

# The Annals of Iowa

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## In This Issue

MATTHEW CECIL, associate professor in the South Dakota State University Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, describes the up-and-down relationship between J. Edgar Hoover's FBI and the staff at the *Des Moines Register and Tribune* and Cowles Publications. *Register* and *Tribune* staff, for the most part, kept some editorial distance from the bureau and occasionally gently criticized Hoover and the FBI, but at times some of them were willing to flatter Hoover or fit their reporting to FBI public relations rubrics in order to secure access to information.

JON K. LAUCK, senior advisor and counsel to U.S. Senator John Thune, offers a portrait of a group of historians he calls "Prairie Historians." From the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, those historians, in reaction to a sense that the profession was unduly dominated by easterners, called attention to the Midwest, toiled to make the region's historical institutions functional and productive, wrote substantial histories of the region, won Pulitzer Prizes, and focused on the nation's democratic heritage and prospects.

## Front Cover

The Mississippi Valley Historical Association (MVHA) met in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1932. (The State Historical Society of Iowa's Benjamin F. Shambaugh is seated just to the right of center in the foreground, with Louis Pelzer across the table from him.) For more on the founders of the MVHA and their contributions to the history of the Midwest, see Jon Lauck's article in this issue. Image from State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

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# The Annals of Iowa

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# “Whoa, Edgar”: The *Des Moines Register and Tribune*, Cowles Publications, and J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI

MATTHEW CECIL

ON FEBRUARY 3, 1951, Louis B. Nichols, the powerful head of the public relations-oriented Crime Records Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), sent a memorandum to the bureau’s second-highest-ranking official, Associate Director Clyde Tolson. In his memorandum, Nichols noted that he had met a young Cowles Publications reporter, Clark Mollenhoff. Nichols added that he came away impressed. He noted that in 1945 the Des Moines Special Agent in Charge had reported that Mollenhoff “was awkward, has a colorless personality, and does not appear to be a fluent talker.” The agent thought Mollenhoff would not develop satisfactorily. “Of course six years can make a lot of difference but I got entirely a different impression of Mollenhoff. He, frankly, looked exceedingly good to me.”<sup>1</sup>

The FBI was not interested in Mollenhoff’s development as a watchdog journalist. Instead, given the FBI’s long-term focus on public relations, it was interested in whether or not it could count on Mollenhoff to withhold criticism of the FBI, to amplify the FBI’s successes, and, in certain circumstances, to come to the

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1. Louis B. Nichols, Memorandum to Clyde Tolson, 2/3/1951, FBI file 94-8-137-94.

The research for this article was supported by a grant from the State Historical Society of Iowa.

THE ANNALS OF IOWA 71 (Spring 2012). © The State Historical Society of Iowa, 2012.

bureau's defense against critics. For example, just the day before Nichols made his assessment of Mollenhoff, he had written to Tolson regarding public statements by the governors of Iowa and Nebraska, who had been criticizing what they saw as the FBI's overzealous efforts to circumvent local police jurisdiction. "It seems to me that we should endeavor within the next two days to get up a good story of the Bureau's coverage and jurisdiction pitched from the local angles of Nebraska and Iowa," Nichols wrote, noting that the FBI had friends in newsrooms in Lincoln and Omaha who would surely help. In a handwritten note on the memo, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover agreed: "I indicated some weeks ago a need for just such a story through our whole country."<sup>2</sup> Reporters like Mollenhoff, who represented newspapers in Des Moines and Minneapolis for Cowles Publications, were valuable contacts for FBI public relations officials.

Throughout the Hoover era, particularly from 1933 to 1972, the FBI monitored reporters, editors, publishers, and publications and evaluated them based on their willingness and ability to be helpful in amplifying the FBI's preferred public relations messages.<sup>3</sup> In 1959 the bureau compiled a report, "Molders of Public Opinion," stating the agency's reasons for monitoring the press: "Looking at the following representative segment of those molding public opinion today, we can raise the question as to whether or not many have made themselves worthy of American ideals so that they may be entrusted with carrying forward human progress and dignity."<sup>4</sup>

The "Molders" memorandum focused primarily on the alleged communist affiliations of high-profile national journalists like I. F. Stone, Walter Lippmann, Drew Pearson, and James A. Wechsler, but the voluminous FBI files on John and Gardner (Mike) Cowles, the *Des Moines Register and Tribune*, and Clark Mollenhoff and several other key staffers demonstrate that the

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2. Louis B. Nichols Memorandum to Clyde Tolson, 2/2/1951, FBI file, unserialized. At times, the FBI failed to include a specific serial number on a document. Files are, however, generally organized in chronological order. Unserialized documents may be located within a given file using the date.

3. Using the Freedom of Information Act, I have collected more than 90,000 pages of FBI files on prominent journalists and publications.

4. William C. Sullivan, "Molders of Public Opinion," Memorandum to Alan H. Belmont, 3/18/1959, FBI file 100-40167-7, iii.

bureau's interest in activities of the press extended to regional and local publications as well national ones.

The copious detail in the files reveals the lengths to which the FBI would go to build and maintain relationships with media representatives. Incidents when relationships faltered demonstrate ongoing evaluations by FBI officials who categorized journalists and publications as friend or foe. And the tenor of correspondence and contacts between the FBI and staff at the *Register* and *Tribune* and Cowles Publications offers a glimpse into the ways each side curried favor and sought access to the other.<sup>5</sup> A review of these files also provides insight into how Hoover and the FBI viewed legendary journalists with Iowa connections—Mike and John Cowles, Clark Mollenhoff, William Wesley Waymack, Richard Lawson Wilson, and others.

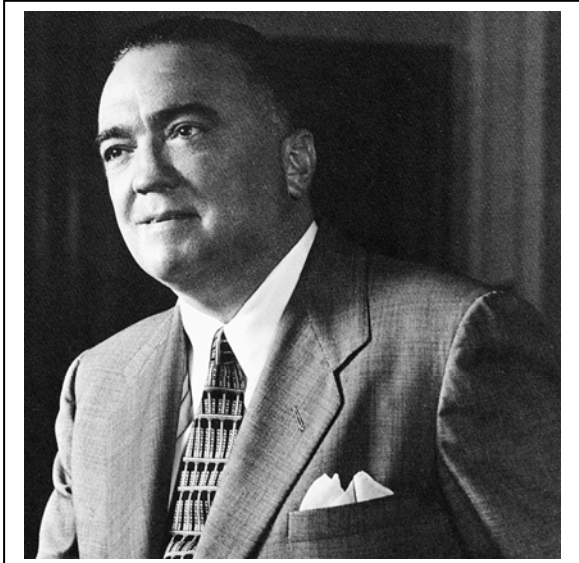
ACTING against the wishes of Congress, Attorney General Charles J. Bonaparte created an investigative bureau within the Justice Department in 1908. Earlier that year, Congress had rejected an effort to create an investigative agency in the Justice Department, citing fears of centralized police power.<sup>6</sup> That controversy created an ongoing crisis of legitimacy for the FBI and its precursor agencies, setting it up as a target for critics, particularly during periods when the bureau's jurisdiction and authority were expanded. Creating an image of restraint and utility to counter critics who questioned the legitimacy of FBI jurisdiction and tactics was a key motivator underlying the FBI's public relations efforts.<sup>7</sup>

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5. In 1903 Gardner Cowles purchased a controlling interest in the *Des Moines Register*. In the 1920s Cowles consolidated all of the major newspapers in Des Moines and formed the Register and Tribune Company, publishing the *Register* in the morning and the *Tribune* in the afternoon. In the 1930s, as his sons took over the company, they expanded to Minneapolis, eventually gaining control of all of the major papers in that city, then launching *Look* magazine and several other publications all under the auspices of Cowles Publications. See William B. Friedrichs, *Covering Iowa: The History of the Des Moines Register and Tribune Company* (Ames, 2000).

6. Athan Theoharis et al., eds., *The FBI: A Comprehensive Reference Guide* (New York, 2000), 141–42; Athan Theoharis and John Stuart Cox, *The Boss: J. Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisition* (Philadelphia, 1988), 43, 84, 88, 99.

7. Theoharis et al., eds., *The FBI*, 102–3, 141–42.



*J. Edgar Hoover in an undated photo from FBI files.*

J. Edgar Hoover had previously served as head of the General Intelligence Division of the Justice Department and was a key figure in the controversial 1920 Red Scare Palmer Raids that rounded up suspected anarchists and communists. He became director of the Bureau of Investigation four years later. From 1924 to 1934, Hoover's bureau operated quietly, with much of the director's energy expended in reorganizing and professionalizing the organization. Specifically, Hoover spent those early years tuning the agency's bureaucratic structure and steering clear of the corruption temptations of prohibition enforcement. As late as 1934, when Hoover had been director of what was then the Division of Investigation (renamed the FBI in 1935) for ten years, the agency's work remained little known outside of Washington. Six years later, however, Hoover and his special agents were cultural icons, lionized in the news and entertainment media.<sup>8</sup>

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8. *Ibid.*, 362–64; Eugene Lewis, *Public Entrepreneurship: Toward a Theory of Bureaucratic Political Power: The Organizational Lives of Hyman Rickover, J. Edgar Hoover, and Robert Moses* (Bloomington, IN, 1980), 94; Richard Gid Powers, *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York, 1987), 227.



In those few years, Hoover's FBI moved from the fringes of the public mind to the center of politics and popular culture in America. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal had gathered increased power within the federal government, including an emphasis on federal law enforcement and public relations. After dabbling in media relations in the early 1930s, Hoover created the Crime Records Division in 1935 and named Louis B. Nichols to head the division. Crime Records handled public affairs for the bureau throughout the remaining three decades of Hoover's tenure, and Nichols came to be considered by some to be the second most influential person in the history of the FBI. By 1936, the FBI had grown from fewer than 100 agents in 1930 to nearly 900 agents stationed in the Seat of Government, as FBI headquarters in Washington was called, and in 52 field offices nationwide.<sup>9</sup>

The once unknown Hoover and his FBI had become "reassuring symbol[s] of security and stability for most Americans."<sup>10</sup> For decades, reports of FBI exploits captured the public imagination as the agency grew in size, in jurisdiction, and as a source of public interest. FBI public relations efforts, beginning with the war on crime in the 1930s and continuing with the war on communism in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, included an ongoing series of organized communication campaigns aimed at solidifying the bureau's position in society, establishing Hoover as America's top cop, and alleviating public fears of the bureau becoming an American secret police.<sup>11</sup>

Relationships with key reporters, editors, and publishers in Washington and across the country were key to Hoover's efforts to maintain his central position in American culture and government.<sup>12</sup> In many cases, those reporters, editors, and publishers

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9. Kenneth O'Reilly, "A New Deal for the FBI: The Roosevelt Administration, Crime Control, and National Security," *Journal of American History* 82 (1982), 642; Theoharis et al., eds., *The FBI*, 176, 346; Theoharis and Cox, *The Boss*, 157.

10. Powers, *Secrecy and Power*, 227.

11. Theoharis and Cox, *The Boss*, 43, 84, 88, 99.

12. See, for example, Matthew Cecil, "'Press Every Angle': FBI Public Relations and the 'Smear Campaign' of 1958," *American Journalism* 19 (2002), 39-58; and Matthew Cecil, "Friends of the Bureau: Personal Correspondence and the Cultivation of Journalist-adjuncts by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 88 (2011), 267-84.

provided Hoover with a megaphone for his message and a willing team of defenders against criticisms of the FBI. In other cases, the relationships were merely a function of ongoing media relations efforts to promote the bureau's preferred image of itself through the pages of local and regional newspapers.

THERE ARE MYRIAD DEFINITIONS of public relations, but most scholars agree that the practice is distinguished from simple publicity by its focus on gaining insight into the nature of the audience. The term public relations was coined in 1920, when Edward Bernays outlined the practice in his book *Crystallizing Public Opinion*. Bernays later termed public relations work as the "engineering of consent" in which expert communicators research their audiences, gain an insight about what motivates a person to act, and craft persuasive messages for those narrowly defined groups of people. This strategic intent, the effort to engineer consent described by Bernays, separates the practice of public relations from earlier, non-strategic communication techniques like press agency or publicity.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequent scholars have expanded the definition to include cultural aspects, focusing more clearly on the individuals who make up the audience.<sup>14</sup> For the purposes of this study, public relations is defined as public communication seeking to build and maintain communities of meaning with those who share the organization's preferred image of itself. The relationships established through public relations techniques may be seen as a source of cultural capital for the organization, each relationship holding the potential for action on behalf of the communicator. Voters may vote. Supporters may come to an organization's de-

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13. Edward Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (New York, 1923), 166-67; Edward Bernays, "The Engineering of Consent," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 250 (1947), 113.

14. This study relies on a composite definition arrived at after reviewing popular public relations textbooks and scholarly papers. I assume that public relations, as defined by the founder of the field, Edward Bernays, must include the gathering of insight into the audience, whether that is produced via formal or informal means. For an exploration of public relations definitions, see Dean Kruckeberg and Kenneth Starck, *Public Relations and Community: A Reconstructed Theory* (New York, 1988), 16.

fense in a crisis. Common understandings create an atmosphere more conducive to change that is in the organization's interest.<sup>15</sup>

The FBI was among the first government agencies in the United States to practice public relations on a broad scale and with a long-term vision. Beginning in 1934, the FBI developed a cohesive message that characterized its public relations messages for the ensuing 38 years of Hoover's tenure. That public relations template was designed to counter challenges to the agency's legitimacy borne in concerns about centralized federal law enforcement authority. Some early critics of the FBI worried about the creation of an American "Gestapo." Thus, the FBI's public relations messages emphasized neutral, scientific law enforcement, touted the organization's restraint, and promoted Hoover as America's top cop.<sup>16</sup>

But it was the information-gathering element of FBI public relations that was particularly groundbreaking. In the mid-1930s, the FBI formalized the public relations duties of the Special Agents in Charge (SACs), who supervised the more than 50 local offices of the FBI. Bureau manuals required each SAC to begin each day by reviewing local newspapers, clipping articles of interest to the FBI, visiting with key opinion shapers in the community, and forwarding all of that intelligence to Washington. SACs became the collectors of insight into the audiences for the FBI's message. Finally, the Crime Records Division compiled that information and communicated it to the FBI's top leadership. The bureau's Executive Conference, composed of the top handful of division leaders and assistant directors and chaired by Hoover's closest confidante, Associate Director Clyde Tol-

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15. Public relations historians have disagreed about whether the practice existed prior to Bernays's twentieth-century epiphany or if Bernays simply defined a longstanding practice. In 2010 Margot Opdycke Lamme and Karen Miller Russell reviewed the scholarship and suggested that the strategic intent of an organization may be discerned from the scope and nature of tactics employed. In other words, by reviewing what kinds of public relations campaigns an organization engaged in, one can determine whether that organization was practicing strategic communication. Margot Opdycke Lamme and Karen Miller Russell, "Removing the Spin: Toward a New Theory of Public Relations History," *Journalism and Communication Monographs* 11 (2010), 354.

16. Stuart Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin* (New York, 1996), 365; Powers, *Secrecy and Power*, 94–98, 108–12.

son, was responsible for identifying key challenges and making recommendations for public relations and other policies.<sup>17</sup>

FBI public relations policies were refined in 1936. Under the new rules, all news stories issued from the bureau came out over Hoover's signature. No one but Hoover could publicly accept credit for any FBI successes. SACs were prohibited from providing information about bureau activities to anyone outside the FBI, including news reporters, without receiving prior permission from Washington. Only Hoover was empowered to speak on policy or to respond to inquiries about ongoing investigations. All speeches delivered by special agents had to be cleared with Washington. SACs were even prohibited from recommending any books not included on the FBI's official bibliography.<sup>18</sup>

By the mid-1930s, the FBI was a bureau built for public relations. It had a ready-made public relations template emphasizing science, restraint, and Hoover. It boasted an in-house public relations division, more than 50 SACs gathering insight in the field, and a policy-making group of top managers in Washington. Most FBI monitoring and evaluation of national and regional reporters, editors, and publishers can be traced in FBI files to the mid-1930s. That sophisticated system of information gathering and evaluation led individuals and their publications to be categorized as friend or foe. The national journalists who merited mention in the "Molders of Public Opinion" report were clearly labeled as enemies of the FBI because their backgrounds or their work included what the bureau considered to be subversive elements.

More commonly, though, the FBI reached no definitive and final conclusion about individual reporters or their publications. Typically, FBI officials revisited their judgments periodically. Hoover and the Crime Records Division had long memories for what they perceived as criticism of the FBI, but absent a sustained campaign of "subversive" content, most publications and individuals had an up-and-down relationship with the bureau. The staff of the *Des Moines Register and Tribune* and Cowles Publications exemplify that sort of relationship with the FBI.

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17. Sullivan, "Molders of Public Opinion," 15-16; Theoharis et al., eds., *The FBI*, 214.

18. *Manual, Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice*, ca. 1927, 1936, chap. 2, sections 22, 23, 25, pp. 30-31.

HOOVER'S COLLABORATIONS with the *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* began in 1934 when what was then known as the Division of Investigation was just beginning to expand its public relations efforts. That year, the division's high-profile pursuit of outlaw John Dillinger played out in the press. With the surge of interest in Dillinger and other midwestern outlaws, the division began evaluating individual reporters and publications when a reporter or editor contacted the agency seeking access to law enforcement information. Those evaluations—determining whether or not reporters and their publications were friendly—were ongoing; conclusions that were drawn in the moment lived on, sometimes for decades, in subsequent bureau memoranda evaluating media organizations and individual journalists.

The first substantive collaboration between the Division of Investigation and the *Des Moines Tribune* occurred in 1934 when reporter Richard L. Wilson contacted Hoover's closest adviser, Clyde Tolson, who had grown up in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to inquire about writing a series of stories on the spate of kidnappings then plaguing the middle third of the United States. Wilson was given a series of case summaries and photographs to prepare his stories.<sup>19</sup> When Wilson's articles were published in February and March 1934, they were reviewed in Washington by Inspector W. H. Drane Lester, who found them well written and interesting but was concerned by the repeated use of the term "Black Chamber" to refer to the Division of Investigation. The phrase, a reference to the brutal tactics of the Spanish Inquisition, directly conflicted with the restrained image Hoover and his public relations team preferred to project. "It will, I fear, give the reader the idea that third degree methods are used by the Division of Investigation," Lester wrote. Hoover agreed, scrawling a note at the bottom of the memorandum: "I agree that we should discourage the use of the phrase 'Black Chamber.'" <sup>20</sup>

Ten years later, the bureau might have blackballed Wilson for employing creative license that undermined the FBI's public relations message. But in those early days of Division of Investigation public relations, prior to the arrival of Louis B. Nichols

19. Clyde Tolson, memorandum for J. Edgar Hoover, 2/23/1934, FBI file 80-69-6.

20. William H. Drane Lester, memorandum for J. Edgar Hoover, 3/30/1934, FBI file 80-69-9.

as head of the Crime Records Division, the Black Chamber reference was forgiven in the context of the generally highly favorable image of the Division of Investigation in Wilson's series.

As time passed, contact between the FBI and the *Register* and *Tribune* in the 1930s followed the FBI's preferred template. Reporters or editors seeking access to popular stories about the FBI were expected to accept the bureau's rules of engagement. The FBI exercised tight control over its information, and when it did provide access, a journalist could expect that the agency would carefully review the resulting stories (clips of which were typically forwarded to Washington by the nearest SAC as part of their daily public relations duties). The bureau's public relations staff typically responded to stories deemed critical or inaccurate with a tendentious letter over Hoover's signature. Early exchanges between the FBI and the *Register* and *Tribune* were relatively cordial, but there were some points of contention.

