# 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.

**Sons of the Wild Jackass: The Nonpartisan League in North Dakota**
Terry L. Shoptaugh. Fargo: North Dakota State University Press, 2019. 264pp. Notes. Illus. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, $29.95.

Terry L. Shoptaugh's *Sons of the Wild Jackass: The Nonpartisan League in North Dakota* documents the rise of an insurgent political movement in the early twentieth century, focusing on its North Dakota roots and the role of its early leadership. Angered by the state legislature's refusal to fund a state-owned mill, Arthur C. Townley joined Socialists, farmers, and activists to develop a platform for a "non-party" league of farmers. The Nonpartisan League (NPL) worked to help small farmers and merchants by advocating for state-owned industries, including mills, banks, and railroads. The group endorsed candidates who supported their agenda without regard for party affiliation.

Shoptaugh organizes *Sons of the Wild Jackass* around four charismatic leaders of the NPL in North Dakota. Townley, the league's first president, was a former Socialist and a dynamic public speaker, but also moody and impulsive. Similarly, while William Lemke, Townley's trusted lieutenant, was well-educated, a terrific organizer, and a careful manager of NPL business affairs, he was also plagued by personal debts. William Langer, meanwhile, a son of a successful Canadian businessman, practiced law and built a political base among farmers around Mandan, but earned the ire of many political enemies. Shoptaugh also examines Lynn Frazier, a former teacher and temperance advocate, who won the 1916 North Dakota gubernatorial election with NPL support. Although Shoptaugh acknowledges the importance of other NPL figures and the editors of newspapers like the *Nonpartisan Leader,* most of the book focuses on the activities of Townley, Lemke, Langer, and Frazier.

The NPL encountered fierce resistance from the political and economic establishment. In 1918, the Independent Voters Association (IVA) formed to combat the NPL. The IVA claimed that Socialism tainted the NPL and that its leaders only sought to increase their own power. The League's opponents labeled its leaders as "reds" intent on creating a Soviet-style Communist state. Despite the IVA's opposition, the NPL won a majority in the state legislature and enacted their agenda. Legislators created the State Bank of North Dakota, funded a state mill and elevator, organized a new state agency to promote low-cost mortgages, and formed a state printing commission to select newspapers in each county to print government information. Voters affirmed the new NPL-backed programs in a 1919 referendum.

The IVA was not the only obstacle for the NPL; rivalries among and missteps by its leaders also hampered the group. For example, Langer never forgave Lemke for a failed land investment in Mexico years before the NPL formed. Langer's distrust of Lemke led him to criticize his fellow NPL leader—especially after Lemke scandalously abused the state-assisted mortgage program.

Newspapers, oral history interviews,

and manuscript collections inform *Sons of the Wild Jackass*. Shoptaugh includes only a few passing references to the development of the NPL in South Dakota, where it also acquired significant popular support. Though other works on the NPL—particularly Robert Morlan's *Political Prairie Fire* and Michael J. Lansing's *Insurgent Democracy*—provide more geographically comprehensive coverage or make more ambitious interpretative claims, Shoptaugh's work serves as an accessible and effective introduction to the subject.

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**Ambitious Honor: George Armstrong Custer's Life of Service and Lust for Fame**

James E. Mueller. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020. 382pp. Illus. Ind. Notes. Biblio. Cloth, $32.95.

Like George Armstrong Custer, James E. Mueller has a flair for well-crafted anecdotes, which make *Ambitious Honor* an engaging read. Strong writing alone, however, does not justify yet another biography of the controversial cavalry officer, especially so soon after T. J. Stiles's extremely thorough *Custer's Trials* (2015). Nor does Mueller's research methodology: he makes effective use of familiar, well-trodden sources, including national newspapers and the published and archival writings of Custer and his wife Libbie, though he curiously draws much of his discussion of their correspondence from secondary sources. Mueller does, however, offer an inventive reinterpretation of Custer's character and his relationship to historical memory.

