

tions of colonization, economic exploitation, economic collapse, and painful rebirth. Leonard J. Arrington and Don C. Reading describe the impact of the New Deal on the Northern Tier states as the beginning of an economic recovery soon to be transformed into a new industrial revolution by the Second World War.

Considering the Native American experience, Kent Richards's case study finds the people of the Muckleshoot Reservation in western Washington surviving and even flourishing through adaptation to commercial farming and dairying in the twentieth century. The picture of the Dakota tribes is much grimmer, but both Frank Pommersheim and Carole Bennett offer reason for hope. Nearly destroyed by dispossession and federal Indian policy, the people survive, drawing spiritual power from the land and a new sense of nationhood from their common struggle and an ancient sense of identity.

The volume offers a collection of excellent essays, but if, as the editor suggests, its purpose is to define the Northern Tier as a distinctive region, that definition does not emerge. The two most reflective essays, Paula M. Nelson's attempt to define the western psyche through a case study of the settlers in the West River country of South Dakota and Donald Worster's concluding essay on the case for a unique western identity, come closest to offering a common theme for the volume. Nelson's settlers live on hope and faith, and find identity and purpose in the struggle to survive in a harsh land. For Worster, it is the relationship to the land that defines the western character: the experience of vast spaces and natural grandeur, of scarcity and disappointed hopes, of a struggle against nature that evolves among the survivors into a grudging sense of partnership with nature. In one way or another, these general themes might be read into any of the volume's essays.

Individually, the essays offer insights into the character of the Northern Tier states. Some suggest useful lines of inquiry for regional studies in general. Overall, however, the volume demonstrates that regional identity may be more a matter of perception than objective fact, and in any case is certainly easier to feel than to explain.

Looking for History on Highway 14, by John E. Miller. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993. xiv, 254 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$15.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY NORMAN E. FRY, SOUTHEASTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The age of the automobile has brought with it the age of historians who interpret the meaning of America's highways and thoroughfares.

John E. Miller's book on Highway 14 tells the story of a stretch of American highway that spans South Dakota from Elkton on the eastern border to Mount Rushmore on the western edge of the state. Miller states that his purpose is to write a book with a historical approach rather than the kind of narrative based on interviews that frequently offers no more than the superficial insights and bias of the casual traveler.

The history of Highway 14 is the history of the small towns along the road itself. To write this history of small towns Professor Miller uses several methodologies: historical geography, oral history and journalism, the study of material culture and photographs, and the American Studies approach, which attempts to define and explain the role of culture. In this respect, Miller does what many historians have to do to reconstruct the history of a region and its people who do not conveniently leave a clear record of their endeavors.

Highway 14 is a good model for anyone contemplating undertaking a small-town history. Miller's work reveals the variety of resources that the dedicated amateur or professional historian needs to write the history of the small town. On the other hand, *Highway 14* does little to advance the historiography or methodology of study for either the small town, the highway, or the Midwest. The historian looking for new sources of information or a new interpretation of small-town life will not find them here. This critical weakness hardly matters, though, since the book is best read as a work that popularizes small-town history and brings its citizens onto the center stage of history.

This approach makes *Highway 14* a good read for anyone interested in the history of the Midwest, Iowa, or the small town. Miller's book focuses on the noteworthy events in the history of small towns: the desperate battles to get railroads, highways, and the county seat; the social importance of sports, band concerts, holiday celebrations, and other social events that create the small-town sense of community; and the role of early settlers and other leading citizens in staking a claim to a piece of land and by dint of hard work turning it into a town. Miller writes about the icons of small-town history; in doing so he evokes images and a history that many of his readers will recognize as part of the history of small towns in other parts of the Midwest.

The greatest strength of *Highway 14* is its use of oral history. Miller got out of his office and onto Highway 14, where he talked to living people, or if the subjects of his research were dead or gone he talked to people who knew of them. This approach enlivens Miller's history of Highway 14 and the towns along it by bringing common citizens into the story of the highway and the towns. The prevailing

lesson of Miller's book is that the landscape of the Midwest and the small towns on it tell us much of this nation's history if we go to these places and meet people in their immediate surroundings. Indeed, *Highway 14* could be a useful guide for the traveler who wants to venture onto this two-laner and learn something about small-town America.

They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School, by K. Tsianina Lomawaima. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994. xviii, 205 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, appendixes, notes, index. \$25.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY S. CAROL BERG, COLLEGE OF ST. BENEDICT

Boarding schools always present the problem of making an institution into a home. Chilocco Indian School in north central Oklahoma is a case in point. K. Tsianina Lomawaima's study of life at Chilocco for several thousand Indian children during the 1920s and 1930s makes clear that "comprehensive power wielded by [a] few adults compromised any flowering of surrogate parenting" (56). Alumni narratives, which constitute the bulk of her study, confirm this conclusion.

Founded in 1884 and closed in 1980, Chilocco flourished from the start. Enrollments were 352 in 1895, and annual enrollment ranged from two to three hundred into the early 1900s. By the 1920s, eight hundred to a thousand boarders was the norm. Oklahoma supplied most of the students; others came primarily from Kansas, Mississippi, and Iowa.

An agricultural school, Chilocco emphasized farming and industrial training, at times slighting academics. Work skills were valued as highly as or even above academics. One alumnus summed up a major goal of the school: "The one thing, if you didn't learn anything else, was to learn to work" (76). Many alumni noted the discipline and hard work as having been beneficial to them when they left Chilocco; others criticized what they saw as a lack of solid academic offerings.

In 1983-84 Lomawaima interviewed 61 people, 53 of them Chilocco alumni (32 women, 21 men) representing 14 tribes, among them Kiowa, Miami, Omaha, Comanche, Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Creek (the majority were Cherokee). With a mix of tribes, ages, languages, and degree of Indian blood, these Chilocco students created subcultures as survival tactics, carrying out overt and covert forms of resistance to authority. The regimentation and uniformity of life at Chilocco were countered by peer friendships and loyalty; gangs often provided protection and a sense of family. Ironically, both pan-Indianism and

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