

Book Reviews

treatment of the Potawatomi sojourn in their state. Located in the extreme western portion of Iowa, the United Bands Reserve included six clusters of villages settled along the river valleys in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Most of the tribesmen living there hailed from northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin; they combined to form the Prairie Band, culturally conservative which later took up residence in Kansas.

In describing the Prairie People's Iowa reservation experience and their previous and later migrations, Clifton reveals a re-revisionist thesis. He deplores the recent sympathetic revisionist historical and anthropological writing about Indians, which he suggests "tends to be shallowly moralistic . . . and excessively maudlin, patronizing and condescending toward Indians of the present." His descriptions of Potawatomi interfacings with Euro-American peoples and governments are devoid of the attitude that the tribe was simply a helpless, guileless victim of a frontier juggernaut. Analyzing the pattern of relationships between Potawatomi and Americans from 1796 to 1837, he concludes that the "basic paradigm was one of reciprocal exploitation, each party expecting and taking something of value from the other."

Clifton's writing is studded with similar provocative statements and analysis. Many of these passages are extremely valuable and, in the case of his postscript on the 1970s Indian style of radicalism, largely accurate and certainly courageous. Scholars will be particularly impressed with the material on the mixed bloods and intermarried citizens of the Potawatomi and their characterization as "intercultural brokers." Whether or not the reader agrees with the author's conclusions and the framework within which they are couched, he must come away from *The Prairie People* intellectually stimulated.

Terry P. Wilson
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, CA

The Worlds Between Two Rivers: Perspectives on American Indians in Iowa, edited by Gretchen M. Bataille, David M. Gradwohl and Charles L.P. Silet. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1978. pp. ix, 148. \$7.95.

This is a book with a purpose. Gretchen Bataille writes that the editors "hoped that this collection and bibliography will help inform educators, students, and concerned people about the Indian in Iowa—the historical and contemporary Indian." (129-30) Guided by the conviction that "education seems to be the key to a new understanding and awareness for both Indian and non-Indian people," (129) the editors

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

offer in this volume some of the papers of a 1974 symposium at Iowa State University, Ames, entitled "Indian Perspectives on Iowa: Education, Spiritual Freedom, and Social Responsibility." The proceedings of such symposia are often uneven, disjointed, even short on thematic integrity, but *The Worlds Between Two Rivers* is one of the most formless collections of papers I have ever seen.

Taken individually, some of the papers are quite good. Donald Wanatee's excellent "The Lion, Fleur-de-lis, the Eagle, or the Fox: A Study of Government" is a fascinating political history of the Mesquakies. His interpretation of the Old Bear/Young Bear factional conflict, hitherto known to only a few outside Mesquakie society, sheds a great deal of light on Mesquakie history, as well as on the history of Mesquakie relations with Anglo-American society and the United States government. It is, I hope, only the first of many contributions by Wanatee.

L. Edward Purcell's outstanding "The Unknown Past: Sources for History Education and the Indians of Iowa," though previously published elsewhere, is well repeated here and will hopefully come to the attention of Iowa educators. In a careful analysis of the ways the authors of several textbooks on Iowa history have interpreted the Indian history of the state, Purcell shows that there has been an overwhelming tendency either to lump all Native groups together into an "amorphous mass" or to lay undue stress on "isolated episodes of violence." (18) Either fault distorts, outrageously, the histories of the many Native tribes between the two rivers. To prove his point, Purcell offers a brief synopsis of Mesquakie history. Iowa readers will, unfortunately, learn more Mesquakie history in those five paragraphs than they will from the textbooks he surveyed.

David Gradwohl's "The Native American Experience in Iowa: An Archaeological Perspective," too long and too technical for this book, is among the best summaries extant of Iowa's prehistoric past. A believer that "archaeological images" can contribute to "a more meaningful discussion of present group identifications, social responsibilities, and cross-cultural understandings," Gradwohl finds no "lost races" nor "civilized mound builders" in prehistoric Iowa, and no "primitive savages" in its historic past. (50-51) They were simply people, living in ways we only partially understand, but about whose cultures Gradwohl tells us much.