Mueller contends that Custer is best defined not by his service as a soldier, but rather by his "artistic temperament" (p. x). In an argument reminiscent of Louis S. Warren's treatment of William Cody in *Buffalo Bill's America* (2005), Mueller suggests that Custer, after his death at the 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn, became an icon of the frontier myth because of his own self-promotion and image cultivation in life. This biography traces Custer's artistic self-fashioning through his early creative work as a schoolteacher and his use of battle reports and connections with reporters to become a celebrity during the Civil War. Mueller analyzes Custer's self-presentation as a master hunter and Indian fighter on the plains through his buckskin uniform, hunting trips with foreign dignitaries, and writing both in his memoir and magazines such as *Galaxy*. The last piece of the puzzle is his death, caused by a promotion and the impetuous pursuit of victory.

Ultimately, Mueller belabors and occasionally overextends his argument for Custer as an artist. Custer's performative self-aggrandizement is well-established. Mueller provides some evidence to suggest that the general prioritized the artistic and intellectual over the soldierly, such as a letter to his sister Ann in which he framed his schooling at West Point as a government-funded education rather than an entrée to the Army. However, in Mueller's hands, seemingly every example of Custer's battlefield strategy or knowledge of his enemy becomes a sign of an artistic mind, as though military men were typically incapable of such ways of thinking. Patterns of press courting and ostentatious dress that he learned from such generals as George McClellan and Alfred Pleasanton become evidence of Custer's uniquely artistic mind.

Most detrimental to Mueller's argument is that, while he plausibly (and repeatedly) suggests that Custer drew much

of his cavalier character from popular literature, he devotes little space to the roots of the American frontier mythology that the general embodied in his actions and writing. Especially underexplored are nineteenth-century ideas about American Indians, aside from Custer's "romantic notion of the Indian" (p. 20) drawn from James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*. Relatedly, Native characters do not come alive in Mueller's narrative as white individuals do, and he too often refers to Indigenous groups, aside from Custer's Osage and Crow allies, monolithically as "Indians."

Nevertheless, Mueller concludes with a valuable exploration of how a widowed Libbie Custer, especially through her writing and speaking career, helped craft a heroic image of her husband that has since been undermined, especially amidst the current debate over public monuments. Though his argument about Custer's artistic temperament is questionable, this concluding discussion emphasizes Mueller's larger point about how individual authors shape historical memory by responding to the cultural milieu of their times. This insight will make *Ambitious Honor* interesting to not only Custer scholars, but also scholars of memory studies.

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**They Met at Wounded Knee: The Eastmans' Story**
Gretchen Cassel Eick. Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2020. 353pp. Illus. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, $45.00.

Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa) and Elaine Goodale Eastman are well-known figures in American Indian history. Indeed, with their numerous publications and extensive activism, they introduced outside readers to Indians and their contributions to mainstream society. The couple also demanded reforms of federal Indian policy, especially the granting of Indian citizenship and equal rights. The Eastmans have had significant books written on each of them. With the publication of *They Met at Wounded Knee*, Gretchen Eick, a professor of history and an adjunct faculty member at Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, offers a one volume double biography that focuses on both Charles and Elaine. Of course, much of what is presented has already been covered in other publications on the Eastmans. However, a major contribution of the book is Eick's analysis of Elaine's relationship with Richard Henry Pratt, head of Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, and the biography of him that she wrote in the 1930s.

The book is well-written, but contains several major issues and problems that Eick could have addressed. Although relating a book's subject to national political and social issues is essential, on several occasions, the author devotes too much attention to events that occurred during the Eastmans' lives. Two examples are her detailing of Colonel Henry Hastings Sibley and U.S. military operations during the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and President Woodrow Wilson's actions during treaty discussions to end World War I at Versailles, France, in 1919. Additionally, too many paragraphs in the book lack citations to consulted sources, such as those on pages 61, 151, 252, and 263. Eick also could have offered more information and her views on important subjects such as Bonno Hyessa, Charles's illegitimate daughter, and the significant role Elaine played in writing and editing his books. She was more than just his typist. After Charles's death, she edited and published some of his manuscripts and listed him as

the author. Eick could have used the many primary and secondary sources available on both topics. Finally, a question lingers over the book: how did the Eastmans' biracial marriage endure and falter over the course of twenty-five years, given the racism and discrimination of the era and the Eastmans' ambitious goals? Remember, they did not divorce and kept their separation a guarded secret.