In 1939 Des Moines SAC Frank Holloman forwarded a memorandum to his supervisor summarizing "crime conditions" in Des Moines. The packet of information included a list of Des Moines public officials, a listing of key staff of the *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune*, and an overview of the FBI's contacts with the newspaper, noting editorials in 1936 and 1938 that praised the bureau; editorial cartoons by a Hoover favorite, J. N. "Ding" Darling; and reviews of several news stories about the FBI written by Richard Wilson in Washington. Holloman judged relations with the *Register* and *Tribune* as friendly, with the exception of one article.

Holloman's memorandum discussed that article, a news story by Wilson that appeared on December 17, 1936, extensively. The story obliquely criticized Hoover in connection with the capture of bank robber and kidnapper Harry Burnette (Tolson had personally made the arrest in New York to boost his thin law enforcement credentials). Holloman wrote, "Although Wilson did not make personal statements in this article concerning the Director, his innuendos were such as to have the impression of a condemnation of the Director's activities in connection with that case."<sup>21</sup> The story insinuated irresponsible behavior

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21. F. C. Holloman, summary memorandum for Mr. Hendon, "The Des Moines Register and Tribune," 12/6/1939, FBI file 94-8-137-unserialized.

by the FBI director, a direct challenge to one element of the bureau's public relations template, thus undermining the agency's legitimacy.

Retribution was swift and, seemingly, final. As a result of that article, Wilson and all *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* personnel were removed from the FBI mailing lists, the equivalent of being put on a blacklist. The restoration of mailing privileges in 1937 demonstrates how the bureau re-evaluated its relationships periodically.<sup>22</sup> However, another more contentious editorial severely damaged the relationship in 1940.

In February 1940 FBI raids on the Detroit homes of activists accused of having volunteered to fight in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War precipitated another series of critical news stories that threatened the FBI's legitimacy. The 18 people accused had, according to the FBI, violated a federal law prohibiting recruitment of Americans to fight in foreign wars. It was not the charges, though, that alarmed the FBI's critics. The tactics of the raids disturbed critics who feared potential abuses of power by federal law enforcement. Bureau agents broke down doors at 5 a.m. and allegedly conducted warrantless searches of homes and offices of the accused. Defendants were not allowed to contact lawyers and were paraded in chains before press photographers. Editorials in the *Milwaukee Journal*, the *New Republic*, and the *New York Daily News* expressed outrage. The charges represented a direct threat to the bureau's carefully constructed public relations message of responsibility and utility and led to a U.S. Senate inquiry into law enforcement methods.<sup>23</sup>

Former Republican turned Independent Senator George Norris of Nebraska wrote to Attorney General Robert H. Jackson expressing his concern about the FBI's conduct. Norris repeated the charges of mistreatment that had been reported in the press. He noted that by the time of the arrests the Spanish Civil War was over, and the accused "were not criminals; there was no reason to believe that any of them would try to escape. They were not charged with an offense that had any odium at-

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22. Milton A. Jones, memorandum for Cartha DeLoach, 5/11/1959, FBI file 94-8-137-107.

23. Theoharis et al., eds., *The FBI*, 114.



tached to it; and yet they were treated as if they were well-known to be criminals of the lowest type.”<sup>24</sup>

As later became a pattern when critical incidents occurred, Hoover responded by demonizing, without identifying, his enemies, accusing them of a coordinated smear campaign against the FBI by anti-American forces. In a series of speeches to conservative groups, Hoover drew clear lines between his critics and his supporters. In so doing, he emphasized differences between those who adhered to the FBI’s version of patriotism and those who did not. His critics were “international confidence men,” “conspiring Communists, their fellow travelers, mouthpieces and stooges,” and made up a “fifth column,” bent on destroying the nation that Hoover’s restrained agents and their dispassionate, scientific law enforcement techniques were protecting.<sup>25</sup>

Hoover delivered one of those speeches to a meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution. His characterization of his critics as communists or fellow travelers caught the attention of *Register* and *Tribune* editors. In his speech, Hoover defended his bureau and said its critics were anti-American.

I charge that accusations in dictating a purpose on the part of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to become an OGPU or Gestapo, a national police, or anything resembling such bodies, emanate directly, or indirectly from certain anti-American bodies who hope to discredit the FBI as a step in a general plan to disrupt the entire United States or from well-meaning, but misinformed persons who have fallen for the lies and utterly false information of those who would tear asunder America’s machinery of law enforcement.<sup>26</sup>

On April 20, 1940, the *Register* responded with an editorial headlined, “Whoa, Now, Edgar, Let’s Clarify!” The editors said that they were unanimously in support of the FBI’s work, but suggested that Hoover was unfairly categorizing his critics.

But we hope J. Edgar isn’t trying to convey the impression that anybody who at *anytime* criticizes something the FBI does, must therefore be “anti-American” or Communist. . . . We hardly think Senator Norris, for example, who was incensed by the high-handedness

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24. Senator George Norris to Attorney General Robert H. Jackson, 2/22/1940, FBI file 94-4-4514-1X.

25. Theoharis et al., eds., *The FBI*, 115.

26. *Des Moines Register*, 4/19/1940.



of the FBI's Detroit raids, is either a Communist or even "anti-American." No, we don't think the FBI wants to become an "Ogpu" [*sic*] or "Gestapo." But we certainly don't think it needs to be immune to debate and criticism, either. Just so we understand each other, Director!<sup>27</sup>

The editorial directly undermined two elements of FBI public relations and legitimation campaigns by directly criticizing Hoover and suggesting that agents in the Detroit raids were overzealous. FBI officials responded first by trying to arrange a meeting between *Register* and *Tribune* president and publisher Mike Cowles and a prominent Des Moines citizen, Dr. Tom Denny. Denny owned the Insurance Exchange Building that housed the FBI's local office and was a close friend of the Cowles family. Denny, agent R. C. Hendon suggested, should sit down for dinner with Cowles, discuss the situation, and "try to straighten them [*sic*] out."<sup>28</sup>

Hoover further suggested that Cowles be sent a letter because "they have distorted my speech & only read part of it."<sup>29</sup> On April 24 Hoover wrote to Cowles, "I want to reiterate to you that very definitely the recent campaign which has been directed against the Bureau was inspired by un-American forces and through the lies and misinformation which they distributed, well-meaning and otherwise sincere persons were victimized by their falsehoods. . . . It is your duty to criticize freely when there is a need; it also is the American duty to stand by the brave, honest, efficient officers who give of their best for the communities they serve."<sup>30</sup> Hoover's staff did not believe that Cowles was behind the attack, but just a few weeks before, on March 14, Cowles had raised concerns about the Detroit raids with the FBI's Des Moines SAC E. R. Davis. "In this connection," Davis reported to Hoover, "MR. COWLES stated that possibly the Bureau Agents were caught off first base at Detroit, Michigan."<sup>31</sup>

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27. *Des Moines Register*, 4/20/1940, FBI file 94-8-137-56.

28. R. C. Hendon, memorandum for Clyde Tolson, 4/20/1940, FBI file 94-8-137-56X.

29. *Ibid.*

30. J. Edgar Hoover to Gardner Cowles, 4/24/1940, FBI file 94-8-137-56X. (Note that related FBI documents often carry the same internal serial number.)

31. E. R. Davis to J. Edgar Hoover, 3/14/1940, FBI file 94-8-137-52.

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

TO

OFFICIAL INDICATED BELOW BY CHECK MARK

Mr. Tolson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Nathan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. E. A. Tamm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Clegg	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Ladd	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Coffey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Egan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Glavin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Harbo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Hendon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Lester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. McIntire	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Nichols	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Rosen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Quinn Tamm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Tracy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/>

See Me ☐

Note and Return ☐

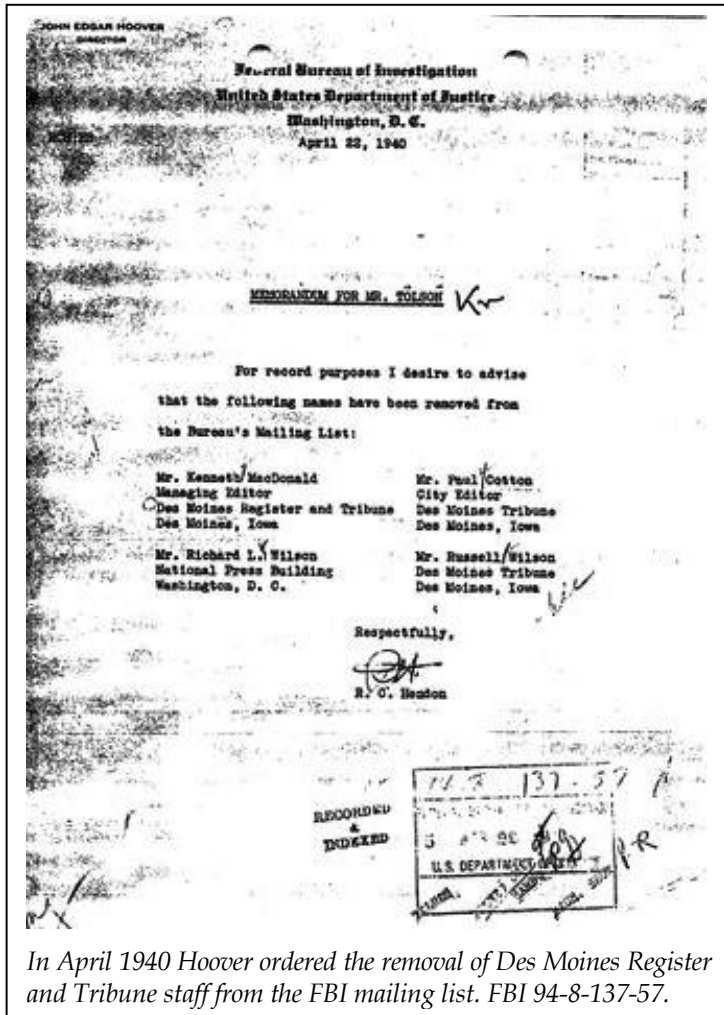
Remarks:

*A typical newspaperman's viewpoint which has been molded by Newspaper Guild propaganda.*

*H.*

Hoover's handwritten note on an FBI routing slip, March 14, 1940, FBI 94-8-137-52.

Two months later, *Des Moines Register* reporter Don Grant told SAC Davis that he believed the FBI had been irresponsible in the Detroit raids. According to Davis, Grant "believed some of the criticisms were well-taken. . . . Thereafter, he commented on the possibility of the F.B.I. becoming a Gestapo, etc." Davis told Grant that the FBI "was doing more to guard the civil liberties of this country than any other organization," and then reported the conversation to his superiors. When Hoover read the memorandum, he dismissed it as more evidence of the untrustworthiness of the *Register* and *Tribune*: "A typical news-



paperman's viewpoint when it has been molded by Newspaper Guild propaganda."<sup>32</sup>

As a result of the "Whoa, Edgar" editorial, the FBI again removed all *Register* and *Tribune* staffers except Darling from its mailing list.<sup>33</sup> Mailing list privileges were subsequently restored,

32. Ibid.

33. Robert C. Hendon, memorandum for Clyde Tolson, 4/22/1940, FBI file 94-8-137-57.

but the FBI continued to assert that the criticisms were part of an organized "smear campaign" by its enemies. The bureau did not forget what it saw as an anti-American attack by "Newspaper Guild" propagandists. It was the type of black mark that remained on the *Register* and *Tribune's* FBI record, shaping the bureau's relationship with the publications for decades. In 1942, for example, Nichols requested a listing of newspapers deemed unfriendly to the FBI due to their editorial policies. The *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* were among approximately 15 newspapers on the list with the reason listed as "derogatory editorial."<sup>34</sup>

By October 30, 1945, the FBI was ready to begin rebuilding its relationship with the *Register* and *Tribune*. After a laudatory article about the bureau by George Coleman appeared in the *Register*, Hoover's public relations aides suggested that the director write to Coleman to thank him. "In view of the lapse of time since [the publication of the 'Whoa, Edgar' editorial] and insofar as it does not appear any worthwhile purpose would be accomplished in not writing to a staff member of this newspaper at this time, it was felt that a letter of appreciation might now be in good order," Nichols wrote in a note attached to a letter for Hoover to sign.<sup>35</sup>

Just six weeks later, though, the bureau noted another critical report in the *Register*. On December 5, 1945, the *Register* published a story by Nat Finney headlined "FBI Charges State Department Favors Reds." The story claimed that Hoover had leaked information to reporters about alleged communist sympathizers in the State Department. The leak, according to Finney's unnamed sources, was retaliation for the State Department clearing two spies arrested by the FBI. "G-men have been shadowing state department people for a long time," Finney wrote, "and the story planted in New York is regarded here as an open invitation to congress to ask the FBI what it has uncovered."<sup>36</sup>

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34. Memorandum for Louis B. Nichols [redacted], 3/1/1942, FBI file 94-8-45. Inexplicably, the FBI's FOIA censors redacted the names of the other newspapers. None of the exemptions provided in the FOIA account for keeping the names of newspapers private, and no exemption is cited on the document.

35. Louis B. Nichols, note on J. Edgar Hoover letter to George Coleman, 10/30/1945, FBI file 94-8-137-74.

36. *Des Moines Register*, 12/5/1945.

The vengeful, secretive FBI depicted in Finney's story was again a direct challenge to public perceptions of the restrained, responsible agency the bureau carefully cultivated. Hoover was incensed and, in a rare move, circumvented the agents who usually wrote his correspondence and personally penned a letter to Editor William W. Waymack. The story was inaccurate and damaged an ongoing operation, Hoover told Waymack. "For your strictly confidential information, the premature publicizing of these cases has rendered ineffective detailed work performed over a considerable period of time," Hoover wrote. In a sentence included in his handwritten letter but edited out of the final, typewritten version sent to Waymack, Hoover claimed, disingenuously, "It has not been the practice of this Bureau to indulge in 'news leaks' or in 'planted stories.'" Waymack admitted that Finney had erred by "stating categorically what was a belief or a contention" and offered to print Hoover's response, or to send Washington correspondent Richard Wilson to interview the director. Hoover, in a letter written by Nichols, refused both options.<sup>37</sup>

Another critical editorial, published on July 19, 1955, was forwarded to Washington by the Des Moines SAC. The editorial, headlined "Using Informers," implicitly criticized the FBI and the Department of Justice for relying on paid informers to solve crimes. "Mr. Hoover is mistaken if he has gained the impression that criticism that occasionally has been directed at the use of confidential and paid informers is intended as a campaign to end the practice." Instead, the editors said, criticism of the use of informers is based on the Justice Department's tendency to insufficiently vet informers' reliability. The editorial, however, began and ended with praise for the FBI, leading off by praising the bureau's 92 percent success rate in criminal cases that year and then closing with "that is the essence of the very best kind of law enforcement." Once again, Hoover characterized a handful of critical statements as representing an organized smear campaign by anti-American forces intent on destroying the FBI. And despite its praise for the FBI, key Crime Records staff mem-

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37. J. Edgar Hoover to William W. Waymack, 12/13/1945, FBI file 94-8-137-75; Waymack to Hoover, 1/24/1946, FBI file 94-8-137-78; Hoover to Waymack, 1/31/1946, FBI file 94-8-137-unserialized.

ber Milton A. Jones evaluated the editorial as a harsh criticism. "After admitting the necessity of using 'informers,'" Jones wrote, "the editorial, by implication, accuses Mr. Hoover of being mistakenly concerned over current criticisms of the use of informants." Jones then summarized the bureau's relations with the *Register* and *Tribune* as "spotty." "There have been instances of unwarranted criticism and untruthful statements concerning the FBI appearing on its editorial pages," Jones wrote. He reminded Hoover that everyone connected with the *Register* and *Tribune* had been removed from FBI mailing lists in 1940 after the "Whoa, Edgar" editorial.<sup>38</sup>

Jones's 1955 memorandum was not the last time representatives of the FBI pointed out the critical story of 1936 and the "Whoa, Edgar" editorial as examples of the bureau's troubled relationship with the *Register* and *Tribune*. In 1958 a note on an outgoing letter addressed to Ogden G. Dwight, TV editor for the *Register* and *Tribune*, noted that the bureau's "relations with this newspaper have fluctuated in the past 20 years." A 1959 memorandum discussing a request from Richard Wilson to meet with Hoover noted the critical story he had written in 1936 and the "Whoa, Edgar" editorial. The black mark of the 1936 story and the 1940 editorial appeared again in a note appended to a 1960 letter. References to the early clashes between the FBI and the *Register* and *Tribune* continued through the 1960s, with the final reference to the "Whoa, Edgar" editorial appearing in an explanatory note attached to a letter from Director Clarence M. Kelley to *Register* Assistant City Editor William T. Kong in 1973, more than a year after Hoover's death.<sup>39</sup>

THE BLACK MARK of the critical 1936 and 1940 publications lingered in FBI files and disrupted the relationship between the bureau and the *Register* and *Tribune* from time to time, but it did

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38. *Des Moines Register and Tribune*, 7/15/1955; Milton A. Jones, memorandum to Louis B. Nichols, 7/26/1955, FBI file 94-8-137-89.

39. J. Edgar Hoover to Ogden G. Dwight, 6/4/1958, FBI file 94-8-137-unserialized; Milton A. Jones, memorandum for Cartha DeLoach, 5/11/1959, FBI file 94-8-137-107; J. Edgar Hoover to Ogden G. Dwight, 12/6/1960, FBI file 94-8-137-110; Clarence M. Kelly to William T. Kong, 11/23/1973, FBI file 94-8-137-120.

not stop Nichols and his staff in the Crime Records Division from building relationships with individual reporters and editors from the newspapers. The bureau refused to forget perceived sleights, but it was unwilling to completely sever its connections to reporters and editors at the only statewide newspapers in Iowa. Those individual relationships, though, depended on the reporters and editors themselves initiating contact, currying favor with the bureau, and delivering publications the FBI found worthy of its time and attention. In a few instances, Des Moines reporters and editors were willing to allow the FBI to review and edit their work prior to publication.

In 1936, for example, Vernon Pope contacted the FBI for help with a feature and photo story on kidnapping, bank robbery, and white slavery that was slated for the first issue of *Look* magazine, a Cowles publication, that would be inserted in 13 newspapers across the country. Pope agreed to provide copies of the five-page series to the FBI prior to publication. He sent them on November 30, 1936. Hoover's Crime Records Division reviewed the series and on December 10 sent Pope three pages of highly detailed corrections and clarifications with a note saying, "I deeply appreciate your thoughtfulness in forwarding to the Bureau the above magazine pages which are being returned to you under a separate cover." The corrections did not reach Pope in time, so the feature ran in its original form. Pope apologized to Hoover: "Unfortunately we had to close the issue before your letter was received. I am under the impression that we have made no serious errors but I am sorry we did not get your suggestions in time, as they would have improved the pages."<sup>40</sup>

Again, in 1937, a *Register* reporter agreed to allow the FBI to preview and edit a series of stories. Reporter William Nelson called the FBI on September 2, 1937, requesting information about the bureau's use of science to solve crimes. No doubt pleased with the opportunity to publicize a key element of their public relations message, Crime Records Division officials forwarded a large packet of case summaries and photographs along with a letter from Hoover. "After you have prepared your

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40. Vernon Pope to J. Edgar Hoover, 10/29/1936, FBI file 94-8-137-21; J. Edgar Hoover to Vernon Pope, 12/10/1936, FBI file 94-8-137-28; Vernon Pope to J. Edgar Hoover, 12/16/1936, FBI file 94-8-137-29.



script," Hoover wrote, "I shall be very glad to have it reviewed prior to publication." After speaking with Nichols by phone, Nelson agreed. "He stated that he wanted to be perfectly honest with the Bureau," Nichols reported to Tolson, "but that the material which he prepared was not prepared in final form and was drawn over by the copy writers out in Des Moines. However he was quite sure they would follow his request that prior to publication a copy of the publication be sent to him in order that he might send it to the Bureau for review."<sup>41</sup>

In 1953 Richard Wilson called Nichols looking for a specific document, the identity of which was redacted in the file. According to Nichols, "Wilson stated that if he could get possession of such a document and wrote a series of articles, what he would like would be to bring the articles over here and then let us edit out anything that should not go in."<sup>42</sup>

The willingness to allow prior review of published stories about the FBI suggests how far journalists might go to gain access to the bureau's exploits, which were popular with readers. In most cases, though, reporters courting favor with the bureau simply resorted to flattery and expressions of support for the FBI's work.

