

clergymen's memories. Szasz might have made better use of some recent community studies, where religion is not as seriously overlooked as in the more general literature he cites.

The account is unsatisfying in other ways, too. Szasz makes few geographic distinctions: examples from the northern Great Plains appear in the same paragraphs with those from the Southwest, and evidence from the ranching frontier supports the same generalizations as that from the mining frontier. Only on pages 81-82 does he discuss the "distinct religious milieu" of one of the vast region's subregions, but that is a superficial discussion: Szasz claims that what distinguished the southern Great Plains from the rest of the region was the dominance of religion rather than alcohol in community life and mores.

Readers will not even get a sense for how the process of establishing churches in the Great Plains and Mountain West was different from the same process on earlier frontiers. Did the different theological or political climate at the time this region was settled affect the pattern of religious activity? The only thing we learn from this book is that the theological controversies on the antebellum frontier did not extend to the New West, because the current national debates over evolution, higher criticism, and comparative religion did not speak directly to the average person. But that begs the question. Why were those controversies any less appealing than the debates between Calvinists and Arminians on the antebellum frontier?

All in all, this book is extremely valuable as far as it goes. I hope, though, that others will take up where Szasz leaves off and provide more sophisticated interpretations of the role of religion in communities of the trans-Mississippi West, taking fuller advantage of the recent western historiography.

Between the Rivers: A History of Iowa United Methodism, by John A. Nye with Louis Haselmayer and Leonard Deaver. Des Moines: Commission on Archives and History, Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1986. xv, 323 pp. Illustrations, notes, maps, glossary, appendixes, timeline, index. \$12.95 cloth, \$10.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD H. THOMAS, CORNELL COLLEGE

John A. Nye, a retired United Methodist clergyman, has undertaken the task of tracing the complicated organizational changes and mergers within the various governing bodies of Iowa Methodism since 1844. The book also includes contributions by Louis Haselmayer, president emeritus of Iowa Wesleyan College, and Leonard Deaver,

retired pastor of the former Evangelical United Brethren church. The work thoughtfully presents charts and timelines to guide the reader through the twists and turns of ecclesiastical administrative structures. This is no small achievement in itself. The shifting population patterns of the state helped to shape governing structures as did the presence of ethnic congregations which were often fairly independent of larger trends in the church. What emerged in 1968 was one large adjudicatory body, the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist church, governing the entire state. This agency thus embraces several mergers with racial and ethnic groups, many realignments of geographic boundaries, and the inclusion of another free-standing denomination, the Evangelical United Brethren, which itself had resulted from the merger of two denominations. The author places these changes in the context of national movements within Methodism that required the Iowa church to respond. Generous footnotes, glossary, and appendixes also contribute to the value of the book.

While much of the book documents how Methodism organized and reorganized itself within the state, Nye also presents brief sketches of the contribution of women, reflections and official statements by Methodism on social and political issues, the role of the church in establishing and supporting fourteen hospitals and homes and eleven colleges, and the development of special ministries aimed at problems associated with increased urbanization. The concluding pages are devoted to religious bodies either bearing the name *Methodist* or having deep roots within the church but which remain outside of the larger and more dominant church. It seems impossible to find any corner of Iowa Methodism that Nye has not at least introduced and placed in historical perspective. The material in chapter ten on ethnic and racial churches is especially interesting.

This is not a book that centers directly on great leaders of the church and heroic circuit-riding clergy, although many of them are found here. Nor is it old-style triumphal history of the march of the church always upward and unconnected to the larger arena in which the church lives out its mission. Nye has a large vision of the church and frequently refers to regional and national movements that influenced Methodism in Iowa. He is also keenly aware of how the growth and development of the state together with the shifting fortunes of agriculture helped to shape the church. While political historians would wish for the inclusion of more of these influences and more attention to Methodism's close connection with the Republican party, Nye has at least made a valiant effort to make the reader aware that the church has not functioned in an economic, political, and social vacuum. The reader becomes aware of how larger movements influ-

enced the church but will need to look to other authors for an analysis of how the church influenced the political currents in the state.

The author does not try to deal with theological controversies, although he does not deny genuine disagreement. Those concerned with how Methodism coped with biblical criticism, evolution, humanism, and modern science will not find many clues in this book. On the other hand, those who wish to focus the scholar's microscope on one geographic area and examine how Methodism in Iowa spent its ecclesiastical and spiritual energy in the past will find that Nye has blazed a fairly interesting and clear trail. The book invites others to join with more specialized studies.

Freemasonry in Iowa: An Historical Narrative, by Keith Arrington. Highland Springs, VA: Anchor Communications, 1989. x, 124 pp. Illustrations, index.

REVIEWED BY PETER H. JAYNES, KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Beginning in 1840 with a lodge opening in Burlington, Freemasonry in Iowa expanded during the next 145 years to all sections of Iowa and claimed approximately fifty-six thousand members in 1985. In the meantime, at least 674 lodges had opened, more than 215 became defunct or merged, and well over one hundred thousand males had been members. Also, two "research lodges," a few "allied bodies" and "side degrees," attempts at "Masonic education," seven "Masonic magazines," a library, various forms of charitable work, and two Masonic nursing homes were or are visible components of Freemasonry in Iowa.

To this basic material, the author adds relatively little to make this work of interest to readers, whether Masons or not. Admirable in a work like this, in addition to mentioning the expulsion of many unnamed Masons for various infractions of the Masonic code, is the portrayal of prominent Masons with ordinary personal traits of jealousy or desire for power, authority, or profit. Mention of other "warts," such as squabbles over ritual and the use of "ritual ciphers," the nonpayment of dues, and forms and legitimacy of organization help "flesh out" the story.

Briefest mention of the relationship between railroad routes and the creation and survival of lodges and of the fluctuating growth and decline of lodges and membership provides something of interest to the social historian and to readers interested in the history of Iowa and Iowans. But brief mention is all there is. If post-Civil War railroads were influential in the spreading of people in Iowa and in the creation

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.