

### Book Reviews

the local newspaper, and railroads as factors in county seat selection. Iowans will appreciate his treatment of numerous county seat wars in their state, including discussion of particular conflicts in Adair, Marshall, Webster, and Mitchell counties. His book has few weaknesses, though greater discussion of county seat controversies in the South, where the county form of government is unusually strong, would be appreciated. The book would also be strengthened by the inclusion of a categorized list of American counties in which the author found conclusive evidence of conflict or controversy between two or more towns for the county seat crown. Still, the author offers a well-researched account of county seat battles to the present, and complements his work with an excellent study of conflict resolution. His is a valuable work on county seat wars which should find a home on the bookshelves of nineteenth-century regional and frontier historians, local historical societies in counties with a history of county seat controversy, and those interested in a unique form of human conflict.

CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

JOHN TIMOTHY VON TERSCH

*Prohibition in Kansas: A History*, by Robert Smith Bader. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986. xiii, 322 pp. Illustrations, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

*"Give to the Winds Thy Fears": The Women's Temperance Crusade, 1873-1874*, by Jack S. Blocker, Jr. Contributions in Women's Studies 55. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985. xix, 280 pp. Illustrations, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth.

These highly disparate books share a revisionist view of prohibition. Probably no topic has generated greater interest and been reinterpreted to the extent of prohibition in the last decade. Once derided as repressive zealots and ridiculed as cranks, dries have been rehabilitated, and prohibition presented as an extension of American social conscience. Revealing dry virtues and imparting new interpretations, the recent books by Robert Smith Bader and Jack S. Blocker Jr., are important additions to the swelling collection of authoritative prohibitionist writing.

Nearly no unifying feature is present in these books. Bader's ideographic book is a long and narrow slice of history. Blocker's slice is a chronologically thin but inclusive cross-section of one significant juncture in the prohibitionist movement. One consequence is that the books intersect only briefly, tenuously, and asymmetrically.

Indicative of the pluralism in historical writing, these books yield erudite interpretations with widely varied research and analytical techniques. A conventional exposition with heavy reliance on manuscript collections and a modicum of statistical analysis are an apt mix in Bader's history. Pursuing a different conceptual line of inquiry, Blocker's book has the unmistakable social science look, replete with extensive quantitative analysis and recourse to models. It is gratefully devoid of jargon and arcane statistics, and manuscript materials are integrated into a clear narrative. These books make a strong case for the benefits of eclecticism.

Kansas prohibition is not a pedestrian topic. Holder of the prohibition longevity record and eventual American dry leader, Kansas was a symbol to prohibitionists everywhere, and its influence by example and exhortation ranged across the continent. Comprehension of Kansas can thereby be regarded as preliminary to understanding prohibition as a national phenomenon. Although Bader's focus is heavily indigenous, he does not neglect Kansas's role in the broader prohibition mosaic.

Kansas history was inseparable from prohibition, and the issue divided the state longer and deeper than any. Historians, however, have tended to ignore the prohibition key to the Kansas personality and treated the issue superficially and tangentially. Bader's book is the first comprehensive, thoroughly researched, and keenly analyzed history of Kansas prohibition.

Revulsion of the saloon was implanted early in Kansas. Fitful and diffused prohibitionist efforts included tactics comparable to the later Women's Temperance Crusade, and saloon smashing was common a generation before Carry A. Nation. Women flocked to the dry movement, which gained the necessary converts to win statewide prohibition in the 1880 referendum, despite the negligible WCTU role in the campaign. Although prohibition was initially fairly successful, saloons reappeared during the 1890s. Bader's impressive insights and cogent interpretations on this cycle of prohibition are copiously supported with citations of primary sources.

Drys were in disarray and Kansas was soaking wet in the early twentieth century. Renewed dry aggressiveness and political fusion with progressives generated a move to prohibitionist sentiment that equalled the nineteenth-century mark and peaked with the Eighteenth Amendment. Shifting attitudes along generational lines were thereafter reflected in growing prohibition violations and repeal in 1948. Although many condemn the "noble experiment" as an egregious failure, Bader views it as a qualified success. Less persuasive on this prohi-

bition cycle than the first, he is too forgiving of drys and too uncritical of their claims.

A dry version of history is offered in this book, and prohibitionists receive the bulk of the space. The best portions of the narrative are on dry organizations, politics, and philosophy, which are complemented by a profusion of perceptive biographical sketches. Caricatures and misconceptions long applied to drys are convincingly excised, and Bader's exceptional chapter on Nation refutes baseless and pejorative judgments. Kansans with dry leanings were primarily of native stock, evangelical inclination, and rural background. Principled women with a practical bent may have been the most important dry group, and Bader is highly attentive and instructive on their role and the affinity between prohibition and gender issues. Dry sympathies of the author notwithstanding, this is a significant history of Kansas and prohibition.

Ignited in 1873, the Women's Temperance Crusade culminated the next year with the formation of the Woman's National Christian Temperance Union. Asserting that "even the simplest details of the movement . . . have been widely mistaken," (4) Blocker expiates historians with a definitive book on the largest women's movement in America to that point. As impressive as it is ambitious, the book is equally informative on temperance and on women in a patriarchal society.