In 1955 Cowles Publications reporter Fletcher Knebel was working on a story about Hoover for the Cowles newspapers, including the *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune*. When Nichols was informed that Knebel was interviewing former special agents, he notified Tolson and submitted a memorandum on the reporter, who was referred to as a "close contact" of the FBI. Nichols explained, "By the term 'close contact' . . . it was meant that Knebel has been cooperative in the past, his attitude has been good regarding our work, and he has been most generous in allowing us to see his finished products prior to publication."<sup>43</sup>

Wilson, the author of the 1936 article, continued to mine his relationship with the FBI and Hoover for stories periodically

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41. J. Edgar Hoover to William Nelson, 8/31/1937, FBI file 94-8-137-32; Louis B. Nichols, memorandum for Clyde Tolson, 9/3/1937, FBI file 94-8-137-33.

42. Louis B. Nichols, memorandum for Clyde Tolson, 11/10/1953, FBI file 94-33693-16.

43. Louis B. Nichols, memorandum for Clyde Tolson, 3/3/1955, FBI file 94-33693-22.



throughout his tenure as Cowles Media's Washington Bureau Chief. A former *Register* city editor, Wilson was 28 when Mike Cowles sent him to Washington to open a news bureau.<sup>44</sup> A summary of the bureau's relationship with Wilson, requested by Nichols in 1950, reviewed the FBI's contacts with the reporter. According to the report, Wilson was interviewed two or three times in connection with espionage cases and was cooperative; he invited Hoover to a cocktail party in 1945; he was understanding when Nichols refused to provide information for an article on communism in 1946; and he had contacted Hoover personally in relation to a fundraiser for the Urban League.<sup>45</sup>

As was typical in FBI public relations, Wilson enjoyed periodic "personal" correspondence with Hoover, with the letters from the director authored by agents in the Correspondence Unit of the Crime Records Division.<sup>46</sup> In a flattering 1962 letter, Wilson wrote to Hoover that he hoped the director would "not retire for a long time" and urged that "safeguards should be considered to assure that the kind of FBI you so ably run will be continued that way." Three years later, Wilson invited Hoover for cocktails after the annual Gridiron Dinner, but the director was busy.<sup>47</sup>

The relationship with Wilson was sufficiently cordial that in 1968 the bureau conducted an extensive investigation to determine whether to approach him as a PSI, Potential Security Informer. Because of their access to powerful people in their communities, security informers in the media were particularly valued in the public relations-oriented FBI. The investigation of Wilson included a check of his credit records, a review of his career's work, and interviews with other journalists who had become security informants. Hoover ultimately determined that

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44. Friedrichs, *Covering Iowa*, 88.

45. Milton A. Jones, memorandum for Louis B. Nichols, 5/11/1950, FBI file 62-92208-1.

46. Hoover's use of personal correspondence, ghostwritten by his correspondence staff, to develop faux personal relationships with reporters and editors was a common tactic of FBI public relations. See Cecil, "Friends of the Bureau," 267-84.

47. Richard L. Wilson to J. Edgar Hoover, 9/6/1962, FBI file 62-92208-2; Richard L. Wilson to J. Edgar Hoover, 3/17/1965, FBI file 62-92208-3.

Wilson “would not appear to be the type of individual who would be amenable to direction in a controlled operation.”<sup>48</sup>

During Wilson’s tenure as Cowles Media’s Washington Bureau Chief, there were lengthy gaps between FBI contacts. For example, the FBI did not provide any information to Wilson for ten years starting in 1949. In 1959 the silence was broken when Wilson wrote to request a statement from Hoover about crime in the Midwest and comments on his thirty-fifth anniversary as FBI director. In his request, Wilson reminded then Crime Records Division head Cartha DeLoach of his first collaboration with the bureau, his 1934 kidnapping series. DeLoach’s top aide recommended that the bureau cooperate with Wilson despite his authorship of the critical 1936 story. “It would appear that he is sincere in his desire to write a favorable story re the Director and the Bureau,” Jones told DeLoach.<sup>49</sup>

MORE THAN any other *Register* and *Tribune* or Cowles Media reporter, Clark Mollenhoff maintained a close contact with the FBI. Mollenhoff was hired to join the Washington Bureau of Cowles Publications in 1950 and, except for a brief stint as an adviser to the Nixon administration, covered the nation’s capital until 1978. In 1958 he won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on corrupt labor practices.<sup>50</sup>

Like the bureau’s relationship with the *Register* and *Tribune* generally, its relationship with Mollenhoff was a roller coaster ride, with periods of cooperation, starting with Nichols’s evaluation of him in 1951 as looking “exceedingly good,” punctuated by rejection and controversy. In 1953 Hoover contacted the Minneapolis SAC, noting that Mollenhoff, who wrote for Cowles newspapers in Minneapolis as well as Des Moines, would likely visit the Twin Cities. “Clark Mollenhoff is a responsible reporter and has been friendly and favorably disposed toward the Bureau

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48. SAC Washington, memorandum for J. Edgar Hoover, 10/11/1968, FBI file 105-186424-unserialized, p. 9; J. Edgar Hoover, memorandum for SAC Washington, 11/1/1968, FBI file 105-186424-unserialized.

49. Milton A. Jones, memorandum for Cartha DeLoach, 5/11/1959, FBI file 94-8-137-107.

50. Robert D. McFadden, “Clark R. Mollenhoff, Pulitzer Winner, Dies at 69,” *New York Times*, 3/4/1991; Friedrichs, *Covering Iowa*, 122.

for several years," Hoover wrote. "He should be courteously received, but no confidential information should be made available to him."<sup>51</sup>

Mollenhoff first touched off controversy within the FBI in 1958, when he contacted the bureau to ask about an alleged change in the procedures for investigating prospective presidential appointees. Mollenhoff said he had spoken with several people at the White House who claimed that an extensive review of candidates' finances had been added to the investigative process. Hoover refused to comment, and the FBI contacted President Eisenhower's press secretary, James Hagerty, to find out who might have spoken to Mollenhoff. A change was being considered by the White House but had not been implemented, Hagerty said, claiming that no one had spoken to Mollenhoff. Hoover dismissed the incident as "just another instance of another 'eager beaver' of the press trying to hook us with a confirmation."<sup>52</sup>

In 1961 Mollenhoff requested a meeting with Hoover to discuss law enforcement issues. Hoover's staff argued against the meeting, noting the director's "eager beaver" comment and highlighting Mollenhoff's advocacy of openness in government, not a popular position within the secretive FBI. The bureau had taken notice two years earlier when Mollenhoff obliquely criticized the FBI during a speech on the campus of Colby College in Maine that emphasized the people's right to know and journalists' obligation to press the government for information. "Columnists Drew Pearson and Joseph Alsop report that when they were critical of government policies and personalities, they found themselves subjected to the investigations of agents of the FBI and other government bureaus. They contended that no breach of security was involved but that they were subjected to probes to dry up their sources of information."<sup>53</sup>

The Colby College speech, along with a report that President Eisenhower had told Mollenhoff to "sit down" during a

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51. J. Edgar Hoover, memorandum to SAC, Minneapolis, 1/27/1953, FBI file 94-33693-10X.

52. Hoover note on R. R. Roach, memorandum to Alan H. Belmont, 5/23/1958, FBI file 94-33693-27

53. Mollenhoff's speech was reprinted in the *Portland (Maine) Evening Express*, 12/8/1959; FBI file 94-7-137-101.

news conference and the reporter's acquaintance with Attorney General Robert Kennedy, were the reasons cited in a memorandum recommending that Hoover not meet with the reporter.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, Hoover agreed to meet Mollenhoff, and the two sat down in the director's office on September 29, 1961. During the meeting, Mollenhoff requested information on Soviet espionage, on a 1960 speech by United Nations Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, and on Dipa Nusantara Aidit, an aide to President Sukarno of Indonesia. At the end of the meeting, according to FBI notes, Mollenhoff expressed his appreciation and said he was "going to keep in touch with the Director because he found his views to be stimulating and reassuring."<sup>55</sup>

After the meeting, Mollenhoff told a Hoover aide that the director's views paralleled his own. Following the meeting, Mollenhoff was added to the FBI's Special Correspondents List to receive additional bureau mailings.<sup>56</sup> The meeting began a brief period of particularly cordial relations between Hoover and Mollenhoff. A few months later, Hoover's letter writers wrote on his behalf to congratulate Mollenhoff on winning a John Peter Zenger Award for his efforts on behalf of press freedom. Mollenhoff replied, thanking Hoover for sending an autographed photograph. "I admire your restraint as much as your wisdom in your comments on the problems of law enforcement," Mollenhoff wrote. "I doubt if I would be as restrained as you are if I had faced the problems for such a long time."<sup>57</sup>

In 1968 Mollenhoff again requested a meeting with Hoover. This time his request was rejected in a memorandum with extensive redactions.<sup>58</sup> The 1968 rejection was, it appears, based

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54. Milton A. Jones, memorandum for Louis B. Nichols, 9/18/1961, FBI file 94-33693-34.

55. Milton A. Jones, memorandum for Cartha DeLoach, 10/2/1961, FBI file 94-33693-36.

56. Cartha DeLoach, memorandum for John Mohr, 9/29/1961, FBI file 94-33693-42. A 1954 review of the Special Correspondents List found that the list included 300 people, including 75 newsmen considered "most friendly." Memorandum for Louis B. Nichols [redacted], 3/26/1954, FBI file 62-21531-1093.

57. J. Edgar Hoover to Clark Mollenhoff, 12/4/1961, FBI file 94-33693-41; Clark Mollenhoff to J. Edgar Hoover, 1/16/1962, FBI file 94-33693-43.

58. Milton A. Jones, memorandum for Thomas Bishop, 1/3/1968, FBI file 94-33693-45.

on new information about Mollenhoff's close relationship with Robert F. Kennedy, a Hoover nemesis.<sup>59</sup> Then in 1971 Mollenhoff requested an interview with Tolson, who had once lived in Iowa, for a feature story. Tolson refused. Hoover agreed with the decision. When a staff member called the director's office to report that Mollenhoff had been so advised, Hoover scrawled, on the phone message, "No one in the Bureau should see this 'rat.'" <sup>60</sup>

The FBI had been aware of Mollenhoff's acquaintance with Kennedy before earlier meetings. So what caused Hoover to permanently sever ties with the "rat" Mollenhoff in 1971? The likely cause was a series of 1970 special television news reports on Hoover by CBS News reporter John Hart. For his five-part series, Hart interviewed former attorneys general, members of Congress, and Clark Mollenhoff.<sup>61</sup> Hoover refused to participate. The critical series suggested that Hoover had remained in office too long. A few weeks after the story aired, Mollenhoff, then in the midst of a brief stint on President Richard Nixon's White House staff, requested information from Hoover. "No," Hoover wrote on the request. "Let him get what information he wants from [Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs John] Erlichman. Mollenhoff participated in a recent 'hatchet' job done by CBS."<sup>62</sup>

BEGINNING IN 1934, the FBI's public relations staff carefully monitored and evaluated its relationships with the *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* and its affiliated publications and bureaus. The SAC in Des Moines scanned the local newspapers daily and forwarded pertinent clippings, along with explanatory memoranda, to the FBI's Washington headquarters. There, staffers in

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59. Hoover mentioned Mollenhoff's relationship with Robert Kennedy in a 1971 note on a memorandum, Milton A. Jones to Thomas Bishop, 3/3/1971, FBI file 161-1848-88. At the bottom of the memorandum discussing another rejection of a Mollenhoff requests, Hoover wrote, "He always was close to Bobby Kennedy."

60. Thomas E. Bishop, memorandum for John Mohr, 4/9/1971, FBI file 94-8-137-118; Phone message for J. Edgar Hoover, 4/9/1971, FBI file 94-8-137-117.

61. Thomas Bishop, memorandum for Cartha DeLoach, 1/8/1970, FBI file 161-1848-87.

62. Memorandum for William C. Sullivan [redacted], 1/22/1970, FBI file 161-1848-88.

the Crime Records Division evaluated the material and maintained an ongoing record of the ups and downs of the bureau's relationships with reporters, editors, and publications. Agenda-setting national publications and prominent national reporters received particular attention, but local and regional publications like the *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* were also closely monitored. Critical editorials were noted and, in some cases, merited a response. Reporters' inquiries were fielded and considered. The rubric for considering some publications and reporters friends and others as foes was based on the FBI's public relations template emphasizing restraint, science, and a positive image of Hoover.

A critical story that undermined the FBI public relations template might result in a temporary removal from the bureau's mailing lists as happened twice to *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* staff. A friendly story conforming to the FBI's public relations template might result in being considered a friend even when one's publication was critical, as with Hoover's continued relationship with editorial cartoonist Jay N. "Ding" Darling. Stories or editorials that undercut the bureau's public relations messages by alluding to concerns about federalized police powers or, even worse, questioning Hoover's proclamations, could remain on a publication's FBI record for decades.

The FBI's up-and-down relationship with the *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* and with key staffers like Richard Wilson and Clark Mollenhoff typifies its relationships with many other regional publications during the Hoover era. Some journalists and publications became adjuncts to the FBI, uncritically amplifying Hoover's xenophobic and paranoid worldview or attacking the director's critics when asked.<sup>63</sup> Others became outspoken critics of the FBI, risking Hoover's wrath and the wrath of his media allies.<sup>64</sup> *Register* and *Tribune* staff, for the most part, kept some editorial distance from the bureau and occasionally gently criticized Hoover and the FBI, but at times some of them were willing to flatter Hoover or fit their reporting to FBI public relations rubrics in order to secure access to information.

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63. See, for example, Cecil, "Friends of the Bureau."

63. See, for example, Matthew Cecil, "'Press Every Angle': FBI Public Relations and the Smear Campaign of 1958," *American Journalism* 19 (2002), 39–58.

# The Prairie Historians and the Foundations of Midwestern History

JON K. LAUCK

From the earliest days of the American republic, New England received considerable attention from historians. The American South also produced many men of letters and later historians dedicated to understanding its traditions and peculiar institution. Yet the American “West,” a constantly shifting region in the American imagination, was given short shrift in the main channels of nineteenth-century American historiography. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, historians in the Midwest were beginning to assert themselves in the form of published works, increasingly active state historical societies, and new scholarly journals. From the late nineteenth century extending several decades into the twentieth, a cadre of midwestern historians busily chronicled their region. These “Prairie Historians,” as I call them, made a substantial contribution to the historical profession and wrote the foundational histories of the prairie Midwest, but they are seldom thought of today. The history profession is still interested in New England and the American South; in recent decades, the American Far West has also developed into a major field of study that dwarfs the midwestern history enterprise. Even the few historians who now study the Midwest pay little attention to the Prairie Historians. That once proud band, however, devoted much of their lives to



the region, and the impressive body of work they left behind deserves to be remembered both on its own terms and as a monument to a once energetic cadre of scholars.

Grouping intellectuals, including the Prairie Historians, is always difficult. The Romantics, the Southern Agrarians, the New York Intellectuals, and the British Marxist historians, for example, all defy tidy categories, yet the thrust of their work and attitudes have at times been successfully captured by their chroniclers. The main currents of their thought and their collective "mind" can be mapped and described while giving due consideration to the nuances, intricacies, and contradictions within their work. Not all of the characteristics that unite the Prairie Historians apply to all of them all of the time, of course, but the unifying elements are reasonably strong. Many of the Prairie Historians were born in the prairie Midwest, often on midwestern farms, and were inclined to study their home region. They supported local history, state historical societies, and regional journals focused on the prairie Midwest. They admired Frederick Jackson Turner, studied the political and economic development of the Midwest, and embraced democracy as a central theme in their histories; more particularly, they focused on law, farming, Populism, land and geography, and social history. Their collective effort yielded a raft of major books and several Pulitzer prizes.

ANY DISCUSSION of the foundations of midwestern history must begin with Frederick Jackson Turner of Wisconsin. When Turner began his study of history in the 1880s, the writing of history, Curtis Nettels noted, "was almost a monopoly of the Atlantic seaboard."<sup>1</sup> Breaking with eastern historians, who saw midwestern culture and institutions as derivative and imitative and who largely ignored happenings beyond the Hudson River, Turner argued that midwestern settlers advanced American democratic practices on the frontier. His work begat a tradition of

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1. Curtis P. Nettels, "History Out of Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 39 (1955-56), 116. On Turner and midwestern history, see David S. Brown, *Beyond the Frontier: The Midwestern Voice in American Historical Writing* (Chicago, 2009), 25-50; and Jon K. Lauck, "The 'Interior Tradition' in American History: A Review Essay," *Annals of Iowa* 69 (2010), 82-93.



historical writing about and from the Midwest. Turner said that he saw his famous frontier thesis as “a protest against eastern neglect.”<sup>2</sup> The Prairie Historians took cues from Turner and developed a pattern of thought and a network of personalities, affiliations, and institutions that congealed into an early twentieth-century movement to advance the cause of studying the history of the Midwest.

In keeping with Turner’s call for greater attention to the Midwest, the Prairie Historians sought an outlet for the region’s history. The secretary of the Nebraska State Historical Society, Clarence Paine, a Minnesotan living in Iowa who caught the eye of former Nebraska territorial governor and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture J. Sterling Morton, led the charge.<sup>3</sup> In 1907 Paine convened a meeting in Lincoln of representatives of midwestern historical societies who debated a constitution for a new organization called the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (MVHA).<sup>4</sup> Because Secretary Morton gave Paine his platform, he is generally considered the “genuine spiritual godfather” of the MVHA.<sup>5</sup> The eastern-dominated American Historical Association (AHA) opposed the new organization, but the MVHA’s

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2. Michael C. Steiner, “The Significance of Turner’s Sectional Thesis,” *Western Historical Quarterly* (hereafter *WHQ*) 10 (1979), 443 (quoting Turner).

3. Clarence Paine was from Eden Valley Township, Minnesota, had worked on a farm and in a lumber camp, founded a business college in Iowa, and become interested in promoting the efforts of the Iowa Historical Department when Morton tapped him to work on a large-scale history of Nebraska. James L. Sellers, “Before We Were Members—The MVHA,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (hereafter *MVHR*) 40 (1953), 6; Benjamin F. Shambaugh, “The Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association,” *MVHR* 10 (1923), 112.

4. Although Turner never served as president of the MVHA, it was “quintessentially the organization of Frederick Jackson Turner, who dominated its proceedings and consciousness for many years.” Stanley N. Katz, “The Rise of a Modern and Democratic Learned Society,” in Richard S. Kirkendall, ed., *The Organization of American Historians and the Writing and Teaching of American History* (New York, 2011), 14. Michael Kammen notes that “Turner’s influence [on the MVHA] was ubiquitous and persistent” and concludes, based on a review of the published work of the MVHA, that “no other figure dominates, personally and intellectually, as much as Turner.” Michael Kammen, “The Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1907–1952,” in Kirkendall, ed., *The OAH*, 22.

