

recall this story on many occasions, but had forgotten most of the details until being reminded of them in this volume.

One of Mills's great strengths as a reporter—his evenhandedness—brings me to my only criticism of this book. He tells a great story but reaches few conclusions. Before the century comes to a close, it would be fun to see Mills take off the gloves and tell us what he really thinks about some of the people and issues he has covered. How does he assess the politicians of his era? Is the state and nation on the right track? And what about the decline of the *Des Moines Register* as Iowa's newspaper? Now that would be a fun volume, indeed.

Bust to Boom: Documentary Photographs of Kansas, 1936–1949, edited by Constance B. Schulz, with text commentary by Donald Worster. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996. ix, 168 pp. 94 photographs, bibliographical essay. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PAMELA RINEY-KEHRBERG, ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Bust to Boom brings together nearly one hundred photographs of Kansas in the 1930s and 1940s. The photos, taken for the Farm Security Administration, Office of War Information, and Standard Oil, follow the state from the depths of the Dust Bowl and Great Depression to the economic development that came during the Second World War. The common thread holding this collection together is that Roy Stryker, who worked as the head of the Historical Section of the Resettlement Administration (later the Farm Security Administration) during Franklin Roosevelt's administration, organized each of the three projects. A number of photographers' work is represented in the volume, including that of Arthur Rothstein, John Vachon, Russell Lee, and others. They captured a variety of scenes, from windswept and dust-ravaged farms, fields, and towns to county fairs and a diverse group of those who labored in Kansas during this era. Many of these photographs have never before been published.

Several different types of text accompany the photos. Donald Worster provides the introductory essay, which sets the scene for the pictorial collection. He follows the history of Kansas through the Dust Bowl years into the prosperity of World War II, and places Kansas's experience in the context of larger national trends. The editor introduces the larger photographic collection, as well as each of the photographers. A detailed historiographical essay concludes the volume. For the most part, this is highly satisfactory, giving readers enough

information about the time, place, and photographic projects, but not too much.

The only exception to this generalization is the editor's failure to provide any clues about how she selected the photographs for the volume. Historians would want to know how many photographs made up the original collection and why she picked the images included in the book and not others. What themes did she hope to illustrate with this highly diverse collection of pictures? What is the relationship between the pictures of the impoverished farm children of the 1930s and those of African-American cavalymen at Fort Riley during World War II?

Most important, however, are the photographs themselves. They are beautifully reproduced and presented, and provide an excellent view of more than a decade of history. For those interested in life in the rural Midwest, the photographs, especially those by Arthur Rothstein, John Vachon, and Russell Lee, provide a particularly compelling visual record of life in that time and place. The government-sponsored photographic record of that era is an especially rich one and, as books like *Bust to Boom* are published, an increasingly accessible one.

Places of Quiet Beauty: Parks, Preserves, and Environmentalism, by Rebecca Conard. American Land and Life Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997. ix, 382 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$15.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PATRICK NUNNALLY, UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

Places of Quiet Beauty is a welcome addition to the growing historical literature in environmental history, the history of conservation, and the protection of landscapes. The book does not break new ground methodologically or theoretically, but it does make an important contribution to our understanding of an easily overlooked and critical subject, namely, state parks in the Midwest. Too often, the history of open space protection focuses on national agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service, or describes the protection of spectacular landscapes in the western or northeastern parts of the country. This history of land protection in Iowa, a state where very little land is protected, offers valuable insights into twentieth-century environmental politics.

Conard is interested in the ideas of the park system, the shifting notions of what a park is and what it is for, and her book reflects this

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