

Although the entry selections are generally good, the editors made several key decisions that merit discussion. Though practically advantageous, excluding persons still alive in 1994 clearly reduced the volume's post-1950 coverage (no John Danforth and worse, no Stan Musial). Second, including those who resided in Missouri only as children effectively imports figures whose fame developed elsewhere. Better, then, to have dropped Langston Hughes and Walt Disney, for example, and included adult Missourians who built the state's radio and television services. Finally, some areas seem somewhat neglected: one will find only two of the more than one hundred state supreme court justices and only a third of the congressmen serving twenty or more years.

Ultimately, any volume like this reflects largely what has already been published. Some of these portraits (those on labor leaders, for example) substantively expand the literature, but the success of this volume mainly demonstrates the larger truth: during the past thirty years Missouri has been well served by its historians and its press.

Diaries of Girls and Women: A Midwestern American Sampler, edited by Suzanne L. Bunkers. Wisconsin Studies in Autobiography. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001. xiv, 457 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$60.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Marilyn Motz is associate professor of popular culture at Bowling Green State University. Her publications include studies of nineteenth-century midwestern diaries, personal letters, and photograph albums.

Diaries of Girls and Women features excerpts from the diaries of 46 girls and women from Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The excerpts date from 1837 to 1999. They represent diversity in age, class, race, ethnicity, education, religion, and rural/urban location. Seventeen of the diaries were written by Iowa residents, five of which date to the nineteenth century, four between 1900 and 1920, four between 1935 and 1975, and four to the 1990s.

Suzanne Bunkers, professor of English at Minnesota State University, Mankato, is an expert on American women's diaries; her edited books include *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*. Her 37-page introductory essay places the diary excerpts in the context of current scholarship on the diary as a narrative form, with bibliographic notes to guide further reading. Bunkers discusses why it is important to study diaries, suggests strategies for interpreting them, and outlines themes common to the selected diaries. She concludes

with an explanation of the editorial practices she employed in preparing the diary selections for publication.

The diary excerpts are grouped into four sections according to the themes they represent: American Girls, Coming of Age, Journeys, and Home/Work/Family. Each excerpt is preceded by a one-page description of the diarist's life, the format and appearance of the original diary, and the content of the diary as a whole. The editor notes important aspects of each diary in its historical context. Most descriptions include a photograph of the diarist. The diary selections range in length from two to thirteen pages. They are presented with minimal editorial alteration, maintaining the original spelling and punctuation. With a few exceptions, each daily entry is printed in its entirety, and several sequential entries often follow one another to preserve the narrative flow of the diary. Some excerpts consist of a few entries, while others include selected entries written over a span of several years. Some diarists wrote only a few phrases each day, while others composed complex entries several paragraphs in length.

The term *sampler* in the book's title indicates its organizing principle. Samplers, like traditional expressive forms such as patchwork quilts, photo albums, scrapbooks, and diaries, build patterns by the juxtaposition of small units. Similarly, Bunkers's scholarship and artistry lie in the selection and arrangement of the diary entries. She lets readers participate by drawing their own conclusions from the selections. Her approach builds on feminist theory as well as traditional domestic art by valuing the personal voice of both the diarist and the scholar. Relying on empathy and subjectivity rather than scientific detachment, she describes her own experiences as a young Iowa diarist and includes excerpts from diaries written by her daughter and nieces. Bunkers is not interested in verifying the diarists' accounts of events or using the diaries to discover historical facts. She approaches the diaries as narrative expressions of the subjective experiences and thoughts of the diarists. She uses the diarists' descriptions of the objects and events of everyday life to enhance readers' understanding of the women's lives, focusing on the diarists' growth through the life stages, their development of a sense of self, and their relationships with others in their families and communities.

This approach has some disadvantages for historical study. Organization of the diary excerpts by topic, as well as the choice of topics, emphasizes common features of human experience rather than historical change and uniqueness. The decision to let readers respond directly to the diaries precludes extended editorial discussion of their historical specificity and significance. Another problem inherent in

historical editing, but especially apparent in a sampler, is that readers do not know what has been deleted or whether the selections are representative. However, these drawbacks are more than offset by the assets of a highly readable narrative that makes previously unpublished diaries accessible to a broad audience. The skillfully edited excerpts are long enough to tell a story but not so lengthy as to become tedious. Bunkers preserves the distinctive voices of the diarists, and the juxtaposition of the excerpts creates a well-paced, varied, and intriguing collection. Based on my own work with midwestern diaries, the selections seem representative while also including a few fascinating accounts of unique experiences.

This book may inspire readers to visit archives to read or donate original diaries, a process Bunker encourages by providing contact information about Iowa archives and their websites. In addition to historians, the book would be of interest to women's book and discussion groups, to classes in American studies, women's studies, regional history, literature and writing, and to anyone who has kept a diary or enjoys reading about women's lives.

Tracking the "Yellow Peril": The INS and Chinese Immigrants in the Midwest, by Peggy Spitzer Christoff. Rockport, ME: Picton Press, 2001. xxv, 256 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer John R. Wunder is professor of history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. A historian specializing in legal issues related to American Indians and other minorities in the West, he has written articles about the law and Chinese immigrants on the frontier.

Tracking the "Yellow Peril" is a superb reference work for those who wish to learn more about Chinese immigrants in the American Midwest. It is a comprehensive guide to the case files compiled by the U.S. government on Chinese immigrants and residents during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943. It specifically relates to those files compiled by the U.S. Immigration Service in its Chicago regional office and in sub-offices established in the heartland at St. Paul, Minnesota; Portal, North Dakota; and Detroit, Michigan. These documents contain extensive information that is invaluable for doing Chinese-American history.

After a prologue that offers a brief, truncated history of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Chinese, the book is divided into five parts. Part one shows how Chinese immigrants attempted to enter the Midwest and how those in the Midwest dealt with the exclusion laws, concluding with a consideration of post-exclusion uses of the Chinese case files. Particularly useful in this sec-

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