

offers additional substance for use by both Native Americans and non-Indians as they continue their cultural healing processes some thirteen decades later.

Despite its obvious faults, Clair Jacobson's study merits recommendation. Military buffs especially will appreciate those pages devoted to the preparation and implementation of combat strategies. Tribal members will find in it further evidence regarding the perils of their relatives in the past. Sioux Country's history is served by the supply of a missing component in the sequence of wars over territory and cultural confrontation that lasted from 1854 to 1903.

Sources for U.S. History: Nineteenth-Century Communities, by W. B. Stephens. *The Sources of History: Studies in the Uses of Historical Evidence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. xviii, 558 pp. Notes, index. \$75.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY TIMOTHY WALCH, HOOVER PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

It is unusual in the annals of book publishing—even scholarly book publishing—that the prose on jacket flaps accurately describes the contents of new books. As might be expected, all but the most modest publishers are given to hyperbole in describing their new publications. Not surprisingly, readers and reviewers alike discount such descriptions as little more than advertising. But after reading this new book by the English historian W. B. Stephens, I am pleased to report that on occasion, jacket copy can be an accurate! This book, notes the flap copy on *Sources for U.S. History: Nineteenth Century Communities*, "will prove a valuable work of reference to a wide range of university and college students, to libraries, archivists, family historians, and schoolteachers, and to many interested amateurs who wish to pursue seriously the study of their region or community, neighborhood or family, or some particular aspect of the American past." I agree wholeheartedly with that claim. In fact, I think the editors at Cambridge University Press were too modest in proclaiming the worth of Mr. Stephens's accomplishment.

At the very least, *Sources for U.S. History* is unusual in American historiography. One can count on the fingers of one hand the books that focus on historical sources as a *subject* for study. Commentary on source materials is usually confined to the back of historical monographs, little more than analytical afterthought. But Stephens turns this historical order upside down by mastering the broad, diverse, and growing body of source material on the early history of American communities. In 550 highly readable and densely packed

pages, Stephens provides a comprehensive guide to individual communities, large and small. He divides his work topically into chapters on demography; ethnicity and race; settlement and farming; religion; politics, labor, and government; business activity; maritime activity and transportation; education; and poverty, health, and crime. In each of these chapters, Stephens discusses a wide variety of sources, both published and unpublished, quantitative as well as qualitative, and his general narrative is closely coordinated with detailed citations at the bottom of each page. Overall, the reader gets a clear understanding and appreciation of what it means to be an authority on the source material of such a broad subject.

Clearly, too, this book is something of an homage to the work of American archivists, particularly those who work at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. On page after page, in citation after citation, Stephens points the reader and the interested researcher to finding aids that describe the local history holdings of this nation's largest archival agency. He is to be applauded for citing so many little-known but very valuable inventories, reference information papers, and other National Archives publications too long forgotten by the research community. Many of these guides are still in print and available free of charge. Implicit throughout Stephens's book is evidence that the National Archives is not just for the study of our "national" history. In fact, the National Archives may just be the nation's largest repository of *local* history materials.

Of greatest interest to the readers of the *Annals of Iowa* will be the citations to Iowa historical materials. On this aspect of the book, students of Iowa history will be disappointed. To be sure, there are passing mentions of the state census, education, elections, land claims, maps, and natural resources, but most of the citations will be familiar to Iowa historians. Readers also will find citations to the work of Robert Swierenga and Allan G. Bogue and other well-known scholars, but the work of some younger historians is not included. Tom Morain's *Prairie Grass Roots*, for example, would have been a welcome addition. Overall, however, Iowa sources receive their due in the context of the general study of nineteenth-century American communities.

Such a criticism of Stephens's book is minor when compared to his remarkable achievement. Students and scholars alike now have an easy-to-use handbook on the historiography of nineteenth-century American communities. This achievement is all the more remarkable in having been written by an Englishman while on visits to the United States! He has put his finger on the pulse of American historiography, and we are in his debt.

One can only hope that the price of this volume at seventy-five dollars, and the fact that it is something of a bibliography, will not diminish its impact. In fact, it can be hoped that scholarly and professional associations in the United States will consider the book in their annual prize competitions. Certainly this book would be an excellent candidate for one of the book prizes given by the Society of American Archivists or the American Association for State and Local History. Such a prize or commendation would be the most appropriate way to recognize this most singular and special achievement.

Defending a Way of Life: An American Community in the Nineteenth Century, by Michael Cassity. SUNY Series in American Labor History. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. xv, 259 pp. Notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$54.50 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY GREGORY R. ZIEREN, AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Social and labor historians, as well as students of nineteenth-century America, may recall Michael Cassity's striking *American Historical Review* article of 1979. In that work he applied the tenets of modernization theory to the development of working-class institutions such as the Ancient Order of United Workmen and the Knights of Labor in Sedalia, Missouri, on the eve of the Great Southwestern Strikes of 1885 and 1886. Cassity's new work, *Defending a Way of Life*, is a far more ambitious attempt to interpret the experience of ordinary people in Sedalia and Pettis County from pioneer days in the 1820s to 1890. At the rhetorical level the attempt is a resounding success, while at the same time it fails to persuade analytically.

Pettis County was settled by migrants from Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina who sought refuge from the encroachment of growing population and market forces in their home states. They found in the relative isolation of central Missouri a place to recreate a simple, subsistence life-style. Cassity depicts the independent lives, the strength of the bonds of community and mutuality, the fundamentals of equality, and the ecological balance of multicrop agriculture in terms worthy of a Rousseau celebrating the noble savage or a Jefferson prizing the yeoman farmer. Only the more romantic and nostalgic passages of Peter Laslett's *The World We Have Lost* will stand comparison to this beautifully crafted paean to frontier life in a preindustrial age before market relations intruded.

Every perfect garden must have its serpent, and in Pettis County his name was George R. Smith, a son-in-law of one of the founders. Lacking biting fangs, this serpent captured his prey—the good, sim-

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