

*Tough Daisies: Kansas Humor from "The Lane County Bachelor" to Bob Dole*, by C. Robert Haywood. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995. xvi, 286 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$22.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY LEO E. OLIVA, WOODSTON, KANSAS

Kansas, like Iowa, does not have a reputation as a funny place. On the contrary, most people probably think of Kansans as primarily serious, sober, and dry. Indeed, except for William Allen White, there never seemed to be much levity among Kansas's best-known public figures, including Alfred M. Landon, Arthur Capper, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Bob Dole. Even Emmett Kelly was a sad clown.

Dig a little deeper, however, and there appear the likes of Senator John J. Ingalls, Populist orator Mary Elizabeth Lease, Populist congressman "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, "goat-gland" doctor and gubernatorial candidate John R. Brinkley, and saloon-smashing prohibitionist Carrie Nation, people who exuded humor regardless of their intentions. Besides the famous and infamous, among the ordinary people of Kansas, there has been a rich heritage of humor that developed especially to deal with hard times from pioneering on the semi-arid plains to the Dust Bowl and Great Depression.

C. Robert Haywood, a third-generation Kansan and distinguished professor of history emeritus at Washburn University in Topeka, has accomplished what most students of social history would argue could not be done, that is, provide a scholarly analysis of Kansas humor. He is exceptionally qualified for this, having been a keen observer of the subject since childhood and an avid researcher. Some of Haywood's earlier publications helped prepare him for this uncommon task. Humor was naturally an ingredient in his *Cowtown Lawyers* (1988) and *Victorian West: Class and Culture in Kansas Cattle Towns* (1990). He produced a witty novel about growing up in Kansas, *PK: The Preacher's Kid* (1985), and edited, with his daughter, "A Funnie Place, No Fences": *Teenagers' View of Kansas, 1867-1900* (1992).

Haywood's title represents something of a double entendre. Years ago the author's young urban cousin picked a sunflower, after some struggle, and declared it was one "tough daisy." Like the sunflower, the people of the sunflower state have had to be "tough daisies" to survive the challenges of nature (drought, flood, blizzard, dust, mud, and wind, all of which have been subjects of Kansas humor).

A couple of examples may entice readers to this impressive book. During the Dust Bowl a western Kansas farmer sent a sample of his well water in for testing. The report came back that it was 30 percent moisture. During the Great Depression a newspaper salesman called on a farmer who had nothing left. The salesman offered a subscription

for eggs, but the farmer had sold his chickens. He would accept butter, but the farmer had sold his cows. He would take corn, but the farmer had sold that, too. Determined to make a sale, the salesman said he would take a load of cobs. The farmer responded, "Listen, mister, I can't read and if I had cobs I wouldn't need your newspaper."

Haywood's sampler of Kansas humor from various eras, including tall tales, songs, poems, and cartoons, is an informative and entertaining book that will delight general readers and social historians.

*Nebraska History: An Annotated Bibliography*, compiled by Michael L. Tate. Bibliographies of the States of the United States, no. 6. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995. xxiii, 549 pp. Chronology, index. \$79.95 cloth.

*Nebraska: An Illustrated History*, by Frederick C. Luebke. The Great Plains Photography Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995. xxiv, 405 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY CHARLENE LEHMAN AND MARY E. NOBLE, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA LIBRARIES

Today, as in the past, travelers cross Nebraska without realizing the variety of its terrain, the diversity of its economy, or the richness of its history. To contribute to a better understanding of this central state, Michael L. Tate has compiled a handy, up-to-date bibliography for academics and amateurs, and Frederick C. Luebke has assembled an impressive collection of photographs and other illustrations to accompany his concisely written history.

Professor Tate has assembled the first systematic bibliography for the state, listing items published prior to October 1994. The book is arranged by broad topic, with separate listings for general histories and reference works, maps, and community and county histories. Entries have short descriptive or evaluative annotations except for the few items Tate was unable to personally examine and the publications listed among the community and county histories. Additional indexing has improved access to the community and county histories.

Users of the volume will want to read carefully the compiler's preface, which sets out the scope of the work and directs readers to supplementary sources. Tate's work includes most of the theses and dissertations included in an earlier work: Frederick W. Adrian's *Theses and Dissertations Dealing with Nebraska and Nebraskans* (1975). Tate provides new annotations for the theses and dissertations and incorporates items produced since 1970. He includes only the most important works from Nimmo and Cutler's *Nebraska Local History and Genealogy Reference Guide* (1987). Because other recent guides exist for materials

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