gundy is a professor of English and a poet, not a mere historian. The facts that his research dug out of family papers and the General Conference Mennonite Archives share his book with reminiscences that he wrote for ancestors who left some facts about their lives, but too few to tell their stories fully. Mere historians may sometimes be hard put to distinguish facts from the author's inventions, but careful reading offers both factual and literary rewards.

The book concerns Amish-Mennonites of Swiss descent whose search for farmland and fear that French military service would be forced upon their young men in Alsace took them to America. John Struber, whose invented recollection begins the first chapter, reports being sent to the United States in 1826, when he was eighteen. After working in Ohio, he walked to central Illinois, looking for farmland. He crossed Indiana, where he learned that his co-religionists were present but had settled well north of his route. Rather than hiking up to Elkhart and Lagrange counties, he continued west, which placed his story, and the stories that fill later chapters, outside of Indiana history but very much in its cultural neighborhood.

Approximately the last third of the book is devoted to George Gundy and Clara Strubhar Gundy, two of the author's great-grandparents. Born in the 1880s, they spent long lives in Illinois, where George Gundy farmed and, beginning in 1906, was a minister serv-

ing congregations in Congerville and then, for twenty-five years, in Meadows. Photographs, which adorn this book, show that the Gundys were extraordinarily attractive people; sermon notes, some of which also grace this book, show that Rev. Gundy was deeply concerned about the moral hazards that endangered his flock in the 1920s. His recollections, written by his great-grandson, describe a dedicated ministry and a modest, happy life.

All of the imagined ancestral recollections here, and the author's interspersed reports on his research, provide lively, readable descriptions of Amish-Mennonite settlement in the Midwest, the Americanization of that community, and some of its people's movement into the Mennonite mainstream. Readers who need more historical information about those subjects may do well to consult Willard Smith's *Mennonites in Illinois* (1983), which is one of the few bibliographical suggestions that Gundy offers, or spend a pleasant few minutes with Cornelius J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (3rd ed., 1993).

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*The Transformation of Rural Life: Southern Illinois, 1890–1990.*

By Jane Adams. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994. Pp. xxx, 321. Illustrations, maps, tables, figures, notes, sources, index. Clothbound, \$49.95; paperbound, \$19.95.)

Anthropologist Jane Adams's study, *The Transformation of Rural Life: Southern Illinois, 1890–1990*, explores the complexities of rural change by focusing primarily on seven family farms representative of the diversity of ecological zones and settlement patterns of Union County, Illinois. Work is the central theme of this book, for "work, more than any other activity, organized and gave meaning to people's lives" (p. 4). Work is embedded in the dual narratives that Adams heard repeatedly in her fieldwork: one of poverty and hardship and one of "the plenty provided by living on a farm: never wanting for or worrying about food, the closeness of neighbors and family, the generosity and honor with which people treated one another, and the respect for hard work" (p. 1). Work is also the pivotal element in understanding Union County women's relationships to farming during the last one hundred years.

Through skillful use of her oral interviews, Adams provides eloquent and evocative descriptions of what anthropologists term "balanced reciprocity." Early twentieth-century farm families in southern Illinois, like those in Indiana, were dependent on kin, neighbors, and hired hands for their survival. In the depictions of these dense networks, readers will find patterns identical to those