

lack of available land, troubles between the Indians and the white settlers, and the return of the drought.

A topic that merits further exploration is cultural adaptation to the environment. *Great Lakes Lumber* is based on the central difficulty that settlers faced on the Great Plains: adapting to an environment that lacked a specific natural resource upon which their society depended—wood. Throughout the history of the nation, settlers have had to adapt their culture to the environment. By expanding upon how the European-Americans and Sioux adapted to their environment, Vogel could link his study to the broader canon of cultural adaptation.

*Great Lakes Lumber on the Great Plains* addresses issues of regional and national interest, particularly the rise of vertical integration in business and the process of cultural adaptation to the environment. Vogel studies how an industry and an immigrant culture interacted to satisfy mutual needs. *Great Lakes Lumber* grants the reader fresh insights into how cultural traditions, economic opportunity, and the environment worked together to mutually benefit the entrepreneurs and immigrants on the Great Plains.

*A Prairie Populist: The Memoirs of Luna Kellie*, edited by Jane Taylor Nelsen. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992. xix, 188 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography. \$22.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY LINDA G. FORD, KEENE STATE COLLEGE

*A Prairie Populist: The Memoirs of Luna Kellie*, edited by Jane Taylor Nelsen, is a publication of great value because accounts of rural women's lives are relatively rare. Luna Kellie's memoirs provide insights into late nineteenth-century life on the midwestern frontier. Her life appears in the book in her own words, undiluted, in diary form. Her story is that of a farm woman, as worker and wife; she also recounts her experiences as a female leader in the Alliance movement.

The details of Kellie's life are fascinating. We read of her circumstances as a young wife in the 1870s and 1880s, of the midwestern farm's incredibly hard work, awful weather, and plagues of grasshoppers. We encounter the deaths of infants, omnipresent disease, and scarcity of food, and the joy Kellie found through family relationships. We are presented with some wonderful details: one day she meets a group of Custer's soldiers; on another, during a blizzard, she and her husband share their sod house with their cattle. Briefly, we are also introduced to Kellie's work with the Alliance

farm protest movement, which she came to after years of grueling work bringing insufficient rewards. The book contains her speech, "Stand Up for Nebraska," and a short summary of her reluctant decision, although a "decent woman" (110), to go into farm politics. The afterword gives a general biographical sketch of Kellie and her family, and describes the historical context and significance of the Alliance movement.

The substitution of an explanatory afterword for a foreword is one of the major problems with this book. Even an informed reader needs biographical material and the historical context to make sense of the diary. For example, in the opening pages the diary refers to "my father" and then immediately "your father." It is difficult to decipher to whom the diary is addressed, a point that is never cleared up. Also early on, I was bewildered as to why Mrs. Kellie was moving to her father's household without her husband. (Finally, I looked at the afterword.)

If this is truly an edited journal, there is not enough sign of it; the book sorely needs explanatory notes throughout. On page 5 Kellie takes medicine for her heart. Does she have a serious heart condition? On page 9, J. T. (her husband or her father, it's not quite clear) had "erysipilas"—what *is* that? It also would have been easier to follow with subheads (there are two and then they are dropped) or at least some division between anecdotes. Finally, the book is entitled "prairie populist," but although there is plenty on the "prairie," there is virtually nothing on the "populist." The afterword states that Kellie's account illustrates women's role in the Alliance/Populist movement, but it provides very few pages on her political activities, and her "Nebraska" speech appears without explanation.

The book would have been much more powerful with clear, explanatory editing and a more accurate title. However, Kellie's worklife and experience as a midwestern farm wife are wonderfully descriptive and poignant. Her humorous anecdotes, for example, were received with great appreciation by my women's history class. Hopefully, more edited journals of other midwestern farm women, including women of Iowa, will follow Kellie's, to provide us with comparative life stories.

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