

The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois 1825-70, by Don Harrison Doyle. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1978. pp. xiii, 289. \$12.50.

Don Harrison Doyle asserts that *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois 1825-70* "explores the problem of building new communities in the Old Northwest by focusing on the history of a single community. . . ." While his study of Jacksonville is well carried out, the town was hardly typical of most communities in Illinois or the Midwest during the 1825-70 period, and so the value of his work as a representative case study may be more limited than he acknowledges.

Early Jacksonville was the home of Illinois College, a female academy, a school for the deaf and dumb, a hospital for the insane, and a school for the blind. It produced the most influential political figure in pre-Civil War Illinois, Stephen Douglas, and the state's fifth governor, Joseph Duncan. It was the residence of noted educators Julian Sturtevant and Jonathan Baldwin Turner as well as the first Illinois novelist, John L. McConnel. Hence, early Jacksonville was distinguished by its social, political, and intellectual leadership. Indeed, one could argue that the community's preeminence in the Midwest during the 1825-70 period, rather than its typicality, makes it worthy of extensive study.

In any case, Doyle's sociological approach yields significant insights into the development of Jacksonville. He clearly displays the political, religious, and social conflicts which divided the community; he effectively discusses the effort to mold common values through the use of formal institutions; and he thoroughly analyzes the town's populace to determine the spread of wealth, number of transients, occupational distribution, and other aspects of community structure.

Especially worthy of praise is Doyle's very effective use of a wide variety of historical sources: newspapers, diaries, letters, autobiographies, local histories, municipal and church records, published speeches, gazeteers, travel books, and federal census manuscripts. As a result of his enormous research effort, the author's discussion is a rich and interesting combination of

Book Reviews

sociological analysis and local history, in which he successfully blends accurate quantitative information with authoritative commentary on men and events. As a sociological study, his book belongs on the same shelf with *The Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County* (1959) by Merle Curti and others—to which Doyle is admittedly indebted. As a history of an early Illinois town, it ranks with Paul Angle's *"Here I Have Lived": A History of Lincoln's Springfield, 1821-1865* (1935)—which depicts the growth of Jacksonville's chief rival during the same period of time.

In short, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community*—which includes tables of census information, a bibliographical essay, and twenty mid-nineteenth-century lithographs—should be of considerable interest to sociologists and historians of the early Midwest.

John E. Hallwas
Western Illinois University
Macomb, IL

Religious Newspapers in the Old Northwest to 1861: A History, Bibliography, and Record of Opinion, by Wesley Norton. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1977. pp. xi, 196. \$12.50.

In this book Wesley Norton presents the pre-Civil War mid-western religious newspaper as one aspect of the special interest press of nineteenth-century America. As an activist press it had a point of view to express both through a strong editorial policy and an unabashedly slanted interpretation of the news. The religious press simply presented local, regional, and national news from a religious standpoint. To a researcher who has usually dismissed the multitude of small, short-lived newspapers often with eccentric titles as probably containing little more than moral sayings, parables, and homilies designed to reinforce the already pious and offer helpful hints to Sunday school teachers and ministers with writer's block, this view of the religious press comes as something of a surprise. But Mr. Norton's study is a

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.