



A Literary History of Iowa

Clarence A. Andrews

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Originally published in 1972, *A Literary History of Iowa*, which features writers published in book form between 1856 and the late 1960s, returns to print. One of Iowa's native sons, Ellis Parker Butler, once said that in Iowa 12 dollars were spent for fertilizer each time a dollar was spent for literature. Many readers will be surprised to learn from this book the extent of Iowa's distinguished literary past---the many prizes and praise received by her authors. To those already familiar with Iowa's credits, *A Literary History of Iowa* will be a nostalgic and informative delight. During the 1920s and 1930s, Iowa had good claim to recognition as the literary capital of the country. Clarence Andrews says that as he grew up he knew a host of Iowa writers. "I also knew that Iowa was winning a disproportionate share of the Pulitzer Prizes---Hamlin Garland, Margaret Wilson, Susan Glaspell, Frank Luther Mott, "Ding" Darling, Clark Mollenhoff. It was winning its share or more of prizes offered by publishers---and its authors' books were being selected as Book-of-the-Month and Literary Guild books. I knew too about Carl Van Vechten as part of that avant-garde group of midwest exiles---including Fitzgerald, Anderson, and Hemingway." *A Literary History of Iowa* looks at Iowans who knew and cared for the state---people who wrote poetry, plays, musical plays, novels, and short stories about Iowa subjects, Iowa ideas, Iowa people. These writers often have dealt with such themes as the state's history, the rise of technology and its impact on the community, provincialism and exploitation, the problems of personal adjustment, and the family and the community. John T. Frederick, whose own books are paramount in Iowa's literary history, has pointed to Iowa's special contributions to the literature of rural life in saying that no other state can show its portrayal in "fiction so rich, so varied, and so generally sound as can Iowa."

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