5. Sellers, “Before We Were Members,” 6. On Morton, see James C. Olson, *J. Sterling Morton* (Lincoln, NE, 1942).



*In 1907 historians from around the Midwest organized the Mississippi Valley Historical Association at a meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska: 1 (see numbers on sleeves)-Benjamin F. Shambaugh, 2-Francis A. Sampson, 3-George W. Martin, 4-Edgar A. Harlan, 5-Warren Upham, 6-William S. Bell, 7-Clarence S. Paine, 8-Edwin Maxey, 9-William E. Hannan, 10-Elmer E. Blackman. Photo from Nebraska State Historical Society.*

leaders refused to compromise their plans, repeatedly noting that the AHA devalued the history of their region.<sup>6</sup>

6. Midwesterners had "long resented what they saw as control of the profession by a northeastern (and especially New England) elite." Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York, 1988), 181. Historians complained of the "difficulty of getting articles on Western history accepted by journals edited in the East." Nettels, "History Out of Wisconsin," 115. On the hostility to western history at Yale, see Jon Lauck, "The Old Roots of the New History: Howard Lamar and the Intellectual Origins of *Dakota Territory*," *WHQ* 39 (2008), 262. On the hostility to western history at Harvard, see Frederick Merk to Milo Quaife, 10/15/1916, General Administrative Correspondence of WHS, 1900-2000, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI. On the friction between midwestern historians and easterners, see Kammen, "Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1907-1952," 18-20.

At the AHA meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, in December 1907, the leaders of the new MVHA adopted a constitution, declaring that the "object of the Association shall be to promote historical study and research and to secure cooperation between the historical societies and the departments of history of the Mississippi Valley."<sup>7</sup> The new organization set its first meeting for Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, in June 1908. The AHA continued to refuse to work with the MVHA, so the budding organization subsequently met on its own in St. Louis and Iowa City and again in Lincoln.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the next decade, despite midwesterners' attempts to assert a stronger voice, the "domination" of the profession by easterners "continued unabated, as did resentment in the outback."<sup>9</sup> In 1915 the MVHA president signed a circular on MVHA letterhead lending support to "reformers" within the AHA who wanted to break the eastern clique that dominated that organization.<sup>10</sup> The MVHA found an audience by drawing on this midwestern regionalist impulse

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7. Sellers, "Before We Were Members," 8; Nettels, "History Out of Wisconsin," 115; Vernon Carstensen to Merle Curti, 7/1/1951, folder 18, box 8, Merle Curti Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

8. John R. Wunder, "The Founding Years of the OAH," *OAH Newsletter* 34 (November 2006), [www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2006nov/wunder.html](http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2006nov/wunder.html); Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 182; Ian Tyrrell, "Public at the Creation: Place, Memory, and Historical Practice in the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1907-1950," *Journal of American History* (hereafter *JAH*) 94 (2007), 27.

9. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 183.

10. Some MVHA leaders objected to the president, Dunbar Rowland, sending his statement on MVHA letterhead without getting the MVHA's approval, and Professor Claude H. Van Tyne of the University of Michigan resigned from the board of editors in protest. See numerous letters in MVHA Correspondence, vol. 2, Alvord Papers, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, MO. Clarence Alvord generally tried to keep the MVHA out of the AHA "fiasco." Alvord to Van Tyne, 10/18/1915, vol. 2, MVHA correspondence, Alvord Papers. Shambaugh and Paxson opposed being drawn into the AHA imbroglio. Frederic Paxson to Alvord, 11/12/1915, and Benjamin Shambaugh to Alvord, 11/13/1915, MVHA correspondence, vol. 2, Alvord Papers. The MVHA's neutrality in the AHA battle stemmed in part from the fact that Turner, then at Harvard, was being attacked as part of the AHA "oligarchy." R. R. Palmer, "The American Historical Association in 1970," *American Historical Review* (hereafter *AHR*) 76 (1971), 5. Turner sought moderate reforms within the AHA. Ray Allen Billington, "Tempest in Clio's Teapot: The American Historical Association Rebellion of 1915," *AHR* 78 (1973), 354. See also Allan G. Bogue, *Fredrick Jackson Turner: Strange Roads Going Down* (Norman, OK, 1998), 305-19.

and grew from its seven original members in 1907 to 840 members by 1923.<sup>11</sup>

AMONG THE FOUNDERS of the MVHA were Clarence W. Alvord of the University of Illinois and Benjamin F. Shambaugh of the University of Iowa. Alvord took over the presidency of the MVHA during its first year when the original president, from Alabama, complained about the first meeting being held too far north in Minnesota and lost interest.<sup>12</sup> Alvord was a strong proponent of maintaining the MVHA's regional distinctiveness and fought the cooptation efforts of the AHA, which, he argued, was too focused on the East and which, he noted, was mounting "a good deal of opposition" to the new MVHA.<sup>13</sup> Alvord thought that the "development of the Northeast, particularly of New England, [had] usurped too prominent a place in the annals of America" and that eastern historians were prone to erroneous "blunders" about western history.<sup>14</sup> In addition to leading the MVHA, Alvord also collected, edited, and published many records from early Illinois history, served as the editor of the *Illinois Historical Collections*, led the Illinois Historical Survey, and wrote books about the history of Illinois.<sup>15</sup> Frederic Logan Paxson, who sympathized with the effort to break the "northern tide-water point of view," wrote in the 1920s that the "sound scholarship of Alvord and his host of associates has

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11. Benjamin F. Shambaugh, "The Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association," *MVHR* 10 (1923), 113; Kammen, "The Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1907-1952," 18-20.

12. Wunder, "The Founding Years of the OAH."

13. Alvord to Dunbar Rowland, 10/19/1915, MVHA correspondence, vol. 2, Alvord Papers; Solon J. Buck, "Clarence Walworth Alvord, Historian," *MVHR* 15 (1928), 314; Wunder, "The Founding Years of the OAH"; Theodore C. Blegen, "Our Widening Province," *MVHR* 31 (1944), 5; James L. Sellers, "The Semicentennial of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association," *MVHR* 44 (1957), 498 ("good deal" quote). For more on the growth of the MVHA, see Tyrrell, "Public at the Creation," 19-46.

14. Clarence W. Alvord, "The Study and Writing of History in the Mississippi Valley," in Benjamin F. Shambaugh, ed., *Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association*, vol. 1, 1907-1908 (Cedar Rapids, 1909), 101, 104.

15. Buck, "Clarence Walworth Alvord," 309-14. See also Dixon Ryan Fox, "State History II," *Political Science Quarterly* 37 (1922), 99-118.

cleared the ground" for the development of western history.<sup>16</sup>

Shambaugh was a native Iowan born on a farm in Clinton County and, although formally a political scientist, served as the superintendent and editor of the publications of the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City from 1907 to 1940.<sup>17</sup> In keeping with the anti-eastern posture, populist spirit, and public orientation of the MVHA, Shambaugh emphasized the value of reaching a general audience, bringing high school teachers into the association, and studying subjects such as constitutional development to generate a "commonwealth" history usable by the citizenry.<sup>18</sup> Shambaugh praised the MVHA for the "absence of that smugness which too often finds its way into historical societies."<sup>19</sup>

Shambaugh aided the budding MVHA by editing its *Proceedings* and publishing its conference papers until Alvord secured funding from the University of Illinois for the permanent publication of the association's new journal, the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (MVHR). Alvord became the first editor of the MVHR and served until 1923.<sup>20</sup> The MVHR was "primarily interested in the history of the Mississippi Valley" but was open to other articles bearing on the development of the region. Alvord promised that the MVHR would be "more closely connected with

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16. Frederic Logan Paxson, *History of the American Frontier, 1763-1893* (Boston, 1924), preface, 111n.

17. By 1934, Shambaugh had already published 720 works. Julian P. Boyd, "State and Local Historical Societies in the United States," *AHR* 40 (1934), 31. Shambaugh received his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Iowa and his Ph.D. from the Wharton School. He transformed the *Iowa Historical Record* into the more scholarly *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* in 1903. Wunder, "The Founding Years of the OAH," n. 13; William D. Aeschbacher, "The Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1907-1965," *JAH* 54 (1967), 348; Alan M. Schroder, "Benjamin F. Shambaugh," in John R. Wunder, ed., *Historians of the American Frontier* (Westport, CT, 1988), 611-12.

18. Wunder, "The Founding Years of the OAH"; David Thelen, "Of Audiences, Borderlands, and Comparisons: Toward the Internationalization of American History," *JAH* 79 (1992), 436; Rebecca Conard, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* (Iowa City, 2002), 11; Benjamin F. Shambaugh, *The Constitutions of Iowa* (Iowa City, 1934). See also "Benjamin F. Shambaugh," *Palimpsest* 21 (1940), 133-39.

19. Shambaugh, "Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the MVHA," 112.

20. See letters discussing the creation of the MVHR, 1913-14, MVHA correspondence, vol. 1, Alvord Papers; Buck, "Clarence Walworth Alvord," 315.

the historical societies in the country than the *American Historical Review* is." Shambaugh said that there was "no reason why readability, accuracy, and scholarship cannot be combined in the same article." Alvord agreed. He sought to publish articles that were "clear" and "self-explanatory" [sic] and that would serve the "great public" instead of being limited to "specialists." Such a policy, he said, was "not contrary to scientific work." Thus the *MVHR* became the "organ of the Westerners."<sup>21</sup>

The new *MVHA*, midwestern-oriented and ably led by Alvord and Shambaugh, was aided by other members of the founding generation of Prairie Historians. Following Alvord's leadership at the University of Illinois was Theodore Calvin Pease. Born in Cassopolis, Michigan, he earned a B.A. from Illinois and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and went on to author detailed histories of Illinois and assist the state's historical society.<sup>22</sup> Following Shambaugh's lead at the University of Iowa was Louis Pelzer, who grew up on an Iowa farm, earned his Ph.D. at Iowa, and went on to write several works of Iowa history. Orin G. Libby, who was born on a farm in Wisconsin and earned a Ph.D. at Wisconsin under Turner, taught at the University of North Dakota (1906–1945).<sup>23</sup> Solon Justus Buck, who also grew up in Wisconsin, earned his B.A. from Wisconsin and his Ph.D. from Harvard under Turner and went on to teach at Indiana, Illinois, and Minnesota, where he revived the Minne-

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21. Minutes, Board of Editors, 12/29/1913; Alvord to Albert Friedenberg, 3/17/1914; Shambaugh to Alvord, 4/3/1914; Alvord to *MVHR* Board of Editors, 3/31/1914, all in *MVHA* correspondence, vol. 1, Alvord Papers; Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, preface.

22. Pease was a professor of history at Illinois from 1914 to 1948. "Historical News and Comments," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 35 (1949), 719–20. Illinois also produced Clarence E. Carter, born in Jacksonville, Illinois, who earned his B.A. from Illinois, his M.A. from Wisconsin, and his Ph.D. from Illinois in 1908, taught at Miami University in Ohio, and then edited the massive Territorial Papers series for the U.S. Department of State and then the National Archives, a series that included many midwestern states. Solon J. Buck, "Clarence E. Carter, 1881–1961," *American Archivist* 25 (1962), 59–60.

23. Martin Ridge, "Turner the Historian: A Long Shadow," *Journal of the Early Republic* 13 (1993), 137; Robert P. Wilkins, "Orin G. Libby, 1864–1952," *Arizona and the West* 16 (1974), 107; Gordon L. Iseminger, "Dr. Orin G. Libby: A Centennial Commemoration of the Father of North Dakota History," *North Dakota History* 68 (2001), 2–3.

sota Historical Society.<sup>24</sup> John D. Barnhart, born in Decatur, Illinois, took his B.A. from Illinois Wesleyan and, after several teaching stints, earned his Ph.D. in 1930 from Harvard, where he studied with Turner. Barnhart taught mostly at Indiana but also in Nebraska and Minnesota, edited the *Indiana Magazine of History* (1941–1955), and wrote several books about the Midwest.<sup>25</sup> Frederic Logan Paxson was born in Pennsylvania and earned his Ph.D. from Pennsylvania, but turned to studying the West while teaching at Colorado and Michigan. In 1910 he replaced Turner at Wisconsin.<sup>26</sup> In 1925 Paxson won the Pulitzer Prize for his broadly gauged book on the westward movement, *History of the American Frontier, 1763–1893*.

This founding generation of Prairie Historians had a mutually supportive relationship with a budding institution in the Midwest, the state historical society. Beginning in Wisconsin in the 1850s with the work of Lyman Draper, the Wisconsin Historical Society became a model for other midwestern states.<sup>27</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites of Oshkosh became secretary at the Wisconsin Historical Society in 1887 and abetted Turner's efforts to craft a regional historical consciousness.<sup>28</sup> Milo Quaife, born near Nashua, Iowa, went to Grinnell College, earned a Ph.D.

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24. Boyd, "State and Local Historical Societies," 32.

25. Barnhart to Hicks, n.d., folder 1925, carton 13, Hicks Papers, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, CA; "Memorial Tribute to John D. Barnhart," *Indiana Magazine of History* 64 (1968), 109–12. Barnhart taught at the University of Nebraska, Nebraska Wesleyan, and Minnesota Teachers College–Moorhead.

26. Paxson to Turner, 5/1/1906 and 3/30/1910, Frederick Jackson Turner Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA; Ira G. Clark, "Frederic Logan Paxson, 1877–1948," *Journal of the Southwest* 3 (1961), 107.

27. Paul Hass, "Reflections on 150 Years of Publishing," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 88 (2004–5), 4–5; John D. Hicks, "My Ten Years on the Wisconsin Faculty," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 48 (1965), 308; William B. Hesseltine, *Pioneer's Mission: The Story of Lyman Copeland Draper* (Madison, WI, 1954).

28. Turner started teaching at Wisconsin in 1889 and "for the next dozen years was a staunch friend and colleague of Thwaites and an eloquent booster of the Wisconsin Historical Society, which inspired his research and teaching for forty years." Thwaites edited the *Collections*, edited and published 168 books, and also wrote 15 books himself. Hass, "Reflections on 150 Years of Publishing," 5. See Turner, *Reuben Gold Thwaites: A Memorial Address* (Madison, WI, 1914). When Turner returned to Wisconsin in 1889, he started "a formal seminary" in the Wisconsin Historical Society library and started to study the "social foundations of American history." Nettels, "History Out of Wisconsin," 114.





*Frederick Jackson Turner conducted his American history seminar in an alcove of the Wisconsin Historical Society's library in the State Capitol. Turner is second from the right in the front row. Photo from the Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS Image ID 23174.*

from the University of Chicago, and succeeded Thwaites as superintendent of the Wisconsin Historical Society when Thwaites died in 1913.<sup>29</sup> Quaife launched the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, served as president of the MVHA, edited the *MVHR*, and is remembered for his opposition to eastern bias in American history.<sup>30</sup> Quaife was replaced at the Wisconsin Historical Society by Joseph Schafer, born in Grantsburg, Wisconsin, who earned a Ph.D. under Turner at Wisconsin and led the society until his

29. Paxson, who served on the search committee for the society's new leader, said that Quaife's history of Chicago was the "kind of historical work that we should like to see associated with the Society." Paxson to Turner, 12/11/1913, Turner Papers.

30. Quaife later moved to the Detroit Public Library to oversee the Burton Historical Collection, becoming known as the "unofficial voice of midwestern history." David A. Walker, "Milo Milton Quaife," in Wunder, ed., *Historians of the American Frontier*, 497–99; John D. Hicks, "State and Local History," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 39 (1955–56), 136.



death in 1941.<sup>31</sup> More than a dozen Wisconsin Historical Society leaders and Wisconsin-connected scholars went on to become president of the MVHA.<sup>32</sup> The cause of midwestern state historical societies was advanced by other, less well-known Prairie Historians, including George W. Martin and William Connelley in Kansas, Clarence and Clara Paine and Addison Sheldon in Nebraska, Doane Robinson in South Dakota, and Warren Upham in Minnesota.<sup>33</sup> They all worked diligently to collect and publish material about midwestern history.

BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION established by the first generation of Prairie Historians and their allies in midwestern historical societies, several scholars carried on in this tradition in subsequent years. Frederick Merk, born in Milwaukee, earned his B.A. at Wisconsin, worked at the Wisconsin Historical Society for five years, and then followed Turner to Harvard, where he earned his Ph.D. Merk would assume Turner's courses in western history at Harvard and train such students as Paul Gates, who became an expert on western land policy.<sup>34</sup> John D. Hicks, born in a small town in Missouri, earned his Ph.D. at Wisconsin under Paxson, taught at Nebraska, and then replaced Paxson at Wisconsin in 1932.<sup>35</sup> While teaching

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31. Hass, "Reflections on 150 Years of Publishing," 8.

32. These included Orin G. Libby, Thwaites, Paxson, Quaife, Buck, Schafer, John D. Hicks, Carter, and Merle Curti. Nettels, "History Out of Wisconsin," 115.

33. Margaret Landis, "Connelley Kept Record Straight," *Kansan*, 11/17/1985; Edgar Langsdorf, "The First Hundred Years of the Kansas State Historical Society," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 41 (1975), 265-425; Anne Polk Diffendal, "A Centennial History of the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1878-1978," *Nebraska History* 59 (1978), 333-34, 345-49, 357-64; Mary Wheelhouse Berthel and Harold Dean Carter, "The Minnesota Historical Society: Highlights of a Century," *Minnesota History* 30 (1949), 313-15; Russell W. Fridley, "Critical Choices for the 'Minnesota Historical Society,'" *Minnesota History* 46 (1978), 134, 136; J. L. Sellers, "A. E. Sheldon's History Gives Complete Story of State Development," *Nebraska History* 13 (1932), 110-12. On Iowa, see Benjamin F. Shambaugh, "A Brief History of the State Historical Society of Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 1 (1903), 139-52.

34. On Merk's admiration for Turner, see Rodman W. Paul, "Frederick Merk, Teacher and Scholar: A Tribute," *WHQ* 9 (1978), 142.

35. Hicks to John Barnhart, 5/21/1932, Barnhart Papers, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

at Nebraska, Hicks helped Everett Dick, who was born on a Kansas farm, win entry into Wisconsin, where Dick became a Paxson student.<sup>36</sup> While at Wisconsin, Paxson also trained the Indiana-born historian R. Carlyle Buley, who went on to teach at Indiana and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1951 for his two-volume history *The Old Northwest*.<sup>37</sup>

Prominent Prairie Historians also emerged from outside the immediate orbit of Wisconsin. Allan Bogue, born on a farm in Ontario, earned his Ph.D. under Gates at Cornell and went on to teach at Iowa and then Wisconsin, where he became the Frederick Jackson Turner Professor of History. At Iowa, Pelzer trained Vernon Carstensen, who was born on an Iowa farm and went on to teach at Wisconsin and Washington; and Elmer Ellis, who was from North Dakota and who went on to teach at Missouri.<sup>38</sup> At Kansas, Frank Hodder, who was from Aurora, Illinois, trained James Malin, who was originally from North Dakota and earned the first doctorate in history granted by Kansas.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to organizing the MVHA to promote midwestern history, the Prairie Historians remained strongly committed to aiding the state historical societies of the Midwest that flour-

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36. Christine Nasso, ed., "Everett Dick," *Contemporary Authors* (Detroit, 1977).

37. Buley to Stanley Pargellis, 8/15/1944, Carlyle Buley Papers, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN; R. Carlyle Buley, *The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815-1840*, 2 vols. (Indianapolis, 1950). At Indiana, Buley followed in the tradition of Logan Esarey, who was from rural Indiana, earned an Indiana Ph.D., and launched the professional study of the state's history. R. Carlyle Buley, "Logan Esarey, Hoosier," *Indiana Magazine of History* 38 (1942), 348.

38. Pelzer also edited the *MVHR* (1941-1946). Ellis earned his M.A. at the University of North Dakota under Libby, and at Missouri Ellis trained historians Lewis Atherton, from Missouri, and Gilbert Fite, from South Dakota. During those years, Fred Shannon, who was from Missouri and Indiana, also earned his Ph.D. at Iowa working under Arthur Schlesinger Sr.; his dissertation became the Pulitzer Prize-winning two-volume book *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865* (Cleveland, 1928). Robert H. Jones, "Fred Albert Shannon," *Great Plains Journal* 19 (1979), 55.

