

Thus, while Luchetti offers an introduction to some of the themes in the culinary history of the West, she had both the evidence and the supporting scholarly research to do more. Foodways and culinary history have become serious fields of research, yet Luchetti tends to sweep through topics without the benefit of the secondary literature (much of which she includes in the bibliography but not in the listings of sources for each chapter). Both food histories and more general social histories of the West and the frontier could have offered a clearer focus for her discussions, highlighted the variations and comparisons across time and space, and supported the fine collection of photographs, memoirs, and recipes that she presents.

*North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*, by Terry G. Jordan. *Histories of the American Frontier*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993. xi, 439 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, charts, notes, annotated bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY JAMES W. WHITAKER, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

In this monumental interdisciplinary study, geographer Terry Jordan continues earlier revisionist work on the cattle-ranching frontier, which, for many, was the quintessential American frontier development. As a cultural geographer, Jordan searches for additional evidence—such as material culture artifacts and language usage—beyond the written and archival sources of historians. His work stresses the myriad elements that involve diffusion, dilution, adaptation, and persistence of cultural traits as people, plants, and animals interact with their environment through time and space. He concludes from this complex array of evidence that the traditional view of the roots of the American Great Plains frontier cattle-ranching business is oversimplified.

The book is very readable in developing the argument and illustrating the complexity of cultural traits and their movements. He begins with the basics of cattle raising in terms of animal husbandry, culture, ecology, economics, and language. In the next three chapters he examines the three root regions of cattle raising on the eastern edge of the Atlantic Ocean (in order of importance: Spain, the British Isles, and sub-Saharan west Africa), and describes how the activity was transferred and adapted as people moved first to the West Indies and then to the North American diffusion points: Carolina, Florida, and Mexico. In each move, some traits persisted, some were modified, and some were abandoned, but they can be clearly traced.

Chapters five through seven examine ranching in northern Mexico and its diffusion of "Hispanic influence" of "Iberian bloodlines [long-horns] in the cattle population" (184). Ultimately, Mexican equestrian skills and Iberian bovine bloodlines met cowpen culture in southwest Louisiana. The Carolina culture triumphed in creating the Anglo-Texas horseback ranching system in the late eighteenth century as herders adapted by decreasing their reliance on hog fattening and herding on foot and dramatically increasing their use of horses and roping, which were not part of either the West Indies or the Carolina experience. Jordan makes a distinction between southern and northeastern Texas, and sees little impact of the more Mexican-influenced south Texas culture on Great Plains ranching developments. The Louisiana mixture is the base of the Texas ranching culture—cattle fending for themselves on free range—which quickly spread north after the Civil War and collapsed by 1886.

After a brief look at the California ranching frontier, Jordan returns in chapter nine to his revisionist view of how midwestern cattle-raising culture—a diffusion from the Carolina base—was the more lasting ingredient in Great Plains development. As the Carolina diffusion carried into the southern uplands, onto the bluegrass country, crossed the Ohio and then the Mississippi into Arkansas and touched Iowa by the 1850s, herding and fattening cattle separated into two enterprises, with droving as the key linkage. The free range elements of this Carolina diffusion entered northeast Texas without reference to contemporary Hispanic diffusions. Its attempt to spread to the Great Plains, however, lost out by 1886 to the midwestern type of cattle ranching—controlled range and supplemental feeding—that had come from the Carolina base through the Iowa wet prairies on to the Great Plains.

In chapter ten Jordan summarizes his conclusions that this was a very complex process and that Turnerian theories of historical development or Von Thunenian theories of geographical development or Webbian theories of environmental determinism "do not work consistently when applied to North American settlement frontiers" or obscure more than they illuminate (308). Many ranching traits seen in North America "derived from the Old World Atlantic fringe, by the surpassing importance of diffusion. . . . Frontier inventiveness remained rather minimal" (312).

Even though much has been written about cattle ranching by others, Jordan has new and relevant things to say about it, and his 75 pages of notes and 37-page annotated bibliography are essential reading for anyone interested in the subject of ranching and the American frontier. There is also a message here about the wider context of cultural diffu-

sion and persistence that careful readers can discern as applicable to a better understanding of the complexity and diversity of American history and culture.

*Ormanville: Life on the Iowa Frontier, 1850–1900*, by Silvano A. Wueschner. Ottumwa: St. Andrew's Publishing, 1993. xi, 204 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$22.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY KAY J. CARR, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY AT CARBONDALE

*Ormanville: Life on the Iowa Frontier* is a classic story of the rise and fall of an American community. Founded in the mid-nineteenth century by "Old German Protestants" from Pennsylvania (by way of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Indiana), Ormanville boomed for twenty-five years, then slowly languished and, finally, fell into obscurity. By 1900 the town had disappeared from the maps of Wapello County, even though descendants of its original families continued to live in the area. Silvano A. Wueschner attributes the town's relatively short life span to its inhabitants' inability to make the transition from a "community steeped in subsistence agriculture" to one that was surrounded by a "nascent market oriented society" (x). This book's story is not, however, a tragedy. Rather, it is a celebration of the Iowa pioneers' "commitment, thrift, and accomplished agricultural skill" (49) in the early years of the state's settlement.

The strength of Wueschner's account is in its application of social history methods to a study of rural Iowa. The author uses state and county records, United States censuses, local newspapers, and early Wapello County histories from the late nineteenth century to recreate—in considerable detail—the flavor and rhythm of the lives of the town's settlers. Over the past twenty-five years, American historians have mined such local records in order to illustrate the social dynamics within individual communities. Beginning with colonial New England towns during the 1970s, historians have slowly made their way westward and have begun to examine the social processes within the more typically American rural neighborhoods of the country. Wueschner successfully illustrates and explains the traditional rules and modern regulations that governed the important interactions in rural Ormanville: land settlement and transfers, farm establishment and building, school construction and curricula, grist and saw mill operations, road construction, inheritance procedures, mercantile activity, and medical practices.

The author contends that Ormanville—which was never officially incorporated as a town—failed to survive into the twentieth century because its original German Protestant founders could no longer re-

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