

good, and glitches are minimal. Hagan uses the "new western history" as an unnecessary straw man; Riley's mountain of citations on western women seems out of place; and Wilson's important lessons about oral history and interviewing Indians are sometimes overshadowed by her insistence that Indians become gatekeepers of their past and that history serve Indian purposes. In the larger scope, however, these are minor problems. This is a highly useful collection of essays that should be read by anyone interested in Indian history, and especially by those concerned with Iowa's neglected Indian past. One need look no further than Douglas E. Foley's *The Heartland Chronicles* (1995) to realize that Iowa has its own middle grounds in places such as Tama and, perhaps, elsewhere.

Researching Western History: Topics in the Twentieth Century, edited by Gerald D. Nash and Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. ix, 220 pp. Notes, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

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Gerald D. Nash and Richard W. Etulain's most recent coedited collection should become a standard reference work for every scholar, teacher, and student of western history. The volume's contributors provide thorough summaries of scholarship on twentieth-century topics, outline a plethora of research possibilities, and provide voluminous notes, citing not only book and article literature, but, in some cases, pertinent archival collections, too.

Nash begins his essay on economic history with apologies for its lack of scope and then proceeds to provide an insightful, informative, and thorough overview of the field and its possibilities. However, after calling for studies marked by objectivity and detachment, he ironically ends up taking some undetached potshots at recent revisionist scholarship. In charting new courses in environmental history, Thomas R. Cox offers myriad possibilities, but perhaps overemphasizes the need to find alternatives to anthropocentrism (historians are, one assumes, interested in environments because humans live in them). Still, this is only the most minor criticism of another very insightful essay.

Roger Lotchin's overview of western urban history is the book's strongest essay. He offers a clear thesis—"major American cities have been geographically conservative and culturally dynamic" (54)—and then provides a sweeping and artfully integrated overview of the West's urban past and the many opportunities for interpreting it.

Robert W. Cherny's survey of modern western political history is similarly sweeping and offers a useful chronological framework. Furthermore, the inclusion of statistical analysis mandates that Cherny define the borders of the West. His eastern boundary is the 98th meridian (roughly the second tier of trans-Mississippi states—from the Dakotas to Texas), and he includes Alaska and Hawaii, for a total of nineteen western states. Iowa and the Midwest do not make it into the volume, in part because of its emphasis on the twentieth century and de-emphasis of earlier western frontiers.

In her essay, "Twentieth-Century Western Women," Glenda Riley raises a plethora of questions for scholars to address, but pays special attention to a wide range of variables that demand attention—race, ethnicity, religion, age, class, marital background, sexual orientation, and regional location. If regionalism is an important subtheme for Riley, it is the driving theme for Etulain's rich overview of opportunities in modern western cultural history as he champions the significance of western cultural subregions and the importance of comparative analysis of the West with the South and with Canada. Comparisons of the West (and the many distinctive Wests that lie within it) and the Midwest would further enhance his analysis.

As an interpretive piece with less emphasis on research possibilities, Fred Erisman's contribution, "The Enduring Myth and the Modern American West," stands out from the first six essays. Still, he does offer some probing analysis of the enduring power of western mythology. Gene M. Gressley's concluding essay, "Research in a Theatre in the Round," is similarly distinct from the others. It provides commentary on the earlier essays and on environmental history and the "new" western history, in addition to outlining a few avenues for research. These departures from the book's format detract a little from its symmetry but do not undermine its usefulness in any way.

If there is a single theme that most of the contributors adhere to, it is that the West is not one monolithic region (outside of the realm of the imagination), but a set of distinct, though linked, regions that demand close individual attention and do not lend themselves well to easy generalization. The book is also of tremendous significance and value because it centers our attention on the twentieth-century West and charts numerous investigative avenues. Other regions of the country—the Midwest, the Northeast, and the South—would benefit from such a well-organized and well-executed volume of twentieth-century research opportunities.

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