

"Bleeding Kansas" and especially the Sumner-Brooks affair. Realizing that, like free labor, republicanism was a pervasive ideology, Gienapp points out that the slave power image strongly attracted Jacksonian Democrats. But his voting analysis shows that Republicans drew very little support from former Democrats. If Gienapp is going to attribute different partisan roles to free labor and republicanism, he should explain why the northern Democratic version of republicanism was less vulnerable to the slave power image.

Scholars will see much that is familiar in William Gienapp's account of the most critical realignment in American political history, but they will not have seen it so thoroughly documented or so comprehensively synthesized.

Cities on the Cedar: A Portrait of Cedar Falls, Waterloo, and Black Hawk County, by Glenda Riley. Parkersburg: Mid-Prairie Books, 1988 (address orders to Mid-Prairie Books, P. O. Box C, Parkersburg, Iowa 50665). xli, 91 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$8.95 paper.

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The writing of local history has been repeated often in Iowa and the United States. The past two decades or more have seen a resurgence in the quantity of local history publications. These publications range in type from reprints of nineteenth-century county histories (often with new every-name indexes) to new county histories complete with sketches of local families and businesses written by the subjects or their representatives. The centennials of towns in Iowa, a great number of which occurred during the period 1968-1971, also yielded town histories, many on newsprint in tabloid sizes.

The publishing techniques of these myriad productions range widely, including private and local presses, publishers devoted solely to producing community histories, and commercial publishing houses. Some are written by diligent individuals, some are produced by editors working with submitted materials, and some are put together by committees. The quality of research and writing varies tremendously, but these books do present immense numbers of photographs not previously available to the public. Some of them also have indexes.

All local histories have value. Even if the content is mostly filiopietistic antiquarianism, such books encourage interest in a community's past. Aiding the appreciation and understanding of a collective local heritage is an admirable result. And these books continue a trend that has been strong throughout this country since the centen-

nial celebrations of 1876. Whether the motivation is patriotism, or local pride, or just simply curiosity about the past, succeeding generations have these references to guide and inform them. Even where community or family legends are repeated as facts, we can find out what the legends are and why people might have been led to believe them.

Besides faulty research and uneven writing, many examples of local history are plagued by bad organization. Some compilers evidently believe that the only true local history is the story of the pioneer settlers. Others artificially chop up all activities into decade-long blocks. Still other local histories are dominated by lists of elected officials. Few local histories offer a balanced account of all periods of time, and they sometimes neglect important elements of the political, economic, or social past. Local histories rarely get high marks in all of these categories. But we should not dismiss local history as a genre just because of some inferior examples. After all, not all historical monographs or history textbooks are accurately researched or written in a clear or scintillating style either.

A recent example of local history that avoids many of the common pitfalls is Glenda Riley's study of two Iowa cities and their rural context. The introduction sets the regional and national context for this local history, and the book's periodization is set by the information involved, rather than by an artificial creation. Although the subtitle indicates equal treatment of rural and urban areas, the organization is really built around the founding and development of Cedar Falls and Waterloo. Each city has some distinct characteristics, and often has quite different reasons for growth. Riley examines these differences thoroughly and objectively for the settlement period. Of course the book's brevity does not allow for complete analysis of all factors, but Riley's choices for emphasis are logical and proper. Yet in some sections of the book, particularly in those dealing with the later years, the differences between the towns are obscured. Perhaps this is intentional, because marked differences appear in some sections of the book, but they are blurred in others. The towns are not identical twins, but sometimes readers will lose sight of the distinct reasons for growth. Contrasts might have been drawn more broadly and with greater consistency.

The inclusion of legends about the naming of Waterloo is a nice touch. Riley also repeats other pioneer stories, especially about schools and the courthouse fight. Some of these are to no particular purpose. Perhaps a definition of how the term *pioneer* is used here would allow us to know why the pioneer period extends until 1870; surely by then these towns had long since ceased being pioneer settle-

ments. Another minor weakness of the book is the paragraph about fences on page 28. It is not a success. We might also wonder about the specific origins of the 3,756 European immigrants to the county in 1870.

These comments aside, Professor Riley's attention to all elements of the population, and her careful inclusion of important information about both genders and all races and ethnic and linguistic groups is commendable. Her inclusiveness allows the reader to understand better the rich tapestry that was woven locally by the myriad population threads. My favorite element in the book is the biographical section on four leading citizens connected to the towns by birth or residence. It promotes interest in specific individuals as well as collective generalizations. We are spared the worship of the founding father, the philanthropic mother, or the political/military hero, all too common in most local histories. Instead we get profiles of people prominent in four different fields of endeavor. If we did not previously know about the author (Bess Streeter Aldrich), the historian (Carl L. Becker), the aviator (John Livingston), and the poet (James Hearst), we are glad we do now. There were other possibilities—the Sullivan brothers or Lou Henry Hoover or others—but Riley made good choices, and in placing this section in the middle of the book, she encourages the reader to explore further these individuals and others from this area who made real contributions to their world.

Cedar Falls and Waterloo were always significantly influenced by national events. Technological improvements in communications and transportation in the twentieth century heightened the impact of events from beyond local boundaries, such as World War I, the depressions of the 1920s and 1930s, and World War II. Riley competently describes and discusses the impact of these and other developments such as woman suffrage, the Harding language proclamation, and prohibition.

The last chapter of the book, which deals with recent decades, is more cursory. The matter of selection is still good, but so many themes appear that they cannot be explored thoroughly. Actually this is the way life seems to be, so in that sense the presentation is realistic. Economic problems, racial unrest, educational changes, and population growth seem to dominate. In this respect, as throughout the rest of the book, Professor Riley has used skill and taste to produce a local history that can be a model for other communities that wish for a good historical description of their own past.

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