

many to this intellectual crisis was the making of myth, "imagining a frontier era in which people—middle-class, midwestern people—had once been the powerful progenitors of a new civilization" (122). This, the authors suggest, is the proper perspective in which to view Frederick Jackson Turner—the greatest of midwestern myth makers.

This is an excellent book of its kind. Since, in effect, it is an extended historiographical essay, the authors have not included a bibliography, but the endnotes are full and serve as a fine guide to the recent literature on the Midwest. Cayton and Onuf are most interested in reading cultural meaning into the history of the Old Northwest. Some of their interpretation is insightful, ingenious, and thought-provoking. On occasion, however, the analysis becomes a bit rarefied. More prosaic historians may well ask how one can adequately test a proposition such as the following: "In a very real sense, Turnerian assumptions about the flattening impact of the frontier notwithstanding, the citizens of the Old Northwest had transformed their environment far more than it had transformed them" (42). We may also wonder whether midwesterners, living in a world of personal objectives, problems, and community challenges, would have understood that they were "attempting to make sense of [a] transformation by reorganizing the complex processes through which individuals simultaneously define themselves as individuals and join with others to form coherent communities" (64).

In the epilogue Cayton and Onuf praise Turner for setting the terms of the debate over the meaning of the midwestern experience but note the deficiencies that scholars see in his work today. "We need our own story," they conclude. That we do. In the end, though, that story may show more of the old "truths" to be correct and relevant than Onuf and Cayton apparently deem possible.

*The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History*, by Carlos A. Schwantes. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989. xxi, 427 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$15.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY GERALD D. NASH, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

The history of many regions in the United States has been amply documented, but curious gaps remain. Excellent histories of New England are readily available. Distinguished historians have produced outstanding histories of the South, and a wide range of histories of the West awaits interested readers. But comprehensive histories of the Pacific Northwest have been very few, indeed. The only complete work was written more than three decades ago by Charles M. Gates

and Dorothy Johannsen. That volume ignored much of the twentieth century, however. Thus, the history of the Pacific Northwest remained somewhat obscure.

As William V. Thomas noted in 1980 in his book on American regionalism, there was a time not long ago when the Pacific Northwest might have qualified as one of the nation's best-kept secrets. Life there was an unpublicized pleasure that residents jealously guarded. But although its residents were loath to admit it, they were undergoing substantial changes. This volume by Carlos A. Schwantes of the University of Idaho should therefore be appreciated as one of the first efforts to provide a comprehensive, balanced account of the region in its historical context.

Schwantes views the Pacific Northwest as an American hinterland. As such, he believes, its history has been that of a colonial area, dependent on national and international markets for its economic health. Hence it has experienced greater vulnerability than other areas of the United States.

Within this framework, the author divides the region's history into five parts. In the first he emphasizes isolation and empire, and treats the colonial era. Maritime discoveries and the great period of the fur trade are prominent features of this section as well as the international rivalries engendered by the discoveries. In part two Schwantes describes the pioneer Northwest and the flow of American settlers there in the quarter-century after 1840. That migration changed the political and social character of the area. Part three covers the transition from frontier to urban industrial society, 1865-1900. A key factor during that period of expansion was the development of coastal ports as well as Henry Villard's transcontinental railroad. That brought considerable expansion of agriculture and the timber industry and stimulated the growth of cities. In part four Schwantes analyzes events during the first four decades of the twentieth century, focusing on political reforms and labor. In part five he courageously covers the past five decades, a challenge other historians of the region have avoided.

This is a compact and readable volume. The style is competent, the illustrations are well chosen, and the book has the breadth that other volumes about the region have lacked. It also contains a useful bibliography and a statistical portrait. Certainly this book at present is the most useful and concise history of the region and should find readers both inside and outside of college classrooms.

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.