

Book Reviews

Grassland, Forest, and Historical Settlement: An Analysis of Dynamics in Northeast Missouri, by Michael J. O'Brien, with contributions by Jacqueline A. Ferguson, Dennis E. Lewarch, Chad K. McDaniel, William M. Selby, Lynn M. Snyder, and Robert E. Warren. Studies in North American Anthropology. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. xxii, 345 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliographical references, index. \$25.00 cloth.

This volume presents a detailed examination of early American settlement processes and patterns during the frontier and postfrontier period in a portion of northeastern Missouri covering an area of approximately 444 square miles. The research was conducted in the central Salt River valley as part of the Cannon Reservoir Human Ecology Project sponsored by the St. Louis District of the United States Corps of Engineers. The project, directed by anthropologist Michael J. O'Brien, was an interdisciplinary effort involving the perspectives of anthropology, geography, and history. In the words of the authors, the book "is really a synthesis of eight years effort to investigate and understand changes in the Euro-American settlement of the Salt River Valley" (6).

Employing ecological and spatial approaches to reconstruct the dynamic picture of frontier settlement in the study area, the authors organized their research around four general topics: the household, the farmstead, the community, and the settlement patterns. Specific research questions dealt with settlement location, land acquisition, land use, land productivity, family organization, household organizations, social hierarchy, and ideological forces.

A key section of the book is devoted to settlement theory. The authors present an exhaustive review of the literature in the field, with particular emphasis on anthropology and geography. A synthetic model of historical settlement in the project area follows. The model, which is aimed at explaining changes in settlement configuration through time, recognizes three stages: colonization, filling in, and competition. While generally patterned after J. C. Hudson's theory of rural settlement, the authors add several economic and sociocultural dimensions as well as physical environmental dimensions of the Salt River valley to better explain the pattern of observed settlement in the study area. Throughout the study the authors stress the dynamic character of the frontier settlement in Missouri. Settlement required adaptation, and adaptation changed constantly and rapidly as perceptions and circumstances altered.

The empirical study of settlement in the Salt River valley focuses on six topics, each constituting a chapter: (1) the physical environment; (2) general patterns of settlement; (3) environmental dimensions of

settlement; (4) social dimensions of settlement, including kinship, commonality of origin, and religious affiliation; (5) the built environment, including a classification system for frontier houses; and (6) the frontier household. In reconstructing a picture of early settlement in the Salt River valley, the authors examine the roots of the frontier settlers in both cultural and geographical terms. The treatment of the Bluegrass region of Kentucky and the Upper South culture that evolved there, for example, provides a valuable perspective for understanding and interpreting the frontier settlement of Missouri.

In their concluding remarks, the authors express their belief that the real value of their study "is in demonstrating the necessity for a formal theory of human settlement" (323). Actually, though, this study has value at several levels. For those with an interest in the project area, the material presented in this volume should prove invaluable. And although the study is of a relatively small geographic area, it clearly has implications for the study of the frontier period throughout the Midwest. For those who deal at a more general level in the study of the frontier, this study provides the kinds of specific details that rarely have been available in the past. Still, the greatest value of this study is perhaps in its contribution to settlement theory. The development of explanatory and predictive models represents a significant contribution to the literature in the field.

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This Well-Wooded Land: Americans and Their Forests from Colonial Times to the Present, by Thomas R. Cox, Robert S. Maxwell, Phillip Drennon Thomas, and Joseph J. Malone. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985. xvii, 325 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendix, bibliographical essay, index. \$27.95 cloth.

An English visitor to the United States in the 1790s observed that Americans "have an unconquerable aversion to trees. . . . not one is spared; all share the same fate, and all are involved in the same general havoc" (53). In a thought-provoking study that explores why and how Americans chopped, felled, and processed trees from the early colonial period to the present, the authors accomplish more than a mere chronicle of lumbering; they peer deeply into human motives and economic causation. The result is a stimulating perspective on trees, which were so common, always taken for granted because of their plenitude, and ultimately protected by conservation and common sense.

The authors follow a chronological format and yet examine specific topics. The thirteen chapters are roughly divided into four groups,

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