

ists and revisionists, old and new western scholars. Jacobs skillfully chronicles and evaluates these interpretive debates during the past century.

Jacobs explains Turner's early life in his native Wisconsin, his education, teaching career, publications, and the development of his viewpoints. Turner was a student of geography, biology, geology, and social Darwinism, as well as history, and he promoted comparative studies to comprehend the evolution of America's institutions. Turner's emphasis on agricultural history, treated in chapter six, is especially pertinent to Iowa. In his mature years, when the frontier which had served as a safety valve was gone, Turner became concerned about the population explosion, international conflicts, racism, and the class struggle.

As a scholar, Turner was devoted to accuracy and insight into the significance of his research. He also had shortcomings. His perspective was narrowly Anglo-Saxon, and he was a true believer in material progress. He glorified expansion and its concomitants: exploitation, violence, and greed. He ignored Indians, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and women. He misunderstood the theory of "multiple hypotheses," confusing it with "multiple causation." Even so, Turner offered an illumination of the American experience that was satisfying to many people. His frontier thesis could not be ignored.

Jacobs probes the conflicts that evolved after Turner's death: Frederick Merk versus Ray Allen Billington, Richard White versus the Turnerians, and current detractors (White, Patricia Limerick, Donald Worster, and William Cronon) versus defenders (Martin Ridge, Allan Bogue, Howard Lamar, and Jacobs himself). After deftly leading the reader through this maze, Jacobs declares that "the inescapable conclusion persists that after one hundred years Turner remains the most influential of American historians, among the brightest and the best we have produced" (247). Professional historians will find this volume most worthwhile, and discriminating general readers will be profoundly rewarded.

*John Sutter and a Wider West*, edited by Kenneth N. Owens. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994. x, 138 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$22.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY J. THOMAS MURPHY, WACO, TEXAS

Arriving in California in 1839, John A. Sutter aspired to become "one of the wealthiest Citizens on the Pacific." But the discovery of gold, he lamented forty years later, "destroyed all my enterprises and plans

and bad designing men, swindlers and thieves, and even the courts treated me very badly & unjust" (124–25). Frustrated that fate had struck a cruel blow, Sutter pressed the federal government for compensation and recognition. In his view, he had civilized the Sacramento region by subjugating its Indians, aiding overland immigrants, and creating an economic foundation based on agriculture. But Sutter's unbridled ambition, shameless fabrication of his past, and alcoholic binges raised doubts about his character. "A heroic figure he was not," Josiah Royce wrote in 1886. "He remained to the end a figure more picturesque than manly in our California life" (122).

Biographers have struggled to explain Sutter's contribution, yet he continues to be a central figure in California and western history. To celebrate his significance, California State University, Sacramento, sponsored a series of public lectures in 1990. Those lectures by five preeminent historians of the American West, published along with Sutter's recollections written in 1856 for his legal adviser, offer a re-evaluation of his life and career.

With the printing of Sutter's personal narrative, editor Kenneth Owens makes available a document that originally appeared in 1876 in *The Argonaut* of San Francisco, then received limited publication as *The Diary of Johann August Sutter* in 1932. Sutter describes his California experience, but, more importantly, he demonstrates an ability to re-create himself as a mythic persona. To do so, Owens suggests, brought "the honor of being California's foremost living historical relic" (3).

The Sutter lectures successfully look beyond Sutter's self-promotion and discuss his complexity as a person, his methods of empire building, and his role in western history. For Howard R. Lamar, Sutter was neither a unique nor a tragic figure, but a "representative of an evolutionary political and economic process" taking place throughout the West (28). Like other entrepreneurs, such as George Bent, he created an attractive economic environment that encouraged settlement and caused his personal empire to decline. Sutter was essential to this process, Lamar notes, "but destined to fail" (43). It is Sutter's failures that interest Patricia Nelson Limerick. Without them, she argues, he becomes a "one-dimensional bore" (112) whose story reduces western history to a parable about Manifest Destiny and progress. Richard White considers Sutter's idea of progress by examining his ecological impact on the Sacramento River valley. Viewing the area as an isolated wilderness, Sutter felt justified in transforming it. He also saw the region's Native American population as part of the natural wildness and, as Alfred L. Hurtado explains, available for exploitation in his private army, shops, and fields. Focusing on Sutter's private life and character, Iris H. W. Engstrand details his lack of compassion and

tendency to blame others for his mistakes. Remarkably well integrated, these essays reinvigorate the debate over Sutter and offer a new perspective on how society should assess its historical figures.

*When Indians Became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West*, by Peter Iverson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994. xxi, 266 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY CRAIG MINER, WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

This book is, at base, a study of adaptation of cultures to change—change that was at first relatively slow and then increasingly, impossibly rapid. The cowboy and the Indian, well-worn stereotypes, symbolize the gulf of cultural differences, while Indian cowboys are at once admirable and, in a way, a humiliation. Livestock itself—the cattle and the horses that are at the core of stockraising cowboy culture—were not part of Native American culture until the seventeenth century. It is a tribute to tribal adaptability that so much of this intrusion became so well integrated that it was thought of as Indian “traditional,” but none of it had the force of thousands of years.

Iverson has collected a series of essays on the theme of Indian cattle ranching. As such, it is hardly a continuous history, and it is very broad in geographical and chronological coverage. Scholars will appreciate the coverage of the New Deal and the twentieth century into the 1960s, as well as the little-known stories of ranching on the northern Plains and Indian rodeo riders.

But there are compromises in this approach. The native cattle industry in Indian Territory and Oklahoma gets, considering the documentation on it, brief coverage. The sources are mostly published ones, often scholarly books and articles, rather than primary material from the National Archives, court cases, government documents, and the popular magazines, which might have enhanced the book from different directions. Iverson covers the legalities of leasing and ranching, but he is unable to portray fully the complexities of either Indian or white motivations in what was a significant policy debate in the nineteenth century. It was really a question of defining “civilization,” and cattle raising was a key to acculturation even before the Dawes Act. One native reaction is typified by the tribe that went on a hunt and shot for meat the cattle and oxen given to it under a treaty, while, on the other extreme, there were sophisticated business people among tribal leaders who were well prepared

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