*They Met at Wounded Knee* contains twenty illustrations, including several of Charles that have never been published before. Readers wanting more details on and more analysis of the Eastmans should consult the publications of Theodore Sargent and this reviewer. Although Eick has written a book that contains several shortcomings as noted above, nevertheless, it should be included in the libraries of students of these two dynamic individuals.

RAYMOND WILSON
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**Walks on the Ground: A Tribal History of the Ponca Nation**
Louis V. Headman. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. 570 pp. Illus. Maps. Cloth, $90.00.

*Walks on the Ground* is a "personal study" of the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma that synthesizes decades of notes taken by Louis V. Headman, tribal elder and coordinator of the Ponca Language Grant (p. xx). Seven chapters focus on history and twenty-two chapters discuss ethnography. The book's purpose is to revise Ponca history from an internal perspective and to "lay the foundations for preserving the culture and traditions of the Ponca Tribe" (p. xvi).

The historical chapters chronicle the survival of the Ponca people, who migrated to the Great Plains from the East. In the nineteenth century, they established twenty-eight villages from the Elkhorn and Niobrara Rivers to the Black Hills. Agents of the United States coerced the Ponca's removal to Indian Territory in 1877, where they adapted to the dominant Euro-American culture. Throughout, Headman carefully uses oral histories, maps, treaties, and archaeology to disentangle Ponca history from those of the other First Nations—such as the Omahas and the Sioux—that previously subsumed it.

Chapters 8 through 29 discuss property, naming, kinship, religion, eschatology, and education, among other topics. The chapters on Ponca songs and singers are notable. Songs, Headman contends, "embrace various acts of bravery, deeds of kindness, participation in hunting and war experience," and thereby teach the Ponca people about their heritage (p. 168). Headman also illustrates how the Ponca culture changed over time, as the Ponca people faced removal, forced acculturation, poverty, alcoholism, and economic strain. For example, songs honor twentieth-century war veterans; people exchange Pendleton blankets instead of buckskin shirts at giveaways; many practice Christianity rather than the teachings of the Sacred Pipe; and the English language predominates.

The strongest aspects of the book are its authorial perspective and utilization of varied sources. Headman includes the voices of nine Ponca elders, who told him stories and songs throughout his life. Anthropologist and collaborator Sean O'Neill argues that this inclusion results in a "polyphonic ethnography"—an ethnography that shares authority and represents the diversity of the Ponca people (p. xv). Headman demonstrates this shared Indigenous authority in his discussion of clans that includes three conflicting oral histories of how the clans were formed. Rather than cherry-picking, Headman gives space

and credit to each history. In addition to cross-referencing internal sources, Headman utilizes external sources, such as maps, archaeology, census rolls, and the work of earlier ethnographers. For instance, the chapter on names combines elders' knowledge and oral traditions with census rolls and the *Tract Books Indian Schedules* to list Ponca first names and organize them by clan. Finally, Ponca phrases, names, lyrics, and their English translations fill nearly a hundred pages throughout the book. Headman argues that the Ponca language itself contains history and values and is therefore essential for understanding the Ponca people.

*Walks on the Ground* is an invaluable resource for those studying the history of the northern plains, Native American and Indigenous Studies, or decolonial methodologies. However, the book is largely self-contained and lacks contextualization, and one wonders if Headman himself has engaged these with historiographies. Furthermore, some of the ideas, particularly in the ethnography section, are disjointed and read like a reference book rather than a synthesis. Nevertheless, Headman has produced an important work for the Great Plains region and for the growing literature of Indigenous-produced histories.

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**Massacring Indians: From Horseshoe Bend to Wounded Knee**
Roger L. Nichols. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021. 198 pp. Map. Illus. Paper, $24.95.

*Massacring Indians: From Horseshoe Bend to Wounded Knee* by Roger L. Nichols explores ten American Indian massacres in the nineteenth century, with most occurring in the American West. Throughout, Nichols mainly utilizes secondary sources, and thus synthesizes a large amount of scholarship and history. He begins with the Red Stick War in Alabama in 1813–1814 and ends with Wounded Knee in 1890. Nichols argues that these ten events should be considered massacres and not battles because the U.S. army killed women, children, noncombatants, and those trying to escape. The massacres often happened to "villages whose chiefs thought they were at peace" and were subsequently attacked by surprise (p. 8). American troops also destroyed property, including lodges, food, and clothing. Throughout *Massacring Indians,* Nichols successfully illustrates continuities between the massacres, while also noting their differences.

