

Belleville, Ottawa, and Galesburg: Community and Democracy on the Illinois Frontier, by Kay J. Carr. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996. xii, 226 pp. Maps, tables, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY NICOLE ETCHESON, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

Kay J. Carr's new book combines several different subfields of United States history. First, this is at heart a community study that lays out the development of three Illinois towns during their frontier period in the first part of the nineteenth century. Second, Carr's thesis touches on that perennial of western history, the frontier thesis and its emphasis on democracy as at the heart of western communities. Far be it from Carr to return to the argument that the frontier produced democracy. Rather, she is interested in how the dynamics of town building on the frontier affected the kind of democratic political structures each town created. Finally, the study contributes to the history of the Midwest by its in-depth focus on the evolution of these three towns with their differing ethnic and political makeups. Carr registers yet another dissent by a historian of the Midwest against the perception of that region as unrelievedly homogeneous.

Belleville's most distinctive component was its relative ethnic richness, with nearby French settlements and a large and diverse German population. Ottawa was marked by its position on the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which made it a transportation hub. Knox College dominated the town of Galesburg, making it a much more cohesive community with an elite dominated by Yankees. In her chapters on the towns and the people, Carr does an excellent job of laying out the structure of the towns, their ethnic and class divisions, and the overlap between the two. She explores how location and population affected the three community's actions and reactions to important issues of early Illinois, including the coming of the railroads, the creation of public schools, and political partisanship.

Ironically, Galesburg, with the most united elite and the least in the way of transportation networks, benefited most of the three towns from the railroad's advent. Ottawa, despite its natural advantage of being a prerailroad transportation center, and Belleville did worse because of their divided political leaderships. Once again, cohesiveness enabled Galesburg to come to a consensus on public schooling, whereas Ottawa and Belleville fractured along ethnic lines in the school systems they constructed. In politics, Carr finds that local elites often subordinated national issues to the needs of the community, limiting partisanship for the town's gain.

The book is well written and thorough. Carr begins her town histories with the Native Americans and provides comprehensive overviews of topics such as surveying procedures and separate spheres. There are occasional interesting anecdotes, but few people emerge as interesting personalities, and then only fleetingly. In fact, the numerous informative tables in the appendix demonstrate one difference between this book and many other community studies. Carr provides information on population growth, nativity, and occupations, but the book often stays on a general level. The statistics, in the appendixes and as cited in the text, give readers an overview of the composition of the town, its structure, and patterns of activity, but few individuals and personalities emerge for very long from these overviews. One does not come away feeling that one knows Belleville or another of these towns because one has followed the lives of various families in that town over a generation or more. Rather, one knows the occupations of Prussian or Hessian residents in Belleville and their place in the class hierarchy of the town. Readers will know the town's structure but not its life.

In her conclusion, Carr sets out a typology for the study of frontier communities. She emphasizes the need to study towns' links to regional and national systems, their ethnic and religious heterogeneity or lack thereof, and the "political, economic, and cultural factionalism or cohesiveness" among their elites (144). Although the book contains little of direct relevance to those interested in Iowa history, it may serve as a useful road map to those doing similar studies of other midwestern communities.

Frontier Settlement and Market Revolution: The Holland Land Purchase, by Charles E. Brooks. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996. x, 239 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, index. \$42.50 cloth.

The Agricultural Transition in New York State: Markets and Migration in Mid-Nineteenth Century America, by Donald H. Parkerson. Henry A. Wallace Series on Agricultural History and Rural Life. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1995. xii, 196 pp. Illustrations, figures, tables, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MARGARET BEATTIE BOGUE, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

In *Frontier Settlement and Market Revolution*, Charles E. Brooks reinterprets a familiar chapter in the history of frontier western New York, the experience of pioneer farmer settlers and their company landlords as they developed the Holland Land Company's 3.3 million acres.

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