

Boyd Law Building), and it achieved national prominence through the ratings published by *U.S. News & World Report*. During the last 15 years of Hines's deanship, the school averaged twenty-first in the nation among all schools and seventh among public law schools, and the law library became second in size only to Harvard's.

Future editions might usefully include an index and a chapter on alumni. There is, however, a highly readable chapter on women students, recounting the difficulties and genuine hardships women have had getting a legal education. The Iowa experience was fairly typical of the national situation.

The Organization of American Historians and the Writing and Teaching of American History, edited by Richard S. Kirkendall. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. xii, 373 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendix. \$99.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

Reviewer Jon Lauck is senior advisor to South Dakota Senator John Thune. His article, "The Prairie Historians and the Foundations of Midwestern History," will appear in the Spring 2012 issue of the *Annals of Iowa*.

In the late nineteenth century, there were few academic historians in the United States and those few focused mostly on the history of New England and Europe. Historians in the American West, which included anything west of the forks of the Ohio River, were rare and their region's history almost completely neglected. The University of Wisconsin's Frederick Jackson Turner finally sparked an organized effort to focus on midwestern and western history, and his acolytes ultimately launched the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (MVHA) to formalize the movement. University of Iowa professors Benjamin Shambaugh and Louis Pelzer were among the earliest and strongest leaders of the MVHA.

The MVHA was organized in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1907, and convened its first conference at Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, in 1908; its successor body, the Organization of American Historians (OAH), reconvened in nearby Minneapolis in 2007. At that centennial conference, Richard Kirkendall, a former executive secretary of the OAH and one-time professor of history at Iowa State University, spearheaded the organization of panels and papers considering the OAH's century of activity. Kirkendall then organized the publication of much of this commentary into *The Organization of American Historians and the Writing and Teaching of American History*, an impressive collection that presents many sides of the OAH story. Michael Kammen sets the stage for the longer story of the OAH with a masterful chapter on the or-

ganization's beginnings that accounts for its midwestern origins and focus. A variety of chapters discuss the growth and evolution of the organization and the emergence of new fields of study. William Leuchtenburg wryly comments on what the founders of the old MVHA would have thought of the new field of "Queer Studies."

Historians tend to believe that during the early years of the OAH its members focused only on political, economic, military, and diplomatic history, or so-called "traditional history." But as Kammen and Frederick Hoxie note, the early historians of the Mississippi Valley devoted considerable energy to the history of American Indians. Stephanie Shaw also explains how prominent social history was from the launch of the MVHA. Historians who were products of the valley, such as Merle Curti (from Papillion, Nebraska), also spurred the development of the field of intellectual history in the 1940s (even though fellow midwesterner Perry Miller dismissed Curti's opus, *The Growth of American Thought*, as a "seed catalogue"). Karl Brooks notes how the old MVHA pioneered the field of environmental history.

Other fields, such as gender, race, and sexuality were not, however, prominent topics during the early decades of the OAH, but their rise to power is finely explained in this volume. Some of the doubts about the changes wrought in the profession by these new fields are also recounted. Joan Hoff, who served as executive director of the OAH from 1981 to 1988, now admits to doubts about the excessive attention commanded by these new fields and the attendant rise of postmodern theory. Hoff explains that the profession has lost its audience to popular historians, who still write about war and peace and politics and economics. Hoff believes that the profession is in a "state of crisis" and has been "damaged by the postmodern theories and deconstructionist methodologies that had been largely imported from abroad since the 1960s" (114). Many historians agree with Hoff, as would, most surely, the creators of the MVHA.

After the founding of the MVHA, James Patterson notes, the study of political history was second only to studies of the Midwest and the frontier. By the end of the twentieth century, however, political history had been displaced by the "race/class/gender paradigm" as the OAH's most active field of inquiry. Patterson laments the intentional marginalization of political history within the profession and notes how "some younger colleagues seemed to regard political historians as old-fashioned has-beens who were interested only in the maneuvering of white male elites." The negative attitude toward political historians within the profession is, Patterson hopes, losing some of its intensity, a development that can only be good for the broader civic culture.

In his organization of the book, Kirkendall included many important voices and made many wise choices. For example, he takes the broader mission of historians into consideration and includes lengthy sections on both the publication of historical works and the teaching of history. The book also includes essays about the thousands of historians who do not work in academic history departments and traces how these “public historians” have built a successful subfield.

On the whole, this volume is a must read for practicing historians of the United States. It smartly covers many topics, but would have benefited from greater attention to the rise and fall of the field of mid-western history, out of which the MVHA emerged, and to the field of western history, which now flourishes thanks to the foundational work of the founders of the MVHA.

American Individualism: How a New Generation of Conservatives Can Save the Republican Party, by Margaret Hoover. New York: Crown Forum, 2011. 248 pp. Notes. \$24.99 cloth.

Reviewer Glen Jeanson is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. His articles and books about Herbert Hoover include *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Presidency, 1928–1933* (forthcoming, 2012).

Margaret Hoover, the great-granddaughter of Herbert Hoover, has written a timely book — part history, part political philosophy, and part memoir. For historians, there is substantial detail about Herbert Hoover. For Iowa readers interested in Hoover lore, the book has much to offer. It includes a rich historical vein, although it is not purely historical. The author draws on the work of eminent Hoover scholars, especially in chapter one, which provides a capsule summary of Herbert Hoover’s career. The Iowa-born president’s 1922 treatise, *American Individualism*, provides the inspiration for this new work.

The Quaker president and his great-granddaughter have much in common: a philosophy whose mantra is tolerance, acceptance of a diversity of ideas, moderation, and inclusiveness. Both demonstrate a mixture of idealism, realism, and common sense. Like Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover, Margaret is erudite, sophisticated, cosmopolitan, and a world traveler. She has lived abroad, learned Spanish and Chinese, and is drawn to international interests and cultures. Nonetheless, like her famous relatives, she considers America a singular nation, a land of opportunity. Still, equality of opportunity does not ensure equality of outcome. A centrist Republican, she rejects a rule-or-ruin philosophy and explains that parties that fail to change inevitably are left behind.