

intention of publishing them as a collection" (xi–xii). As a coauthor of the well-received *Lewis and Clark Companion* (2003) and a board member for several Lewis and Clark–related foundations, Tubbs has plenty of knowledge about the expedition and its bicentennial celebrations throughout the West.

Her chapters range from a personal account of a canoe trip on the Missouri River and talks with people living and working along parts of the Lewis and Clark Trail to judgments of the two captains' qualities as leaders. The essay on Sacagawea examines the young mother's roles in the expedition, basically saying that there is not much more to say on the topic. When discussing the controversial death of Meriwether Lewis (whether by murder or suicide) while on his way to Washington, D.C., the author raises the interesting possibility that he suffered from Asperger's Syndrome. If true, that would help to explain much of the captain's often strange behavior, and probably is the only new thing about Lewis and Clark that the book offers. In general, Iowa readers, unless they are fans of Ms. Tubbs, will be disappointed.

Troubled Waters: Steamboat Disasters, River Improvements, and American Public Policy, 1821–1860, by Paul F. Paskoff. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007. xx, 324 pp. Maps, illustrations, graphs, tables, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$48.00 cloth.

Reviewer William E. Lass is professor emeritus of history at Minnesota State University, Mankato. He is the author of *Navigating the Missouri: Steamboating on Nature's Highway, 1819–1935* (2008).

The history of steamboating has been approached in a variety of ways. By emphasizing colorful characters and dramatic events, William J. Petersen, in his *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi* (1937), contributed significantly to the romance of steamboating. Louis C. Hunter, in his *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (1949), considered the business and mechanical aspects of steamboating. With more emphasis on quantification than Hunter, Erik F. Haites, James Mak, and Gary M. Walton, in their *Western River Transportation: The Era of Early Internal Development, 1810–1860* (1975), presented detailed information about steamboating's impact on the overall economy. In *Troubled Waters: Steamboat Disasters, River Improvements, and American Public Policy, 1821–1860*, Paul Paskoff's emphasis is on the interrelationships of steamboating as a perilous trade and river improvement as an important aspect of public policy.

Within a decade after the first steamboat navigated the western rivers (the Mississippi and its tributaries) in 1811, it was evident that

navigation was very risky. Snags especially took a heavy toll on fragile boats. Steamboat losses, which resulted in higher rates and slower service, created public demands for river improvement. As Paskoff relates, in the four decades before the Civil War the federal government had an inconsistent river improvement policy. Improvement was generally well supported during the presidencies of John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson (1825–1837) but denounced by James K. Polk in 1847 as unconstitutional.

Using the research methodologies of history, economics, and political science, Paskoff skillfully presents a nuanced portrayal of the workings of American democracy. Westerners, who had no qualms about the constitutionality of river improvement, consistently appealed to Congress and the various presidents to support it. Easterners, who had many Atlantic coast harbors and lighthouses, would generally ally with westerners to make appropriations for omnibus rivers and harbors improvement acts. The Atlantic coastal states of the Old South and such strict constructionists as Polk and John Tyler were the most determined foes of western river improvement. Those states' rights advocates, who sincerely believed that the Constitution did not authorize federal river improvement, also resented the detrimental impact of high protective tariffs, the principal source of federal revenue at the time.

Advocates insisted that rivers, as natural public highways, deserved federally supported improvements. Such enhancements as snag removal and dredging, they contended, would not only promote commerce and economic growth, but would also facilitate national defense and such essential activities as mail service. But opponents saw river improvement as a regional problem that should be funded by states and localities.

The issue of river improvement has to be considered in the context of western steamboating as a big business that had a cause-and-effect relationship with such economic factors as population growth, urbanization, agricultural production, manufacturing, allied transportation methods, and local and regional development. For 1846, shortly before the advent of railroad building, river improvement advocates reported that there were 1,190 western steamboats with an aggregate value of \$16,188,561, a total annual operating cost of \$32,725,000, and 41,650 employees.

Paskoff supplements his clearly written text about the nature and development of river improvement policy with 53 figures and 32 tables. Such quantification enables him to present an enormous amount of data about numerous topics, including sources of river improvement

funding, reasons for steamboat losses, and the longevity of boats. Numbers are never exciting reading. Thus, this study will appeal mostly to serious students of economic development and public policy. Nonetheless, everyone who labors under the misapprehension that laissez faire economics was the sole reason for American growth should read it. Paskoff concludes that the federal river improvement program not only succeeded in making navigation safer, but was also a major stimulus to increased productivity and economic growth.

This book should be useful to anyone interested in steamboating and public policy. Understandably, Paskoff does not include much specific information about Iowa, which became a state in 1846. But, because Iowa is flanked by the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, commercial navigation is a vital aspect of its history. Paskoff aptly describes the origins of federal river improvement, which after the Civil War radically changed Iowa's two major rivers.

How the States Got Their Shapes, by Mark Stein. New York: Smithsonian Books, 2008. xv, 332 pp. Maps, bibliography, index. \$22.95 cloth.

Reviewer Derek R. Everett is visiting assistant professor of American history at Metropolitan State College of Denver. He is the author of "To Shed Our Blood for Our Beloved Territory: The Iowa-Missouri Borderland" (*Annals of Iowa*, 2008).

In *How the States Got Their Shapes*, Mark Stein, a playwright and screenwriter, employs his flair for the dramatic in narrating the creation of American political boundaries. But readers seeking accurate information about boundary making will find little in this informal book to inspire them to shout "Bravo!"

Stein's work begins with a chapter emphatically titled "Don't Skip This: You'll Just Have to Come Back Later," in which he presents the major ideas he traces throughout the rest of the book. This overview chapter provides the work's only real contextual framework, and introduces Stein's most cherished and repeated notion, that the federal government used the motto "all states should be created equal" while drawing political lines (8). From there, he shifts to an alphabetical organization by state, describing how each of its lines came to be. In this way, he loses any thread of historical context, and his work shifts from a study of the boundary-making process to an artificially segregated tale of each state. Stein suggests that investigating each state individually is the best way to demonstrate their equality as created by boundaries, but such an organization treats the lines as isolated and divisive phenomena rather than as tools to provide a political structure within the vast tracts claimed by the United States.