

Book Reviews and Notices

The Heartland: An American History, by Kristin L. Hoganson. New York: Penguin Press, 2019. xxvi, 399 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$30 hardcover.

Reviewer Andrew Offenburger is assistant professor of history at Miami University. He is the author of *Frontiers in the Gilded Age: Adventure, Capitalism, and Dispossession from Southern Africa to the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands, 1880-1917* (2019).

In *The Heartland*, Kristin Hoganson is a historian on the hunt, out to dispel a myth in American popular culture: that the Midwest forms the heart of the country and is an isolated, parochial place. Wielding a six-chapter study like a historiographical shotgun, Hoganson loads each chapter with a broad array of historical evidence, calling attention to the region's global connections, using her resident county of Champaign, Illinois, as a focal point. With overwhelming evidence to connect the local to the global, the author then fires a sustained attack on myth and memory, effectively arguing for a new way of understanding the Midwest. Some of her shots hit, some miss, but the end result is a serious blow to midwestern isolationism.

Where others see white picket fences and a purely American homeland, Hoganson finds deep global roots and common imperial ambitions. "What is the nation at heart when we unbind it from myth?" she asks as a guiding question (xxv). Her response to this—less an answer to "what is" than a deconstruction of "what isn't"—constitutes a series of in-depth case studies meant to foreground the region's global ties. In chapter one, probably the most effective and persuasive contribution, she shows how settler pressures on indigenous lands led to the dispossession of the Kickapoo, among other indigenous peoples, and to Euro-Americans' reclaiming the region as one of permanent heritage. From this milieu emerged the local historical texts bound in gilded covers that functioned as mechanisms to establish legitimacy, normalcy, conservatism, and heritage for a Turnerian readership. Chapter two explores the northern and southern connections of the developing cattle industry in the nineteenth century, which readers will recognize as the author's acclaimed "Meat in the Middle" article in the *Journal of American History*. Chapter three details the cross-breeding of hogs in England and the overlapping eugenic and social Darwinist beliefs that tied Americans to their former mother country. Chapter four explores the anti-isolationism of alliance politics during the late nineteenth century.

The final two chapters deserve special consideration (below), but, as the previous chapter summaries may indicate, the book focuses, consistently and insistently, on the strength of local and global ties. This produces an unwieldy analysis at times, exemplified by a summary paragraph from the introduction. There the author describes her search, which led her to “Anglo-Saxonist pigs, Chinese miracle plants, celebrity bulls, polar explorers, African winds, World War I aces, racialized bees, Cuban radio chatter, and UFOs. One thread led to an 1873 cavalry invasion of Mexico; another to diarrhea-induced scandals on British ships. Still other threads connected Champaign to consular outposts in Germany, bioprospectors in Manchuria, congresses of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and a fledgling agricultural college in Piracicaba, Brazil. I learned of reservations for westward-moving native tribes of birds, the politics of tornado mapping, an Algonquian people living under an international bridge, Malthusian fears of a global race war, a Hindu student’s arrival in a place he hadn’t known existed, and people on the ground wondering when the next bomb would fall. I found so many leads that I could not possibly follow them all” (xxv–xxvi).

Overwhelming, yes, and intentionally—effectively—so. One cannot set the book down after six chapters of a global barrage against provincialism and come away with the same view of the Midwest. By this measure, the work is a considerable success and an important contribution to reformulating the American middle. The consequences of this strategy, however, lead to less persuasive sections, notably chapter five, which aims to contradict the trite characterization of the Midwest as “flyover country.” To do so, Hoganson turns to the skies to discuss telecommunications (from the appearance of telegraph poles to wireless telegraphy), the politics of meteorology, hunting and birds, kite flying, ballooning, and militarized airspace. The chapter feels disjointed, quirky, and a step too far.

Whereas the author’s analytical framework might hamper some of the narrative, it often produces significant interventions. Chapter six follows the Kickapoo as they are removed from Illinois to Kansas, Indian Territory (Oklahoma), and Mexico, nearly all of which takes place beyond today’s understanding of the Midwest. For this reason, some readers may see this chapter as easily excluded from the study, but that would miss the author’s point. Dispossession and its consequences must be understood as midwestern phenomena. Chapter six is not an appendage about displaced Native Americans beyond the nation’s margins; rather, it is central to the story about the middle. If teaching *The Heartland* in undergraduate courses, professors might ask their students, “Was chapter six necessary?” In arguing the negative, some students might come to realize that their own ideas about the region need updating.

After reading this scattershot assault on regional parochialism, one emerges from the text with a different line of questioning, though: What is truly local? If nearly everything can be traced back to extra-regional origins, what makes any particular place distinct? And what makes the foreign uniquely foreign, and not the byproduct of some other migration or connection? Are all places therefore a matter of historical definition? These questions fall beyond the scope of this book, but Hoganson's re-situating of the Midwest—away from the musty pages of prairie yore and toward a dynamic region with a complex past—has the potential to guide the way to a new synthesis. The myth may yet survive, but it is staggering.

Petroglyphs of the Kansas Smoky Hills, by Rex C. Buchanan, Burke W. Griggs, and Joshua L. Svaty. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019. x, 209 pp. Map, color illustrations, glossary, references, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer David W. Benn is an archeologist affiliated with Bear Creek Archeology, Inc., who lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Petroglyphs of the Kansas Smoky Hills is a photographic record of 12 prehistoric rock art sites and one intaglio site in the Smoky Hills region of central Kansas. The authors—a geologist, a lawyer, and a local resident—must have expended considerable energy and resources to publish this beautiful volume in large format (11" x 11") with the goal of preserving a detailed record of relatively obscure rock art sites. They did not attempt to document all of the rock art sites even in the Smoky Hills region, although that region seems to contain large amounts of rock art. The authors do not provide site locations, because nearly all of the sites are situated on private property where concerns about trespassing and vandalism are paramount.

The book's first chapter offers an overview of the sites, including their histories of discovery and background about prehistoric tribes who occupied the region. The concluding chapter ("Challenges") predicts that weathering will gradually but inevitably dissolve the soft sandstone and its rock art images. Between these two chapters are 13 chapters with basic descriptions of each rock art site (and the "serpent" intaglio) with headings like "Horses and People," "Anthropomorphs," "Bluff above the Smoky Hill River," "Bison and People," "Shield at Spring," "Birds, Lines on Bluff," etc. The descriptive and, at times, lyrical text in each chapter is formed around one or more spectacular color photographs of site context and the most visible petroglyph images achieved under natural lighting. Close-up photos display petroglyph