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BOOK REVIEWS

All communications regarding book reviews and review copies of books should be sent to Book Review Editor, *South Dakota History,* 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217.

Regionalists on the Left: Radical Voices from the American West
Edited and with an Introduction by Michael C. Steiner. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 416pp. Illus. Notes. Ind. Cloth, $39.95.

Michael C. Steiner's edited volume is a welcome addition to the scholarship on regionalism and the cultural history of the American left. This book contains the editor's thoughtful introduction and fifteen biographical essays by different authors on regional figures, including well-known writers such as John Steinbeck, Mari Sandoz, and Josephine Herbst. A main premise of this book is that left-wing regional culture in the 1930s and 1940s has been overlooked or unappreciated until recently. This left-wing version of regionalism stands in contrast to the monolithic image identified with artists Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton. However, both versions of regionalism reject the hegemony of eastern authorities and commentators, whether they be mainstream or on the left.

An issue raised only implicitly by this book is a definition of the Midwest. Some of the writers treated here, such as Meridel LeSueur and Josephine Herbst, both born in Iowa, clearly identified themselves with the Midwest. Steiner treats them as part of a "western" regionalism. It seems a stretch to call LeSueur and Herbst "western" writers, although this minor point should not be interpreted as detracting from the essays themselves. Perhaps "Radical Voices West of the Mississippi" would be a more accurate subtitle for the book.

A unifying theme for most of the figures treated in this volume is their attention to common people, including immigrants, Indians, workers, and farmers. Although the book focuses on the 1930s and 1940s, some of its protagonists, such as folklorist B. A. Botkin, showed this interest in common folk well before the Great Depression. It may be misleading to identify all the individuals profiled in this collection as "left-wingers" in the 1930s sense, but they were left-of-center and opposed to political trends that they perceived as "fascist." A few actively took part in left-wing causes. Meridel LeSueur, for example, was a lifelong member of the Communist Party and served in its Minnesota leadership during the 1940s. But she was also representative of a group that wanted to promote a distinct regional culture built on an earlier progressive history. LeSueur was best known for her lyrical "people's history" of Minnesota, *North Star Country*, which was originally published in 1945. When the political climate changed after World War II, LeSueur found her writing out of favor. Though she was able to publish children's biographies into the mid-1950s, her other work either appeared in party outlets or remained unpublished until the late 1970s and 1980s, when she was "rediscovered" by a feminist audience. Among other figures treated in this volume are painter Joe Jones, historian Angie Debo, folklorists J. Frank Dobie and Americo Paredes, novelists Robert Cantwell and John Sanford, and journalists Joseph Kinsey Howard and Carey McWilliams.

Steiner's collection on left-wing regionalists will introduce readers to a hidden

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dimension of regionalism, demonstrating that the provinces have experienced more political diversity than is often appreciated by journalists and scholars from other parts of the country. Yet, a number of the people studied here apparently found their region too confining and moved out. Students of the Midwest, especially, might ponder why so many of its writers and artists have fled for New York or the West Coast.

WILLIAM C. PRATT
University of Nebraska at Omaha (emeritus)
Omaha, Nebr.

The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History

Jon K. Lauck. Iowa and the Midwest Experience Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013. 180pp. Notes. Ind. Paper, $35.00.

Jon K. Lauck recounts the rise and fall of historical scholarship about the Midwest and calls for renewed attention to the region. Among the author's many arguments for the significance of Midwestern history is the region's role in creating a national culture. Lauck maintains that the "Midwest . . . proved to those who were skeptical that this republic could expand and that republican commitments could persist and intensify" (p. 28).

Based on his meticulous reading of the correspondence and scholarship of a group of Frederick Jackson Turner acolytes he dubs the "Prairie Historians," Lauck chronicles the golden age of midwestern history in the first half of the twentieth century. Resenting East Coast dominance of the American Historical Association, the Prairie Historians founded the rival Mississippi Valley Historical Association (MVHA) in 1907. Much of the scholarship they published in the organization's journal, the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, challenged the East Coast-centrism of existing historiography to argue that the history of the Midwest was central to the history of the United States. Prairie Historians, for example, considered the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which banned slavery and called for republican governments in the Old Northwest Territory (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin), a document of importance "secondary only to the Constitution" (p. 44).

