

Book Reviews

C. Breckinridge was of Scotch-Irish descent, not Irish (p. 168). On one page Buckner rode at the head of the Confederates who marched to Bowling Green in September 1861, but on another page Buckner and his men boarded trains for the trip. Since Bowling Green is in Kentucky, the statement that food arrived there "from Kentucky" is somewhat confusing (p. 57). Such discrepancies detract from what is certain to be one of the best Civil War books of the year.

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Iron Frontier: The Discovery and Early Development of Minnesota's Three Ranges, by David A. Walker. St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979. pp. xi, 259. Photographs, maps, notes, index. \$16.00.

Throughout the late nineteenth century the West experienced a series of mining booms. Towns such as Virginia City, Nevada or Cripple Creek, Colorado were well known for their precious minerals, however, more significant for American industrialization were the iron mines then opening in northeastern Minnesota. The story of this less romantic, yet intriguing, mineral frontier is the subject of David A. Walker's *Iron Frontier*.

The three Minnesota ranges chronicled, Vermilion, Mesabi, and Cuyuna, were the last and richest iron fields to be opened in the United States. The existence of iron ore in the area had been known for over a century before the deposits were commercially utilized. The author details the exploration of the fields from the earliest French and British fur trappers through federal efforts of the early 1800s. The national and later state investigations of the nineteenth century were especially aware of the iron deposits and attempted to delineate them in detail. These catalogings provided would-be entrepreneurs with a solid data base for their operations.

Early promoters of the Vermilion range, spurred by the increased demand for iron ore after the Civil War and wartime depletion of Michigan's iron reserves, used the exploration findings to attract necessary capital. Conditions, including technological developments in steel production, had changed by 1880 to make pioneering the region economically feasible. The area was a virgin wilderness when

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

Minnesota booster efforts began. Their arguments found a ready ear with Pennsylvania industrialist Charlemagne Tower. These men had a vision of development for the resources and were typical of many mining frontier capitalists.

The Vermilion area exhibited many other facets of the mining frontier experience such as boom towns; reliance on foreign born, especially Cornish mining experts; claim litigation; and the evolution of a transportation network. The author thoroughly followed these various developments. Within a few years the region was settled and quickly became a leading iron ore producer for the United States. The Vermilion region's success led to additional prospecting in the late 1880s. The Mesabi range was the next to be developed and by 1890 the Merritt family of Duluth was actively promoting the area. The frontier experience was repeated, but development was slowed by the Panic of 1893. The Duluth promoters, forced to insolvency by the financial crisis combined with falling iron prices, sought aid from Frederick T. Gates. Gates, as representative of Standard Oil Company founder John D. Rockefeller, rescued the Merritts. The oil magnate eventually wrested control of the family's iron and railroad properties from them and used these as the basis for his Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mines. The new company managed all of Rockefeller's Mesabi interests including iron mines, railroads, ore docks, and Great Lakes ore ships. Walker's book includes the story of the Mesabi's evolution in the early twentieth century.

The Lake Superior Company marked the end of the frontier development phase and the beginning of Minnesota's iron mining industry as one more segment of American corporate activity. Typical of this process of rapid consolidation was the emergence of United States Steel. As if to add emphasis to the passing of the frontier, the Cuyuna range opened during these years. The area was not a frontier, having been previously settled by lumbermen. The author's treatment of the Cuyuna is the greatest weakness of the book, being much too brief and giving a definite imbalance to the work.

Relying to a great extent on primary sources, Walker has done a commendable job of chronicling the developments of Minnesota's iron mining frontier. He accomplishes the smooth integration of several themes, such as the mining frontier experience and business history, into his regional study. The book was enjoyable to read and should be comprehensible to a wide audience. However, at times the organization suffered as characters appeared, disappeared, and reappeared much too frequently. Profuse illustrations and maps aid the reader's understanding of iron mining development and add flavor to the

Book Reviews

work. *Iron Frontier* should stand as a useful addition to mining and business historiography by illuminating this less romantic and neglected part of America's frontier experience and the ancillary activities of business leaders such as John D. Rockefeller who were involved in the process.

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Normal to University: A Century of Service, by Arthur H. Mattingly.
Cape Girardeau, Mo.: Missouriian Litho and Printing Co., 1979.
pp. xi, 304. Photographs, footnotes, appendices, index. \$8.00.

The histories of regional state universities which began their institutional lives as teachers' colleges or normal schools are still largely unwritten. *Normal to University* is the story of the first one hundred years of a regional state university, Southeast Missouri State. It traces the presidential administrations and major developments that occurred from 1873 to 1973.

Founded in 1873 as one of the first normal schools in the Midwest for the purpose of training elementary school teachers, the early years of Southeast Missouri State were characterized by trials and uncertainty. Not until 1899 did presidential leadership stabilize. The appointment of Dr. Washington S. Dearmont as president in 1899 opened a period of growth that established the institution permanently. Presidents during the present century generally served long terms in office. However politics sometimes disrupted the status quo; at least three presidents were fired by the board of regents because of political differences.

The board was non-political in other matters such as the name of the institution: the name changed as the school developed. In 1919 the name of the school was changed to State Teachers College, establishing it as a four-year degree granting institution. The name was again changed in 1945 to State College indicating the broadening of the goals of the college beyond teacher preparation. The final name change occurred in 1972 when the college was designated a state university.

The period 1960 to 1973 was one of unprecedented growth for the university. Enrollment increased dramatically and the size of the physical plant doubled. By the end of the first century, the university

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