

Band Law and founding the Iowa Bandmasters Association. After King's death in 1971, Will Green led the band and continued the quality and pride of the organization. Since Green's abrupt passing in the middle of the 1977 season, Reginald Shive has assumed leadership of the band.

Through anecdotal and archival evidence, the author constructs a narrative that describes the impact of the ensemble on the community and state. In the first part of the book, he deals objectively with people and events outside his personal experience, while those of and since his time with the band receive slightly more biased treatment. Written with obvious admiration for the band, the book nevertheless gives due attention to the inevitable shortcomings, conflicts, and low points in the history of the ensemble, noting, for example that "King had acquired rough edges that clung to him all his life" (59) and "it is possible that King might have handled the situation with less than the utmost tact" (75). Most of the book focuses on the sociological rather than musical impact of the band, but concert programming practices are discussed for the Quist (29) and early King years (71-72), with the implication that these patterns were those followed to the present. An insightful comparison of the King and Sousa march styles (55) is interesting to both musicians and lay readers, as is the discussion of the Iowa Band Law (72) and the formation of the Iowa Bandmasters Association (91).

Very readable and rich with anecdotes, the book relates the growth and development of the organization to many twentieth-century trends, including the development of "talking pictures," television, and the increasingly mobile populations of Iowa towns. Readers will find an engaging and interesting narrative describing the history of a significant Iowa musical institution.

*American Towns: An Interpretive History*, by David J. Russo. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001. xiii, 350 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$28.95 cloth.

Reviewer Jan Olive Nash is co-principal of Tallgrass Historians L.C. In that capacity, she has visited and studied the history of Iowa towns for 14 years. She is also working on a Ph.D. dissertation at Loyola University Chicago on the survival patterns of small towns in the Midwest.

Small towns are so essential to the American psyche that we thirst for anything to explain why they're held so dear, convinced that to understand our own hometown is to better understand ourselves. Since 1959, when Merle Curti published *The Making of an American Community*, professional historians have recorded the history of countless small

towns on a case-by-case basis. David Russo's *American Towns* is a rare attempt to synthesize these small-town studies. As such, one hopes for not just a summary of four decades of community histories, but an overarching interpretation, gleaned from the cases but greater than the sum of the parts. Because of its breadth, the book will be of interest to students new to community studies. It does, however, suffer from a serious flaw. *American Towns* is guided by traditional, Turnerian interpretations of the patterns of community life. Its conclusions are rooted in the historiography of the 1950s, before the new social history broadened local history to include women, ethnic and racial groups, and the day-to-day lives of ordinary people. Russo found little ferment among town residents and only glanced off recent historiographic branches such as the New Western history.

*American Towns* covers four centuries, from colonial times through the twentieth century. Its equally broad geographic span includes virtually the entire country. Bridging these expanses is Russo's constant challenge, but also where potential lies for a synthesis of the literature.

Russo divides his material into six chapters by subject and unfolds each chronologically. "Foundings" explores the diverse patterns and motivations of town founders in coastal New England and southern colonies, with much less attention paid to southwestern and western Spanish colonial towns. Nineteenth-century midwestern towns are subsumed within Great Plains agricultural service centers. Although Russo acknowledges the role of railroads in founding these towns, he suggests that the railroads followed the farmer rather than the reverse. At least in Iowa and the humid midwestern prairies west of the Mississippi, federal land grants helped railroads finance construction and push them well ahead of the settled countryside.

In the chapter on "Sites," Russo uses historical geography to explain the evolution of town layouts east of the Appalachians. To the west, Russo argues, planned towns were based on the grid. Other generalizations include a claim that the first "revolutionary design in town layout of the modern era" was the post-World War II curvilinear street. Despite some oversimplifications, this chapter also introduces the concept of the transformation wrought by the automobile—truly the greatest agent of change for the American town.

In "Political Life," Russo delves into common forms of town organization and acknowledges the gendered aspect of political life, as well as increasing town complexity and loss of local autonomy in the twentieth century. The last chapters—on economic, social, and cultural life—deal with main street and the decline of specialized crafts, class and status, schools and church, entertainment, and community memory.

As textured as these subjects are, the book's primary weakness reveals itself here, too. Chapters are formulaic in their organization, each commencing with a few lines about American Indians before springboarding into the largely white Protestant subjects that propel the rest of the chapter. References to women and "gendered space" (the author's marks) are brief and stitched into the text with visible seams. Examples of gendered space, including barbershops and dress shops, lack nuance. Prostitution, on the other hand, which offers opportunities to explore the relationship of sex and place, is framed from the customer's perspective and the impact the activity had on *his* marriage and family. This framework ignores the availability of sources such as Patricia Nelson Limerick's *Legacy of Conquest* (1988), which provided a gendered context for prostitution in western settlements. Limerick is one of the heavyweights of the New Western history, but that subfield, along with the corresponding western community studies, is largely ignored.

Conflict between groups with interests antagonistic to the town's elite is also discounted. The author argues that from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, "a hierarchical and varied social structure in towns did not ordinarily produce deep, ongoing . . . persistent divisions based upon class or ethnicity" (198). Rather, "town society usually cohered," kept stable by church parishioners threatening censure, town authorities threatening legal sanctions, and the public criticism of newspaper editors (211). What kept towns from fracturing, Russo suggests, was "geographic and social mobility," which "worked against the hardening of class and ethnic, though not racial divisions. . . . the kind of town didn't matter: everywhere on the continent, dissatisfaction with one's lot could and often did lead to either a social or a geographic change of place" (199). This relief-valve theory of American mobility, however, *prima facie* eliminates the need to examine entire chapters of a town's history or to explore why so many moved on. *American Towns* leaves a clear invitation for others to follow.

*The Rise of the States: Evolution of American State Government*, by Jon C. Teaford. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. 272 pp. Notes, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$21.50 paper.

Reviewer Rebecca Conard is professor of history at Middle Tennessee State University, where she teaches public, environmental, and modern U.S. history. Her most recent book, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History*, was published by University of Iowa Press in 2002.

In *The Rise of the States*, Jon Teaford, a respected urban historian, turns his attention to the history of state government and provides a long

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