Bertha Waseskuk's "Mesquakie History—As We Know It" is a useful reprinting of a valuable interpretation of Mesquakie history from the Mesquakie perspective. It tantalizes with its brevity and raises the hope that she, Donald Wanatee, or some other Mesquakie

Book Reviews

historian will someday join the small but growing ranks of native scholars willing to commit to paper the histories of their people. And the printing of ten Mesquakie photographs from the incomparable Duren J. H. Ward Collection of the State Historical Society of Iowa is always welcome.

On the other hand, Fred McTaggart, author of the excellent *Wolf That I Am*, limited himself here to a brief and superficial discussion of the problems of studying oral literature, wrenched from its dramatic context, and translated to the printed page. Perhaps, he suggests, greater use of film will help, an idea that points to the essay by Charles L. P. Silet on "The Image of the American Indian in Film." A slim tracing of the images of Native people in Anglo-American popular literature with an emphasis on how Hollywood has picked up a composite Indian stereotype and fed it back to us, Silet concludes that as filmmakers in recent years have found it increasingly hard to perpetuate the stereotype, they have solved their problem by dropping Indians from the screen. Unlike the other essays, which at least shared a common regional theme, this paper seems to have been included simply because it was handy. These and seven other papers, grouped to deal with media distortions, historical interpretations, contemporary Native American perspectives, and alternatives for the future, compose the book. A solid bibliography, partially annotated, accompanies the text.

I have tried to keep in mind the reviewer's axiom that one must evaluate the book at hand and not the book one might wish had been written in its place, but with *The Worlds Between Two Rivers* that has been a difficult task. Every serious student of the Native American history of Iowa knows of the overwhelming deficiencies in the literature. Distortions, lies, ignorance and misconceptions abound and virtually anything which seeks to fill even some of the gaps should be welcomed with open arms. But Bataille, Gradwohl, and Silet have made it an embrace with a porcupine.

Random best describes the results of the editors' efforts. They include a little bit of archaeology, a little bit of Mesquakie history, a little bit of urban sociology, and a little bit on Native American education, literature, and the Indian stereotype in commercial film. The historical section, strong on certain aspects of Mesquakie history, ignores the Sauks, Ioways, Potawatomies, Winnebagoes, Poncas, Omahas, Otos, and the many bands of Dakotas who also inhabited the country between the Mississippi and the Missouri.

In "The American Indian and Ethnicity in Iowa's Future," Joseph Hraba, a specialist in "ethnic relations," asserts that Native Ameri-

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

cans, like the Amish, Czechs, Italians, Chicanos, Scandinavians, and blacks, are just one more ethnic group in Iowa scrambling for a share of the pie. Rejecting the recommendation of some Native American participants at the conference that Iowa establish an Indian Commission to increase and channel the political power of Native people, Hraba calls instead for the creation of an Ethnic Commission. Hraba thinks an Indian Commission would arouse the "envy" of others who had no such "parochial" agency to serve them. Any such "envy," ridiculous to anyone who has compared the economic and vital statistics of Indians with others, should be dispelled with reasoned explanation and the kind of educational effort this book purports to make. It is not the responsibility of Native Americans to appease the "envy" Hraba predicts through sharing. There is only one group in this country to which payment is owed for this country and no amount of "envy" qualifies another group for a share.

Many of these short papers, most under six pages long, are tantalizing and one can imagine all sorts of possibilities for their use. But gathered together in this book, subject to little editorial control, organized around no workable theme, and connected in only the most perfunctory way, the gems of insight which many of them contain get lost in unfulfilled expectation. The worlds between two rivers remain unexplored.

Michael D. Green
Dartmouth College
Hanover, NH

Terrace Hill: The Story of a House and the People Who Touched It, by Scherrie Goettsch and Steve Weinberg. Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1978. pp. 120. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$14.95.

Through most of its century of existence Terrace Hill has attracted attention; it is inevitable that with age such an acclaimed symbol of power and prestige should become wrapped in legend. The recent acquisition of the house by the State of Iowa and the seemingly never-ending debate on how best to preserve and use this landmark have stimulated renewed interest in its history. To those whose pleasure or duty it has been to reconstruct this history, it has been painfully evident that much of what passed for historical fact regarding Terrace Hill was actually myth. *Terrace Hill*, the first work to draw upon the wealth of primary source material pertinent to the history of the mansion, supplies many legend-destroying answers.

Impelled by the idea that the history of a house makes little sense

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.