The central subjects of the book are the groups of people involved in the massacres, both the victims and the assailants. Nichols concludes that in all but two of the massacres, regular troops from the U.S. Army were the main aggressors involved. In both Bear River and Sand Creek, volunteers from California and Colorado made up most of the American forces in large part because these events occurred during the Civil War. Nichols also notes that Indians participated with the U.S. Army in two of the massacres. For example, Osage scouts worked with the United States at the Washita River Massacre in Oklahoma in 1868.

*Massacring Indians* also analyzes the role public opinion played and how this differed throughout time and space. For example, Nichols discusses the Marias River massacre of a Piegan camp in Montana in 1870. In the West, people and the press praised the army and the attack, but in the East, "humanitarians and reformers denounced it" (p. 109). These contrasting views are evident in many of the massacres under study. Throughout the nineteenth century,

these massacres also received varying levels of national coverage. For example, Wounded Knee received less attention than previous massacres, and the media "considered it the result of an obscure Indian religious movement, not a matter of public safety" (p. 150). Throughout this book, Nichols adeptly demonstrates the varying levels of national attention these massacres received, and how the attention varied based on region.

While *Massacring Indians* offers a compelling synthesis, a further inclusion of the voices of Indigenous people, especially women, who were victims in the massacres would provide a more well-rounded analysis and center the victims. Overall, Nichols makes a strong argument as to why these events were massacres. This synthesis should be read by those who study or are interested in Native history, nineteenth century American history, and western history more broadly. Because of this book's readability, it would also benefit a wider audience and undergraduate students.

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**The Grass Shall Grow: Helen Post Photographs the Native American West**

Mick Gidley. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. 216pp. Illus. Notes. Cloth, $50.00.

In the 1930s and '40s, Helen Post, an extraordinary photographer, worked with Indigenous subjects and served as the contributing photographer for Olive La Farge's iconic text *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow* (1940). As Mick Gidley notes, her career and artwork have been overshadowed by her sister, Marion Post Wolcott—the well-known Farm Security Administration photographer. With *The Grass Shall Grow: Helen Post Photographs the Native American West,* Gidley highlights this under-appreciated artist. Broadly conceived, this book explores Helen's career without denying or exaggerating Marion's importance.

In order to illuminate his less studied subject, Gidley presents a comprehensive narrative of Helen's life and career, while masterfully utilizing her photographs as primary source documents, not just as diverting illustrations. Rather than bombarding the reader with an avalanche of images, Gidley instead wisely selects particular images as evidence for his analysis of Post's career. He identifies and discusses the images' major themes and significance.

After the first two chapters that cover Helen Post and the production of *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow*, chapter three focuses on the special collaboration between Post and many Indigenous people. Here Gidley reveals the types of photographs Post pursued, the relationships she developed with her Indigenous subjects, and the manner in which she performed picture taking. Gidley notes the "cooperation between subject and photographer" and that their relationship was "mostly reciprocal," and the photographs were "presented with much tact" (pp. 58, 63, 79). In fact, Gidley especially highlights the Indigenous people in the photographs by exploring their identities and motivations and addressing the fraught power imbalance that is pervasive in the interaction between white photographers and American Indians. Chapter four follows up by connecting Post to broader, contemporary issues in the country. As a "documentarian" in the era of the "Indian Reorganization Act" of 1934, Post demonstrated a political and cultural awareness that is also present in her images. Post's

photographs appear to have been more sensitive in their making and documentation than in previous decades. Her work appears even more responsible in comparison with the late nineteenth-century "Indian gallery" approach that drove a wedge between Native communities and non-native photographers.

This book joins an ever-growing body of scholarship that addresses overlooked photographers like Helen Post and reevaluates who has been traditionally valued in western history and photography studies. *The Grass Shall Grow* will be interesting to a wide variety of readers, with an accessible narrative and fascinating images. This slim and immensely enjoyable book will leave the reader with an excitement for the scholarship that it will surely inspire.

