

historical questions as well. Were Civil War soldiers inspired by political ideas, or just practical thoughts about protection of property and home? Springer, for one, measured all he saw by the tenets of the Republican Party—education, labor, democracy—and found the South wanting. He even followed Republican thinking on race: citizenship and subordination alike were appropriate, he believed, for dark-skinned people of a different species than he. How, we may also wonder, did war vary from region to region? Occupied Arkansas, in Springer's eyes, was an unnerving patchwork of Union loyalists, "Secesh" hotheads, repentant former Confederates, and simple victims, such as the wives driven to "madness" ("violent fits of weeping & exclamatory utterances of the most despairing anguish") over the fate of their men (93). Perhaps this confusion was typical of the war on its geographic margins.

This is a personal book for William Furry. His great-great-grandmother, a war orphan, found a home through the charitable efforts of Francis Springer. The diary itself afforded Springer a personal space—a "woodshed," in Furry's words—to sort through the issues of war (xxiii). These private commitments put a special stamp on the social panorama of wartime Arkansas that Springer recorded. As readers, we are invited to see the history of this troubled time from a perspective marked by unusual sensitivity and discernment.

The American West: A New Interpretive History, by Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. x, 616 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Michael Steiner is assistant professor of history and director of the social science education program at Northwest Missouri State University. He is the author of articles on the Farmers' Alliance, Japanese Americans in the West, and populism in Missouri.

For a long time teachers of the American West have had difficulty finding a general text dealing with western development that takes into account the complex body of new work on western history in a balanced and readable narrative. Standards in the field, such as Billington and Ridge's classic work, reduced the drama, excitement, and creative development of the West into detailed but narrow descriptions of the westward expansion of Anglo-American achievement. The alternatives published in the past three decades have been engaging and varied contributions to a "new" western history, usually focused on special topics rather than intended as general works. Fortunately, this new western history is now being synthesized into a handful of

more comprehensive texts that will be more useful for general readers, teachers, and students of the West. Hine and Faragher's considerably revised edition of Hine's *The American West* is the best of these.

Transcending the century-old debate over Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, the authors describe the West as a process of continental development that defied cyclical patterns and clear lines of growth and confrontation. They take a continental view that treats western development in a broad sense and over a broad time frame—from Columbus to the conflict in Los Angeles in 1992. The definition of *frontier*, a word that has pestered historians since Turner, rather than being geographically determined, is built more broadly on a notion the authors borrow from Sara Deutsch that frontiers are "what happens when cultures meet." Hence, the western frontier is a process of cultural transformation (and destruction) rather than a geographic place.

As a result, Hine and Faragher treat varied dimensions of the West with much greater balance than any general work before—with Richard White's *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own* (1991), from whom they seem to draw heavily, a close second. In Hine and Faragher's work, traditional interpretations meet comfortably with the "new" revised West. They examine the roles of a wide range of people, with particularly engaging observations on the melding and transformation of cultures. The considerable role of the federal government is revealed alongside private enterprise. And biographies of important and interesting men and women illustrate the human drama within a broader social history.

The 16 chapters are organized in a loose chronology of important topics in western history, including the colonial "contest of cultures," the major economic enterprises in the West (which all become cultural enterprises as well), community development, the urban frontier, the mythology of the West, and a welcome final chapter on the West since World War II. Throughout the book the plight of Native Americans serves as a common theme.

In compressing all of this into a manageable and readable text, there are naturally gaps that those with special interests may be anxious to identify. For students of midwestern history, the most significant disappointment will likely be that the stripe of middle states from Minnesota through Iowa, Missouri, and Arkansas gets very little attention. If one wishes to find a thorough account of the settlement of the tallgrass prairie of Iowa, northern Missouri, and eastern Nebraska, it will not be found here. In mid-text, after several pages on the Oregon migration, the authors note briefly that Iowa's 1.2 million settlers by

1869 outnumbered the Pacific Northwest by 10 to 1—essentially, and ironically, the only mention of Iowa in the book. Still, the context that the book provides for students of midwestern history is tremendous.

Hine and Faragher have also managed to craft their work in prose that casual readers and undergraduate students will enjoy. It is chock full of unusual illustrations, written with a sharp sense of irony, and flavored with wonderful quotes. Fortunately, too, they put back some of the humor and bawdiness of the West that a hundred years of academic writing had largely removed, without trivializing the human tragedy and environmental destruction that accompanied growth. One can find much here that is bittersweet. *The American West: A New Interpretive History* is a welcome and exceptional text that should become a new standard on reading lists.

An Independent Woman: The Life of Lou Henry Hoover, by Anne Beiser Allen. Contributions in American History. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000. 232 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$65.00 cloth.

Reviewer Barbara McGowan is professor of history at Ripon College. She is interested in American politics, gender roles, and female biography and autobiography. Her next publication will be an essay on New England girlhood in the *Encyclopedia of New England Culture* (2002).

Lou Henry Hoover was born in Waterloo, Iowa, on March 29, 1874. In 1964, twenty years after her death, her body was reburied in West Branch, Iowa, next to that of her husband, former President Herbert Hoover. Lou spent most of her childhood and adolescence in California, graduating from Stanford University as the nation's first female geology major. Shortly after graduation, she married a fellow Iowa native, Herbert Hoover, and in doing so became part of a life that would include professional success, world travel, wealth, humanitarian service, and political triumph and failure. This biography of Lou Hoover characterizes her as an "independent woman" and links her experiences and achievements to the generation of women who came of age in the Progressive Era and through mainly female-based organizations improved the opportunities and status of American women.

Anne Beiser Allen, who frequently writes about Iowa people and places, is correct in describing Lou Henry Hoover as a "modern" woman with her own interests, activities, and causes. Lou Hoover was obviously extremely intelligent and energetic. She did not merely follow her husband to China when he took an engineering position there shortly after their marriage. Instead, she studied Chinese, collected

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