

Werner Sollors, Richard McCormick, and Joseph Schwab demonstrate how student protests and the threat of civil action forced many universities to modify exclusionary policies.

Hubbard's book represents a critical step in analyzing institutional prejudice. Subsequent studies may further explain the implications of these prejudices and offer fresh insights into how institutions juggle progressive policy with perpetual manifestations of discrimination. *New Dawns* provides a solid foundation for studies that examine a broader range of the experiences of students, staff, faculty, and administrators. University administrators should definitely read it.

Wetlands of the American Midwest: A Historical Geography of Changing Attitudes, by Hugh Prince. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. xiii, 395 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$21.00 paper.

Discovering the Unknown Landscape: A History of America's Wetlands, by Ann Vileisis. Covalo, CA: Island Press, 1997. xii, 433 pp. Map, illustrations, appendix, notes, index. \$27.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY REBECCA CONARD, MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY AND TALLGRASS HISTORIANS L. C.

For historians of the Midwest in general, and of Iowa in particular, *Wetlands of the American Midwest: A Historical Geography of Changing Attitudes* by Hugh Prince is a mixed deliverance. On the one hand, the research on which the book rests, although impressive in its sweep, contains notable gaps; and the treatment of the subject is uneven, both geographically and chronologically. On the other hand, Prince has provided us with the first synthesis of historical material on wetlands in the Midwest, especially their drainage for agricultural use in the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota; and he has written a very readable narrative that should find an audience beyond historians and geographers. Experts who are involved in land management and land-use planning, regardless of their disciplinary training, can learn much from this book.

In a narrative of 350 pages, Prince attempts to cover a period of time that stretches roughly from pre-European contact to the floods of 1993. Obviously, this dictates a broad-brush treatment. The chapters that cover the half-century before World War I are the best, in large part because that period has been studied extensively by agricultural and environmental historians and by historical geographers. Chapter

five, "Landowners, Cattlemen, Railroads, and Tenants on Wet Prairies," chapter 6, "Draining and Agricultural Change on Wet Prairies," and chapter 7, "Occupying, Draining, and Abandoning Northern Bogs and Swamps," constitute an invaluable reference section for anyone seeking to undertake localized or more detailed investigations. In contrast, chapter eight, "Utilizing and Conserving Wet Prairies Since 1930," simply attempts the impossible. Readers who know the territory, literally, will be unsatisfied by the sketchy nature of that section. The brevity of treatment given to the past sixty or so years is especially puzzling because contentious battles fought in those decades have done much to reveal the nature of Americans' changing attitudes toward wetlands.

Those who are especially interested in the politics of environmentalism concerning wetlands beginning in the 1930s will be much better informed by reading *Discovering the Unknown Landscape: A History of America's Wetlands*, by Ann Vileisis. Vileisis devotes more than half of her book to unraveling the vicissitudes of environmental policy from the "double agenda" of FDR's New Deal (chap. 9), which set resource conservation on a collision course with flood control, to the "promise of restoration" (chap. 17) that came in the wake of the 1993 floods in the Mississippi River Valley, when Congress approved an Emergency Wetlands Reserve Program to purchase permanent conservation easements for one hundred thousand acres of wetlands, and two hundred communities took steps to relocate to higher ground. In those chapters—indeed throughout the entire book—Vileisis skillfully weaves changes in government policy with changes in societal attitudes and values through a progression of site-specific examples and case studies—such as Frederick Law Olmsted's 1879 plan to incorporate a restored tidal marsh into the design of Boston's Back Bay Fens Park, the 1914 campaign of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs to save the Everglades, J. N. "Ding" Darling's determined attempt to establish federal wildlife refuges in the 1930s, and Catherine Kerr's mobilizing of forces that led the California legislature to establish the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission in 1965.

