

receive little moisture, creating an environment that sustains dryland species such as yucca and the ornate box turtle which are more common in the arid western prairies.

Human presence in the hills is seen in scattered archeological remains which document the animals hunted and the agriculture attempted. With the coming of European cultures, the hills began to change in response to the demands of the new inhabitants: prairie fires were stopped, pastures replaced prairie, and cultivation opened areas to erosion. Across the entire region, roads, agriculture, housing developments, and barrow pits became forces of change that continue to alter plant and animal communities.

To aid those who take her invitation to heart, Cornelia F. Mutel has provided a selection of short tours and checklists of plants and animals that will help expose the inquisitive to the variety of features and life-forms in the Loess Hills. Although illustrations are plentiful, many of the photographs are too small to show the desired features clearly. I also wish more color plates could have been scattered through the body of the text rather than added at the end.

Fragile Giants was partially funded by the Iowa Academy of Science and is a suitable companion to *Iowa's Natural Heritage*. It is not designed as a scientific text, nor does it provide great depth or new insight on any specific topic, but it will extend the general reader's view and understanding of one of Iowa's unique areas.

Historians of the American Frontier: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook, edited by John R. Wunder. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988. xiii, 814 pp. Bibliographies, index. \$75.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ROGER L. NICHOLS, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

For at least the past century historians have studied the American frontier. In this sourcebook John Wunder has gathered discussions of the life and work of fifty-seven people who wrote about some aspect of the frontier experience. A fair number of the individuals included were not historians, but, in the editor's view, their writings on the frontier deserved recognition. To be included the individual had to have died and to have made "significant discoveries that have shaped further research, writing, and thought" about the frontier experience (xi). Unfortunately, by excluding living scholars, major figures such as Vernon Carstensen, Paul Gates, and Earl Pomeroy are not included. Coordinating the work of more than fifty scholars took several years. During that time several important scholars who were living when the book began had died. A few would-be contributors never completed

their chapters, so chapters on Francis Parkman, Reuben Gold Thwaites, and Clarence E. Carter, to mention a few, do not appear in this collection.

Despite these annoying omissions, the book is a useful tool. Conceived as a reference work, it became far more. Each chapter begins with a biography of the writer. Then it discusses the major themes found in the scholar's work. Next, the author analyzes the subject's ideas and contributions to frontier history. Then the chapter concludes with a bibliography of the scholar's writings and reviews and studies of his or her work. The biographies include people born as early as the 1830s and those who died as recently as the early 1980s. They include historians, agricultural economists, biographers, political scientists, professional writers, and even a lawyer. The chapters vary from a mere nine pages to about twenty-five pages for several of the longer ones. Some of the variation reflects the prominence and contributions of the subjects, while part of it is the author's doing. The contributors represent a broad cross-section of present historians. They present their subjects clearly and interestingly. Several chide the old-time writers for avoiding controversial topics such as slavery, Native Americans, or women, but they usually recognize that few scholars dealt adequately with those subjects in past decades.

The birthplaces and scholarly subjects pursued by many of those in this collection should be of interest to students of Iowa and midwestern history. Many, perhaps nearly half of the men and women, were born in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, or Missouri. Most of these writers lived in small towns or rural areas during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Not surprisingly, their writings reflected this background. Among those with direct Iowa connections, three deserve at least brief mention. Benjamin H. Hibbard, born in Iowa in 1870, taught at Iowa State for a time and focused his scholarship on federal land policies and agricultural history and economics. Another Iowa farm boy, Louis Pelzer, became recognized as a premier state and frontier historian because of his writings and his thirty-five years on the faculty at the University of Iowa. A student of midwestern government through the careers of Henry Dodge and his son Augustus Caesar Dodge, Pelzer also wrote on frontier military history and the cattle industry. The third Iowan in this collection is Benjamin F. Shambaugh, a longtime professor of political science at the University of Iowa and a major force in the development of the State Historical Society of Iowa. Of the three men, Shambaugh focused most sharply on Iowa issues and subjects. Nevertheless, all three contributed heavily to American frontier studies and worked to place midwestern events within the national setting.

As in any multiauthored book, the chapters vary widely. Some deal with relatively minor people who made only minor contributions. Others discuss giants of the historical profession. Editor Wunder gave his contributors wide latitude. Generally the result is what one might have wanted. The essays give a clear discussion of where frontier history came from and what it accomplished through the careers under discussion. From the criticisms leveled by the chapter authors, it is clear that historians now consider different issues than did most of these deceased scholars. At the same time, the present collection is an excellent resource for people interested in American frontier history. The chapter bibliographies give a quick introduction to the many topics the writers considered. The editor has made a valuable contribution to understanding how American history is written. This book helps its readers realize where many of the ideas we hold about the frontier originated.

The Genesis of Missouri: From Wilderness Outpost to Statehood, by William E. Foley. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989. x, 367 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY JEFFREY S. ADLER, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

William E. Foley undertook an ambitious task. He sought to write a modern successor to Louis Houck's 1908, fact-filled, three-volume study of early Missouri. Moreover, Foley attempted to incorporate new substantive and methodological approaches, bringing the roles of Indians, slaves, women, and cultural forces into clear focus. Finally, he tried to produce a comprehensive analysis of the much neglected colonial and territorial periods of Missouri history in a single volume that is useful to historians but still accessible to general readers. To a considerable extent, Foley succeeded.

Too often, historians of the Midwest have ignored the early history of the region, overlooking the influence of Indian nations and the role of European colonial powers. Foley redresses this imbalance and reminds scholars that Missouri's prestatehood period significantly affected the development of the region. Drawing on the framework of "Borderlands history," Foley explains that the upper Louisiana territory formed the periphery of the European world; Spanish, French, and English holdings in North America abutted in the region. Because Missouri represented a key borderland, it possessed immense value as an outpost against hostile powers. The Indian nations of the Midwest—and later the United States government—also recognized

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