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**Cowboy Presidents: The Frontier Myth and U.S. Politics in the Twentieth Century**
David Alexander Smith. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021. 288 pp. Illus. Ind. Notes. Biblio. Cloth, $36.95.

The frontier myth has profoundly influenced presidential politics in the United States. Since Frederick Jackson Turner famously argued in 1893 that the frontier experience formed American identity, both progressive and conservative presidents have deployed this enduring myth. Although both versions shared Old West attributes of American exceptionalism and a sense of greater mission, the future-oriented and community-based politics of the progressive frontier myth contrasted starkly with the nostalgia and individualism of the myth's later, conservative guise. David A. Smith seeks to explain this transformation by examining the influence of the frontier myth on the presidency and, in turn, how the presidency and external events affected the myth. In doing so, Smith explores the struggle between rugged individualism and centralized federal government, which lies at the heart of the frontier myth's role in presidential politics.

Drawing on archival sources and cross-disciplinary scholarship, Smith advances our understanding of the ways cowboy presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Lyndon B. Johnson, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush deployed and personified the frontier myth to advance their agendas, primarily through discourse, imagery, and symbols. Smith not only focuses on the attitudes, decisions, and policies of these four presidents, but also the major events responsible for reshaping the frontier myth in presidential politics.

Roosevelt, "the original cowboy president," forged his identity in the Badlands and brought "strenuosity" to the presidency, addressing the economic and social ills of the Progressive Era with "a sense of liberal optimism, proactive government, unity, and purpose that would dramatically shape the contours of national politics for decades to come" (pp. 15, 18, 29). Johnson excelled in domestic policy, using his Texan swagger and frontier symbolism to advance the Great Society, civil rights, and the space program. In Vietnam, however, frontier symbolism helped Johnson sell the escalating conflict to Americans, but it failed to justify the war's continuation and hastened the progressive frontier myth's collapse. Reagan, for his part, revamped the frontier myth to promote individual liberty, small government, and a strong national defense, restoring public confidence with his eternal optimism. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Smith contends, Bush relied on the conservative

myth to initiate the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Public opinion eventually soured on these conflagrations, and the conservative frontier myth receded during the 2008 financial crisis.

The tumult of the 1960s and '70s, Smith convincingly argues, created "the *hinge* from Reagan to LBJ," a period in which a series of national failures and crises—the Vietnam War, Watergate, assassinations, race riots, oil shocks, stagflation, and the Iranian hostage crisis—discredited Roosevelt and Johnson's progressive frontier myth and catalyzed Reagan's conservative version (p. 136). Smith observes that Roosevelt and Reagan proved the most successful in deploying the frontier myth. Roosevelt and Reagan established competing forms of the myth and departed office in relatively popular standing. Conversely, Johnson and Bush diminished the explanatory power of their respective myths, losing public support due to domestic crises and unpopular wars.

The frontier myth, for now, awaits the next cowboy president. Highly critical of the conservative frontier myth, Smith prefers a return to its original, progressive form. Yet, Smith's perceptive analysis suggests that the myth could easily reemerge in a renewed conservative incarnation.

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**The Life of the Afterlife in the Big Sky State: A History of Montana's Cemeteries.**
Ellen Baumler. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021. 186 pp. Index. Paper, $19.95.

Ellen Baumler, the former interpretive historian at the Montana Historical Society, invites readers to reflect on the "haunting beauty" and "ugly truths" of cemeteries in *The Life of the Afterlife in the Big Sky State: A History of Montana's Cemeteries*. The book is a result of Baumler's three decades of experience as a Montana historian, a position in which she documented historic sites for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominations and created explanatory plaques. This book, the culmination of Baumler's experience and research, successfully appeals to local readers and offers a model of interpretation for cemeteries in the American West.