In charting the decline of Midwestern history in the post-World War II era, Lauck draws particular attention to events of the 1960s and 1970s. The establishment of the Western History Association in 1961 and creation of its affiliated journal attracted the attention and energies of several scholars—particularly those studying the trans-Mississippi Midwest—who otherwise would have identified as Midwest historians. When the MVHA changed its regional focus to a national one by becoming the Organization of American Historians in the 1960s, the profession lost an organization largely dedicated to midwestern history. With this development, the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* became the *Journal of American History*, depriving the discipline of a major journal devoted to scholarship about the Midwest. Finally, the rise in the 1960s and 1970s of the New Social History and its focus on issues of gender, race, and class made study of the allegedly homogenous and reactionary Midwest distinctly unfashionable.

Lauck ends his brief book exhorting historians to rediscover the Midwest and praising the University of Iowa Press for its new Iowa and the Midwest Experience series (which includes *The Lost Region* among its titles). Numerous other recent developments should also give Lauck reason to cheer. Women's and Gender Historians of the Midwest, an organization once nearly moribund, is now healthy enough to hold a biennial conference and challenge Lauck's statement that interest in the history of Midwestern women "seemed to peak in the early to mid-1990s" (p. 88). Ohio University Press has launched successful new book series on midwestern legal history and the history of the Civil War in midwestern states. Northern Illinois University Press has recently published an important new collection of essays about the rural Midwest since World War II. Evidence abounds that

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historians have begun to heed Lauck's call. The renaissance he desires may have already begun.

KATHERINE JELLISON
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio

Shaping the North Star State: A History of Minnesota's Boundaries

William E. Lass. Saint Cloud, Minn.: North Star Press, 2014. 246pp. Illus. Maps. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Paper, $16.95.

William E. Lass has made another fine contribution to Minnesota history, reflecting his longstanding interest in the evolution of the spatial entity that is Minnesota. Although this book is not an easy read because Lass necessarily introduces so many people and places, he describes, in six chapters arranged as chronologically as possible, how the state's boundaries were defined. In doing so, he weaves the large threads of Minnesota and United States history—commerce, transportation and settlement—together with the details of negotiations among the various stakeholders. Like all good historians, he allows the data to tell a story that is simultaneously familiar and compelling.

In part, this book is an updated summation of Lass's work over the past forty years, much of which was published in the pages of *Minnesota History.* There is much original material, however. Lass takes a fresh look at the southern and western boundaries of Minnesota, providing the latter with "a political context that included territorial contention over proposed capital removal and railroad construction" (p. x). Importantly, he describes how the boundaries were actually marked on the ground. The southern and eastern borders of the state were located by deputy surveyors who were also involved in running the rectangular land survey lines, while deputies with previous experience surveying the limits of the Dakota Indian reservations in Minnesota handled the western boundary. West Point-trained engineer-astronomers, all active-duty soldiers, supervised the northern boundary surveys. For the most part, these stories have received little attention. While there is much more to be written on marking the eastern, western, and southern boundaries of Minnesota, Lass has made an impressive start. Refreshingly, he also includes a description of the often-ignored water boundaries with Wisconsin on the Saint Louis River and in Lake Superior.

I have some minor criticisms. Surprisingly, there is no contents page, and both Lass's illustrations and his acknowledgement of the sources are minimalist. His description of the debates about Minnesota's southern boundary seems overly long, and his use of "Here and below" in the references for each chapter is irritating. These criticisms aside, this book is essential reading for anyone interested in state boundaries and Minnesota history, and it provides information missing from Mark Stein's *How the States Got Their Shapes*.

ROD SQUIRES
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minn.

Freshwater Passages: The Trade and Travels of Peter Pond

David Chapin. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. 384pp. Maps. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, $50.00.

Peter Pond (1740–1807) was an important early figure in the development of the fur trade in the Canadian West following Britain's acquisition of New France in 1763. David Chapin skillfully reconstructs Pond's life and business ventures from a large number of published and archival sources, many of which are obscure and fragmentary. Even Pond's own autobiographical sketch, written late in life in a quaint and largely phonetic style, has survived only in part.

Born and raised in Milford, Connecticut, Pond served in Britain's colonial forces during the French and Indian War. After active military operations ended in 1760, he joined a West Indies trading voyage and then spent

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several years raising younger siblings after his mother's death in 1761. Following in his father's footsteps, Pond entered the Great Lakes fur trade in the Detroit and Michilimackinac areas about 1765. Although Pond traded largely on his own account, he usually did so in partnership with his suppliers or other independent traders. Seeking ever more lucrative returns, he pushed further inland and traded for two winters in the Minnesota River valley, then shifted his base to Grand Portage on Lake Superior, the westernmost supply depot for most traders who penetrated the inland rivers and lakes of Canada. After trading in the remote Saskatchewan River region for several years, Pond ventured even further north and exploited the vast Athabasca country, which became a hotly contested fur-harvest area for the traders who followed in his wake. Pond was one of the North West Company's original wintering partners in 1779, a status he held until he left the company and retired from the fur trade in 1790. Pond's modest commercial success in the fur trade enabled him to live out his days comfortably in Milford.

