

the ways in which these rituals, crafts, and celebrations were incorporated into life in Minnesota.

The vivid descriptions of folk life and work culture are perhaps the most informative portions of the book. It would be interesting to know more about the political life and activities of the Bohemians. Their attitudes toward and interaction with their Turner compatriots could also be explored in greater depth. Finally, the chapter dealing with the centrality of music and the proliferation of brass bands, while impressive, seems somewhat lengthy and less connected with the remainder of the book.

*German-Bohemians: The Quiet Immigrants* is an important contribution to the study of immigration in the Midwest. It highlights, in an engaging yet authoritative manner, the experiences of a group that has been overshadowed by its illustrious, politically adept neighbors. Those interested in state and local history will welcome this community study. Well documented and filled with scores of fascinating photographs and informative maps, the work will attract a popular as well as scholarly audience.

*The Civil War in Popular Culture: A Reusable Past*, by Jim Cullen. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995. 253 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

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*The Civil War in Popular Culture* represents an ambitious attempt to reimagine what it might mean to "do" history. Seeking to focus a series of far-ranging speculations about the relationship between popular culture and representations of the past, the book devotes separate chapters to specific texts about the Civil War: Carl Sandburg's popular biography of Abraham Lincoln (1927-28), the film *Glory* (1989), *Gone With the Wind* (novel in 1936, film in 1939), rock songs by southern-born musicians such as Randy Newman and Tom Petty, and the historical pageants created by people who lovingly reenact the battles of the 1860s. Because even people interested in popular history have their favorites, one of the virtues of *The Civil War in Popular Culture* is its eclecticism. Thus readers who wish to ignore (or perhaps forget) the rebel rock of Lynyrd Skynyrd or the Allman Brothers can turn to Cullen's analyses of the racial politics of *Glory* or the curious appeal of *Gone with the Wind*.

In celebrating recent attempts, particularly in the increasingly broad field called cultural history, to acknowledge the power of individual and collective "memory," this study seeks to refocus historical

debate on material that academic historians have traditionally dismissed. To dismiss popular culture, however, unnecessarily limits public debate, Jim Cullen insists. Civil War reenactors and amateur historians "have ideas about the past," ideas that are "intelligible" and deserve serious analysis (195). Moreover, people who engage the Civil War—and presumably other topics in U.S. history—through works of popular culture can, as do Sandburg and Margaret Mitchell, provide examples of "passion and discipline" in the search to represent the complexities of the past (107). Both "the expert and the citizen" need to find common ground on which they might construct, "in a mutually satisfactory way," meaningful dialogue about the past, discourse that honors the "obligation of memory" (7, 202).

"The art of history," Cullen concludes, is too important to be left to those credentialed in the academy. The works of popular historians, such as Newman and Mitchell, belie claims that "professional scholarship offers a degree of analytical sophistication unavailable in popular culture." Rather, academic history is "best understood as a series of shared conventions": reliance on primary sources, footnotes, bibliographies, and "even rhetorical patterns such as the use of the topic sentence as a key unit for organizing an argument" (202).

Cullen does confront the limitations of popular culture as history. Reenactors work to master the details of Civil War uniforms and battlefield tactics, for example, but they invariably show little interest in the context, particularly the historiographical context, of the social texts they are scripting. The issue of slavery, and the broader matter of race, for example, rarely become issues among reenactors or among "Civil War buffs" in general. Cullen concedes that popular renditions of the Civil War, including Ken Burns's celebrated TV series, have been largely "white affair[s]," but he expresses optimism that a truly pluralistic dialogue might honestly engage very different views of history.

Cullen's position is hardly a new one—major professional journals, after all, now review popular films about history—but it does highlight some salient issues, especially for those who struggle over how to bridge the gap between the academy and the history-consuming public. Obviously, the kinds of questions that Cullen raises are particularly important for students of state and local history, fields in which professionally trained scholars have long worked alongside "amateur" compatriots. Similarly, state and local historical societies increasingly must negotiate disputes that can come down to a simplistically framed battle between (professional) history and (popular) memory. Far better than some recent polemics on behalf of professional history (and, inevitably, academic freedom), *The Civil War in Popular Culture* helps to illuminate the contemporary practice of history—a contested terrain

that must, if its practitioners are as open to diversely generated perspectives as Jim Cullen, encompass the politics of the present as well as those of the past.

*The Frontier in American Culture*, by Richard White and Patricia Nelson Limerick, edited by James R. Grossman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. xiii, 116 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendix. \$30.00 cloth, \$15.00 paper.

REVIEWED BY ANNE M. BUTLER, UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

As editor, James R. Grossman deserves recognition for the lush production of *The Frontier in American Culture*, designed to complement a recent exhibition at the Newberry Library in Chicago. Drawing on the considerable talents of two of western history's brightest stars, Richard White and Patricia Nelson Limerick, Grossman shapes an exhibit catalog into a fresh intellectual piece within a visually attractive format. The content consists of an essay apiece from White and Limerick, a generous pictorial selection of exhibit items, and a list of the materials displayed. The result is a short volume, but one that goes far beyond the usual publication in this genre.

Richard White, in "Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill," frames his essay around the Newberry exhibit. But rather than offering a summary of the exhibited works, White assesses the items on display by commenting on the joint national impact of Turner and Cody. In so doing, he elevates the two seemingly disparate frontier celebrities to common cultural importance. He explores the western vision of both, assesses their parallel contributions to the emergence of our national identity, and bonds his observations to the text's illustrations. White explains how other Americans, especially artists, absorbed and expressed the ideas of Turner and Cody.

Tracing familiar terrain with his discussion of Frederick Jackson Turner, White manages to infuse his essay with observations that show that the shop-worn frontier thesis can still elicit thoughtful writing in the hands of an imaginative scholar. At the same time, White layers his work with his own perceptions of the American identity.

It is this aspect that gives grace to Richard White's writing. With his razor-like mind and keen wit comes his undisguised love for the West and its history. While White calls for a more critical examination of the West, he does so with complete respect for his subject and inspires readers with a national vision that sees above all the unity of the American people. Everyone should read White's essay, worrying less about his criticisms of past interpretations and focusing more on

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