*The Life of the Afterlife in the Big Sky State* delivers a chronological narrative with thematic chapters that weave together several different areas of Montana. Baumler covers a range of topics from the prehistory of the Northern Great Plains and archaeological mortuary practices to contemporary white highway crosses and animal burials. Each chapter is organized by sections that reflect a larger unifying theme revolving around death, cemeteries, and human funerary practice. Throughout the book, Baumler utilizes her mastery of Montana history and a variety of sources to invite readers to contemplate how humans in the past understood and processed death. Baumler achieves her goal of appealing to "those who love history, quiet places, and wandering among the dead" through her approachable writing (p. xvii).

Public historians will find this book helpful as a model for how to interpret historic sites that address death, commemoration, and memory. Baumler's expertise as a public historian appears throughout every chapter, and many of her examples are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Her analysis of these sites read as if they were written for the statement of significance on a NRHP nomination. Additionally, Baumler's interpretation of urban and rural sites provides a broader example of how to work with cultural

landscape analysis within the field. For example, her chapter, "Conflict, Misfortune, and Uneasy Transition," recounts violent events in Montana history that "left scars not only upon humans but also upon the landscape," (p. 42). Lastly, Baumler's text hints at the difficulty of telling the history of death and its meaning because of the contested battle over memory.

Ellen Baumler's work contains useful and new information to both academic and popular audiences. *The Life of the Afterlife in the Big Sky State* could be used in the classroom or on the road for self-guided tours. Baumler successfully compiled a concise and cogent book on the cultural meanings of death and cemeteries in Montana. Overall, this well-researched and finely written book makes a significant contribution to the larger literature on death and burial practice in the American West.

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**Tuesday Night Massacre: Four Senate Elections and the Radicalization of the Republican Party**
Marc C. Johnson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021. 256 pp. Illus. Ind. Notes. Paper, $26.95.

In *Tuesday Night Massacre: Four Senate Elections and the Radicalization of the Republican Party*, Marc C. Johnson examines the Senate losses of Democrats Frank Church (Idaho), George McGovern (South Dakota), John Culver (Iowa), and Birch Bayh (Indiana) in 1980. Each of these individuals was targeted by the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC), which engaged a new type of politics centered on national issues and out of state money. Johnson argues that the 1980 elections, which gave Republicans control of the Senate for the first time in decades, demonstrated the effectiveness of this polarized, nationalized strategy that eventually became a hallmark of the New Right and the Republican Party.

Johnson's exhaustive investigation into these campaigns enhances the scholarly literature, and he successfully argues that national groups—chiefly NCPAC—employed coordinated strategies across these campaigns, even going so far as to use nearly identical ads in both South Dakota and Indiana. They drew the state campaigns into national issues, like abortion and the Panama Canal Treaty. These subjects forced the senators to confront the fact that their ideology was often out of step with their state and that they could no longer count on their personal qualities or legacy of service for reelection. These tactics by new right groups illustrate the full effects of *Buckley v. Valeo*, which allowed these groups to spend unlimited money on campaigns. Johnson shows that NCPAC's fundraising was national, but their spending was focused on these four states. This approach was innovative because it used out of state money, allowing the NCPAC to redistribute funds from Republican dominated states to states with tighter elections. Further, the relatively new Federal Election Commission crafted a loose, permissive definition of what constituted illegal coordination. Johnson notes that the greater amount of money raised also allowed these groups to begin campaign season earlier. The Democrats were simply outmatched and unprepared for these changes, and the Republican Party capitalized on the opportunity.

This analysis, however, understates the importance of the simultaneous 1980 presidential election and the down ballot effects of candidate Ronald Reagan's landslide victory. Reagan earned a higher

percentage of the vote than the Republican Senate candidate in three of the four analyzed races (Iowa excepted). He energized conservatives and created Reagan Democrats, many of whom voted for Republicans for the first time in their lives, drawn to Reagan's political ideology. Thus, the author potentially exaggerates the impact of NCPAC and their strategies. Nothing in politics happens in a vacuum, but the public typically pays more attention to presidential elections than senatorial ones.

Overall, this book is a valuable contribution to the study of political campaigns, polarization, and the rise of the New Right. Johnson effectively shows how the development of PACs fundamentally altered the strategies conservatives used, which ultimately polarized the party. Additionally, his engagement with the broader social science literature, including sociology, political science, and history, ensures a nuanced narrative of a compelling argument.

