

JOHN DYLONG, *LIVING HISTORY 1925-1950: FAMILY EXPERIENCES OF TIMES REMEMBERED*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1979. pp. 139. \$4.95 paper; \$6.50 teacher's guide; \$7.95 trade edition.

Beginning with the premise that "the family is our richest historical resource" because "they have been through it all" and "their memories are not dry, dusty facts," John Dylong sets out to document one family's (his) growth. He does this with snapshots from family albums, brief narratives and newspaper and magazine clippings on facing pages.

Imploring the reader to "get into a nostalgia trip," Dylong also includes at the end of each of his four chapters a series of questions intended to prompt students (what level is not clear) to explore their own family histories. A bibliography is appended for the same reason.

Dylong's chapters are: 1925-1929 The Wild Years, 1930-1939 The Decade of Depression, 1940-1945 A World Gone Mad and 1945-1950 Home to Stay.

While utilizing family memorabilia and popular journalism to study the past is valuable, Dylong's approach is of limited value. By using only sketchy identifications with his photographs e.g. "Grandmother and Grandfather Pazik forcing a smile" he takes them from the realm of "everyperson" and yet leaves the reader wondering: Who is this? What are the circumstances of these people's lives? And while the news stories, cartoons and advertisements do illustrate the chapter subsections (Aviation in America, Religion in the Hard Times, Fun for Nothing, etc.), the reader cannot help asking: Why did he choose these?

One presumes (the reader never is told) that the Dylong family emigrated to America (from where apparently does not matter); first photos and clippings are of "A New Beginning." Apparently the book is meant to be the story of an immigrant family. But the picture of that family that emerges is unrealistic, a Pollyanna version of immigrant life during that time period. The words ("The severe economy of the early 1930's affected clothing styles as it did everything else") and photographs ("John off to work as a waiter," "Harry practicing his golf swing," "Friend Lee in his Sunday best") don't seem to jibe. This is a book of smiles. Where are the tears?

Readers (be they students or not) with access to older family members, personal photo albums and "dry, dusty" copies of old hometown newspapers, Life magazines and the like do not need Dylong's book. Others might find it interesting.

--Barbara R. Luebke  
*Department of Journalism*  
*UW-Eau Claire*