

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.

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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

overdue framework for debate. One can only hope that this book will find as wide an audience among historians as it deserves. Political scientists and observers renewed their interest in state leadership and policymaking in concert with the "New Federalism" thrust of the Nixon and Reagan administrations, but, as Teaford rightfully notes, "historians [have been] less interested in the subject, and the evolution of state government was only dimly perceived" (5). In his introductory chapter, he quickly sums up the state of historical scholarship on the topic and states his purpose: to shape an argument that Morton Keller outlined in a short article now 15 years old, "State Power Needn't Be Resurrected Because It Never Died" (*Governing* 2 [October 1988], 53–57). Teaford does so with striking breadth in 230 pages of beautifully written text.

Teaford argues that the "supposed renaissance of state government during the last quarter century . . . was the culmination of decades of change" (8), which he proceeds to characterize in constructive terms. For the most part, he focuses his attention on the financing and administration of state government. Although his evidence suggests more waxing and waning than steady progress, he presents a strong argument that, from 1890 to 1980, the states were significant "factories of government" in their own right (10). Among other things, Teaford demonstrates that between the 1890s and the late 1920s, states assumed primary responsibility for highway development and did so, on the one hand, by setting road construction standards that effectively subordinated local governments and, on the other, by skillfully negotiating state administration of federal funds following passage of the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916—a policy that holds to this day. Teaford also provides ample evidence that, on balance, states professionalized the administration of government at about the same pace as the federal government throughout the twentieth century, and that states have been both aggressive and creative when it comes to budget and finance matters. As a case in point, only after most states had adopted the practice of debating and reshaping a proposed executive budget did Congress create the federal Bureau of the Budget. Likewise, Wisconsin and North Carolina imposed an income tax before the federal government did, and states were the first to adopt consumption taxes. After Oregon levied the first state tax on gasoline in 1919, the rest of the states followed. During the 1930s, financially strapped states quickly abandoned the property tax, leaving it to local governments, and one after another adopted a general sales tax.

Iowa figures most prominently in the pre-1940 decades, not surprising for a state that figures prominently in the history of progressivism.

For instance, Iowa was among the first states to establish a single entity to set policy for its public institutions of higher education. In 1911, Iowa and Minnesota were the first states to adopt classified property taxes in an effort to increase honesty and state revenue. In 1919, State Highway Engineer Thomas MacDonald left Iowa to become head of the federal Bureau of Public Roads, where he took the lead in establishing the federal-state partnership still in existence. During the 1930s, Iowa was one of several states that quickly took action to cap property taxes in order to abate rising tax delinquency rates. Iowa fades to the background in the post-World War II years, although Teaford names Robert Ray as one of several long-term governors who exercised strong executive control over growing state government bureaucracies in the late twentieth century.

Teaford marshals considerable evidence to argue his thesis convincingly, but because his study ends in about 1980, he misses an opportunity to speculate on the long-term implications of the most recent round of severe state budget difficulties. Moreover, his analysis of state government is incomplete. One is left with an uneasy feeling that Teaford's conclusions might not have been quite as confident had he ventured into social and environmental policy areas. The basic outline of civil rights history immediately comes to mind, with the well-known shifts in state versus federal power marked by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A subtler case in point is Teaford's treatment of Iowa's place in the development of state park systems. He asserts that "the needs of the motorist determined the goals of state park commissions" (113). That was true in many states but not so in Iowa even though Des Moines was the site of the 1921 inaugural meeting of the National Conference of State Parks, which, as Teaford notes, assembled under the slogan, "A State Park Every Hundred Miles." To be sure, the Iowa Board of Conservation could not completely ignore the demands of motorists, but its goals were driven by resource concerns, not motorists' needs. The board purposely chose to minimize automobile traffic in state parks by delaying the construction of park roads as long as possible and made a determined effort in the 1920s and early 1930s to prod the state into adopting a comprehensive resource conservation policy that included state park development guidelines. Undoubtedly, there are many such policy areas in the administrative histories of individual states that would blur the big picture, but the value of *The Rise of the States* is that it presents a bold argument for the abiding strength of state government in the federal system.

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