39. Malin said that Hodder "meant more to the cause of history in Kansas than any other man." James Malin, "Frank Heywood Hodder, 1860-1935," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 5 (1936), 115; Thomas B. Colbert, "James C. Malin," *Great Plains Journal* 19 (1979), 48. At first, Hodder was not enthused about the MVHA, but became its president in 1925. Alvord, Shambaugh, and James E. James, Memo to MVHA Executive Committee, circa 1913, MVHA correspondence, vol. 1, Alvord Papers; Buck to Alvord, 4/6/1916, MVHA correspondence, vol. 2, Alvord Papers.



Frederick Merk took over Frederick Jackson Turner's courses in western history at Harvard University. Photo from Harvard University Library.

ished during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>40</sup> In 1916, in an emblematic moment, Shambaugh and Buck talked until 2:00 a.m. at a history conference about Buck's speech, "The Functions of a State Historical Society."<sup>41</sup> As president of the MVHA, Paxson appointed Alvord to chair the association's committee on "The Relation of Historical Societies and Departments of History."<sup>42</sup> Alvord was a good choice; he had collected a massive amount of materials for the Illinois Historical Survey and had turned the *Illinois Historical Collections* he had created into a "veritable laboratory of state history."<sup>43</sup> The Illinois Centennial Commission named Alvord the editor and organizer of

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40. Boyd, "State and Local Historical Societies," 28, 33; Andrew R. L. Cayton and Susan E. Gray, "The Story of the Midwest: An Introduction," in *The American Midwest: Essays on Regional History* (Bloomington, IN, 2001), 22; Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 551–56; Eric Hinderaker, "Liberating Contrivances: Narrative and Identity in Midwestern Histories," in *The American Midwest*, 53–65, 215n.

41. Buck to Alvord, 5/3/1916, MVHA correspondence, vol. 2, Alvord Papers.

42. Clara Paine to Alvord, 10/18/1916, MVHA correspondence, vol. 2, Alvord Papers.

43. Buck, "Clarence Walworth Alvord," 311.

a multivolume history of Illinois, which was "generally recognized as setting a new standard for state histories."<sup>44</sup> Working as a graduate assistant with Alvord at Illinois, Theodore Pease cowrote "Archives of the State of Illinois" with Alvord. As a professor at Illinois, Pease took over as editor of the *Illinois Historical Collections* in 1920, when Alvord moved to Minnesota, and edited it until 1939. Pease also traveled throughout Europe collecting materials from European archives relating to early Illinois, making copies before some were destroyed during World War II.<sup>45</sup> Pease edited many other collections and, in a measure of his dedication to saving the remnants of the past, he became the editor of the newly formed journal *American Archivist* in the 1930s. Pease was a member of the State Historical Society of Illinois for 39 years and also served as its president.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to the frenetic activity in Illinois and the long-standing work of the Wisconsin Historical Society, the historical societies in other midwestern states benefited from the work of the Prairie Historians. Shambaugh and Pelzer remained committed to supporting the State Historical Society of Iowa. Solon Buck "rebuilt" the Minnesota Historical Society, became its superintendent, launched its quarterly journal, edited a four-volume history of Minnesota, encouraged the organization of county historical societies, and generally "proceeded to reorganize and revolutionize the institution."<sup>47</sup> In North Dakota, Orin Libby started "reorganizing the moribund State Historical Society," served as its secretary for four decades, planned six state parks, started publishing the *Collections*, and launched the *North Dakota Historical Quarterly* in 1926. For all of his work,

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44. Ibid., 311–12. The series included Buck's *Illinois in 1818* (1917), Pease's *The Frontier State, 1818–1848* (1918), and Alvord's *The Illinois Country, 1673–1818* (1920).

45. J. G. Randall, "Theodore Calvin Pease," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 41 (1948), 354, 357–59; "Historical News and Comments," 720.

46. Randall, "Theodore Calvin Pease," 361–62; "Historical News and Comments," 720. Pease also chaired the AHA's Manuscripts Commission. In 1941 Buck became the second U.S. Archivist.

47. Theodore Blegen to John Barnhart, 11/12/1931, Barnhart Papers; Theodore C. Blegen, "Solon Justus Buck—Scholar-Administrator," *American Archivist* 23 (1960), 259–61.

Libby became known as the "father of North Dakota history."<sup>48</sup> In addition to assisting state historical societies and publishing in the *MVHR*, the Prairie Historians actively used the pages of state history journals to publish their research and urged journal editors to reach out to professional historians.<sup>49</sup>

The Prairie Historians' dedication to state historical societies was complemented by an intense commitment to state and local history. In his 1923 presidential address to the MVHA, Solon Buck lauded the increasingly "scientific" work of the "historical societies of the Mississippi valley" but also noted the growing interest among the region's historians in state and local history.<sup>50</sup> Buck's student Theodore Blegen, who earned a Ph.D. at Minnesota and followed Buck as superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, denounced the "inverted provincialism" of "urbane and cosmopolitan" scholars who dismissed "regionalists" and "rejected the near-at-hand as local and insignificant."<sup>51</sup> Buck praised Blegen's work on Minnesota history, and Frederick Merk said James Malin's study of prairie locales set "a pattern for local history that much needs to be followed."<sup>52</sup> Throughout his career, Allan Bogue would honor Malin's ad-

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48. Wilkins, "Orin G. Libby, 1864-1952," 108, 110; Iseminger, "Dr. Orin G. Libby," 6-7; Waldemar Westergaard, "Orin Grant Libby," *North Dakota Historical Quarterly* 42 (1956), 70; Unknown to Paxson, 12/12/1913, Libby Papers, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND.

49. See, for example, John Barnhart to John Hicks, 6/19/1928, Hicks Papers. On such journals, see James H. Rodabaugh, "Historical Societies: Their Magazines and Their Editors," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 45 (1961-62), 115-23.

50. Solon J. Buck, "The Progress and Possibilities of Mississippi Valley History," *MVHR* 10 (1923), 5-6. See also Solon J. Buck, "The Upper Missouri Historical Expedition," *MVHR* 12 (1925), 385-91. Buck's speech signaled the Prairie Historians' professed devotion to local studies. See Hicks, "State and Local History," 137; Shambaugh, *The Constitutions of Iowa*, 11; Schroder, "Benjamin F. Shambaugh," 614; Walker, "Milo Milton Quaife," in Wunder, ed., *Historians of the American Frontier*, 499; Alvord, "The Study and Writing of History in the Mississippi Valley," 98-110; Robert Galen Bell, "James C. Malin and the Grasslands of North America," *Agricultural History* (hereafter *Ag History*) 46 (1972), 415.

51. Theodore C. Blegen, *Grassroots History* (Minneapolis, 1947), 5. Blegen said that Buck's "instruction turned me away from the Stuart period of English history into American western and American social history." Blegen, "Solon Justus Buck—Scholar-Administrator," 260.

52. Buck to Blegen, 2/4/1937, box 6, Buck Papers, National Archives; Merk to Malin, 3/15/1952, Malin Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.

monition that "the good historian should master both local and national history."<sup>53</sup> John Hicks echoed Malin's point, arguing that the historian "should be able to weave into the national story the complicated contributions of localities, states, and sections, and yet not lose himself in insignificant detail."<sup>54</sup> Only on the basis of strong local histories, the Prairie Historians argued, could larger interpretations properly be made.<sup>55</sup> They found it frustrating that other observers failed to see the larger importance of local history and that they continued to treat it as "provincial."<sup>56</sup> Malin noted that local history had been in "disrepute" and lamented the "virtual elimination of local history from the scene." In place of historical writing "from the top down," Malin argued for a "bottom up" history that recognized "the basic fact that all history of human activity must necessarily start from the individual at a particular time and place."<sup>57</sup>

THE ENERGY expended organizing the MVHA, aiding state historical societies, and advocating state and local history underscored the regionalist sensibility of the Prairie Historians and their tilt toward studies of midwestern history. The *MVHR* was purposely geared toward the history of what Shambaugh called "the Great Valley."<sup>58</sup> Alvord said that the *MVHR* "belongs to all the historians and historical organizations of the Mississippi Valley." The journal featured reports on "historical activities" in regions designated as the "Old Northwest and Canada" and the "Trans-Mississippi Northwest."<sup>59</sup> The original

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53. Allan G. Bogue, "Tilling Agricultural History with Paul Wallace Gates and James C. Malin," *Ag History* 80 (2006), 437, 448, 453.

54. Hicks, "State and Local History," 137.

55. Buck to Barnhart, 1/18/1938, Barnhart Papers; James C. Malin, "On the Nature of Local History," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 40 (1957), 227; Frederic L. Paxson, "A Generation of the Frontier Hypothesis: 1893-1932," *Pacific Historical Review* 2 (1933), 39; Iseminger, "Dr. Orin G. Libby," 3.

56. Buck, "Clarence Walworth Alvord," 320.

57. Malin, "On the Nature of Local History," 228.

58. Minutes, Board of Editors, 12/29/1913, and Shambaugh to Alvord, 1/16/1914, MVHA correspondence, vol. 1, Alvord Papers.

59. Alvord circular letter, 3/7/1914, and Alvord to the Authors of "Historical Activities," 2/10/1914, MVHA correspondence, vol. 1, Alvord Papers; James



*The MVHA met in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1932. Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.*

organizers of the MVHA worked diligently to attract historians at regional universities such as Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa, Cincinnati, and Chicago.<sup>60</sup> The *Prairie Historians* also tried to keep the presidency of the MVHA in the hands of scholars who focused on western history.<sup>61</sup> Alvord thought the MVHA would become a “laughing stock” by going “so far afield as to elect a modern history scholar for our presi-

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Sellers to Solon Buck, 8/2/1929, Sellers Papers, University of Nebraska Archives, Lincoln. When the MVHA was searching for an editor of the *MVHR*, James Sellers said that the MVHA “can hardly afford to go east of the Alleghenies to secure an editor.” Sellers to Hicks, 7/17/1940, Sellers Papers. James Sellers, who was born in North Platte, Nebraska, earned his Ph.D. from Wisconsin in 1922, taught at Nebraska (1930–1959), edited *Nebraska History*, and served as president of the MVHA. James C. Olson, “James Lee Sellers,” *Nebraska History* 47 (1966), 123–26.

60. Alvord circular letter, 1/30/1914, and Clarence Paine to Alvord, 3/4/1914, MVHA correspondence, vol. 1, Alvord Papers.

61. Alvord to Clarence Paine, 6/17/1914, MVHA correspondence, vol. 1, Alvord Papers; Vernon Carstensen to Merle Curti, 2/14/1951, folder 18, box 8, Curti Papers; Paul Gates to Ray Billington, 11/15/1951, Paul Gates Papers, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

dent.”<sup>62</sup> In keeping with its regional focus, the MVHA often met in such cities as Lincoln, Lake Minnetonka, Iowa City, Bloomington, Omaha, Grand Forks, St. Paul, Madison, Des Moines, Vincennes, Columbia, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Cedar Rapids, Columbus, Rock Island, and Cincinnati.<sup>63</sup>

This dedication to the regional dimension of midwestern history stemmed from Turner’s leadership. Since Turner first challenged the dominance of the East and promoted the study of the Midwest, regionalism was thought to be “synonymous with Frederick Jackson Turner.”<sup>64</sup> Turner was, after all, a “son of the Prairies,” and his writings were “in fact predicated largely upon the unique conditions of the Prairie West and became the basis of an historical school that had its center in that region.”<sup>65</sup> As early as 1887 Turner had said that he would focus “chiefly upon the Northwest and more generally upon the Mississippi Valley” and those “peopling the prairie.”<sup>66</sup> Turner remained attuned to “state resistance to the nationalizing process” and regional “resistance to national homogeneity.”<sup>67</sup> Michael Steiner argues that the “furor” over the frontier thesis has “blinded” historians to “Turner’s more persistent concern” with regionalism, which led him to win the Pulitzer Prize.<sup>68</sup> The “rallying cry”

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62. Alvord to Clarence Paine, 6/24/1914, MVHA correspondence, vol. 1, Alvord Papers.

63. Sellers, “The Semicentennial of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association,” 516–17. For a negative assessment of the MVHA’s regionalism, see Ray Allen Billington, “From Association to Organization: The OAH in the Bad Old Days,” *JAH* 65 (1978), 75–84.

64. Richard Jensen, “On Modernizing Frederick Jackson Turner: The Historiography of Regionalism,” *WHQ* 11 (1980), 307.

65. Earle D. Ross, “A Generation of Prairie Historiography,” *MVHR* 33 (1946), 392–93.

66. Steiner, “The Significance of Turner’s Sectional Thesis,” 442 (quoting Turner).

67. Frederick Jackson Turner, “Is Sectionalism in America Dying Away?” *American Journal of Sociology* 13 (1908), 661–62; Turner to Barnhart, 4/1/1931, Barnhart Papers.

68. Steiner, “The Significance of Turner’s Sectional Thesis,” 439. Turner was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his book *The Significance of Sections in American History* (New York, 1932). Turner used the term *sectionalism* because *regionalism* was “not widely used in the United States until the last decade of his life.” Michael C. Steiner, “Frontier to Region: Frederick Jackson Turner and the New Western History,” *Pacific Historical Review* 64 (1995), 486.



for regional history, Fulmer Mood once reminded historians, "came from Turner, at Madison."<sup>69</sup>

While amenable to Turner's regionalist ethos and his emphasis on the role of the Midwest in American history, the Prairie Historians were certainly willing to modify his findings.<sup>70</sup> If Turner and some Prairie Historians had emphasized the rapid Americanization of immigrant settlers in the Midwest, others were closely attuned to ethnic persistence.<sup>71</sup> Theodore Blegen, for example, who became a professor at Minnesota, always advocated more work on the "immigrant factor."<sup>72</sup> If Turner had emphasized the uniqueness of frontier democracy too much and had not adequately accounted for European and eastern precedents, the Prairie Historians accepted the critics' points.<sup>73</sup> If Turner saw the frontier as a social "safety valve" for the nation, the Prairie Historians recognized that the frontier did less to relieve pressure on the body politic than Turner thought. Paxson rather enjoyed the "good row" during the 1930s over Turner's "'safety valve' idea."<sup>74</sup>

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69. Fulmer Mood, "The Theory of the History of an American Section in the Practice of R. Carlyle Buley," *Indiana Magazine of History* 48 (1952), 14.

70. John Morton Blum, "A Celebration of Frederick Merk, 1887-1977," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 54 (1978), accessed at [www.vqronline.org/articles/1978/summer/blum-celebration/](http://www.vqronline.org/articles/1978/summer/blum-celebration/).

71. Paxson, "A Generation of the Frontier Hypothesis," 43-46; Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West: Historical Interpretations, 1890-1990* (Albuquerque, NM, 1991), 30, 35; Louis Pelzer, Merle Curti, Edward Everett Dale, Everett Dick, and Paul W. Gates, "Projects in American History and Culture," *MVHR* 31 (1945), 510.

72. Blegen to Merle Curti, 5/25/1944, folder 4, box 6, Curti Papers; Solon Buck letter, 9/27/1935, box 6, Solon Buck Papers. See also Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*, 2 vols. (Northfield, MN, 1931, 1940). The Prairie Historians also frequently corresponded with Turner student Marcus Hansen, who was from Iowa, and Carl Wittke, who was from Ohio. Hansen and Wittke both emphasized immigration. See Marcus L. Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860* (Cambridge, MA, 1940), which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1941; and Carl F. Wittke, *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant* (New York, 1939). See also Joseph Schafer, *The Yankee and the Teuton in Wisconsin* (Menasha, WI, 1922). On Turner as the "key figure in [the] reorientation of American historiography" toward immigration, see Allan H. Spear, "Marcus Lee Hansen and the Historiography of Immigration," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 44 (1961), 258-59.

73. Nash, *Creating the West*, 31.

74. Paxson to Malin, 11/16/1936, Malin Papers ("row" quote); Paxson to Joseph Schafer, folder 5, box 3, Schafer Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society;

A number of the Prairie Historians did, however, carry on Turner's emphasis on the prairie Midwest as a unique meeting ground where diverse peoples and cultures successfully mixed, giving rise to a more egalitarian social order. The distinctions between the North and South were more pronounced in the East, Alvord said, but in the West there was more "friendly intercourse" among peoples.<sup>75</sup> Paxson described the mixing of colonial settlers and German and Scotch-Irish immigrants in the midwestern backcountry and explained how their "divergent and contradictory traits" were brought into the "melting pot of the interior valleys" and "speedily submerged in the common nationality."<sup>76</sup> Carlyle Buley noted the "dual heritage" of paternalistic New England Puritanism and "Scotch-Irish frontier individualism" in the Midwest.<sup>77</sup> John Barnhart described the many "racial and national strains" in the Midwest, including the important role of southern immigrants.<sup>78</sup> Because of this great diversity, Libby said, midwestern history was "amply continental, never petty or sectional."<sup>79</sup> While recognizing cultural persistence among these groups, the Prairie Historians also sought to understand the "solvent power" of the American experience in contrast to a divided and balkanized Europe.<sup>80</sup>

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Gates to Merk, 5/1/1935, Gates Papers; Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 10 n. 17; Fred A. Shannon, "A Post Mortem on the Labor-Safety Valve Theory," *Ag History* 19 (1945), 31-37; Joseph Schafer, "Was the West a Safety Valve for Labor?" *MVHR* 24 (1937), 299-314; Henry M. Littlefield, "Has the Safety Valve Come Back to Life?" *Ag History* 38 (1964), 47-49.

75. Alvord, "The Study and Writing of History in the Mississippi Valley," 101; Clarence Walworth Alvord, "The Relation of the State to Historical Work," *Minnesota History Bulletin* 1 (February 1915), 16.

76. Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, 7.

77. Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 2:1.

78. John D. Barnhart, *Valley of Democracy: The Frontier versus Plantation in the Ohio Valley, 1775-1818* (Bloomington, IN, 1953), 7; "Memorial Tribute to John D. Barnhart," 110; John Barnhart, "Sources of Southern Migration into the Old Northwest," *MVHR* 22 (1936), 49-62; idem, "The Southern Influence in the Formation of Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 33 (1937), 26-76; idem, "The Southern Influence in the Formation of Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 32 (1939), 358-78.

79. Orin G. Libby, "Some Aspects of Mid-West America," *Minnesota History Bulletin* 4 (February/May 1922), 214.

80. Pelzer et al., "Projects in American History and Culture," 510.

The social and ethnic mixing in the Midwest, the Prairie Historians thought, was accompanied by a greater degree of egalitarianism in the region. Shambaugh said that the "frontier was a great leveler" that "fostered the sympathetic attitude" and made "men plain, common, unpretentious" and "really democratic." Most settlers were small landholders and thus, Barnhart said, the Midwest was a "poor man's home" where people participated in civic affairs and the "pretensions of the aristocrats" were shunned. Buley found that on the midwestern frontier egalitarianism was the norm: "Equality was not a theory or creed; it was merely a natural circumstance." The midwesterner thought he could "serve in any political capacity from assistant dog catcher or fence viewer to governor or even president." Buley pointed to nineteenth-century travelers who also noted this egalitarianism and the "American's tendency to profanity, tobacco chewing, and leaning back on the hind legs of a chair, his devotion to newspapers."<sup>81</sup>

BY HIGHLIGHTING the growth of democratic attitudes in the Midwest, the Prairie Historians were tracing what they saw as the unique nature of American democracy. This focus on what has come to be called American exceptionalism is often traced to Turner.<sup>82</sup> The Prairie Historians continued this tradition by frequently noting distinctions between midwestern democratic progress and reactionary regressions in Europe. The states and provinces of the vast interior region of the United States were unique, Libby wrote, especially in comparison to Europe, where a "state of tension exists, resulting from centuries of conflict and rivalry." The Prairie Historians also noted how democratic reformers in other countries borrowed American ideals. Theodore Pease explained how the "stirrings of revolution and liberty in Europe and South America" took place "under the influence and example of republican America."

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81. Shambaugh, *The Constitutions of Iowa*, 25; John D. Barnhart, "The Democratization of Indiana Territory," *Indiana Magazine of History* 43 (1947), 9-10; Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 1:31, 2:2, 489.