Vileisis provides the national context for understanding the wetlands of the Midwest as one part of the "mosaic of native swamps, bogs, and marshes" that she describes in chapter two. Reclaiming land for agricultural production was a driving force behind wetlands drainage not only in the Midwest, but along the Atlantic Coast, the lower Mississippi Valley, and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta of California. Both authors, however, focus on the role of John Johnston,

who introduced tile drainage in 1835 and thereby contributed one of the important technological advances that revolutionized agricultural practices in the late nineteenth century. Prince argues that, by 1920, the draining of midwestern prairies had "produced a remarkable uniformity of landscape and land use. It obliterated what was formerly an important regional division" (231).

What is missing from *Wetlands of the American Midwest* indicates work that awaits interested scholars. The material in chapter six, for instance, suggests that the process of draining marshes, sloughs, bogs, and swamps in the Midwest contributed substantially to creating the era of prosperity between 1896 and World War I that is commonly known as the "golden age of farming." Yet, despite a liberal use of quantitative data, the author does not attempt to quantify, or even evaluate, the relative contributions of rail transportation, seed hybridization, farm technology, and land drainage. To cite an Iowa-specific example, Prince overlooked several pertinent studies undertaken at the direction of the Iowa legislature, including the 1911 *Report of the Iowa State Drainage, Waterways and Conservation Commission*; the 1917 *Report of the State Highway Commission*, the first systematic survey of remaining lakes, which contains valuable information concerning drainage; the 1933 *Report on the Iowa Twenty-five Year Conservation Plan*; and the two-volume 1934-35 *Report of the Iowa State Planning Board*. A quick scan of the footnotes suggests that similar omissions may exist for other states covered in this volume.

These criticisms, however, are not meant to deter readers from taking Hugh Prince's work seriously, only to emphasize that much remains to be done and that he has provided scholars with an excellent benchmark. His book is an extremely helpful synthesis of existing scholarship. The bibliography runs more than thirty pages, representing research that began in the 1950s. Anyone who wants to know anything about the history of wetlands in the Midwest will want to consult *Wetlands of the American Midwest*.

The central strength of *Discovering the Unknown Landscape* is the author's ability to demonstrate how the inherent ambiguity of wetlands has led people to perceive their value in opposing terms. Ever since the Puritan colonists "projected a moral landscape onto the physical landscape of the New World" (30), Americans have pursued contradictory, if not inchoate, land and environmental policies. By the time the citizens of Grafton, Illinois, yielded to nature by voting to move a portion of their town to dry land after the flood of 1993, more than fifty percent of the wetlands in the continental United States had been lost. "The tricky matter is," Vileisis writes, "that although by

customary law a citizen may survey and purchase a parcel of wetland and consider it private property, the very wetness of wetlands means that there will always be a 'commons' component to them. This commons may be a public nuisance, or it may be a public good" (6). Using this concept as the organizing principal, Vileisis masterfully tells a story of changing cultural attitudes and government responses as we have haltingly come to recognize a public responsibility to respect the ecological functions of wetlands within a legal system that protects individual rights.

Cleaning Up the Great Lakes: From Cooperation to Confrontation, by Terence Kehoe. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997. ix, 250 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MARGARET BEATTIE BOGUE, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Cleaning Up the Great Lakes is an important study that traces efforts to rectify the damages done to the mid-continent's most significant water resource, the Great Lakes, by the growth of population, urban-industrial development, agriculture, lumbering, mining, power generation, and a host of other human activities that for more than a century have degraded water quality and the marine habitat. Terence Kehoe's study concentrates on the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, which witnessed the effects of a vast post-World War II industrial expansion based in large part on the production of synthetic compounds that yielded wastes toxic to life forms. The heavy toll on water quality evoked public outcries and the crusades of environmentalists to make the plight of the lakes a major issue, nationally as well as regionally. The work is basically a public policy study in which the relationships between the process of water spoliation and the changes in ways of trying to control it are skillfully interwoven.

The problem of pollution in the Great Lakes affected public health and the well-being of marine life well before 1900. At that time efforts to develop safe systems for drinking water and sewage disposal were handled at the city, state, and provincial levels, which were considered the appropriate segments of government to deal with the problem. They functioned through boards that stressed volunteerism, cooperation, and a philosophy of regulation geared to assimilative capacity and primary uses of bodies of water receiving wastes. They also accommodated the economic interests at stake and their political clout.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.