

Minnesota in a Century of Change: The State and Its People Since 1900, edited by Clifford E. Clark, Jr. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989. vii, 607 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$35.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

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This handsome book is a collection of essays that addresses a broad scope of Minnesota's history in the twentieth century. The collection is notable because it considers concerns such as the changing landscapes of rural and urban Minnesota, and because it includes as authors geographers, planners, and others who are concerned with historical processes but are not trained historians. The seventeen essays cover topics such as labor and politics that are pertinent to any state's history, as well as topics that are particularly appropriate to Minnesota, such as the experiences of native Americans.

The volume is appropriate to its subject. The history of any state, particularly one as geographically, ethnically, and culturally diverse as Minnesota in the twentieth century, cannot be adequately represented by a single narrative. The "march of time" story so common to older-style histories of states and regions has become outmoded and has been replaced by histories that emphasize divergence, conflicts, and the development of cultural pluralism.

The essays in this book follow this new implicit historiography with generally good results. Sometimes the essays overlap, sometimes they conflict, and they rarely, if ever, make specific reference to each others' subjects. Only the first and last essays, by Clifford Clark and Karal Ann Marling respectively, directly consider subjects such as the state's image and "quality of life" that could be said to touch on the others. While this absence of coherence might trouble some readers, it serves as an appropriate representation of Minnesota during a time of dramatic change.

The book stands out most clearly as an introduction to the state and the scholarly literature about it. The volume is well put together, with ample margins for notes. The numerous photographs from the Minnesota Historical Society's extensive collection illustrate well points made in the text. The editor and producers of this book (planning involved many staff members of the Minnesota Historical Society) seem to have a good sense of their audience, even if all of the authors do not. Some authors write to an academic, historically sophisticated audience that is conversant with the general outlines of Minnesota history, but the book as a whole does not address scholars only. Another indication of the intended audience is that the notes are not arranged for easy reference. Notations after the first reference in a

chapter are abbreviated and hard to trace. The absence of a bibliography, which would have been a very helpful tool for those using the book as a serious reference, further marks this as a book for generalist scholars and the educated lay public.

Still, there are many strengths to the book's text. David Beaulieu's essay on the history of native Americans is especially strong in connecting Minnesota events to developments in the country at large. Clarke Chambers is astutely aware of the socializing functions of public education and how those intents have changed over time. Daniel Elazar's chapter on government is not just a civics lesson or a political history; rather, it considers how government agencies affect the daily lives of Minnesota's citizens. The separation of the "rural experience" from "the business of agriculture" is a perceptive recognition that competing ideologies of land and culture in rural America have diverged sharply in the twentieth century. Some other chapters, however, take a much more simple, "march of time through the decades" approach to their subject, with the resulting implication that things have gotten better and better as the century has progressed.

In fact, some of the most interesting points about this volume are the contrasting philosophies displayed by some of the authors. Peter Rachleff's chapter on labor focuses on three particular instances of labor unrest: Iron Range strikes in 1916-17, the Minneapolis teamsters' strike of 1934, and the Hormel battle of 1985-86. Rachleff offers a highly analytical look at the rise and fall of organized labor in Minnesota throughout the century. Rachleff is uncertain whether all the developments have been for the good, but he is certain that conflicts between labor and management did not just happen; rather, they reflected deliberate strategic choices by both sides. Contrast Rachleff's view with this summary by D. Jerome Tweton of the "forces" affecting the rise of agribusiness: "The Albert Lea situation tells in microcosm the story of twentieth-century Minnesota agriculture: the interdependence of farming, marketing, and processing" (262). There are no people in Tweton's summary, just interdependent historical abstractions that cannot be opposed.

The professional specialist might quarrel with some particulars in this book, just as I have quibbled with Tweton's stance toward the development of agribusiness. But other factors should override such problems. The book's lack of consistency and its wide range of predispositions, not to mention the range of subjects, make it a valuable text historiographically as well as a useful introduction to the state's history. Other state historical societies would do well to undertake similar projects of their own.

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