

the lack of emphasis upon such matters may reflect the character of the sources; the more numerous small ranchers left fewer traces. The result, however, is an apparent bias toward the outlook of the large feeder or operator. As the author notes, the Kansas Livestock Association was dominated by such figures. That fact may explain in part the Association's opposition to direct sales and community sales barns when trucks began to provide alternatives to railroads and central markets. Notwithstanding these caveats, *The Kansas Beef Industry* establishes a standard and model for similar studies to follow.

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The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States, edited for the American Historical Association by Michael Kammen. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980. pp. 524. Index. \$19.95.

Our age is an age of history. Never before has the study of the past meant so much to so many. Every man and every woman, along with their children in school, sense that yesterday was different than today. Thus the only way to comprehend the fullness of our experience is to have a rendezvous with history. Genealogy and the quest for roots; local historical societies and museums; television series and popular magazines, antiques, and nostalgia; historic preservation; and a back-to-basics mood—these are all aspects of the past before us.

This series of essays sponsored by the American Historical Association does not take much note of this surge of popular interest in history. Instead, it turns to another aspect of our age of history, the vast enterprise of professional historians who write history according to scholarly canons. These are the members of the American Historical Association and this book is largely for them.

Superbly introduced and edited by Michael Kammen, *The Past Before Us* collects twenty essays on various periods, areas, and approaches to history. It is not comprehensive, nor is it systematic, but it does illustrate the present state of the profession. The situation, in a nutshell, is the partial triumph of social history. It has captured the contemporary historical imagination, but it has yet to produce a large synthesis of the past useful to society at large.

The editor's introduction to the volume is probably the best brief treatment of the status of the historical profession today. The rest of the essays are grouped into three parts: "Units of Time and Areas of Study," "Expanding Fields of Inquiry," and "Modes of Gathering and Assessing Historical Materials." The first surveys recent work by American historians on European, African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American history. The second takes a topical approach, looking at various specialties: social, political, labor, local, black, women's, family, and cultural history. Some of these essays, like the ones on social history and the historiography of international relations, consider topics beyond American history. Others focus more closely on the American experience itself.

The essays in the third division of the book cover oral history, psychohistory, quantitative methods, comparative history, and the teaching of history. The last essay differs from the rest in that it does not reflect recent ferment in the profession. The author laments that professional historians have shown little interest in the teaching of history. To meet the needs of history teachers, Hazel Hertzberg concludes, will "require profound changes in the structure and direction of the profession" (p. 504).

Thus, although *The Past Before Us* serves as an excellent introduction to the excitement swirling around in the world of the professional historian, it ends on a rather sober note. The vast professional enterprise seems divorced from history in the schools and perhaps from the more general needs of society as well. With that possibility in mind, the book takes on a prophetic voice. In describing the present state of the profession, it also sets an agenda for the future.

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The Blacks in Oklahoma, by Jimmie Lewis Franklin. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980. pp. vi, 79. Photographs, bibliographic essay. \$2.95.

This volume is part of a unique series in Oklahoma history. In the late 1970s a group of scholars came together and planned the "Oklahoma Images" project. Included in the project is a series of publications collectively titled "Newcomers to a New Land." In these publi-

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