

Frontier Nebraska: Stories of Hardship and Triumph from Boone County in the 1870s, compiled by Stephen K. Hutchinson. Lincoln, NE: Foundation Books, 1998. xii, 499 pp. Illustrations, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY DEBORAH FINK, AMES

This collection of stories and reports about westward migration and pioneer life draws on a cast of characters who settled in the incipient plains environment of Boone County in east central Nebraska. Beginning with a diary account of an 1871 trek across northern Iowa, it moves to such stock pioneer topics as sod-breaking, housekeeping, schools, grasshoppers, blizzards, prairie fires, and horse thieves. Copy from promotional tracts about Nebraska offers insight into motivations of the newcomers. Many names of Boone County settlers appear and are indexed, making the book readily usable by genealogists. There is a substantial amount of 1870s material on the Pawnee, who lived on a reservation in Nance County, just south of Boone County, as well as scattered references to Sioux.

A sprawling array of stories is most useful to researchers if it is carefully indexed; it is most useful to general readers if it is annotated and placed in a wider historical and geographical context. Unfortunately, this book has only a name index and no broader context. Students of Plains Indians may latch onto the book with the most enthusiasm. While the perspective is exclusively European-American, there is considerable information on encounters with Indians, including an account of an illegal foray into Lakota territory and various anecdotes about stealing wood from Pawnees.

Black Pioneers: Images of the Black Experience on the North American Frontier, by John W. Ravage. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997. xxi, 224 pp. Illustrations, charts, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL CASSITY, LARAMIE, WYOMING, AND MOUNT PROSPECT, ILLINOIS

Despite explicitly stating several times its intention to do otherwise, this study ultimately limits itself to demonstrating the existence of African Americans in the West by publishing approximately two hundred photographs of men and women, rural and urban, in a variety of occupations, in the North American West (including Hawaii and Alaska and Canada) of the nineteenth century (and into the twentieth). As a scrapbook of photographs, some quite striking, the book demonstrates considerable effort and digging.

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