

Book Reviews

hardly appeared in the *Detroit News-Tribune* story of July 24, 1910. Lass fails to mention the impetus given Bunyan in pamphlets issued by the Red River Lumber Company. With all the emphasis placed on the Vikings, fearsome critters, and the Bunyan tales of exaggeration, it is curious that the Mayo Clinic and its founders are given only a couple of lines.

Indeed, except for scattered references, major attention to cultural activities—education, arts, theater, books, authors—is meager. Nevertheless, one unacquainted with the history of the state will find substantial information. Readers should not rely upon the index, which, like some others in the Bicentennial volumes, is a pitiful travesty.

Philip D. Jordan
Burlington, IA

Ups and Downs of Iowa's Railroads, by William Nelson Whitehill. Marshalltown, Iowa 50158: Privately published by the author, 1500 Lincoln Tower Circle, Apt. 402, 1978. pp. 131. \$6.50 (paper).

Railroad service came to Iowa just nine years after it gained statehood in 1846; in short order rails spread through every section. This was not simply because of an advanced technology and expanding capital investment which together would have inevitably brought at least a modicum of rail service. Rather, Iowa was fortunately located: immediately west of Chicago, an aspiring village at the southern edge of Lake Michigan; immediately east of the western terminus of the Union Pacific; north of established St. Louis and southwest of established Milwaukee; and in proximity to the burgeoning communities of Omaha, Kansas City, and St. Paul. Thus Iowa naturally received a host of horizontal or east-west carriers which bridged the intervening distance between Chicago and the Union Pacific and it received, as well, various vertical or north-south roads. All of these spawned branches to carry the produce from Iowa's incredibly rich soil. In the end, each of the state's counties was served by the steam cars and Iowa became one of the top-

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

ranked states in terms of rail mileage. It is trite, then, to say that there is an inseparable bond between the history of the state and the history of its railroads. Nevertheless, it is true.

This book, *Ups and Downs of Iowa's Railroads*, employs a "from-the-back-porch" approach; the view is from Marshall County, State Center, and Marshalltown in particular. It is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a full-fledged study of the state's railroad history. The value of the book derives from the author's warm and vivid recollections of railroading in the time of his youth. Indeed, he has captured the essence of small-town railroading and the changes that have occurred therein during this century. Yet because of its restricted scope, its anecdotal form, and the absence of exactitude the book has limited utility. Local history buffs and railfans will enjoy it but more serious scholars will find little of value in it.

Don L. Hofsommer
Wayland College
Plainview, TX

America's Frontier Culture: Three Essays, by Ray A. Billington.
Foreword by W. Turrentine Jackson. College Station, Texas:
Texas A & M University Press, 1977. pp. 97. \$5.00.

The author of this slim volume is recognized as the leading scholar on Frederick Jackson Turner and his ideas. That invites an examination of the three essays in the collection for what they say about the frontier experience as a contributor to the uniqueness of the American character and American institutions. Such an examination produces mixed results and a discernible progression away from a Turnerian interpretation over the twenty-year period in which the essays were produced. "The American Frontiersman" is ardently Turnerian; "The Frontier and American Culture" is moderately so; while "Cowboys, Indians, and the Promised Land" is at best indirectly Turnerian since it argues that writers, publicists and settlers fashioned images about the American West which any reader of the essay should detect as Turnerian.

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.