Although lacking formal education, Pond possessed an unusually inquiring and observant mind. He produced several maps that depicted geographical information he had obtained in his own travels, from other traders, or from published accounts. Pond, like many of his fellow traders, tried but failed to discover a northwest water passage through the North American continent. Nevertheless, his information helped to inspire Alexander Mackenzie's epic voyages of 1789 and 1792–1793 across what is now western Canada to the Arctic and Pacific oceans.

Historians, as well as many of Pond's contemporaries, have pointed up a dark side to his character. Although Pond was widely regarded as a man of volatile temper and was implicated in the murder of two fellow traders, no legal charges were ever brought against him. Chapin insightfully reviews the evidence regarding these killings and questions Pond's culpability. Although several earlier authors have produced biographical sketches of Peter Pond, *Freshwater Passages* will long stand as the definitive reconstruction of his significant role in the western Canadian fur trade in the late eighteenth century.

THOMAS D. THIESSEN
Pleasant Dale, Nebr.

The Indianization of Lewis and Clark

William R. Swagerty. Foreword by James P. Ronda. 2 Vols. Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 2012. 836pp. Illus. Maps. Tables. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, $90.00.

Reflecting deep and broad primary and secondary source research on European American and American Indian lifeways in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, William Swagerty's *The Indianization of Lewis and Clark* utilizes material culture, from clothing and food to boats and ropes, as well as ways of doing things with those objects, such as eating or using plants as medicine, as windows into the worlds of the Corps of Discovery. The author examines the European American world the explorers came from, the many native worlds they encountered as they crossed the continent, and the ways in which those worlds influenced Corps members. Swagerty is past associate director of the Newberry Library and currently professor of history at the University of the Pacific, where he also serves as director of the John Muir Center.

Swagerty bases his study on concepts from the anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell (transculturalization as the adoption of the cultural ways of another society by an individual, and "Indianization" as the adoption by non-Indian peoples of native cultures), tracing the culture of the foodstuffs, clothing, medical care, and material outfitting of the expedition in detail. Swagerty shows the reader what Corps members expected to find and what was soon to be traded away, lost, or simply found impractical and so needing replacement with local native equivalents. As a result, the author argues, Corps members

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adopted native ways and ideas to some degree, becoming temporarily "Indianized." Relying heavily upon James Ronda's *Lewis and Clark among the Indians,* he returns the focus from Ronda's emphasis on those on the shore to those on the boat by examining what the Corps brought back from their visits to the shore. Swagerty reveals that, at least temporarily, the members of the Corps of Discovery learned and tried to understand how and why the nations they encountered lived as they did. He proves that native peoples, their ways of doing things, and their material goods made the expedition successful rather than acting as barriers to it.

While primarily about material culture, the volumes quote extensively from Gary Moulton's *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* to show what members thought about the goods and lifeways of the people they encountered. To a lesser extent, Swagerty also examines Corps attitudes toward the behaviors of their hosts, such as work, sex, and play. While not his main focus, these sections leave the reader wishing that discussions of material culture and the outcome of the expedition did not go quite so far afield, leaving more space to examine the ways in which the expedition's members became more internally "Indianized" by adopting indigenous ways of thinking.

In this somewhat chronologically but largely topically organized work, Swagerty writes for an audience comfortably familiar with the outlines of the route, its peoples, and most notable events. He focuses on the impact of native peoples, and their things, on the expedition's many members, producing an engaging, highly detailed, and well-written account of the Corps' temporary, and often shallow, adoption of the ways of their native hosts. He argues successfully for a more active role for Sacagawea and shows that despite the slow and partial publication of the expedition's findings, they informed future expeditions for decades.

CHUCK VOLLAN
South Dakota State University
Brookings, S.Dak.

Uses of Plants by the Hidatsas of the Northern Plains
Gilbert Livingston Wilson. Edited and annotated by Michael Scullin. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. 472pp. Illus. Maps. Biblio. Cloth, $65.00.

Ethnobotanical studies take a significant stride forward with this book. From 1906 to 1912, Gilbert L. Wilson (1869–1930) interviewed the Hidatsa Maxi´diwiac (Buffalo-bird-woman, ca. 1839–1932) and her brother, Wolf Chief, on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Her remarkable memory and sharp insights give us definitive descriptions of her people's cultivation of indigenous and nonindigenous plants in the Northern Great Plains both before and after the arrival of non-Indian settlers. Edward Goodbird, Maxi´diwiac's son, interpreted and translated for Wilson. Goodbird also made sketches that became the basis for illustrations in both the present volume and in Wilson's *Agriculture of the Hidatsa Indians: An Indian Interpretation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1917).