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**Spotted Tail: Renaissance Man of the Lakotas**

Edited by James Hanson. Chadron: Museum of the Fur Trade, 2020. 223 pp. Illus. Ind. Notes. Cloth, $30.00.

Spotted Tail (1823–1881) gained early fame as a skilled Lakota warrior fighting the Pawnees. By the time he was thirty years old, he was honored as a Shirtwearer for his numerous successes in battles, counting coups, and capturing horses. By the 1850s and 1860s, Spotted Tail, along with Red Cloud, Crazy Horse, and Sitting Bull, were recognized by both American Indians and whites as preeminent leaders. All four men were victorious military commanders dedicated to preserving traditional Native cultures and lifestyles. Only Spotted Tail chose to do this with a policy of diplomacy, based on his cunning understanding of white settlers. This book explores and explains that his approach "contained the formula for the successful metamorphosis of Lakota culture to meet changing realities" (p. 10).

The book contains eight essays, two informational sidebars, maps and photographs, with an introduction by editor James Hanson. Kingsley M. Bray and Randy Kane detail Spotted Tail's life and achievements in the first two chapters. Other essays by Paul Hedren, Douglas D. Scott, and Peter Bleed examine specific events of Spotted Tail's life, including his role in the Fort Laramie treaties and his presence in the honor guard that accompanied Russian Grand Duke Alexis on a hunting expedition. Thomas Buecker and Charles Hanson explore Spotted Tail's diplomatic skills in the essay, "Spotted Tail's Agency on Wheels," and illustrate how he repeatedly created situations that required his agency to be mobile and adaptable. Additional chapters by James E. Potter and Thomas Powers center on the U.S. conquest of the Black Hills and the killing of Crazy Horse, highlighting Spotted Tail's role in each of these defining events in the history of the Lakota nation. A final essay by Richmond Clow details the events of Spotted Tail's death and its lasting impact, including *Ex parte Crow Dog*, a milestone in American jurisprudence.

All of the essays are skillfully written, carefully researched, and reveal the rich character of Spotted Tail. He revered his heritage and adapted to the white man's world by learning English. He also met and negotiated with military and political leaders not only on the plains, but also in Washington. He was witty and always ready to speak his mind. Spotted Tail seemed adept at adapting to new contexts

and doing whatever he could to preserve the Lakota way of life.

The definition of a renaissance man is a person with many talents or areas of knowledge. After reading and contemplating the facts and data presented in this collection of essays, it is plain to see that Spotted Tail fits that description. And as editor James A. Hanson adds, "Spotted Tail was a class act" (p. 9). Everyone interested in Lakota history will want to add this book to their collections.

PATRICIA ANN OWENS
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**The Making of the Midwest: Essays on the Formation of Midwestern Identity, 1787–1900**
Edited by Jon K. Lauck. Hastings, Nebr.: Hastings College Press, 2020. 399 pp. Cloth, $30.00.

The reductionistic, but nonetheless pervasive, current image of the American Midwest as a blighted region of hollowed out cities and towns surrounded by rural farmland hides its history from much of the public. It obscures the historical diversity of the Midwest's traditions and its importance in the development of the United States in the nineteenth century. In *The Making of the Midwest*, editor Jon K. Lauck and several authors offer a valuable glimpse into the history of a fascinating American region that merits greater attention in the country's history.

Lauck's introductory essay lays out the broad cultural, economic, geographic, racial, and social boundaries of the nineteenth century Midwest. The initial Anglophone settlement of the region brought with it a culture saturated in Christian conceptions of civic commitment and engagement with the arts. Protestant settlers between 1790 and 1810 saw themselves as founding a new center of Christian civilization not only in North America, but also globally. Unsurprisingly, reform became a staple of Protestant religiosity in the Midwest in the Early Republic. Midwesterners championed temperance, antiprostitution efforts, and, most prominently, antislavery and abolition in the years that preceded the American Civil War.

The Midwest's influence reached its peak after 1865. Edward Frantz's essay explores Midwestern control of the presidency between 1860 and 1930. Nine of the thirteen presidents in those years hailed from the Midwest, and their presidencies overlapped with the sociocultural maturation of the region and the United States a whole. The same era saw the rise of Midwestern historians like Frederick Jackson Turner, whose ideas influenced historiography for decades.