82. Nettels, "History Out of Wisconsin," 116; Francois Furstenberg, "The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History," *AHR* 113 (2008), 676; Ridge, "Turner the Historian," 137.

Merk praised Merle Curti, who was a product of Papillion, Nebraska, and who had studied with Turner at Harvard, for explaining the role of American democratic ideas in the reform efforts of mid-nineteenth-century Germany and German reformers' embrace of the American model of framing a constitution for a new Germany. Merk also appreciated Curti's article outlining European fears of American democracy during the early nineteenth century. Curti had emphasized the extent of anti-Americanism among European conservatives, who saw the new American republic as "dangerous to the established order of the Old World." From Turner to Curti at Wisconsin, where Curti replaced Hicks, and among the Prairie Historians generally, the nation's unique heritage was a given. Indeed, Wisconsin's history department and the Wisconsin Historical Society, Curtis Nettels noted, "fostered writings" that explained "why the United States [was] a distinctive nation."<sup>83</sup>

The most important component of the exceptionalist story for the Prairie Historians was the development of American democracy on the midwestern frontier, which constituted a dominant and unifying theme in their writing. Turner set the tone for this emphasis in his 1893 address in which he said that the "most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy here and in Europe." In his presidential address to the MVHA in 1952, Curti stressed how Turner had brought the "democratic theme" into American historical discourse. Hicks praised Curti's speech for its attention to the "essentials of democracy" and recounted his own efforts to capture and communicate the "various ingredients of the American concept of democracy" to broader audiences. In 1943 Hicks himself had written *A Short History of American Democracy*. In Curti's *The Growth of American Thought*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1944 and was dedicated to the memory of Turner, Curti also emphasized the rise of democratic modes of thought in the West. The year after Curti's presidential address, Barnhart published *The*

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83. O. G. Libby, "The New Northwest," *MVHR* 7 (1921), 346; Pease, *The Frontier State*, 20; Frederick Merk to Merle Curti, 6/28/1926, 3/14/1949, and 11/14/1950, folder 1, box 26, Curti Papers; Merle Curti, "The Reputation of America Overseas (1776-1860)," *American Quarterly* 1 (1949), 59; Nettels, "History Out of Wisconsin," 115-16.

*Valley of Democracy*, which encapsulated many of the democratic themes embraced by the Prairie Historians and summarized much of their work. In the book, after thanking Turner, Alvord, Buck, and Pease, Barnhart explained the "significant victories" for American democracy in the Midwest, where the "aristocracy inherited from colonial days" was destroyed.<sup>84</sup>

FOR THE PRAIRIE HISTORIANS, a focus on the development of American democracy involved close attention to law and constitutionalism.<sup>85</sup> Working under Turner at Wisconsin, for example, Orin Libby closely analyzed the bases of support for the ratification of the federal Constitution.<sup>86</sup> Because of its fundamental importance for the legal foundations of the Midwest, the Prairie Historians also extensively studied the Northwest Ordinance. Theodore Pease said that the members of the MVHA considered it "secondary only to the Constitution."<sup>87</sup> Pease had studied constitutional history at the University of Chicago with Andrew McLaughlin, who was born in Beardstown, Illinois, and served as the fifth president of the MVHA.<sup>88</sup>

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84. Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays* (New Haven, CT, 1998), 53; Merle Curti, "The Democratic Theme in American Historical Literature," *MVHR* 39 (1952), 10, 12-13; Hicks to Curti, 5/6/1952, folder 17, box 19, Curti Papers; John D. Hicks, *A Short History of American Democracy* (Boston, 1943); Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York, 1943); Barnhart, *Valley of Democracy*, ix, 3, 4.

85. Curti treated constitutionalism as an "essential element of democracy." Curti, "The Democratic Theme in American Historical Literature," 8.

86. Libby's dissertation under Turner about the ratification votes on the federal Constitution has been described as "Libby's magnum opus" and the "foundation for a new sophisticated study of the Constitution" that "brought him immediate acclaim in the American historical profession." Wilkins, "Orin G. Libby, 1864-1952," 107-8. See also Iseminger, "Dr. Orin G. Libby," 3.

87. Pease, "The Ordinance of 1787," 167.

88. McLaughlin's *Constitutional History of the United States* (New York, 1936) won the Pulitzer Prize. Curti, in "The Democratic Theme in American Historical Literature," 18, said that McLaughlin was a "pioneer" in bringing the theme of democracy into American history. See McLaughlin's presidential address to the AHA, "American History and American Democracy," *AHR* 20 (1915), 255-76, along with his *Steps in the Development of American Democracy* (New York, 1920) and "The Uses of an Historical Society," *North Dakota Historical Society Collections* 1 (1906), 53-67.

Pease turned his dissertation into his first book, in which he connected English Leveller ideology to the development of American constitutionalism, and he edited the *Laws of the Northwest Territory*.<sup>89</sup> When McLaughlin had moved to Chicago, Paxson succeeded him at Michigan, took over his "Constitutional Law and Political Institutions" class, and developed a strong interest in western constitutions.<sup>90</sup> After moving to Wisconsin, Paxson also pushed his advisee John Hicks to study western constitutions and "brushed aside" Hicks's initial plan to study Populism.<sup>91</sup> Hicks discussed his work on constitutional history with Barnhart, who also focused on the constitutional development of the Midwest.<sup>92</sup> Shambaugh wrote *The Constitutions of Iowa*, and Buck, after he moved to the National Archives, published works on the ratification of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.<sup>93</sup> When focusing on the constitutional development of the West, Pease, along with others, noted westerners' debts to

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89. Theodore Pease, *The Leveller Movement: A Study in the History and Political Theory of the English Great Civil War* (Washington, DC, 1916). The book won the Herbert Baxter Adams Prize. Johannsen, "Introduction," *The Frontier State*, xv; R. Douglas Hurt, "Theodore Calvin Pease," in Wunder, ed., *Historians of the American Frontier*, 472. The book began as an assignment in McLaughlin's seminar at Chicago. Randall, "Theodore Calvin Pease," 355, 360; Theodore Pease, *The Laws of the Northwest Territory, 1788-1800* (Springfield, IL, 1925).

90. Clark, "Frederic Logan Paxson, 1877-1948," 108; Frederic Paxson, "The Constitution of Texas, 1845," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 18 (1915), 386-98; idem, "A Constitution of Democracy: Wisconsin, 1847," *MVHR* 2 (1915), 3-24; idem, "The Admission of the 'Omnibus' States, 1889-1890," *Proceedings of the Wisconsin State Historical Society* 49 (1911), 76-93; idem, "Influence of Frontier Life on the Development of American Law," *Proceedings of the Wisconsin State Historical Society* 13 (1919-21), 477-89.

91. John D. Hicks, "My Years as a Graduate Student," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 47 (1964), 283. See Hicks, *The Constitutions of the Northwest States* (Lincoln, NE, 1924). After moving to Berkeley, Paxson advised Earl Pomeroy, who studied the development of western territories and drew heavily on Clarence Carter's collections of documents about the territories. Earl S. Pomeroy, *Territories and the United States, 1861-1890: Studies in Colonial Administration* (Philadelphia, 1947).

92. Hicks to Barnhart, 6/4/1935, Barnhart Papers; John Barnhart, "Sources of Indiana's First Constitution," *Indiana Magazine of History* 39 (1943), 55-94; idem, "The Tennessee Constitution of 1796: A Product of the Old West," *Journal of Southern History* 9 (1943), 532-49; idem, "The Democratization of Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 43 (1947), 1-22.

93. Buck to Hicks, 5/26/1936, box 8, Solon Buck Papers.

the East and England, providing another qualification to Turner's overemphasis on the uniqueness of frontier conditions.<sup>94</sup>

In addition to seeing constitutionalism as a core component of the American democratic tradition, the Prairie Historians paid particular attention to the popular assertion of democratic rights in campaigns and elections. Most prominently, the Prairie Historians saw democratic passions and the influence of backcountry and frontier norms at work in the Populist rebellion of the late nineteenth century; their resulting research gave birth to Populist historiography. Turner called attention to farmer activism, and his more general assertion of the importance of western history served as a "historiographic counterpart of the farmer's revolt."<sup>95</sup> Turner's student Solon Buck began the tradition of focused studies of farmer activism with his book *The Granger Movement*, which provided the "scholarly foundation" for studying Populism and "opened the way to scores of books and articles" about Populism.<sup>96</sup> Paxson praised Buck's book in the first issue of the *MVHR* and linked the democratic energy of farmer movements to the Midwest's frontier heritage of democracy. Paxson saw the frontier's political culture "undergoing transmutation into agrarian influence."<sup>97</sup> Buck followed *The Granger Movement* with the publication of *The Agrarian Crusade* in 1920.

John Barnhart and John Hicks followed in this tradition. Barnhart consulted with Turner when he pursued his graduate work on Nebraska Populism, and his first two published articles were about Populism.<sup>98</sup> The first, published in 1925, noted that

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94. Hurt, "Theodore Calvin Pease," in Wunder, ed., *Historians of the American Frontier*, 474.

95. Steiner, "The Significance of Turner's Sectional Thesis," 443.

96. Solon J. Buck, *The Granger Movement: A Study of Agricultural Organization and Its Political, Economic, and Social Manifestations, 1870-1880* (Cambridge, MA, 1913); Blegen, "Solon Justus Buck—Scholar-Administrator," 260. See also Buck, "Agricultural Organization in Illinois, 1870-1880," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 3 (1910), 10-23.

97. Frederic Paxson, review of Solon Buck, *The Granger Movement*, in *MVHR* 1 (1914), 139; Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, 573.

98. Ridge, "Turner the Historian," 143 n. 36 (on Barnhart and Turner). Merk, Arthur Schlesinger Sr., and Barnhart agreed that Schlesinger would be the first reader of Barnhart's dissertation on Nebraska Populism. Merk to Barnhart, 2/19/1926, Barnhart Papers; "Memorial Tribute to John D. Barnhart," 111; John Barnhart, "Rainfall and the Populist Party in Nebraska," *American Political*

the "significance of Populism is being increasingly recognized" and cited Buck's books and a number of new articles in the *MVHR*, the *Indiana Magazine of History*, and the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*.<sup>99</sup> During the 1920s, while teaching at Nebraska, Hicks also turned to the study of Populism. Paxson, who had earlier vetoed Hicks's plan to study Populism in graduate school at Wisconsin, was enthused about Hicks's Populism research and urged him to study agrarian activism past 1900 and even to compare American Populism with French "debtor psychology" and opposition to paying war debts after World War I.<sup>100</sup> Hicks and Buck discussed Hicks's new work on Populism, and Hicks and Barnhart collaborated on studies of Populism during these years.<sup>101</sup> Hicks's work resulted in the publication of *The Populist Revolt*, which was written "in the context of the Turner thesis."<sup>102</sup> Merk was enthusiastic about the "sympathetic yet shrewd judgments" in Hicks's book, which he called the "definitive book on Populism."<sup>103</sup> Merk similarly saw Populism as a product of the settlement of the West.<sup>104</sup> Hicks later gave himself the "task of finding out what had happened to the farmers of the Middle West after Populism." He put his research assistant Theodore Saloutos to work on the project and,

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*Science Review* 19 (1925), 527–40; John Barnhart and John Hicks, "The Farmers' Alliance," *North Carolina Historical Review* 6 (1929), 254–80.

99. Barnhart, "Rainfall and the Populist Party in Nebraska," 527.

100. Paxson to Hicks, 12/1/1928 and 10/11/1930, Hicks Papers.

101. Buck to Hicks, 1/2/1929, Hicks Papers; Barnhart to Hicks, 1/21/1925, 12/8/1925, 7/16/1928, and 8/13/1930, Hicks Papers; Hicks to Barnhart, 5/7/1932, Barnhart Papers.

102. John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party* (Minneapolis, 1931); Martin Ridge, "Populism Redux: John D. Hicks and *The Populist Revolt*," *Reviews in American History* 13 (1985), 142. The book earned Hicks his post at Wisconsin. Hicks recalled that Carl Russell Fish began his search for a replacement for Paxson "by removing my book, *The Populist Revolt*, from the office shelf, and taking it home with him. In a matter of days he wrote me what he chose to call 'a love letter,' inviting me to join the Wisconsin staff." Hicks, "My Ten Years on the Wisconsin Faculty," 305.

103. Merk to Hicks, 2/10/1932, Hicks Papers.

104. Smith, "Frederick Merk and the Frontier Experience," 144. Merk's later Agricultural History Society presidential address focused on developments in the East that contributed to agrarian unrest in the West. Frederick Merk, "Eastern Antecedents of the Grangers," *Ag History* 23 (1949), 1–8.



Hicks claimed, Saloutos largely wrote the resulting book with himself as "silent partner in the enterprise."<sup>105</sup>

TO STUDY POPULISM is to study farming, and the Prairie Historians, many of them products of midwestern farms, were intense about this enterprise. The midwestern democracy that Turner chronicled had its "economic basis," Barnhart noted, in the small farm; thus Turner actively promoted the study of agricultural history.<sup>106</sup> Malin thought that Turner's frontier thesis was essentially an "agricultural interpretation of American history."<sup>107</sup> The Prairie Historians followed this course of study by actively promoting the creation of the Agricultural History Society in 1919, which, like the MVHA, was also resisted by the AHA.<sup>108</sup> Supporting and advocating the study of farming was a natural fit for historians focused on the Midwest.<sup>109</sup> In 1934 Iowa State University historian Louis Bernard Schmidt, born in Belle Plaine, Iowa, gave his presidential address to the Agricultural History Society that underscored the centrality of family farming to the region.<sup>110</sup> An "ardent admirer" of Turner and a proud "son of the Middle Border," Schmidt explained the development of farming in the prairie Midwest and the distribution of land that had created 6.5 million farms in the region by 1920.<sup>111</sup> The prairies, he noted, generated over 60 percent of the nation's farm

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105. Hicks, "My Ten Years on the Wisconsin Faculty," 309. See Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, *Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939* (Madison, WI, 1951).

106. Barnhart, *Valley of Democracy*, 8; Nettels, "History Out of Wisconsin," 118.

107. James C. Malin, "Mobility and History: Reflections on the Agricultural Policies of the United States in Relation to a Mechanized World," *Ag History* 17 (1943), 177.

108. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 182.

109. Pelzer et al., "Projects in American History and Culture," 507.

110. Schmidt was head of the Department of History and Government at Iowa State (1919-1945) and "pioneered courses in agricultural history and farmers' movements." W. Turrentine Jackson, "A Dedication to the Memory of Louis Bernard Schmidt, 1879-1963," *Arizona and the West* 15 (1973), 103-4. See also Louis Bernard Schmidt, "The Economic History of American Agriculture as a Field for Study," *MVHR* 3 (1916), 39-50; and idem, "The Role and Techniques of Agrarian Pressure Groups," *Ag History* 30 (1956), 49-58.

111. Louis Bernard Schmidt, "The Agricultural Revolution in the Prairies and the Great Plains of the United States," *Ag History* 8 (1934), 173.

income and gave the nation its secretaries of agriculture.<sup>112</sup> Several Prairie Historians were active in and served as president of the Agricultural History Society and published articles in and served as editors for its journal, *Agricultural History*. Agricultural history courses were common at land-grant institutions in the Midwest, and those institutions themselves were studied and held in high regard by the Prairie Historians.<sup>113</sup> When he died, Paxson was working on a history of land-grant universities. He was half finished with the book when he told administrators he could not finish, left his study, went to the hospital, and died.<sup>114</sup>

The agricultural history genre included Allan Bogue's classic treatment of midwestern farming, *From Prairie to Corn Belt*.<sup>115</sup> Bogue was raised on a farm in Ontario.<sup>116</sup> When he was considering graduate school, he wrote to the president of the Agricultural History Society and asked for advice on where to study. Bogue decided to study at Cornell with Merk's student Paul Gates, who introduced Bogue to Malin, whom Bogue thanked for his help with *From Prairie to Corn Belt*.<sup>117</sup> Revealing his own

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112. From 1889, when the post was given cabinet rank, until the 1930s, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture was always from the prairies or Great Plains. Louis Bernard Schmidt, "The Agricultural Revolution in the Prairies and the Great Plains of the United States," *Ag History* 8 (1934), 181, 184.

113. Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, *The University of Wisconsin: A History, 1848–1925*, 2 vols. (Madison, WI, 1949); Carstensen, "The Origin and Early Development of the Wisconsin Idea," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 39 (1956), 181–88; Earle D. Ross, *Democracy's College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage* (Ames, 1942); Schmidt, "The Agricultural Revolution in the Prairies and the Great Plains," 181–82. David Smith, in "Frederick Merk and the Frontier Experience," 142, said that Merk "embodied" the ideal that Justin Morrill envisioned for land-grant colleges.

114. Clark, "Frederic Logan Paxson," 108; Hicks, "Historical News and Comments," 373; Earl Pomeroy, "Frederic L. Paxson and His Approach to History," *MVHR* 39 (1953), 690.

115. Allan G. Bogue, *From Prairie to Corn Belt: Farming on the Illinois and Iowa Prairies in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1963).

116. Bogue recently said, "I was born a midwesterner because southwestern Ontario is essentially midwestern in its natural environment—farther west than Ohio, farther south than much of Minnesota and Wisconsin." Bogue, interview with author, 5/7/2007; Bogue, "Tilling Agricultural History with Paul Wallace Gates and James C. Malin," 438. See also Bogue, *The Farm on North Talbot Road* (Lincoln, NE, 2001), xii.

117. Bogue also met his future wife, Margaret Beattie Bogue, in Gates's seminar. About the time Allan published *From Prairie to Corn Belt*, Margaret published

agrarian roots, Bogue argued that such works of history were needed because "city-reared and urban-oriented historians [had] come increasingly to dominate our profession."<sup>118</sup> Bogue chronicled the agrarian settlement of the Iowa and Illinois prairie and sought to focus on "the man with dirt on his hands and dung on his boots."<sup>119</sup> He discussed the settlers' reaction to the prairie experience, where they settled, how they acquired land, where they were from in the states to the east and in Europe, how they built houses and barns, how they plowed, raised livestock, used machinery, and innovated, how they consumed farm newspapers and attended agricultural fairs, and how they dealt with the costs of farming such as credit, taxes, and shipping. Bogue concluded that the "achievements had been striking" for the prairie farmer and that by the end of the nineteenth century the farmer could look back and think it "was good to have pioneered here, to have been an 'old settler,' and made virgin prairie 'productive' by stocking it with fine animals and raising bountiful crops."<sup>120</sup>

Bogue thought that prairie farmers had a "strong commercial orientation." Along with other Prairie Historians, he devoted significant attention to the brass tacks of farm economics. His first book, which began as a dissertation under Gates and was made possible by time he spent studying with Malin in Kansas, examined the intricacies of farm mortgages in the Midwest.<sup>121</sup> Bogue's work followed in a tradition that traced back to Turner, who emphasized economic history, as did subsequent Prairie

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*Patterns from the Sod: Land Use and Tenure in the Grand Prairie, 1850-1900* (Springfield, IL, 1959).

118. Bogue, *From Prairie to Corn Belt*, preface. Gates was the reader for the book's publisher. Bogue thanked Malin for his comments on the book and expressed "shock" at the negative review of the book in the *MVHR* by Mary Hargreaves, who had been a student of Gates (when he taught at Bucknell) and Merk (in graduate school at Harvard). Bogue to Malin, 7/13/1964, Malin Papers.

119. Bogue, *From Prairie to Corn Belt*, 1. Bogue said, "Iowa is virgin territory almost for quantitative analysis on the pioneer process." Bogue to Malin, 1/10/1954, Malin Papers.