Wilson was an anthropologist and a minister, not a botanist or an agronomist, but he keenly absorbed Maxi´diwiac's lengthy descriptions, which formed the basis of his doctoral dissertation in anthropology at the University of Minnesota, later published as the 1917 book. On page five of that work, Wilson described his project as "not, then, an account merely of Indian agriculture. It is an Indian woman's interpretation of economics; the thoughts she gave to her field; the philosophy of her labors."

In this new edition, Michael Scullin, a midwestern ethnobotanist with extensive knowledge of plants and ethnography, has left the original Wilson texts unchanged. Scullin has, however, supplemented Wilson's writings by adding significant introductory material, including his own experiences growing corn and squash in the difficult Northern Great Plains environment, with its unpredictable extremes of temperature and precipitation. Maxi´diwiac, Wolf Chief, and Wilson did not

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emphasize the inevitable agronomic tribulations that came with the environment. To accompany his discussions of the roles that the plants known to the Hidatsas play in nature and in cultivation, Scullin has included identifications of the plants in Hidatsa, English, and Latin—a service to the reader because Wilson's writings did not fully identify all such plants. All of the indigenous plants described by Wilson's Hidatsa informants can yet be found in the region, and all but one of the introduced crops so mentioned are grown there today. The exception is *Nicotiana quadrivalvis bigelovii*, a tobacco subspecies of southwestern North America that was commonly grown by many indigenous tribes. Maxi´diwiac did not approve of its cultivation.

This book is a trove of information arranged in an engaging way, with the texts of Wilson, Maxi´diwiac, Scullin, and others nicely interwoven. Scullin's edition is an important addition to the field, and its lengthy bibliography leads readers to the important relevant works. The expanded table of contents somewhat compensates for the unfortunate absence of an index. Rather surprisingly, there are few illustrations of plants in a book ostensibly centered around them.

ROBERT B. KAUL
University of Nebraska State Museum of Natural History
Lincoln, Nebr.

American Carnage: Wounded Knee, 1890

Jerome A. Greene. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. 648pp. Illus. Maps. Apps. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, $34.95.

Jerome Greene has written what will likely be regarded for some time as the definitive assessment of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre. In 1963, Robert M. Utley wrote his *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, a book long considered as the standard study of this event. However, as Utley admitted in a 2004 preface to the book's second edition, his book came up short on several fronts, including its title, which implied that the Sioux nation had ended on the field at Wounded Knee. Greene goes beyond Utley's otherwise solid book, including much material that has yet to be part of previous accounts. Notably, Greene utilizes a large number of Lakota accounts of the massacre, which adds a fresh dimension to understanding the events prior to, during, and after the "carnage."

In what is more than a battle study, Greene sets the stage for understanding the Ghost Dance movement that swept the American West in the years prior to Wounded Knee. The Sioux had suffered from the impact of federal policies designed to force them to Americanize. However, by 1890, a series of droughts and cuts in federal appropriations had made the Lakotas of western South Dakota particularly susceptible to the Ghost Dance's appeal. Greene also examines the bureaucracy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its inept agent, Daniel F. Royer. Royer's desperate messages after the start of the Ghost Dance on the Sioux reservations led to the largest deployment of federal troops since the Civil War.

The actual conflict involved several theaters of action spread over a week or more, with the main bloodshed occurring on 29 December 1890 near Wounded Knee Creek. Bands of Sioux under the leadership of Chief Big Foot were intercepted during their march toward Pine Ridge Agency. In a botched attempt to disarm the Indians, guns were discharged, and in the ensuing melee, volleys of gunfire killed at least two hundred Lakota men, women, and children as they attempted to flee. Intermittent skirmishes continued for several days.

In telling his story, Greene asks some hard questions and has provided judicious answers. Was the massacre planned? Was the Seventh Cavalry, which took part in the most heated action, animated by revenge for Custer's 1876 demise? Finally, in a brilliant assessment of the event's aftermath, Greene examines how the event has been remembered by both groups involved and in American popular culture. He also details the frustra-

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tions of Lakota survivors who sought to gain compensation for losses and asks whether awarding military medals for United States Army participants was warranted. Greene makes it clear that the event was a massacre and not a battle. He believes Wounded Knee symbolizes the "worst elements in America's long and tragic history of relations with its Native peoples" (p. xiii).

