

much so for those who regard themselves as knowledgeable about Iowa history and politics as for admitted neophytes. Fifteen tables, most of which summarize the caucus results of 1972-1984, add considerably to the value of those chapters; the tables are the best way to convey the quantitative data they contain. Eleven cartoons from the *Des Moines Register* by Frank Miller and Brian Duffy also enhance the volume, many of them combining with Winebrenner's text to remind those who have followed Iowa politics during the 1970s and 1980s, particularly readers of "the newspaper Iowa depends upon," of various developments and moments related to the Iowa precinct caucuses of 1972-1984. Unfortunately, perhaps due to a rush to meet a timely publication date, the book contains many stylistic flaws, including frequent inadequate punctuation, occasional unfortunate word choices, and some sentences that cry out for clarification.

Regardless of how one evaluates the Iowa precinct caucuses, they have been one of the most important events in the presidential nomination process in each of the past five presidential elections. As the first scholarly study of the phenomenon, Winebrenner's volume is a valuable addition to the literature on the candidate selection process and on the state's history and politics.

The New History and the Old: Critical Essays and Reappraisals, by Gertrude Himmelfarb. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 209 pp. Notes, index. \$20.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY KENT BLASER, WAYNE STATE COLLEGE

The past twenty-five years have witnessed the most revolutionary, far-reaching changes in historical writing and scholarship since the origins of professional, academic history. The terms "new history" or "new social history" are often used as labels for the most important new developments. Actually, there have been at least three major, different, but related aspects of this historical revolution: a more critical political and ideological perspective, the emergence of New Left history; a dramatic methodological change with the emergence of social science techniques and theories; and new subject matter, the panoply of women's, minority, ethnic, working-class, and everyday life topics that have become popular staples. Collectively, the topics, approaches, and ideologies of the new history have touched off voluminous, often bitter debates among historians. Gertrude Himmelfarb's *The New History and the Old* is a significant recent contribution.

The New History and the Old is a collection of ten essays, all previously printed but revised for this work. Together, they present an important, intelligent, effective, and impassioned criticism of various aspects of the new history and a defense of traditional historiography, particularly of political and intellectual history as the heart of the profession. Several chapters touching only obliquely on the main topic include essays on Robert Nisbet and the idea of progress, Victorian historians, and Oakeshott and Nietzsche's philosophies of history. Psychohistory and quantification are *betes noires* in several essays. A chapter on British Marxist historians is the most heavy-handedly conservative. The centerpiece of the book, a 1984 essay, "History with the Politics Left Out," is the most direct and convincing criticism of the new social history, and the only essay that did not originate as an extended book review. "Is National History Obsolete?" and "Social History in Retrospect" provide strong supporting arguments.

Even for an intellectual historian who shares many of Himmelfarb's doubts and concerns about social history, however, this book has serious problems, and its reputation seems much exaggerated. While Himmelfarb's book may be attractive to true believers, in the manner of Bloom, Bennett, and Hirsch, virtually all of its points have been made more tellingly by leading practitioners of the new social history, including the Genoveses, Lawrence Stone, Thomas Bender, Bernard Bailyn, and E. J. Hobsbawm. This work is essentially polemic with no attempt to assess the positive features of the new history, to admit to problems with the old, traditional history that might have provoked the rebellion, or to ask why the new trends have proven so widely attractive.

Himmelfarb's specialties are English and European history; her examples and arguments come almost exclusively from the British and French historical traditions. This book will provide a good, provocative beginning for someone interested in the current ferment over the state of the historical profession. It may also help to reinforce and solidify the beliefs of historical traditionalists and provide some verbal brickbats to hurl at the avant garde. But it is far from a reliable and fair-minded assessment of the profession. It should be considered a beginning point, not a stopping place, for those interested in the historical profession today.

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.