

one supposes, we couldn't "get the hell out of Dodge" if we tried. Sometimes that may be a helpful thing. At other times, it may leave us in the hands of an unreconstructed make-believe cowboy like Ronald Reagan.

The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America is a good and useful and important book, deserving of a wider audience than it is likely to get from the constituency of a university press. It is a model of judicious scholarship and a pleasure to read. More importantly, there is nothing in the book to intimidate the nonspecialist, for whom it was probably intended in the first place.

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

WILLIAM W. SAVAGE, JR.

The New Deal and the West, by Richard Lowitt. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984. xx, 283 pp. Notes, map, illustrations, bibliographical note, index. \$25.00 cloth.

Few American historians are as familiar with the resources of New Deal history as Richard Lowitt, and his selection by editor Martin Ridge to write this volume in *The West in the Twentieth Century* series was fortuitous. The chairman of the department of history at Iowa State University, Lowitt has written a definitive three-volume biography of Senator George Norris of Nebraska and has edited the reports of Lorena Hickok on the Great Depression, and the journal of Nils A. Olsen. He brought to this book a keen awareness of the national political structure, the economic conditions, and the destructive forces of nature which shaped the United States and the West during the Great Depression.

In this first full-scale treatment of the impact of the New Deal on a region, Lowitt organized his study around such vital topics as agricultural programs, water use, Indian policy, regional development of electrical power, environmental issues, and conservation of the public domain. Above all is the commanding presence of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who expressed deep concern for western development even before his inauguration in March 1933. Lowitt began his study with an overview of the West as it existed in 1932. He defined the West as all of the nation beyond the first tier of states bordering the Mississippi River, and in that vast region he found a "plundered province" with its grass, soil, timber, and watersheds exploited, in some cases to depletion. Repeated droughts, plagues of insects, and dust storms brought to the "rugged individualists" of the West the realization that state and local efforts to save and revive their economies had failed. They turned to Washington for intervention to reverse the catastrophic collapse of agricultural

and mineral prices and to preserve the natural resources threatened by humankind and the vagaries of the weather.

Franklin Roosevelt shared with his distant cousin Teddy a love for the West and a devotion to conservation, a fact well-known to westerners. On a tour of the region in 1931, James Farley found that Democrats in the West saw in FDR a savior, a doer, and a man of action, and they helped him win the party's nomination the following year. From 1932 until 1938 Roosevelt, his wife Eleanor, Lorena Hickok, Farley, Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace, Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, and other New Dealers visited the West, conducted interviews, held conferences, gave speeches, and formulated plans to address the plight of a distressed people.

A major theme of the book is the ongoing conflict between the departments of Agriculture and Interior, Wallace and Ickes, over control of land and water policies in the West. The bureaucratic infighting in Washington spilled over into the region as local administrators fought to establish rules on grazing rights, water allocations, the construction of dams and canals, and land management. Despite the wrangling and occasional bitterness which resulted, the New Dealers made great progress, as Lowitt carefully delineated. With the strong support of senators such as George Norris, Key Pittman of Nevada, and Burton K. Wheeler of Montana, the New Deal pushed through Congress massive appropriations for dams on the Colorado, Columbia, and other major rivers. New irrigation projects were proposed and developed even as Wallace labored to reduce agricultural output in order to raise prices. New Deal agencies reoriented and revitalized federal Indian policy and focused considerable attention on the plight of these forgotten peoples. In the state of California and in the Great Basin, Ickes established dominance by Interior while Wallace's Agriculture Department became the most significant agency in the Great Plains. Roosevelt agreed to major changes in the nation's monetary system in order to stimulate the silver mining industry directly and the mining of copper and zinc indirectly. A vast network of federal programs restored much of the West through planning, both economic and environmental, and directed many efforts specifically for the farmers, miners, lumbermen, and ranchers in the region.

The varied interest groups in the western states never totally agreed on all of the New Deal schemes, and some political figures fought efforts to conserve forests, water, and grazing lands. Interest groups often clashed with New Dealers who sought to bring order to developmental concepts and end the devastation of resources. Yet, despite the opposition which arose, the New Deal managed to lift the

region out of the depths of economic despair and implement programs which ended the unrestrained depletion of natural resources.

Lowitt used a wide range of source material, especially the collections in the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park and at the Library of Congress. He labored among the massive reports issued by the various cabinet departments and their subagencies. The view which resulted reflects the president's study at Hyde Park, the Oval Office, and the corridors of power in Washington. This is the New Dealer's history written cautiously and with shrewd insight, but often missing is the perception from the West. Little credit is given to state and local governments for initiating projects such as the Grand River Dam Authority in Oklahoma or the Interstate Oil Compact which reduced the flood of crude oil after Ickes failed to obtain federal control of petroleum output. There are numerous essays and articles available on the individual states in the West during the New Deal as well as a large number of biographies of political figures in the region, and these works could have provided yet another dimension to Lowitt's conclusions. Nevertheless, this is a well-written and thoughtfully argued study which enhances our understanding of the New Deal and the history of the West in the 1930s. Lowitt's carefully considered conclusions based on his work in a wide array of sources illustrate both the extreme complexity of the New Deal and the successes it had in the western states in less than a decade. This is a substantial book which represents a major contribution to American history.

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KEITH L. BRYANT, JR.

The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864-1906, by Michael P. Malone. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981. 320 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$17.95 cloth, \$12.50 paper.

In *The Battle for Butte* Michael Malone describes the "economic-political struggle to win supremacy over and consolidation of the great Butte Hills" (xiii). The battles—political, between copper kings Marcus Daly and William A. Clark, and economic, between F. A. Heinze and Amalgamated Copper Co.—have been told elsewhere, but Malone provides the first solid study, detached from hero worship or bias. This is not an apologist's history, for Malone portrays and condemns all players as "ruthless capitalists engaged in an epic struggle, one of the roughest in the roguish history of western mining" (59). Malone, well known as a historian of Montana with three previous works, places the battles for Butte in the broader context of western mining and politics,

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