



The Amanas : A Photographic Journey 1959-1999

Joan Liffing-Zug Bourret

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For over forty years, Joan Liffring-Zug Bourret has photographed Iowa's Amana villages and the people. The Amanas once were a communal society, one of the longest lasting in America. The earliest image, taken in 1959, is part of a series originally taken on assignment for The Iowan magazine. That image is of workers eating lunch at the Colony Inn. The most recent images are of the color cover of tulips and trees blooming in South Amana, and of the 1999 Maifest. The book begins with photographs of the Community of True Inspiration, the religion of the original Amana settlers, their churches, and religious followers. The next section is "The Communal Legacy" with villagers, villages, and artifacts left over from the days when the colonists followed a system of religious communal life. In 1932 they voted The Great Change to a free enterprise system with a corporation owning the 26,000 acres, mills, and various businesses. The people could now own their own homes. A photograph taken in 1982 shows "Those Who Knew the Communal Way," the earliest years after The Great Change. A final section titled "The Winds of Change" shows the traditions of Germany as celebrated in the Maifest and an Oktoberfest. The Amana Heritage Society documents its historic past in several museums. Over 100 black-and-white images are included in the book. The color section, "The Beautiful Amanas, The Amanas in Bloom," has thirteen photographs, ending with two views of the Native American Fish Dam on the Iowa river prior to the destruction of the dam in the floods of 1993.

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