120. Bogue, *From Prairie to Corn Belt*, 287.

121. Allan G. Bogue, *Money at Interest: The Farm Mortgage on the Middle Border* (Lincoln, NE, 1955). Bogue said that Ray Allen Billington's treatment of western mortgages made his survey textbook, *Westward Expansion* (New York, 1949), a "damn waste of paper and money." Bogue to Malin, 3/19/1950, Malin Papers.

Historians.<sup>122</sup> Bogue and other Prairie Historians expanded on this tradition of economic history by promoting the broader use of statistical and quantitative methods.<sup>123</sup> Bogue said that statistics were "like drug addiction. I realize that I am hooked, regret it periodically, but keep coming back."<sup>124</sup> Beyond economics and statistics, Bogue more generally advocated that historians use insights from the social sciences.<sup>125</sup>

WHEN STUDYING the economic details of agriculture and the broader story of midwestern farming, the Prairie Historians closely examined land distribution and geography. Bogue's mentor Paul Gates, who devoted the bulk of his career to studying land distribution, believed that no other issue so consumed the federal government in the century after the Revolution.<sup>126</sup>

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122. Jensen, "On Modernizing Frederick Jackson Turner," 317; Gerald D. Nash, "John D. Hicks," in Wunder, ed., *Historians of the American Frontier*, 308. While at the Wisconsin Historical Society, Merk wrote *Economic History of Wisconsin during the Civil War Decade* (Madison, WI, 1916), which Harvard accepted as his dissertation. Paul, "Frederick Merk, Teacher and Scholar," 140. The famous business historian Alfred Chandler was a student of Merk. Blum, "A Celebration of Frederick Merk, 1887-1977." Turner's focus on economic history and the work of his "historical followers, helped to lay the groundwork for the more aggressive use of the economic interpretation of history that came with Beard's generation." Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington* (New York, 1968), 72.

123. Bogue to Malin, 3/19/1959 and 2/11/1971, Malin Papers; E. David Cronon, "Merle Curti: An Appraisal and Bibliography of his Writings," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 54 (1970-71), 121; Wilkins, "Orin G. Libby, 1864-1952," 110; Smith, "Frederick Merk and the Frontier Experience," 143.

124. Bogue to Malin, 8/14/1968, Malin Papers; Allan G. Bogue, "The Quest for Numeracy: Data and Methods in American Political History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 21 (1990), 89-116. See also the work of Bogue's student Robert Swierenga, "Computers and American History: The Impact of the 'New' Generation," *JAH* 60 (1974), 1045-70; and William Silag, "Pioneers in Quantitative History at the University of Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 46 (1981), 121-34.

125. Allan G. Bogue, "Social Theory and the Pioneer," *Ag History* 34 (1960), 34; Nash, *Creating the West*, 69.

126. Thomas C. McClintock, "Frederick Merk," in Wunder, ed., *Historians of the American Frontier*, 435; Margaret Beattie Bogue and Allan G. Bogue, "Paul W. Gates," *Great Plains Journal* 19 (1979), 22; Paul Gates, *The Farmers' Age: Agriculture, 1815-1860* (New York, 1960), 51; idem, "The Homestead Law in an Incongruous Land System," *AHR* 41 (1936), 652-81; idem, "The Role of the Land Speculator in Western Development," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 66 (1942), 314-33; idem, *Frontier Landlords and Pioneer Tenants* (Ithaca,

Merk thought that Gates, through his "intensive borings in manuscript collections," was the scholar who had "most effectively modified the Turner hypothesis" by explaining how the distribution of land had been disrupted by speculators. But Merk also thought that Gates had "pushed his ideas rather hard."<sup>127</sup> Merk, Paxson, and Vernon Carstensen all wrote extensively and often critically about federal land policy, and the Prairie Historians called for others to study land policies as well.<sup>128</sup>

In tandem with their studies of land distribution, Turner and the Prairie Historians all took geography and the role of environmental conditions in the settlement process seriously.<sup>129</sup> In the 1890s Turner had called for the study of the "physiographic basis" of American history and for the historian to work "hand in hand" with "the geologist, the meteorologist, the biologist."<sup>130</sup> The Prairie Historians followed these suggestions and discussed

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NY, 1945). For a survey of work on this topic, see idem, "Research in the History of the Public Lands," *Ag History* 48 (1974), 31–50. For a survey of Gates's work, see Harry N. Scheiber, "The Economic Historian as Realist and as Keeper of Democratic Ideals: Paul Wallace Gates's Studies of American Land Policy," *Journal of Economic History* 40 (1980), 585–93; and Frederick Merk, "Foreword," in David M. Ellis, ed., *The Frontier in American Development: Essays in Honor of Paul Wallace Gates* (Ithaca, NY, 1969), ix–xxx.

127. Frederick Merk to Merle Curti, 12/15/1949, folder 1, box 26, Curti Papers; Merk to Gates, 9/11/1935, Gates Papers.

128. Buck, "The Progress and Possibilities of Mississippi Valley History," 8; Pelzer et al., "Projects in American History and Culture," 504–6; Frederick Merk, *History of the Westward Movement* (New York, 1978), 605; Smith, "Frederick Merk and the Frontier Experience," 143; Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, 43–70; Vernon Carstensen, ed., *The Public Lands: Studies in the History of the Public Domain* (Madison, WI, 1963). Carstensen's students include University of Iowa historian Malcolm Rohrbough, whose first book was *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789–1837* (New York, 1968); and Richard White, whose first book was *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle, 1979).

129. Bogue, *Frederick Jackson Turner*, 239–42, 430; Everett E. Edwards, "Middle Western Agricultural History as a Field of Research," *MVHR* 24 (1937), 317–18; Steiner, "The Significance of Turner's Sectional Thesis," 451, 454; Jensen, "On Modernizing Frederick Jackson Turner," 308; Libby, "Some Aspects of Mid-West America," 213; Smith, "Frederick Merk and the Frontier Experience," 143; Elmer Ellis, "Louis Pelzer: Scholar, Teacher, Editor," *MVHR* 33 (1946), 209.

130. Steiner, "The Significance of Turner's Sectional Thesis," 451, 454 (quoting Turner); Jensen, "On Modernizing Frederick Jackson Turner," 308.

soils, grasses, and geographic formations extensively.<sup>131</sup> Malin was particularly interested in what would now be considered environmental history, asking "How much has man modified the ecological setting of history in America?"<sup>132</sup> Malin focused on linking ecology and the natural sciences to historical development. Merk told Malin that he had a "genius for tying in the sciences, and especially the more rapidly developing sciences, with history." "No other American historian," he said, "writes as you do the insights of science and history."<sup>133</sup> After reading Malin's *Grassland of North America*, Merk responded that he had "not often in recent years read a work as filled as this with new information, ideas, and approaches." The book, he said, "represents a new plateau in our knowledge of western America which historians of the future will have to ascend before they begin their own work."<sup>134</sup>

Hicks wished he knew as much about agriculture as Malin and said that Malin's work was "as important as anything that is going on in the historical world." Bogue also praised Malin's work and applied his insights in his own research. Turner's and Malin's differing forms of emphasis on the role of the natural environment shaped the work of the Prairie Historians. In an address to the Agricultural History Society a few weeks after Pearl Harbor, for example, Everett Dick set forth a broad range of environmental adaptations and developments that frontier farmers endured and promoted, much as he did in several books. Vernon Carstensen continued that focus. Richard White noted that Carstensen went beyond "farms and farming" and

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131. Merk to Malin, 1/27/1947 and 11/18/1947, and Hicks to Malin, 2/7/1942, Malin Papers; Gates, *The Farmers' Age*, 180; Pelzer et al., "Projects in American History and Culture," 506-7; Edwards, "Middle Western Agricultural History as a Field of Research," 317-18.

132. James Malin, "Ecology and History," *Scientific Monthly* 70 (May 1950), 297. Blegen also helped to found the Forest History Society. Tyrrell, "Public at the Creation," 40. Malin, who thought that there had been "less fundamental change than is usually assumed by conservation propagandists," resisted, along with Merk and Bogue, what he considered the misuse of environmental data to promote natural resource policies during the New Deal era. Malin, "Ecology and History," 297; Malin, "Space and History," part 2, 120; Merk to Malin, 1/27/1947 and 5/6/1947, and Bogue to Malin, 2/11/1956 and 3/11/1956, Malin Papers.

133. Merk to Malin, 5/6/1947 and 3/15/1952, Malin Papers.

134. Merk to Malin, 11/18/1947, Malin Papers.

remained “endlessly fascinated by how the natural world responded to human attempts to control it and by the odd results those attempts sometimes yielded.”<sup>135</sup>

THE WORK OF MALIN, who emphasized the importance of writing history from the “bottom up,” also underscores the Prairie Historians’ attention to early forms of social history.<sup>136</sup> In keeping with a focus on frontier democracy, farming, and economic history, however, there was naturally a political and economic spine to the corpus of works produced by the Prairie Historians. Paxson said he “found the political framework, among other conventional frameworks, indispensable in telling a general story,” as did Pease.<sup>137</sup> Hicks taught “American Social History” at Wisconsin and tried to squeeze out all mentions of “political and economic” factors, but agreed with Paxson that it was like “trying to nail jelly to the wall.” Hicks said that “political and economic history weave together readily and provide an almost essential background for every other kind of history.” Without them, a “reliable scheme of organization is hard to find.” Hicks tried to organize the course around “cross sections of American life and thought,” but thought this only worked if the “students already knew their political and economic history.”<sup>138</sup>

Despite these obstacles, the Prairie Historians were keen to examine social history, again following Turner, who first revolted against a history profession focused solely on the East, elites, and formal politics and diplomacy.<sup>139</sup> Michael Steiner

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135. Hicks to Malin, 5/15/1944, and Bogue to Malin, 11/2/1947, 6/7/1963, and 11/26/1950, Malin Papers; Everett Dick, “Going Beyond the Ninety-fifth Meridian,” *Ag History* 17 (1943), 105; Richard White, “Obituary,” *WHQ* 24 (1993), 138; Richard White, interview with author, 7/27/2011. See also Karl Brooks, “The Wild One: Environmental History as Redheaded Stepchild,” in Kirkendall, ed., *The OAH*, 212.

136. Malin, “On the Nature of Local History,” 228.

137. Howard R. Lamar, “Earl Pomeroy, Historian’s Historian,” *Pacific Historical Review* 56 (1987), 551; Pease, *The Frontier State*.

138. Hicks, “My Ten Years on the Wisconsin Faculty,” 306.

139. Fulmer Mood, “The Theory of the History of an American Section in the Practice of R. Carlyle Buley,” 4, noted that before Turner most historians focused on “political and institutional history” but that Turner promoted economic and “social history.”



calls Turner "perhaps our first self-conscious social historian."<sup>140</sup> Alvord, Pease, Buck, Pelzer, Paxson, Merk, Gates, Blegen, Buley, and Dick followed suit and all advocated and wrote social history.<sup>141</sup> Alvord called for a "real history" that went beyond governors' messages and treasury accountings and that exhibited a "far greater knowledge of the life of the people."<sup>142</sup> Pelzer was seen as "primarily a social historian" because he was "interested in people, in what they thought and did and how they lived" and focused on their "social customs and manners."<sup>143</sup> Blegen condemned the "arrogance" and narrowness of elite-oriented history, which "masked an ignorance of, and disinterest in, the actualities of the common life."<sup>144</sup> Everett Dick's books about the settlement of the prairie and plains were thick with the details of social history.<sup>145</sup> Carlyle Buley's massive two-volume treatment of early life in the Midwest, which won the

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140. Steiner, "Frontier to Region," 490; Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians*, 72.

141. Louis Pelzer, "History Made by Plain Men," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 11 (1913), 307-22; Pelzer et al., "Projects in American History and Culture," 517; Pease, *The Frontier State*, 20-23; Buck, "The Progress and Possibilities of Mississippi Valley History," 6-10; Smith, "Frederick Merk and the Frontier Experience," 143; R. Carlyle Buley, "Glimpses of Pioneer Mid-west Social and Cultural History," *MVHR* 23 (1937), 481-510; idem, *The Old Northwest*, 1:138-239; Buley to Stanley Pargellis, 8/15/1944, Carlyle Buley Papers; Herbert A. Kellar, "Louis Pelzer: Scholar, Teacher, Editor," *MVHR* 33 (1946), 204; Alvord, "The Relation of the State to Historical Work," 8, 15; Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, 113; Fred A. Shannon, "The Life of the Common Soldier in the Union Army, 1861-1865," *MVHR* 13 (1927), 465-82; Joseph Schafer, "The Wisconsin Domesday Book," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 4 (1920), 61-74; Stephanie J. Shaw, "The Long and Influential Life of Social History in the MVHR and the JAH," in Kirkendall, ed., *The OAH*, 127-32.

142. Alvord, "The Relation of the State to Historical Work," 8, 15.

143. Kellar, "Louis Pelzer," 204; Philip D. Jordan, "Louis Pelzer: Scholar, Teacher, Editor," *MVHR* 33 (1946), 215.

144. Blegen, *Grassroots History*, 6, 15.

145. Everett Dick, *The Sod-House Frontier: A Social History of the Northern Plains from the Creation of Kansas and Nebraska to the Admission of the Dakotas* (Lincoln, NE, 1954); idem, *Vanguards of the Frontier: A Social History of the Northern Plains and Rocky Mountains from the Earliest White Contacts to the Coming of the Home-maker* (New York, 1941); idem, *The Lure of the Land: A Social History of the Public Lands from the Articles of Confederation to the New Deal* (Lincoln, NE, 1970). In 1952 a survey of historians indicated that *The Sod-House Frontier* was among the top 15 books published between 1936 and 1950. Gilbert C. Fite, "Everett Dick," *Great Plains Journal* 19 (1979), 17, 21.



*Carlyle Buley at work in his office. Photo from Indiana Historical Society, M0717.*

Pulitzer Prize in 1951, was also replete with the details of social life. The book was so massively detailed and lengthy that Buley struggled for years to find a publisher. A son of Indiana who had studied with Turner, Paxson, and Schafer and earned his Ph.D. from Wisconsin, Buley had taught midwestern history for decades at Indiana, and his book, which he had been planning since 1923, represented the culmination of much of the work of the *Prairie Historians*. He joked that he probably won the Pulitzer because "there was some midwesterner on the committee."<sup>146</sup>

IF A SYMPATHETIC MIDWESTERNER on the Pulitzer committee gave Buley a boost, it would have been part of a strong midwestern regionalist sentiment that united the *Prairie Historians* during the early decades of the twentieth century.

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146. Buley to Charles D. Anderson, 8/20/1947; Rosemary B. York to Buley, 5/6/1948; Arthur W. Wang to Buley, 7/7/1948; Edward C. Aswell to Buley, 8/16/1948; Buley to Stanley Pargellis, 8/15/1944; and Buley to Philip D. Jordan, 5/24/1951, all in Buley Papers.

The Prairie Historians brought to the study of history personal experiences, often on farms or in small towns in the Midwest, that shaped their views and provided a regionalist ethos that unified their work. In their revolt against eastern condescension and neglect, the Prairie Historians gave birth to an intellectual movement organized around the study of the democratic, economic, and social development of the Midwest that was supported by regional research institutions and scholarly journals. While maintaining scholarly norms, they also understood that by compensating for eastern historians' ignorance of the "great interior of North America" they could, as Libby said, generate histories from an "altogether different viewpoint."<sup>147</sup>

In the course of their work, the Prairie Historians sought to maintain their movement's regional grounding. When deciding on meeting locations for the MVHA, they sought out "different points in the west" and were guided by the principle of "locality."<sup>148</sup> When seeking a new director for the Wisconsin Historical Society, they praised a candidate for completing research "in the Middle Western field," rejected one for his "lack of a western connection," and ruled out a southerner because of "his lack of experience with Middle Western mores and his lack of knowledge of Middle Western history."<sup>149</sup> They praised the University of Minnesota for providing fellowships for regional writers and the University of Minnesota Press for making a "place, and a large place, for books interpreting the Upper Midwest."<sup>150</sup> In a measure of the Prairie Historians' regional consciousness, Bogue rejected the idea of living in the urban East, and Hicks turned down an offer from Harvard because he said he "could never fit comfortably into an Eastern environment."<sup>151</sup> Some

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147. Libby, "The New Northwest," 345–46.

148. Alvord to Clarence Paine, 6/24/1914, and unknown to Clarence Paine, 9/28/1914, MVHA correspondence, vol. 1, Alvord Papers.

149. Buck to Hicks, 3/5/1941; Hicks to Buck, 4/23/1941; and Buck to Hicks, 4/21/1941, box 8, Solon Buck Papers.

150. Blegen, *Grassroots History*, 11.

151. Bogue to Malin, 8/10/1971, Malin Papers; Hicks, "My Ten Years on the Wisconsin Faculty," 315. When Merk left the Wisconsin Historical Society to continue his studies at Harvard, Milo Quaife worried that he might become "an effete Easterner." Quaife to Merk, 10/5/1916, General Administrative Correspondence of WHS, 1900–2000, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

devotees of the midwestern cause resented Turner for "deserting the West" and moving to Harvard, but he insisted, "I am still a western man in all but my place of residence."<sup>152</sup> These commitments were part of the persisting belief that professors "should be spiritually attuned to the region" where they worked and should contribute to the "continued regionalism" within the American historical profession during the early twentieth century.<sup>153</sup>

In subsequent decades younger generations of historians have moved in different directions, and the midwestern impulse in historical writing has lost the force it once enjoyed. In a move that symbolized that decline and the withering of regional attachments, in the 1960s the Prairie Historians' old organ, the *MVHR*, became the more general *Journal of American History*.<sup>154</sup> But even at this distant remove, the Prairie Historians deserve to be remembered for what they accomplished and for the trends they anticipated. When Carlyle Buley was researching an earlier group of midwestern historians, he noted that they had been "more or less forgotten, unknown to any except specialists in the field," but that they were "too important to be permitted to pass into oblivion."<sup>155</sup> So, too, are the Prairie Historians, who called attention to the Midwest, toiled to make the region's historical institutions functional and productive, wrote substantial histories of the region, won Pulitzer Prizes, and focused on our democratic heritage and prospects, points of emphasis that can help us all.

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152. Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians*, 79–80.

153. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 180–81, 185.

154. James Madison notes that without a topically oriented journal "there can be no field, no sense of scholarly community around a subject, no us/them, no impetus to think of a genre of scholarship." Madison, "Diverging Trails: Why the Midwest is Not the West," in Robert C. Ritchie and Paul Andrew Hutton, eds., *Frontier and Region: Essays in Honor of Martin Ridge* (Albuquerque, NM, 1997), 43.

155. Buley to Stanley Pargellis, 8/15/1944, Buley Papers.

## Book Reviews and Notices

*Man of Deeds: Bishop Loras and the Upper Mississippi Valley Frontier*, by Thomas E. Auge, edited by Amy Lorenz. Center for Dubuque History Occasional Publications No. 4. Dubuque: Loras College Press, 2008. xi, 262 pp. Notes. \$15.00 cloth.

Reviewer Timothy Walch is director emeritus of the Hoover Presidential Library and associate editor of the *U.S. Catholic Historian*, the journal of the U.S. Catholic Historical Society. His books include *Parish School: American Catholic Parochial Education from Colonial Times to the Present* (1996) and *Catholicism in America: A Social History* (1989).

Mathias Loras was, indeed, a man of deeds. Not much remembered by Iowans these days, Loras was the first Catholic bishop of Dubuque and the founder of a college in Dubuque that now bears his name. More to the point, when Loras first arrived in Iowa in 1839, he assumed responsibility for the evolution of the Roman Catholic church in a territory that is now the states of Iowa, Minnesota, and the two Dakotas. By the time of his death in 1858, he could contemplate a diocese that encompassed 50 churches, 47 missions, 37 priests, two orders of women religious, and a Trappist monastery.

This is not to say that Loras found it easy to build his diocese out of little more than hope. "God be praised," he wrote shortly after his arrival, "this diocese will be formed in the course of time. In the meantime, we are going to try not to die of hunger this winter" (89). Like many others who ventured west, life became a contest between long-term dreams and short-term needs.