The Crusade is examined simultaneously at three levels. With three-fifths of all participants, Ohio is logically the state analyzed, and the book has a detailed and absorbing local view of a representative Ohio Crusade town. Abundant examples are provided on the Crusade at the national level. No important aspect of the Crusade escapes notice, and Blocker is thorough and persuasive on the elusive and controversial issue of motivation.

Against the background of increased male consumption of intoxicating beverages and numbers of purveyors, women's experience with and fear of destructive drinking by male family members galvanized their self-interested campaign against saloons. This contradicts strongly held notions both about the relationship of social traits to prohibition and susceptibility to debilitating drinking. With a profile comparable to the Kansas dry, the Crusader appeared to be of a station immune to the perils of drinking, but Blocker demonstrates their vulnerability. Crusaders metaphorically scratched where they itched. They tried to save family males and themselves from degradation, not manipulate lower classes, repress immigrants, and discriminate against Catholics. Crusaders sought and intermittently located allies within groups that have been regarded as anathema to drys. The moti-

vation adduced by Blocker was not exclusively one of the Crusaders, but it is perhaps the only one that logically explains nearly every dimension of the movement.

Blocker incisively examines the snarled issues and varied responses to the Crusade. Groups aligned against the movement were predictable, but Blocker proposes that expected allies were tepid at best. Uninterested in the vote, skeptical about statutory prohibition, and defying social convention, Crusaders found many suffragists, mainstream prohibitionists, and clergymen to be unenthusiastic. Both Crusaders and suffragists wanted to expand women's entry into the public sphere, but disagreement over the use of law led into "separate paths toward protecting the interests of women" (172).

Crusaders probably won the battle, lost the campaign, and helped win the war. Many of their initial successes were transitory. Probably the most significant and palpable result of the Crusade was the organization of new institutions like the WNCTU, which would later bridge the gulf between Crusaders and suffragists, and promote both prohibition and equality.

With unsynchronized methodology, analysis, and perhaps evidence, frustration results when the books intersect. Blocker reveals that 171 women were counted in the five Kansas Crusades, and they represent a mere 0.3 and 0.6 percent of the national totals. Statistics imply that Kansas Crusade efforts were negligible, although Blocker does not state the obvious. Bader, however, claims that the Crusade's "impact . . . was substantial, involving upwards of a score of larger towns" (31), but he identifies only four cities with Crusades. Not closed saloons, but "heightened public awareness" (33) was the impact, and it led to the election of temperance officials in more than seven towns; the exact number is not specified and only one identified town was a Crusader site.

The predicament is clear, but not the answer. Interested in the locus of the crusade, Blocker does not pretend to explain every situation. Crusades could sprout in unlikely environments and not in conducive ones without nullifying his thesis. Kansas may have been such an anomaly, as Bader describes conditions that Blocker would regard as inhospitable, and yet touts the Crusade's success. Salience is obviously not the whole story to Bader, who finds the Crusade's influence vastly greater than its visibility and surprisingly exhibited in locations that it bypassed.

A unique situation may explain why Kansas had Crusades in larger cities while the success imputed to them was in smaller towns. Crusades were mounted in the former, which were exempt from the petition provision of the licensing law, and where saloons may have

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been the densest. These were also locations where dry influence was often weak and the Crusades had few results. Election successes ascribed to the Crusade, however, were in smaller towns where prohibition sentiment was the strongest and saloons were often circumscribed. Kansas Crusades, therefore, seemed to appear where the saloon may have been the strongest and enjoyed its successes where the dries were.

Kansas's peculiar prohibition history extends to the role of women. Kansas women had equality with men on saloon licensing, although only in small towns; and they were prominent in the Kansas Temperance Society, which backed woman suffrage, the Kansas Temperance party, and Good Templars. Kansas women seemed to have little philosophical affinity with Crusaders and to be poor prospects as recruits. The conundrum of the Crusade and Kansas is one for the readers of these excellent books to resolve.

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*The Transformation of the Woman Suffrage Movement: The Case of Illinois, 1850-1920*, by Steven M. Buechler. The Douglass Series on Women's Lives and the Meaning of Gender. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986. xvi, 258 pp. Tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.00 cloth.

Women's history continues to flourish as measured by such indicators as the number of books and articles published, papers read at professional meetings, and courses offered. Recent growth has been more than just quantitative, however, as the number and variety of subjects has continued to expand. During the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s most of the increase occurred on the private side of American women's experiences, with growing numbers of studies on marriage, motherhood, work, and activity in voluntary associations. Although these areas continue to attract large numbers of historians, a growing proportion of recent investigations has focused on the public side of the lives of American women, on such activities as the campaign for suffrage and the ways in which women used the ballot following the enactment of suffrage extension.

Recent interest in the history of woman suffrage is a revival of an earlier concern with the topic, with much of the earlier writing on the movement a product of the 1950s and 1960s, decades in which relatively few historians studied the experiences of women. The new suffrage scholarship differs from that of an earlier day in at least two respects. One is the choice of limited geographical areas, usually a single

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