

Avery's book is well written, although her meticulous dissection of personal correspondence and narrow focus on David's personal travails in the last half of the book may become tedious for general readers. Likewise, her analysis of David's poetry occasionally suggests more insight into his motivation than seems apparent to this reader. Ironically, David's story is overshadowed early in the book by Avery's compelling portrait of Emma Smith as family counsel and formidable opponent to Brigham Young. Young's often acerbic attacks on Emma's character and purpose—particularly with regard to disputes over polygamy and David's prophetic destiny in the Mormon movement—reveal the influence of a woman taken very seriously by her rivals. While Young struggled to promote the Saints' gathering in Utah, Emma's firm guidance and enormous personal will shaped the spiritual development of her sons and prevented the Utah branch from ignoring the Mormon Prophet's midwestern legacy.

Avery's sympathetic examination of a life undone by mental illness also serves as an essential guide to the personal struggles that gave rise to competing regional visions of Mormon purpose.

The History of Wisconsin, Volume 4, The Progressive Era, 1893–1914, by John D. Buenker. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1998. xviii, 734 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendix, index. \$40.00 cloth.

REVIEW BY DAVID B. DANBOM, NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

This is the fourth volume in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's ambitious project to recount the history of the state in six comprehensive treatments by accomplished historians. No aspect of this important state is more significant than its progressive reform movement, which established Wisconsin as a national political model and made Robert LaFollette one of the most important figures of his generation. John Buenker, a scholar of progressive reform with a distinguished scholarly career, is well qualified to tell this story.

Buenker devotes the first half of the book to an exhaustive examination of the factors that stimulated the rise of reform in Wisconsin. He details economic developments in agriculture, lumbering, commerce, transportation, and industry, the changing nature of work, the emergence of an industrial working class, the rise of cities, and the influx of immigrants, all of which created economic and social stresses and strains that cried out for alleviation. This is mostly old-style history, with gender considered only briefly and as an afterthought, though there is excellent treatment of Wisconsin's Indians.

Buenker follows recent trends by deemphasizing LaFollette's role as the founding father of Wisconsin progressivism, and he notes that already by the 1890s some Wisconsinites were clamoring for controls on big business, an end to the corruption of government by capital, and a more equitable system of taxation. Finally, on page 431, we have "The Advent of LaFollette" and the beginning of a period of remarkable reform activities in a number of areas, including regulation of private enterprise by the state, social justice for the poor and the working class, democratization of politics, and the use of experts in the making of public policy. The collapse of this movement came in 1914, which Buenker attributes to progressive factionalism and growing public distaste for high taxes and rule by experts. Buenker is especially strong at unraveling the factional intricacies in the politics of a state where party labels meant relatively little.

Buenker covers all of this competently enough, and while his conclusions are not particularly imaginative, they are certainly reasonable. Still, I found this a generally unsatisfactory treatment, for several reasons. The main problem with this book, and one that will disturb Iowa readers, is that it is an intensely narrow study. Buenker tends to view Wisconsin as if developments there occurred in a vacuum. He seldom cites non-Wisconsin sources, making it difficult for readers to gain a perspective on the state or to put it in a context. For example, in a book on a midwestern state he cites William Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis* only once, to no clear purpose, and he totally ignores John Hudson's *Making of the Cornbelt*.

Buenker compensates for his lack of breadth with depth, but too often that assumes the character of mind-numbing tedium. Do we really need to know who the industrial employers in Janesville were, or where Wisconsin's Bulgarians lived? And is it necessary to list every platform plank of every party and every issue addressed by every legislature? The authors in this series seem compelled to produce more than 600 pages per volume. Someone should tell them that often less is more.

The tedium of this treatment is exacerbated by Buenker's failure to humanize his story. He never uses a person to make a point when a statistic is available. Even Robert LaFollette, one of the most fascinating figures in American political history, is treated flatly and coldly. If you can't have fun with politicians, you're in for a long haul. Part of the problem is with Buenker's prose, which is pedestrian at best, and which sometimes produces curious images, as on page 359 where he has "streams" becoming a "tide."

Buenker also demonstrates an annoying proclivity for laboriously proving the obvious. Of course Wisconsin's farmers were discontented; whose weren't? And what is the value of taking four pages to show that new immigrants were concentrated in working-class occupations? Readers will also be stunned to learn that poor Wisconsinites had fewer resources than rich ones. And isn't it helpful to be told, as we are on page 527, that 1866 came "just after the Civil War?"

It is not that Buenker is overly simple. Some of his passages are absolutely opaque. Consider this one, on page 314, "Those in power strove to restructure most aspects of life into large-scale, complex, impersonal systems made up of discrete, hierarchically arranged components." Turn out the light, Martha, it's time for bed.

Wisconsinites might find this book valuable, though they will have to be determined to endure some rough sledding. I doubt that many readers of the *Annals of Iowa* will find it either edifying or enjoyable.

The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America, by Andrea Tone. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997. xii, 264 pp. Illustrations, charts, tables, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JOHN WILLIAMS-SEARLE, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Some historians have argued that the ubiquity of welfare capitalism in the United States has decontextualized it as a historical phenomenon. Andrea Tone's refreshing new volume deftly combines business, labor, cultural, and gender history to resituate welfare capitalism in its contingent historical setting. She rejects the work of labor historians as overly simple; they have, she insists, been too quick to conclude that welfare work was just another corporate strategy to undermine unionization—a "padded glove over an iron fist" (3). Tone argues that corporations championed welfare work during the Progressive Era with a different, although complementary, goal in mind. These companies—National Cash Register, H. J. Heinz, and International Harvester, to name a few—feared losing authority not just to labor unions, but to the developing welfare state. To retain their power over the workplace, corporations used welfare capitalism to develop an antistatist public culture. In her sobering epilogue, Tone concludes that the antistatist intentions of welfare capitalism are with us still, limiting the broader reform potential of the federal state by making welfare capitalism seem the "natural" way to address social problems.

As muckrakers and the National Child Labor Committee exposed corporate abuses and demanded government regulation, com-

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