

The Federal Landscape: An Economic History of the Twentieth-Century West, by Gerald D. Nash. The Modern American West Series. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999. xv, 214 pp. Map, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

Reviewer Tom Dorich received his Ph.D. in American history in 1996 from Arizona State University. He is researching and writing a book-length study on the impact of big business on twentieth-century American society.

Gerald Nash's last contribution to the history of the American West is a succinct and highly readable survey arguing the significance of the role of the federal government in western regional development. He accomplished his intention by writing an economic and policy history using a timeline chapter format and with topical content. There are seven chapters covering the "colonial landscape," the Great Depression, World War II, reconversion, the military industrial complex, the Sun Belt phenomenon, and recent deindustrialization.

Nash neatly fits his analysis within the original theme of the West as a national colony then pacesetter, placing western development into a theoretical context developed by economists Nicolae Kondratieff and Joseph Schumpeter. Kondratieff belonged to a school of economists who looked at history in the context of long wave cycles. During the 1920s Kondratieff suggested that capitalism was cyclical in development, experiencing growth in 40–50 year swings and then a crisis of adjustment. Each wave was developed and fueled by entrepreneurial adaptation of technological innovation. Joseph Schumpeter refined Kondratieff's theories, adding the importance of technology as a cycle-forming catalyst. Nash's succinct contextual analysis of the West's development within these paradigms makes this book valuable for graduate history students. For those already in the profession, Nash's analysis should trigger several points of discussion and provide some revised ideas for teaching about the American West.

Throughout the book, Nash drives home the point that the region is the child of the federal government. For much of the West's history, government spending and developmental policy making prompted, fostered, and sustained its growth. The government was the region's leading entrepreneur, and the private sector followed.

Nash develops and sustains his argument by surveying government spending on defense and infrastructure (reclamation and roads, for example). He is especially effective in quashing the myth that the region was the cradle of entrepreneurial individualism. Without the cornucopia of federal programs, projects, and purchasing, Nash contends, western regional development would have been stunted, and its pacesetting accomplishments would not have been attained.

This book covers a lot of time and territory in 161 pages of text. Each chapter is written in almost almanac style. Some topics receive pages, others just paragraphs of explanation. Readers may consider each chapter as an abstract or research design for expanded efforts. Doctoral students should take note. There is work to be done on these topics within the three paradigms.

Nash's final effort should be read by all history majors. The book is easy enough to read to introduce regional economic history to undergraduates. It is a must read for students of the American West because Nash expands his earlier interpretations into economic and policy history. The volume contains endnotes and an informative bibliographic essay. It lacks more maps and data tables.

Our State Fair: Iowa's Blue Ribbon Story, by Mary Kay Shanley. Des Moines: Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation; Ames: Sigler Publishing, 2000. 272 pp. Illustrations. \$35.00 cloth.

The Missouri State Fair: Images of a Midwestern Tradition, by Richard Gaskell. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000. 114 pp. Illustrations. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewer Chris Rasmussen is assistant professor of history Fairleigh Dickinson University. He is completing a book manuscript on the Iowa State Fair.

Fairgrounds teem with such an overabundance of exhibits and activities that each visitor inevitably focuses on some aspects of the fair and skims over or overlooks others. These recent books on the state fairs of Missouri and Iowa both attest to the abiding popularity of fairs, but offer very different visions of these annual exhibitions. Richard Gaskell's fair is a timeless rural tradition captured in stolid black-and-white photographs, while Mary Kay Shanley's mingles tradition, innovation, and festivity in a riot of color. Gaskell's fair retains its popularity by hewing to its original purpose and resisting the vast changes that have remade American culture over the past century, while Shanley's fair endures by stirring new events into its time-tested recipe of agricultural exhibits, good clean fun, and sociability.

Photographer Richard Gaskell's black-and-white images of the Missouri State Fair evoke a rural America seemingly bypassed by interstates and the Internet, but by no means gone. The fair, he writes in the introduction to this collection of photographs taken in the 1980s and 1990s, evokes potent feelings of nostalgia, reviving fond childhood recollections and even binding us to past generations of fairgoers. The fair remains one of the few places where "the reality of virtue," rather

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.