

and did unimaginable harm to the very people she sought to help. Mark also weaves in a great deal of information about the life and times in which Fletcher lived and includes acute observations on the history of anthropology. The only thing that the author might have added to the book would be interviews with modern Omaha concerning their attitudes toward Fletcher and La Flesche. Have the Omaha forgiven her for her role in promoting allotment and accepted her contribution to preserving Indian history, or are the old wounds too new?

*The Politics of Community: Migration and Politics in Antebellum Ohio*, by Kenneth J. Winkle. *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modern History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988. xiv, 239 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, figures, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT R. DYKSTRA, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY

The author of this slender but solidly researched study, Professor Kenneth J. Winkle of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, has produced an important contribution to the scholarly literature on American political history, the methods and research outcomes of which should prove as much of value to the study of Iowa as they are to Ohio. Historians have known since the 1930s about the enormous instability of the American population, specifically its intercensal "turnover" rate, so that it is now axiomatic that only 30 percent or so of the population of a given township, village, or ward enumerated in one federal manuscript census was still in place ten years later when census-takers again made their rounds. But political historians doing long-run studies of grass-roots voting, says Winkle, have failed to take voter turnover sufficiently into account.

Winkle's main data sources included federal census enumerations, state census enumerations of eligible voters, and poll books from scattered townships in which the names of electors actually casting ballots were recorded. He first surveys larger migration patterns in antebellum Ohio, and offers a case study of the phenomenon in one county. He finds that in the four years between 1851 and 1855 only 43 percent of the voters remained in their original townships, while 8 percent moved to different places locally and a staggering 49 percent left the county altogether, those from town and from the countryside emigrating with about the same frequency. He next examines migration's impact on the changing suffrage laws in Ohio. By the time of the Civil War a potential voter—a white adult male citizen of the United States—was free to choose his place of residence, although township election judges were

permitted to challenge any would-be voter's claim of residency and, in fact, to interrogate him at length in order to determine how he measured up to a set of specific standards.

Winkle then proceeds to analyze the behavior of six thousand voters listed in the surviving poll books from eight Ohio townships. He finds that first-time voters typically represented from 20 to 25 percent of a township's electorate in an average election, and that few voters stayed long enough to participate in many more such elections before moving on. He finds that pattern to be of long duration, extending with little variation from 1822 to the Civil War. He demonstrates beyond a doubt that voter turnover was the product of in- and out-migration rather than of young men coming of voting age or of old men dying. Finally, he carefully estimates the roles of the "persisting minority" of voters, and offers a nicely realized case study demonstrating the importance of local political parties at election time, the type of blow-by-blow reconstruction that is not often enough encountered in scholarly treatments.

Winkle is not very clear, however, as to just how historians doing longitudinal voting studies err by not taking turnover more seriously. It may be, perhaps, that when one terms a voting unit a "German township" or a "working-class ward" or some other designation, one implies a population stability that is simply not true. If so, it is good that Winkle offers a caution. But certainly in this day and age, when the method of choice is ecological regression, cutting-edge practitioners regressing one set of election returns against another, for example, normally include a category for the estimated number of men ineligible to vote in the first election but eligible in the second. This at least accommodates the *net* voter gain or decline in any given voting unit. Even more significantly, Winkle himself emphasizes the commanding political roles of local elites, proving that typically there *was* a form of electorate stability that—far from being of little importance vis-à-vis the churning masses—actually maintained an exaggerated influence precisely *because* of the geographical impermanence of the majority.

These local elites, who were socioeconomically as well as politically dominant, hypothetically engaged in two extremely important activities at election time. First, they employed the rules of residency to control access to the ballot box by hundreds of itinerant workers, tenant farmers, and other transients who otherwise, because of their numbers, might have successfully challenged elite dominance of public policy making. Second, these persisting elites provided enough election-to-election balloting continuity to sustain the long-run "voting traditions" that characterized localities all over the nineteenth-century United States. The historiographical implications of these stabilizing factors

are, one might be permitted to say, that political historians have less to worry about than Winkle's main argument suggests.

Winkle was not the first scholar to discover the existence of persisting "core leaders," a term first applied to a historical community, Winkle notes, by Richard S. Alcorn's 1974 study of Paris, Illinois. But the present book necessarily brings the concept front-and-center in a way that promises (or threatens) to reenergize historians' interest in the precise contours of grass-roots democracy in the American past. That will probably not happen, since social historians have found the political aspects of nineteenth-century communities less fascinating than their fashionable "structural" concerns. But if by some chance it should happen, then perhaps the suggestion I made twenty years ago might prove relevant: under circumstances of rapid economic development local elites tend to fracture and fall to quarrelling, thus allowing for a much wider range of voter decision making than usual.

*Jessie Benton Frémont: A Biography*, by Pamela Herr. New York: Franklin Watts, 1987. xiii, 496 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY DAVID L. FERCH, MOUNT MERCY COLLEGE

Pamela Herr, former editor of *American West* magazine, has written an entertaining biography of one of the more heralded women of the nineteenth century, Jessie Benton Frémont (1824–1902). It is the story of a remarkable woman who, caught in the gender constraints of Victorian America, meshed her considerable talents and buoyant personality into a life-long commitment to foster, and later defend, the heroic public image of her husband, explorer-entrepreneur John Charles Frémont.

The favorite child of pugnacious Thomas Hart Benton, the Senate's influential spokesman for westward expansion, Jessie grew up during the boisterous Jacksonian years. Benton raised his daughter like a son — Herr regards this as the central fact of Jessie's childhood — and passed on to her his passionate, ambitious nature, quick temper, and egalitarian sensibility. Rebellious as a teen, Jessie was hostile to her mother's genteel Virginia world, preferring the more masculine worlds of political Washington and frontier St. Louis. Not surprisingly, she became infatuated with the handsome, but questionably heeled, backwoods surveyor, John Frémont. Their elopement in 1841 scandalized "proper" society, but was, Herr argues, "not only a passionate impulse but a political statement, the only kind a young woman could make" (60).

For the next twenty-five years, the Frémonts rode the crest of America's energetic history, becoming one of the most celebrated couples of

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