

From Ackley to Zwingle: The Origins of Iowa Place Names, by Harold E. Dilts. Second edition. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993. ix, 235 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, maps, index, appendix. \$14.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY TOM CAROLLO, SOUTHWEST IOWA REGIONAL LIBRARY

This second edition of *From Ackley to Zwingle* follows the format of the first edition. Two hundred place names have been added to the second edition, and entries carrying over from the first edition have been corrected and added to. The alphabetical arrangement of place names lists Iowa's counties, but concentrates on the names of Iowa's incorporated cities. Over 1,200 place names are discussed, but, as the author clearly states, the list is neither complete nor exhaustive. The author appends a list of place names for which origins have not been determined, a list of place name changes and nicknames, and a list of city place names county by county. Each description carries a reference citation to a relevant item in the bibliography. The author identifies verbal or folkloristic explanations of place name origins.

Dilts gives us an excellent example of popular local history. The book's comprehensive scope provides readers with an introduction to the development of Iowa's railroad system and a glimpse at the impact of the federal postal system on Iowa's society and history. Often the bibliographic sources provide more detailed analysis of a specific place name, but Dilts provides the single, best general compilation for ready reference use. Local history authors will find this work useful as they update city and county histories, and students of local history will also find useful facts in this book.

High on the Okaw's Western Bank: Vandalia, Illinois, 1819-1839, by Paul E. Stroble, Jr. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992. xiii, 178 pp. Chronology, illustrations, notes, index. \$32.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM ROBA, SCOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Paul Stroble has written the first scholarly monograph on Illinois's second capital. Although the book offers little insight into the nature of community on the prairie frontier, it does offer interesting vignettes of the first generation of inhabitants. Stroble concludes, not surprisingly, that the town had its own leaders who created a modestly successful town.

Throughout the narrative, Stroble ignores the useful distinction between those who tried to create an Anglo-European settlement no

matter how long they lived in an area and those who were transitory inhabitants, whether for a season or for several years. Thus, Stroble considers as residents legislators such as Abraham Lincoln, even though his attendance at an Illinois legislative session never lasted for more than about three months in one year. This problem is obvious in chapter two, where Stroble briefly describes the arrival in 1821 of nearly one hundred German settlers from the kingdom of Hanover, but fails to place them into a community context. This is unsettling because Stroble's 1987 article in the *Illinois Historical Journal* clearly shows how their tenuous connection to the town lasted barely a year. This structural flaw also appears in the way Stroble treats James Hall, one of the earliest midwestern writers. Although Hall lived in Vandalia for six years, Stroble fails to develop any community connections. He does describe Hall's activities in a number of local cultural clubs, but merely assumes that activity somehow enhanced the meaning of living in the town. There is no evidence that the unique identity of the town shows up in any of Hall's writings: he could have been living in Dubuque, Iowa; or Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; or Richmond, Indiana.

The missing ingredient is a comparative approach. In an early footnote, Stroble refers to Colonel Thomas Cox (1787-1844), a land surveyor and member of both the Illinois state legislature and the Iowa territorial legislature. Cox's experience in the early 1820s led him to choose unoccupied land as the logical place for a new Illinois capital. In 1838 he used the same logic in choosing the unoccupied land of Johnson County instead of Mt. Pleasant for Iowa's capital. Here is surely a lost opportunity for comparison.

Anyone hoping to find insights into the early career of Abraham Lincoln, the failure of a German settlement in the Midwest, the community influences on James Hall, or community development in the antebellum Midwest will be sorely disappointed.

Missouri '49er: The Journal of William W. Hunter on the Southern Gold Trail, edited by David P. Robrock. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992. xxix, 299 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY M. GUY BISHOP, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

William W. Hunter's gold rush account contained in his carefully recorded journals offers a telling account of the Callaway County (Missouri) Pioneers' trek across the southern route to the gold fields.

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