The collection's chapters are all stimulating. Highlights include David Miller's "Blood and Iron," which traces the development of German culture in the United States and challenges some of the long-held assumptions about German communities in the era of immigration. African Americans became a vital part of the Midwestern social fabric in the years following the Civil War, with the successive migrations of freed Blacks from the states of the old Confederacy. By 1900, the Midwest's racial makeup also included immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Christa Adams explores conceptions of a "cosmopolitan Midwest" with her analysis of the Cleveland Museum's exhibit of Asian art that was on display from 1914 to 1916.

These essays also have significant connections to the modern Midwest. Jason Stacy's "Popucrats" explains the growth of Populism in the Midwest at the end of the nineteenth century. The rise of populist politicians and the co-option of the so-called white working class as a new

political bellwether—replacing the white middle class—in the early twenty-first century make this essay interesting for contemporary readers.

With well-written essays spanning an impressive breadth, Lauck and his collaborators have added a truly excellent, comprehensive collection to the historiography of the nineteenth century Midwest. The essays are accessible both to the scholar and the general reader. The Midwest's influence on the development of the United States deserves to be rediscovered. *The Making of the Midwest* offers the reader an informative and intriguing place to start.

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**Women in the Writings of Mari Sandoz**
Edited by Renée M. Laegreid and Shannon D. Smith. Sandoz Studies, Vol. 1. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019. 149pp. Illus. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Paper, $30.00.

Renée M. Laegreid, one of the editors of *Women in the Writings of Mari Sandoz*, writes that the Sandhills women defied easy characterization. This idea is evident in Sandoz's writings, which include the Sandhills short story entitled "The Vine," an excerpt from the dark novel called *Slogum House*, and another from the nonfiction essay titled "What the Sioux Taught Me," interspaced between the new chapters of this book. Thus, the women at the core of this book include a homesteader defeated by the land and her unfeeling husband, one of the most dissolute women in all of western letters, and the eminently capable Lakota women of Sandoz's acquaintance.

This first volume of Sandoz Studies, organized by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, is a promising beginning. The work is comprised of original essays by Laegreid, Lisa Pollard, Shannon D. Smith, who co-edited the book, and Jillian L. Wenburg. Additionally, it includes Glenda Riley's essay that was previously published in *Great Plains Quarterly*.

Although wary of stereotypes, Laegreid nevertheless defines, for scholarly and lay readers alike, the classic conceptualizations of American womanhood in the era of Sandoz: separate spheres, the good woman (including the reluctant frontier wife), and the bad woman. The other authors expand on these well-established categories.

Pollard analyzes Meda and her husband, Baldwin, the two "highly drawn characters" in "The Vine." Pollard observes that these figures show that "drought affects women's lives differently than men's" (p. 46). She leaves open the question of whether Sandoz was engaging in satire of American stereotypes. Riley explains that with the character of Regula Haber Slogum, Sandoz "turned the stereotype of greed and cupidity on its head." She lodged those corrupt traits in the heart of a woman, which at the time seemed "incomprehensible and inconceivable" (p. 71). Riley argues, however, that Slogum is "a true-to-life figure, genuine in her machinations and transgressions" (p. 82).

Smith describes how Sandoz, with her friend Eleanor Hinman, traversed western reservations in a Model T, then returned and commenced combatting stereotypes of native women. Wenburg admires Sandoz as "a hardworking woman" whose "gender ideal was that there need not be an ideal, neither masculine nor feminine" (p. 116). She argues that the writer achieves, at her best, an "androgynous balance" (p. 126). These essays bring the reader back to where Laegreid left off—with possibilities of gender-busting.

This new Sandoz Studies series promises to consolidate and advance the state of Sandoz scholarship for Nebraska and to deepen literary consciousness for the entirety of the Great Plains. Wenburg writes of one of Sandoz's works that its "historical significance lies in its representation of plains women as more than submissive helpmates in the West" (p. 124). Surely, we are now all on that page, and turning the next one, too, perhaps to whisper with irony, along with Libby Slogum—or is it Sandoz herself?—"And someday the line fence would be farther away, much farther away" (p. 64).

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