truly reimagine the Great Plains as something entirely new. But collectively, *The Greater Plains* shines. In organizing this compilation, Frehner and Brosnan demonstrate that the Great*er* Plains are complex and nuanced, where stories of adaptation and resilience are the norm. Such a collection is not only critical to our understanding of the history of the region. But more significantly, *The Greater Plains* compels readers to think about the past with an eye on an uncertain and concerning future—one where resilience and adaptation are necessary.

A Big History of North America: From Montezuma to Monroe, by Kevin Jon Fernlund. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2022. 376 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. $95.00 hardcover, $30.00 paperback, $30.00 digital download.

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Kevin Jon Fernlund's *A Big History of North America: From Montezuma to Monroe* attempts to bridge historiographic divisions between English-speaking and Spanish-speaking North America. Using methods from the discipline of Big History, Fernlund provides a model for uniting the colonial and early national histories of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. He does so by studying the differences in the development of specific human groups on the continent. Rather than concentrating on the historical categories of race, class, and gender, Fernlund analyzes North Americans through the lens of "social development." He contends that "differences in development are the principal drivers of modern history (9)." To measure social development over such a broad space and time (1521–1827 North America), Fernlund borrows methodologies from the United Nations' Human Development Index. Through data such as mortality rates, gross domestic product, and literacy rates, he draws conclusions about various North American societies' social development. With his indexed data, Fernlund then analyzes and categorizes North American societies' social power, or ability to assert themselves when interacting with other societies. These complimentary data allow Fernlund to argue that the massive social power of the United States was due in large part to its relationship with its North American neighbors, Canada and Mexico. *A Big History of North America* offers an interesting amalgamation of theory and analysis that provides the reader with a perspective on North America as a coherent whole.

A Big History of North America is broken into three parts, bookended with a prologue and epilogue. The prologue extends for two chapters and digs deep into Fernlund's Big History methodology. Part I explores the significance of European exploration and Enlightenment thought in North America. Part II analyzes the social development of Hispanic North America, while Part III shifts to the social development of Anglo-America. Finally, the epilogue connects the rise of North America's historical social power to current events in the twenty-first century. The author provides an overview of New Spain's early meteoric rise in social development and then offers his key conclusions as to how the United States overtook Mexico in social development in the nineteenth century. For Fernlund, most of the answer revolves around the differences between Catholic and Protestant societies. Early in development, the Catholic Church in the Spanish Empire helped protect and mobilize Indigenous labor in North America, which contributed to efficient natural resource exploitation and high GDP. However, over time, the Catholic Church stymied literacy and innovation. Essentially, he argues, the opposite was true for Protestant Anglo-America. Individualist Anglo Protestant colonists engaged in destructive wars with Indigenous people, which increased mortality and lowered GDP. However, the long-term destruction and expulsion of Indigenous people opened land for freeholding Anglo-Americans to create economically productive farms. It also produced a martial and confrontational Anglo-American culture, contributing to its social power. A hinge point in the different trajectories for Hispano- and Anglo-America was the transformative era of the Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon severed many of the deep ties between New Spain and Old Spain, opening the pathway for Mexican independence. Spain's tenacious attempts to hold onto Mexico followed by efforts to reconquer Mexico devastated Mexico's wealth and health (GDP and mortality). Conversely, the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, and thus the War of 1812, set the United States and England on a pathway of amicable relations. Rather than preparing for an attempt at reconquest, the English supported economic growth in Canada and the United States.

Iowa teachers and researchers may find *A Big History of North America* useful. The book does an admirable job of building an interconnected narrative of the entire continent. Teachers can use the book to build a holistic curriculum that incorporates all of North America rather than just nationalist histories. The book also has a large and thorough bibliography. Researchers in any subregion of North America will be sure to find further reading and insights into various historiographies. Furthermore, Fernlund's centering of the importance of a freeholding

society may inspire deeper research into the success and contestations over freehold agriculture in Iowa.

A Big History of North America does contain a few flaws. The organization of the book may discourage some readers. The two-chapter prologue essentially pushes readers through a divided 50-page introduction. Further, since the arguments for social development rely on significant amounts of data on GDP, literacy, and mortality, the narrative often gets lost in paragraphs of data. Converting that data into easy to digest visualizations would have gone a long way in streamlining the analysis. With that said, *A Big History of North America* provides an important contribution to encourage historians to think bigger and consider North America as a singular whole.

Dawn's Light Woman & Nicolas Franchomme: Marriage and Law in the Illinois Country, by Carl J. Ekberg and Sharon K. Person. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2022. xi, 243 pp. Illustrations, maps, diagrams, notes, index. $27.50 softcover.

> Reviewer Patrick J. Jung is a professor of history and cultural anthropology at the Milwaukee School of Engineering in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is the author of several books and articles, most recently, "American Indian Resistance to Settler Colonialism in the Western Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi Valley, 1814–1832" (*Annals of Iowa*, 2022).

In this sleek volume, readers will find much that is new and useful, and Carl J. Ekberg and Sharon K. Person demonstrate why they remain the doyens of the Illinois Country and its history. The authors provide an excellent summary of the early history of the Illinois Country in the opening chapters. The remaining text is largely devoted to a legal case concerning an inheritance that engulfed the lives of several Native and French residents in the village of Kaskaskia in 1723. Through this case, the complexities and intricacies of the development of the legal culture of the Illinois Country emerge. The inventories of household goods produced by the legal magistrates illustrate the changing nature of the region during the early eighteenth century, when the cultivation of wheat slowly replaced the fur trade. As the agricultural economy blossomed, African slaves subsequently took on greater importance (and larger numbers) than the Native persons held as chattel. The published and annotated 1726 census of the Illinois Country toward the end of the book provides a rich illustration of these trends.

The principal focus of the book is Marguerite 8assecam8c8e (Dawn's Light Woman), an Illinois Native woman who married three French husbands in succession. Jacques Bourdon, her first husband, had