

practice—beginning in the mid-1960s. Finally, although Daly-Bednarek makes Omaha a midwestern city in some respects, she does not develop the geographical context as fully as she might have. It would have been nice to occasionally learn how city leaders and planners tackled similar (perhaps related) problems across the Missouri in Council Bluffs, Iowa, or downriver in Kansas City.

Despite its weaknesses, *The Changing Image of the City* is a welcome addition to the literature on both cities and the Midwest. Much of the research about cities has focused on the nation's largest cities or those in the East. Omaha is neither. One cannot assume that small and medium-sized cities are like big cities scaled down, or that midwestern cities are like their eastern counterparts. Thus Daly-Bednarek's work is important not in spite of examining Omaha but because it does so.

Geographical Inquiry and American Historical Problems, by Carville Earle. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992. xii, 555 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, charts, graphs, notes, index. \$49.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JOHN C. HUDSON, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

There is no mistaking Carville Earle's intention that this collection of some of his earlier writings—fleshed out considerably with new and equally provocative essays—marks a turning point in the geographical interpretation of American history. He begins with a direct assault on disciplinary boundaries, casting aside the comfortable "historical geography" in favor of a more inclusive "geographical history," which encompasses the French *Annales* school as well as, apparently, the work of most historians. Earle describes the father of American historical geography, the late Andrew Clark, as "a geographical historian in spite of himself." In fact, Clark pursued what he called a "bi-disciplinary" approach to history and geography, rather similar to the program Earle advocates. Labels aside, Earle's own mastery of diverse bodies of literature makes it clear that disciplinary boundaries mean little in the age of social science history.

In these dozen independent but linked essays Earle demonstrates the original thinking that has been the hallmark of his work. Each case study is framed in historiographical context and, frequently, Earle propounds a new or revised answer to long-studied questions. Included are "Why Tobacco Stunted the Growth of Towns" (it was a high-value, low-bulk commodity sent to England

from many small port towns that had no other function); "The Myth of the Southern Soil Miner" (between 1840 and 1900, Earle believes, southern planters practiced a cotton/corn/cowpeas crop rotation); and "Why the Puritans Settled in New England" (they were dissenters and hence, under the British practice of monopoly colonization, were given lands poorer than those awarded to "Friends of the Crown" farther down the Atlantic coast). In another chapter, "Boston, Vanguard of the American Revolution," Earle notes that the city had only a poor agricultural hinterland, and the ocean trade upon which it depended was adversely affected by British colonial trade policy after 1763. Whether or not one agrees with the various lines of reasoning, every essay provokes thought.

Two major themes connect these case studies. First, Earle has long been a proponent of an expanded staple-theory approach to regional development. Differences between the wages paid to labor—slave-versus-free or country-versus-city—he reasons, can account for differences in social systems or in levels of urban-industrial growth between regions. In the Middle West, rural labor was seasonal and urban wages were good, a difference that led to labor migration from the Corn Belt to Chicago. In the plantation South, where rural labor was needed most of the year, the balance worked against migration to the cities and, hence, against urban growth. Earle attempts to extend this model to the antebellum Corn Belt, claiming that slavery was "headed north" because slave labor was cheaper than free labor at the time. Although he is correct in noting that moral revulsion against slavery was not particularly strong in the mid-nineteenth century Corn Belt, I believe he misconstrues racism as proslavery sentiment and thereby draws the wrong conclusion from his model.

A second theme that permeates the book is Earle's macrohistorical view of geography. Those who would synthesize history and geography need some overarching model to link time with space and vice versa. Geographers conventionally do this via "changing geographies," or snapshots over time, while historians see periods and trends. Earle transcends them both and instead brings back—surprisingly, to this reader, at least—the cycles and long-wave periods studied by some economists. In his concluding chapter, "The Periodic Structure of the American Past," Earle proposes that every 45–60 year period in American history (literally, the period of a logistic function oscillating between "good times" and "bad times") is divided into six phases: crisis, creativity, and conflict in the upswing; diffusion, dissent, and decline in the waning phase. As would be expected in such a bold proposal, the

model's periodicity is then shown to correspond to the timing of historical events. The whole approach is at least good fun, but the assumptions necessary to believe in his model of a stationary, oscillatory kind of history probably would have to come from outside the domain of science.

Mapping American Culture, edited by Wayne Franklin and Michael Steiner. American Land and Life Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992. vii, 310 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$32.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY KENT BLASER, WAYNE STATE COLLEGE

Mapping American Culture is a collection of essays originating from a 1990 American Studies conference on "Place in American Culture." The essays are loosely linked by a common interest in "cultural landscape," the role of space and place in American society, the ways in which environment conditions and shapes culture, and the role of geography in cultural studies. Even as collections of articles go, the capaciousness of these themes means that this is a more than usually diverse and eclectic work.

Insofar as there is a clear center to these essays, it is presented by Wisconsin geographer Yi-Fu Tuan in an introductory essay on the role of place in American culture and culture studies, and Americans' use of place as an antidote to space and the anomie and isolation of modern society. Several essays follow Tuan's "inner geography" approach rather directly. J. B. Jackson and D. W. Meinig also figure heavily as leaders of a reemergent emphasis on geography in cultural studies. Further in the background, the increasingly pale ghost of Frederick Jackson Turner is still a presence despite repeated exorcisms.

An excellent essay on Norwegian folklore in O. E. Rølvaag's *Giants in the Earth*, and on place in Henry David Thoreau's *Journal* and in William Carlos Williams's long poem, "Paterson," are traditional American Studies fare. Studies of the shopping mall as a descendant of the formal garden in western culture, a geographical analysis of the Manhattan Project, and a personal and journalistic description of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant lean more to the avant garde.

Several of the most effective pieces are located between the traditional and innovative extremes of the spectrum. One examines the way images of the South in African-American gospel music in New York City helped ease the shock of migration and urbanization

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