Greene is strongest when considering matters from a federal military perspective. He is on thoroughly solid ground in detailing troop movements, commander personalities, and bureaucratic infighting. He also makes a noble effort to incorporate American Indian perspectives, and toward this laudable end his work is more successful than any previous. Greene clearly strives for balance and does not seek overly to condemn either the military establishment or the Lakota Ghost Dancers for precipitating the tragedy. As result, *American Carnage* will stand for some time as the standard study of Wounded Knee 1890.

STEVEN C. SCHULTE
Colorado Mesa University
Grand Junction, Colo.

Sod Busting: How Families Made Farms on the Nineteenth-Century Plains
David B. Danbom. How Things Worked Series. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. 144pp. Illus. Notes. Ind. Cloth, $44.95. Paper, $19.95.

David Danbom's *Sod Busting* delivers. The fourth installment in the Johns Hopkins University Press series How Things Worked, this book explains how nineteenth-century farmers acquired land, financed and built farms, and created working communities on the Northern Great Plains from around 1870 to 1920. The author achieves exactly the right tone: this book does not explore the past; it *explains* it. Today in most historical writing, "exploring" a topic suggests narrow topics, tentative conclusions, and the other usual caveats of the profession. This book has none of that. In this work, the author simply explains how things usually worked by carefully synthesizing the results of decades of historical research on the Great Plains into one simple, straightforward narrative.

This book, however, also offers a useful framework for interpreting Great Plains history. Settling the plains, the author concludes, was more a process than an event (p. 95). Befitting that emphasis, Danbom strives to explain the range of choices that families made to create, keep, and improve their farms. In just five chapters, the author takes us through the basics of pioneer life across Kansas, Nebraska, and both Dakotas. Just how did people acquire land (Chapter 1)? How did "proving up" on federal land acquired through the Homestead Act compare to purchasing land from the state, a railroad company, a land company, or simply another settler? Where did settlers find the money to build homes (Chapter 2), and when was borrowing money from speculators preferable to borrowing from local banks or even family (Chapter 3)? And finally, how did settlers build towns (Chapter 4), and how did those communities mature—or fail—over time (Chapter 5)?

Beyond these careful summations of common patterns to plains settlement (I will be revamping a lecture or two), this book also effectively combines family history with economic history. The two are not always compatible; family studies often have difficulty with larger economic patterns, while many great economic histories have trouble giving specific examples at the household level. By tracing the choices settlers made, this work bridges that gap. Those common choices, shaped equally by fluid family situations and local opportunities, operated within powerful boom-bust cycles that shaped every aspect of life on the Great Plains. Indeed, this book shows how families balanced the search for stability and profit against the social and economic instabilities that came with life on an agricultural frontier. This emphasis on family choices is not only great social history, it also

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allows the author to illustrate larger economic forces effectively.

This work further does a superb job of tracing the role that railroads played—both good and bad—in settling the plains. The treatment is balanced, nuanced, and always played against the choices that families made. Railroads are neither villain nor savior; they are simply important elements of rural life integral to every aspect of plains settlement.

It has been said that the only thing worse than making generalizations about history is *not* making generalizations about history. This book gleefully does the latter. It reads like a great lecture and relegates historiography to where it belongs: in the footnotes.

DAVID GRETTLER
Northern State University
Aberdeen, S.Dak.

Announcements

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society, provides financial support for the work of the society in preserving and interpreting the state's rich past. The foundation offers a number of giving opportunities for donors who wish to leave a legacy of history for future generations. For information on making a contribution or bequest, please contact the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217; telephone, (605) 773-6001.

The South Dakota State Historical Society will hold its annual history conference 29–30 May at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center in Pierre. The society's State Historic Preservation Office is organizing the event, entitled "Prairie to Pines: People and Their Environment." For more information, call (605) 773-3458 or visit online at history.sd.gov.

The Northern Great Plains History Conference has issued a call for papers for its fiftieth annual conference, to be held 30 September–3 October 2015 at the Radisson Hotel in Bismarck, North Dakota. Papers and panels in all areas of history are welcomed from academics, public historians, independent scholars, and graduate and undergraduate students. Classroom-oriented sessions such as new trends in teaching or historiography, technology, and similar topics, especially as they relate to local and regional history, are encouraged. Proposals for papers or sessions should consist of paper title, abstract, vita, and complete contact information for each participant. The deadline for proposals is 3 April 2015. For more information, contact Bonnie T. Johnson, Program Chair, State Historical Society of North Dakota, 612 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck, ND 58505; email, btjohnson@nd.gov.