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## Forty Years of Growth and Achievement: A History of Iowa's Community Colleges

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*Marshalltown Community College*

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articles provide a personal look at individual Iowans, painting a complex human picture of the development of Iowa farming over the past 80 years. The introductions and statistics present a more dispassionate narrative, mainly drawing on information that is available elsewhere. The book concludes with appendixes that list award winners by last name, year, and county.

*Forty Years of Growth and Achievement: A History of Iowa's Community Colleges*, by Jeremy Varner, edited by Janice Nahra Friedel. Des Moines: Iowa Department of Education, 2006. 114 pp. Maps, illustrations, tables, graphs, notes, appendixes.

Reviewer Thomas Burnell Colbert has taught at Marshalltown Community College since 1981. He has researched and written about various topics in Iowa political and agricultural history and is a past member of the State Historical Society Board of Trustees.

In 1918 the first junior college in Iowa was established in Mason City. The fewer than 40 junior colleges that existed nationwide offered the first two years of general education courses required for a bachelor of arts degree. In 1927 the Iowa General Assembly authorized local school districts to create junior colleges with voter approval. By 1930, 32 such colleges existed in Iowa. Thereafter, a story of ups and downs began. The Great Depression and World War II affected enrollments, but with the availability of funding for education from the GI Bill when the war ended, the number of students increased and a new stability evolved.

Mostly local students constituted the clientele for the colleges, which were attached to local high schools and drew their instructors from the high school faculties. However, in 1957 when the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik I*, federal money became available to establish local post-high school vocational-technical training through the National Defense Education Act. Then in 1965 Senate File 550, championed especially by Senator John "Jack" Kibbie, passed the Iowa legislature. That legislation allowed vocational-technical schools to unite with junior colleges. Thus began the Iowa community college system that operates today.

This book focuses on the establishment and growth of the present-day community colleges in Iowa. By no means a definitive rendition of the story of Iowa's community colleges, the book is a generally mundane, limited overview of what has transpired especially since the enactment of Senate File 550. Divided into three parts — "The Early Years," "Community Colleges in Transition," and "Evolving into a System of

Comprehensive Colleges” — its primary intent is to commemorate the birth of the statewide community college system in Iowa.

Over the years, the concept of a community college has changed. The enabling legislation created 15 community college districts with elected local boards to oversee the affairs of the colleges. The functions of community colleges also changed. Beyond transfer academic credit and vocational programs, adult and continuing education offerings and later workforce development responsibilities were assigned to the community colleges. In this broadening context, the designation of “comprehensive” was added to the description of the institutions, and by 2004 one in four college students in Iowa was enrolled in a community college — and the ratio is even greater today. Students of all ages and abilities, including those undertaking remedial study, attend these institutions, which generally admit all who apply for admission.

Important historical trends, events, and disputes as well as contemporary issues associated with Iowa’s community colleges are presented in this short, glossy-page paperback study, which is augmented with pictures, maps, tables, and charts. Although the research is documented, the study’s limited depth is perhaps a product not only of the author’s intention but also of the paucity of available source materials. For the reader wanting a brief but multifaceted story of Iowa’s community colleges, this work suffices. Moreover, *Forty Years of Growth and Achievement* makes the integral role of community colleges in Iowa’s educational network abundantly clear, and it may be hoped that in the future a wider and deeper examination of this important topic might be produced.

*The Amish and the Media*, edited by Diane Zimmerman Umble and David L. Weaver-Zercher. Young Center Books in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008. ix, 275 pp. Illustrations, table, notes, index. \$35.00 cloth.

Reviewer Steven D. Reschly is professor of history at Truman State University. He is the author of *The Amish on the Iowa Prairie, 1840 to 1910* (2000).

Mass media writers, film makers, and reporters have discovered the Amish — repeatedly. So have scholars and tourists, although the various Amish groups have no great wish to be fodder for these groups. The mediations among media, scholarship, tourism, and Amish faith and life are observed and interpreted in this book, which originated in a 2001 conference at the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.