

Book Reviews and Notices

A Dictionary of Iowa Place-Names, by Tom Savage. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007. xxiv, 349 pp. Notes, sources, index. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Sarah S. Uthoff is a reference librarian at Kirkwood Community College.

In his *Dictionary of Iowa Place-Names*, Tom Savage shows how much of Iowa's history is revealed on a map. There are waves of town incorporation. A single man, railroader John Blair, left his mark by naming a large number of towns. Early mail delivery was problematic because many towns changed names to be distinct. Some Iowans didn't want a town named after them and suggested friends, hometowns, or even first names of children as alternatives. Others openly sought the honor. The impact of the war with Mexico is evident in the number of names from people and events in that war.

The book's format follows that of the earlier *From Ackley to Zwingle*, by Harold Dilts et al. (1975), but Savage greatly expands on that previous work. Dilts cited 127 sources; Savage cites 598. Many libraries were consulted, but the work cries out for more primary research. It's more of a starting place than a definitive reference. The main section of both works is a listing of towns in alphabetical order with information about each name. Entries may discuss previous names for a town and why it changed and any interesting stories or legends associated with the name. However, what is included is uneven, and several interesting stories that I'm aware of are not included. When several possible stories exist, Savage seldom attempts to judge between them. Unlike Dilts's previous work, Savage's includes county names, what happened to former counties, lists of former towns, and changed names. This book belongs in every Iowa history collection.

Native American Placenames of the United States, by William Bright. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. xviii, 600 pp. References. \$29.95 paper.

Reviewer W. Raymond Wood is professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. His most recent book is *Prologue to Lewis and Clark: The Mackay and Eoans Expedition* (2003).

If you are curious about the origin of that odd-sounding name for a local town or landmark, this is the place to start, particularly since

Virgil J. Vogel's *Iowa Placenames of Indian Origin* (1983) is now out of print. The chances are good that the name is based on a Native American name or term. Iowa—and indeed every state—is replete with such place names. Here at long last is a comprehensive, up-to-date, scholarly inventory of such names for each of the 50 states. Iowa is of course a prominent contributor to that inventory, for the Indian tribes that lived here provided a long register of place names, beginning with the state's namesake. The Sauk and Meskwaki are of course represented in those names, specifically by Keokuk, Keosauqua, Keota, and Tama, but greater numbers are based on sources from outside the state. The Algonquin Mascouten and Potawatomi are represented in county names, but there are numerous and unlikely entries that include such alien ones as Camanche, Chillicothe, Dakota City, Hiawatha, Mineola, Mingo, Nodaway, Okoboji, Rock River, Shenandoah, Titonka, and Wahpeton, to name only a few. Many of these are based on words in eastern languages, but some are based, for example, on Dakota Sioux terms. The entries are alphabetized in one unit, for any breakdown by state would have been impossible. This scholarly book is eminently usable by anyone seeking to understand the cultural setting of a geographic place name. You will find the book an education in itself.

An Honest Calling: The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln, by Mark E. Steiner. DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 2006. x, 272 pp. Tables, notes, bibliography, indexes. \$42.00 cloth.

Lincoln the Lawyer, by Brian Dirck. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007. xiv, 228 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Kenneth Winkle is the Thomas C. Sorensen Professor of American History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is the author of *Young Eagle: The Rise of Abraham Lincoln* (2001).

Abraham Lincoln practiced law for a quarter-century and considered it his primary profession, yet we know relatively little about his legal career and its impact on his political views and his presidency. Most biographers have slighted or even ignored this dimension of Lincoln's life simply because they lacked sufficient documentation of the thousands of legal actions that involved him in some way. Previous studies typically highlighted a few memorable but unrepresentative cases, including the famous "almanac trial," the wreck of the steamboat *Effie Afton*, the Manny Reaper patent case, the notorious Matson slave case, and Lincoln's litigation for the Illinois Central Railroad. The result was a fragmentary and skewed portrait of Lincoln the lawyer that often