

the people and cultures of the states. The essays are hardly celebratory, however; several authors — including Gordon Lloyd on California, Melissa Scheier on New Jersey, Franklin C. Nyles on Arkansas, and Amy Cossett on Louisiana — subject their constitutions to sharp strictures. Such essays show that state constitutions provide an excellent “laboratory” or workshop in which to study good government.

The midwestern and Great Plains state constitutions are of particular use to scholars of the central Mississippi River valley because the authors of essays in that section focus (probably more than in any other) on the historical context of constitution writing and political philosophy, as well as on the historic roots of their modern political climate (for example, Francis H. Heller and Paul D. Schumaker on Kansas). Similarly, Jordon B. Barkalow’s chapter on Indiana explains a theory of “responsible citizenship” (430–31). Because Donald Racheter addresses modern interest groups and draws specific comparisons with other midwestern state constitutions, his essay on Iowa is one of the strongest in the collection.

As a study of American constitutionalism and democratic participation, *Constitutionalism of American States* is highly recommended to constitutional and legal scholars. This collection will also become a standard work for scholars interested in state constitutional history (indeed, for all interested in a particular state’s political history). It should also be read widely by anyone interested in the interplay between democracy and power, between rights and authority, between populism and traditional constitutionalism.

Encyclopedia of Rural America: The Land and People, edited by Gary Goreham. 2nd ed. Millerton, NY: Grey House Publishing, 2008. 2 vols. xiii, 1,341 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, graphs, document collection, bibliography, index. \$195.00 cloth.

Reviewer Pamela Riney-Kehrberg is professor of history and director of the agricultural history and rural studies program at Iowa State University. Her most recent book is *Childhood on the Farm: Work, Play, and Coming of Age in the Midwest* (2005).

Reviewing an encyclopedia is a difficult task. *The Encyclopedia of Rural America* attempts to provide a comprehensive view of rural America, from “Addiction” to “Workers’ Compensation.” More than a thousand pages of material fall between those two topics, followed by a section titled “Primary Documents.” Some of the materials are historic or have a historic component; others are decidedly not. I have chosen to tackle this review by seeking out those parts of the encyclopedia that should

have a historic component, and evaluating their usefulness for readers of the *Annals of Iowa*.

Most historians will probably wish that there was more history in this set. Some topics that should include a great deal of historical material are somewhat thin. The section on African Americans, for example, does not even include the word "sharecropping." The entry on "community, sense of," likewise excludes most of the material on communities before World War II. When addressing the Country Life Movement, the author omits the rural reaction to the commission and its findings. The entry for urbanization neglects the historical perspective altogether, in favor of discussing changes since 2002. Other sections, however, are far more comprehensive. Mark Harvey provides a succinct summary of the meaning of the term "environmental history," and in four pages David Danbom provides an able summary of "agricultural history" from the colonial period to the present. Thomas Isern brings together "rural history" in an equally economical manner. The encyclopedia does not neglect gender, with Wava Haney providing an excellent summary of recent research in rural women's history, along with a very useful bibliography for beginning researchers.

The primary documents set at the end of the second volume are highly problematic. From the point of view of a historian, many of the documents therein are not, in fact, primary documents. Some, such as Frank and Deborah Popper's "The Great Plains: From Dust to Dust," are indeed primary documents. Others, however, are much too current to fit the bill for historians. Musings of sociologists, agricultural economists, and others about the state of rural America have their value, but I cannot see them being used in a history classroom for another 10 to 20 years, except as an epilogue in the last week of classes.

My recommendation is not to buy the encyclopedia, but to make use of it as a reference source at the library. From a historian's perspective, there is not enough history in the set to make an investment worthwhile. On the other hand, some of the historical articles in the encyclopedia are extremely well done, and will be of use to teachers and scholars, as will the timeline and selected bibliography of works in rural studies. *The Encyclopedia of Rural America* should provide a useful place to begin many a research project.