

locality. A selected list of Iowa commissions indicates how successfully this was carried out: Audubon, "Audubon's Trip Down the Ohio and Mississippi—1820"; Corydon, "Volunteer Fire Department"; Cresco, "Iowa Farming"; Dubuque, "Early Mississippi Steamboat"; Hamburg, "Peony Festival at Hamburg"; Monticello, "Iowa Landscape"; Pella, "Hollanders Settle in Pella."

Nevertheless, though quality was maintained by offering commissions on the basis of anonymous competitions, and this process allowed unknown artists to compete equally against famous ones, there was no guarantee that the subject of the mural would find favor in the community where it was to be installed. Park and Markowitz show the problems artists sometimes had to deal with, not only in the form of hostile townspeople, but also when a building was not designed with the muralist in mind.

The authors state their purpose in the book's introduction: "to study the tensions between three polarities: the desire for quality in art and the commitment to make art democratic; the effort to create an art embodying national ideals and the wish to make art relevant to people in various regions of the United States; traditional artistic values and the contemporary styles" (9). They do this and more. *Democratic Vistas* is well illustrated and provides the reader with a sense of the diversity of the work sponsored by the New Deal. Of special interest to many readers will be the appendix, which lists, in alphabetical order by state, and then by city, the location of murals and sculptures commissioned by the Section.

INDIAN HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MICHAEL MULLEN

*American Singularity: The 1787 Northwest Ordinance, the 1862 Homestead and Morrill Acts and the 1944 G.I. Bill*, by Harold M. Hyman. Richard B. Russell Lectures 5. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986. x, 95 pp. Notes, index. \$15.00 cloth.

In this small volume Professor Harold Hyman of Rice University sets forth his views that American singularity has long existed and still does, and that a look at three of its earlier incarnations and their implications validates that point. Starting with the assumption that the values and aspirations of the revolutionary era embraced a uniquely American commitment to economic opportunity, social mobility, and political freedom, Hyman tests the sincerity of those values by seeing how much individual access to land, to education, and to legal remedies have been available in real life to the average American. He makes his case by examining the Northwest Ordinance, the Homestead and

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Morrill Acts, and the 1944 G.I. Bill of Rights, and concludes that each of these measures entailed the setting forth of public policies which granted that access at different times in American history. The Northwest Ordinance enshrined the basic liberties secured by the revolutionary war. The Homestead and Morrill Acts opened up the public domain to a multitude of average American land seekers and afforded educational opportunities to their children. The G.I. Bill broke the elite monopoly on higher education, but also combined that thrust toward broader educational opportunity with access to a variety of social programs, particularly housing. The material chosen to validate this thesis is used persuasively to bolster the argument. Although the logic is slightly tenuous at some points, the package Hyman affords us is generally convincing.

The historiographical structure of the chapters is interesting and provocative. In treating each action, Hyman uses a foil to validate his position. For the early period, he takes on those historians who deprecate the importance and positive effects of the Northwest Ordinance as principally serving land speculators and knavish members of a small, economically self-serving class looking primarily toward a bigger common market. Hyman prefers to turn to those historians who celebrate the Ordinance both for what it accomplished in the early history of the territorial system, and for the enlightened principles it set forth. He winds up joining those who hail it for its republican values—religious freedom, relative economic opportunity and hence relative social equality. As to legal remedies, he particularly emphasizes its clause against contract impairment, its legal rights and remedies including *habeas corpus* and trial by jury, and the access to the courts which people in the area came to utilize. Its failure he sees principally in its unwillingness to deal with the unfree labor issues, a question which then was picked up on by his next group of policy makers in 1862 and 1863.

The three Civil War statutes (the Habeas Corpus Act is included to support the argument for legal remedies) Hyman sees as especially remarkable for wartime. He views their positive thrust of securing rights, particularly for freemen, as implicit in their framing and their content, and argues that their dynamic contemporary thrust carried forward into the Reconstruction amendments. This puts him on the side of such scholars as Robert Kaczorowski, who connect the amendments with earlier revolutionary era values and the principles of the Northwest Ordinance. It puts him at odds, historiographically, with lawyers and conservative critics of the Warren Court and *Brown v. Board*, who in their need to deprecate those opinions have tended to write or rewrite Reconstruction history in anti-rights terms, particularly in the area of desegregated education. Hyman contends that *Brown* is good history,

and that the Reconstruction amendments potentially incorporated the very values he sees as so central to his thesis regarding American singularity. Again the lawyers' history foil serves his purpose and solidifies his argument.

Hyman acknowledges that the 1944 G.I. Bill seems, initially, to be an aberration. Historians have seen it as a measure designed specifically for veterans, unlike the previous two examples. However, he argues that it was broader in its impact than simply educating veterans and granting them loans. It eventually included provisions for reemployment, unemployment compensation, social security, and loan guarantees for farms and business. Thus, in action, it reenforced and revitalized New Deal civilian legacies. This linking of peacetime to wartime public policy commitments allowed unprecedented numbers and segments of the population to enjoy improved access to education, land (housing), and legal remedies. He then argues that the sons and daughters of the beneficiaries of the G.I. Bill, particularly in education, became leaders in the civil rights movement, greatly democratized university systems, and challenged prior social stratification, so that the outcome of the G.I. Bill's largesse was again equal access to housing, education, and legal remedies for all Americans.

Hyman sees the Reagan administration efforts to turn back the clock as validating his point that these laws were the products of our most liberating thinker-politicians, and their cumulative effect, over two hundred years of history, has both produced success and reenforced aspects of our national exceptionalism.

Hyman chooses his examples carefully and well. Critics from the far left and the far right will certainly quibble with his upbeat approach, but they will find his arguments serious and well constructed.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

PAUL L. MURPHY

*To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900-1940*, by Roger L. Geiger. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. x, 325 pp. Tables, appendixes, notes, index. \$27.50 cloth.

The word *scholarship* as used to designate the systematic investigation of some topic of interest has been with us at least since the sixteenth century. But this is not what Roger L. Geiger has in mind when he writes about the advancement of knowledge. That term suggests an ongoing, cumulative enterprise rather than the idle curiosity we associate with the traditional gentleman scholar. "To advance knowledge" implies the existence of institutional structures that give support and continuity to the scholarly activity of individuals. It also implies the ra-

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