Born in Lyon, France, in 1792, Loras was ordained a priest in 1815 and began his career as a seminary administrator. A conflict with his local superiors in 1829 and a timely invitation led Loras to emigrate to Mobile, Alabama, where he served as vicar general, college president, and parish pastor. In July 1837 Pope Gregory XVI selected Loras as the first bishop of Dubuque.

He devoted the next 20 years to that task and faced a wide variety of challenges. Foremost was the sheer poverty of his new diocese. He was fortunate, indeed, that the Society for the Propagation of the Faith was based in his native Lyon and was generous in its financial support. Loras also received support from the Leopoldine Foundation in Vienna. Such gifts allowed for modest growth.

Loras also faced a substantial challenge in finding enough priests to meet the needs of his sprawling diocese. His desperation would lead him to accept a number of troubled priests who were, at best, a mixed blessing. Not surprisingly, Loras devoted considerable energy to a "seminary on Mt. St. Bernard" that would later become the college that today bears his name.

The publication of *Man of Deeds* brings to completion the last scholarly work of Thomas E. Auge, a beloved professor of history at Loras College. Auge completed the manuscript in 1980 but never carried it forward to publication. The project was revived by Amy Lorenz after she discovered the manuscript in the collections of the Center for Dubuque History in 2006. "In working with Dr. Auge's manuscript," she writes in her introduction, "I have made every effort to maintain the integrity of his text, with minor corrections."

*Man of Deeds* is a useful study—the first scholarly biography of an important figure in Iowa history. It is thorough, balanced, and well written—based on Loras's letters and documentary legacy as well as the relevant primary and secondary sources available as of 1980. The only limitation to the study is that it focuses too closely on Loras himself and would have benefited from a broader look at the history of Catholicism in other midwestern dioceses at that time. *Man of Deeds* nonetheless merits inclusion on any reading list of books about the history of religion on the midwestern frontier.

*The Roots of Rough Justice: Origins of American Lynching*, by Michael J. Pfeifer. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011. 143 pp. Maps, appendixes, notes, index. \$40.00 cloth.

Reviewer Stacy Pratt McDermott is assistant director/associate editor of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois. She is the author of "'An Outrageous Proceeding': A Northern Lynching and the Enforcement of Anti-Lynching Legislation in Illinois, 1905–1910," in *The Journal of Negro History* (1999).

*The Roots of Rough Justice* is a tidy and provocative prequel to Michael Pfeifer's important comparative portrait of lynching in America, *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874–1947* (2004). In this new book, Pfeifer examines the social and cultural antecedents of lynching to better understand the history of mob murder in America. Through an analysis of various American regions—particularly the cotton south, the emerging midwestern frontier in Iowa, and the desert southwest—Pfeifer argues that lynching was a white response to legal reforms that promised protections for non-white Americans. Historians of American lynching have primarily focused on the post-Reconstruction and

Jim Crow eras, but Pfeifer asserts that an examination of lynching during the antebellum period is instructive. Most of the book's analysis rests on American antecedents of lynching, but the author also suggests that a tradition of vigilante violence in the British Isles was transplanted to American soil during the colonial period.

The book contains five chapters, the first of which is an extremely brief survey of collective violence across the modern Anglo world. In five pages, Pfeifer proposes that a transnational perspective informs the historical context of mob murder in America. Given that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century crowd actions in England and Ireland tended towards the non-lethal variety (public flogging, for example), and given that a large cross-section of American ancestors of settlers from the British Isles were devoted to the rule of law and never engaged in mob violence, Pfeifer's transnational explanation raises more questions than it answers. Although the cultural connections he draws are intriguing, Pfeifer offers too little in the way of evidence and explanation on the transnational antecedents to make a convincing case.

Questioning the book's contributions as a transnational history of lynching is a minor criticism, however. The following four chapters are grounded in impressive regional research. The remainder of the book presents a complex portrait of nineteenth-century American social and cultural antecedents of systematic racialized lynching that occurred after Reconstruction. The second chapter examines the southern, midwestern, and western frontiers and analyzes issues of class and legal authority.

The book really hits its stride in the third chapter, where Pfeifer discusses the emergence of lynching as a terror tactic used against minorities. Lynching's development into a racialized weapon was, as Pfeifer sees it, a backlash to developing legal protections of due process that in theory at least extended to blacks, Indians, and Hispanics. In the fourth chapter, Pfeifer argues that, by the 1850s, vigilante ideologies and due process legal reforms "had competed for cultural supremacy in American life for decades" and "took on a particular intensity at midcentury" (54). Partly because of the dynamic changes in the social, economic, and political landscapes and the growing multicultural environment, this competition heightened perceived threats against white culture and society.

The final chapter connects the antebellum context of lynching to the transformative era of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Violence, Pfeifer argues, was at the root of the America's national conversion from slavery to emancipation; and he reiterates that lynching was further entrenched as a "visceral means of seeking to resist and to redi-



rect the dynamics of social, political, and legal change" (67). To end the book, Pfeifer includes a short epilogue, suggesting how his research might serve as a springboard for understanding mob violence in other parts of the world.

*Roots of Rough Justice* is an important little book for three reasons. First, the research it presents on lynching in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s is impressive, and a regionally organized chart in the appendix providing details of individual lynchings will prove invaluable for scholars researching mob violence in the antebellum era. Second, the book very clearly connects the history of lynching in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to its pre-Civil War history. This might seem a logical connection, but many lynching historians have neglected to analyze lynching's early career in America. Third, the book very loudly asserts that region matters as a historical context for lynching and that a comparative analysis of regional variation in the character of mob action is imperative. Examining the regionalized social foundations of vigilante movements in the 1830s to the 1850s makes clearer the dynamic ways in which lynching became a tool in a contested and violent struggle for social order after emancipation.

*Crusade Against Slavery: Edward Coles, Pioneer of Freedom*, by Kurt E. Leichtle and Bruce G. Carveth. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011. xi, 268 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer James Simeone is associate professor of political science at Illinois Wesleyan University. He is the author of *Democracy and Slavery in Frontier Illinois: The Bottomland Republic* (2000).

Edward Coles is best remembered in the Midwest as the governor who between 1822 and 1824 fought to keep Illinois from becoming a slave state. Kurt E. Leichtle and Bruce G. Carveth's new biography demonstrates the heavy cost Coles paid for that brief episode. Coles spent most of his life in Virginia and Pennsylvania, but it was the decade he spent in Illinois and the actions he took there that indelibly marked his fate.

Edward Coles was born into Virginia's slaveholding aristocracy. Dolly Payne Madison was his first cousin, and he served as a personal secretary to President James Madison in what the authors describe as "the Republican Court." The description is apt: Coles lived in a rarified air at Washington City in daily presence with republican royalty. In 1816 his experiences became even more rarified when Madison sent him as a personal envoy to the czar's court at St. Petersburg, Russia.

When Coles landed in Illinois in 1819, after President James Monroe appointed him Register of Lands at the Edwardsville land office, he owned over 6,000 acres of land in the area and was among the handful of economic royalty in a young state still dominated by wild prairie.

But, as Leichtle and Carveth relate, the royal coat covered a great secret: his decision to emancipate his slaves. From an early age, persuaded by "the upbraiding of conscience" that slavery was a violation of natural rights, Coles determined to rid his life of the one institution that he believed sullied the fair name of Virginia republicanism. He communicated his antislavery sentiments in a now famous letter to Thomas Jefferson in 1814. Late in life he argued (mistakenly it turns out) that Jefferson penned the antislavery provisions of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, tangible proof that the founder intended the institution to be extinguished. Jefferson disappointed Coles by refusing to join his antislavery crusade. James and Dolly Madison disappointed him again when they decided not to free their slaves.

The institution of slavery marked Coles throughout his life. He was raised in the privilege it created, and his most famous moment came when, en route to Illinois, he freed his inherited slaves while he and they floated down the Ohio River. But emancipation never brought the closure Coles sought. Slavery stuck to him like a tar baby. He was known in Illinois as a man of privilege who sought political gain from his emancipations. One of the great virtues of *Crusade Against Slavery* is the care with which the authors trace the legal harassment Coles faced from his political opponents.

Coles's life in Illinois featured one misunderstanding after another. Most Illinoisans never understood him, and he never understood them, although he was elected by a plurality in the four-way governor's race of 1822. He founded the state agricultural society and advocated soil conservation but was derided as a poor potato farmer. He believed that slavery had been made illegal by the Northwest Ordinance, while many Illinoisans considered existing slavery to be secured as a pre-existing property right under the same ordinance. Most Illinoisans were proud of all things local; he was a cosmopolitan with mixed loyalties.

Coles died in 1868 after losing a son in the Civil War. The son fought for Virginia; the father lived in Philadelphia and voted for Abraham Lincoln. Leichtle and Carveth have produced a compelling portrait of that quintessential American character, the disappointed idealist.

*Midnight Rising: John Brown and the Raid that Sparked the Civil War*, by Tony Horwitz. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2011. 365 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, appendix, index. \$28.00 cloth.

Reviewer Galin Berrier has been adjunct instructor in history at Des Moines Area Community College. He is the author of "The Underground Railroad in Iowa," in *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838–2000* (2001).

The steady stream of recent books on John Brown continues with yet another entry, a vividly written account by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Tony Horwitz. Readers familiar with his best-selling *Confederates in the Attic* will not be surprised if this latest attempt to explain the controversial abolitionist reaches a larger popular audience than most if not all of its recent predecessors.

Horwitz divides *Midnight Rising* into three parts. In part one, "The Road to Harpers Ferry," he summarizes Brown's early life, his emergence as a border warrior in "Bleeding Kansas," and the preparations for his famous raid, including his brief sojourn with his men in Springdale, Iowa, and the drafting of his "provisional constitution" in Chatham, Upper Canada (Ontario). In part two, "Into Africa," he describes the raid itself and the capture or death of Brown and his men at their besieged "fort" in the engine house at the Harpers Ferry arsenal. Part three, "They Will Brown Us All," covers Brown's trial and execution and includes an assessment of his impact on his own and succeeding generations.

Horwitz is a journalist, not a historian, but his research is thorough and impressive, extensively utilizing manuscript collections. By using their own words culled from letters and contemporary newspaper accounts, Horwitz manages to endow not only Brown, but also his family members and associates, with distinct personalities. No other recent John Brown book has done this so well.

Nonetheless, Iowa readers may find *Midnight Rising* a bit disappointing. The Missouri raid of December 1858 and the subsequent trek across Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa to Chicago and on to Canada merits only a couple of pages, and the passage across Iowa itself in February 1859 a mere two sentences (89). His account of the sojourn of Brown and his men in the Quaker settlement of Springdale in the winter of 1857–58 (73) is more satisfactory, thanks to Horwitz's use of Irving Richman's *John Brown among the Quakers, and Other Sketches* (1894), a sometimes neglected source. But he seems not to have consulted John Todd's *Early Settlement and Growth of Western Iowa, or Reminiscences* (1906). There is no mention of Todd or of another prominent Iowa abolitionist, Josiah B. Grinnell, both of whom aided Brown; and the brief references to the community of Ohio Congregationalists at Tabor

(66, 67, 70–72) offer no explanation of how or why Tabor became a base for Brown and his men.

Readers familiar with the recent scholarship on John Brown will find in *Midnight Rising* no great new insights on such familiar topics as Brown's alleged insanity, his Old Testament religious faith, or whether or not he was a "proto-terrorist." What they will find is a highly readable narrative of John Brown and the Harpers Ferry raid, with fresh insights into the personalities and character of Brown's family and associates. It is a welcome addition to the ever-growing John Brown bookshelf.

*Price's Lost Campaign: The 1864 Invasion of Missouri*, by Mark A. Lause. Shades of Blue and Gray Series. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011. vii, 280 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendixes, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Terry L. Beckenbaugh is assistant professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His dissertation (University of Arkansas, 2001) was "The War of Politics: Samuel Ryan Curtis, Race, and the Political/Military Establishment."

Mark Lause's *Price's Lost Campaign: The 1864 Invasion of Missouri* is a welcome addition to the University of Missouri Press's Shades of Blue and Gray series. Lause's study is a detailed narrative of the 1864 campaign up to the point that Major General Sterling Price's rebel Army of Missouri turned away from Jefferson City, Missouri. That narrative does much to debunk the myths that surround Confederate forces during the Civil War, namely that they respected private property and eschewed the "Hard War" tactics embraced by the Union army that devastated the Confederate states. Price's forces not only routinely looted Missouri citizens but murdered many in cold blood. Most of these actions were not borne of military necessity—certainly not the killings of civilians and prisoners of war. The Confederate Army of Missouri left in its wake a bloody trail of corpses and ransacked homes and businesses, hardly the benevolent liberating army of neo-Confederate myth. Lause also harshly assesses the Federal commander of the Department of Missouri, Major General William S. Rosecrans. According to Lause, Rosecrans was more concerned with protecting the business interests in Missouri than with protecting that state's citizens from Price's forces. Rosecrans also reacted with deplorable slowness to the threat, and did little to coordinate with the Department of Kansas's commander, Iowan Major General Samuel Ryan Curtis.

Unfortunately, Lause ends *Price's Lost Campaign* in mid-stride. The decision to use the word *invasion* in the subtitle is significant: Lause argues forcefully that the campaign was no raid, but that the intent was to "liberate" Missouri from Federal rule (2). That editorial decision influences the rest of the book, because Lause abruptly ends the study when the Confederates turned away from Jefferson City in early October 1864. His rationale is that when the Army of Missouri veered west from Jefferson City, it ceased to be an invasion and turned into a raid. From a military terminology standpoint, that is correct. However, this account may leave the reader unsatisfied because Lause ignores the fighting around Westport on October 21–23, 1864, as well as the pursuit after that battle—including the Battle of Mine Creek on October 25. The Battle at Westport was the biggest battle of the Civil War in the trans-Mississippi, and the fight at Mine Creek was one of the largest cavalry battles of the war. The omission of those two clashes will therefore be a disappointment to readers who expect the study to examine the entire campaign.

Beyond this truncated account of the struggle, the lack of good maps is the book's most significant shortcoming. Such maps are almost essential for readers to comprehend the swirl of events taking place throughout the campaign.

Despite these weaknesses, *Price's Lost Campaign* is a significant addition to the historiography of the Civil War in the trans-Mississippi. The author strips away much of the myth surrounding Price's invasion with in-depth research and analysis. We can hope that Lause will follow up with a second volume examining the rest of the campaign in similar detail. If a showman is supposed to leave his audience wanting more, then Lause has succeeded admirably.

*Freedom by the Sword: The U.S. Colored Troops, 1862–1867*, by William A. Dobak. Army Historical Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2011. xvi, 553 pp. Tables, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$58.00 cloth, \$38.00 paper.

Reviewer Donald R. Shaffer teaches exclusively online for Upper Iowa University and other institutions. He is the author of *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (2004) and (with Elizabeth Regosin) *Voices of Emancipation: Understanding Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction through the U.S. Pension Bureau Files* (2008).

*Freedom by the Sword*, by William A. Dobak, brings yet another perspective to the service of African Americans in the U.S. Civil War. Once a marginal topic, black Union soldiers have been the subject of

many studies in recent decades, so Dobak's book enters a crowded field. The author writes that his purpose is to "tell the story of how the Union Army's black regiments came into being, what they accomplished when they took the field, and how their conduct affected the course of the war and the subsequent occupation of the defeated South" (xiv).

In other words, *Freedom by the Sword* is a traditional narrative history of the black Union regiments in the Civil War, mostly based on federal archival sources and the published volumes of the *Official Records*. After a chapter dealing with the evolution of the Lincoln administration's policy toward emancipation and the initial recruitment of black men into the Union army, Dobak organizes most of the rest of the book geographically, examining the history of African American military service in particular regions from the initial efforts to recruit black men there to their discharge from the army.

Of particular interest is chapter 8, which deals with the black regiments in the trans-Mississippi West. Among the units discussed is the First Iowa Colored Infantry, later the 60th U.S. Colored Infantry. Recruited mainly from among Missouri slaves, the regiment helped Iowa meet its federal recruitment quota. In that regard, Dobak laudably shares a trenchant quote from Iowa's Civil War governor, Samuel J. Kirkwood, demonstrating how racist and coldly cynical even an anti-slavery Republican could regard black military service in the Civil War (234). Dobak also provides a short but adequate account of the military experience of the regiment, which spent most of its existence garrisoning Helena, Arkansas, and had only one brief skirmish with Confederate forces during a reconnaissance-in-force outside the city.

While praiseworthy in its effort to provide a comprehensive history of African American service in the Union army, even at a lengthy 500+ pages, *Freedom by the Sword* nonetheless often manages to treat its subject shallowly. Part of the problem is the comprehensive approach itself. By trying to deal with so many aspects of the subject matter, the effort overall suffers as too much is dealt with too little. Dobak should have been more selective, as some aspects of the black military experience in the Civil War are clearly more important than others. He also should have analyzed more of his wealth of documentation instead of letting the sources speak for themselves, which creates a problem as most of the documents he uses were produced by Union officers and other whites. Dobak does try to bring black soldiers into his narrative, but they tend to be men like James Monroe Trotter and Christian Fleetwood who achieved prominence during the war. Consequently, the mass of African Americans who served in the Union army tend to get lost at times in the book, when, as the Freedmen and Southern So-

ciety Project at the University of Maryland has shown, the voices of many ordinary black soldiers can be found in federal sources. So *Freedom by the Sword* is a good book, but with further revision and editorial work it could have been even better.

*The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic*, by Barbara A. Gannon. Civil War America. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. xiv, 282 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Sarah J. Purcell is associate professor of history at Grinnell College. She is working on a book tentatively titled *Spectacle of Grief: The Politics of Mourning and the U.S. Civil War*.

In her new book on the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) as an interracial institution, Barbara A. Gannon directly takes on previous scholarship on the GAR and, indeed, some of the broader scholarship on the memory of the Civil War. Gannon argues that other historians, especially Stuart McConnell in his 1992 book *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865–1900*, have overemphasized the racism and segregation in the GAR. Far more important than racism in the GAR, she argues, was its interracial makeup and the integration of many posts.

Gannon asks as her central question, “What was the Grand Army of the Republic, and why did it welcome African Americans at a time when so many American institutions excluded them” (2)? In part one of the book she sketches how African Americans participated in the GAR and its female auxiliaries, taking part in all of the important GAR rituals, holding offices, and contributing to the ways GAR oratory and ceremonies shaped the public memory of Civil War veterans. In part two, Gannon turns her attention more fully to the interracial aspects of the GAR by explaining regional patterns of post-by-post segregation or integration. In part three she examines how white veterans recognized black veterans as sharing their sacrifice during the war and how they built a sense of “comradeship” based on a notion of common suffering. In part four she coins the term *the Won Cause* to describe the dual emphasis on union and freedom in GAR memories of the meaning of the war. After a short epilogue that traces the last days of the GAR in the twentieth century, Gannon includes two extremely helpful appendixes that list the African American and integrated GAR posts by state.

Gannon’s greatest success in this meticulously researched if unevenly argued book is to uncover the extent of African American participation and integration in the GAR. She shows how, remarkably,

some previous historians have missed the fact of the widespread integration of GAR posts because the GAR membership rolls themselves almost never included racial classifications. By combining extensive research in black newspapers and demographic records with deep investigation of membership rolls and other GAR records, Gannon is able to establish clearly just how many posts were truly interracial.

Both region and wartime experience influenced the integration of the GAR. Although many African American Union veterans lived in the South, only "a handful" belonged to integrated posts (87). Outside the South, Gannon convincingly argues, states—such as Kansas and Massachusetts—that organized all-black state regiments that had served in the East were more likely to see all-black GAR posts created after the war. Iowa stands out, in Gannon's account, as one of the most highly integrated states for GAR membership. Even though Gannon recognizes that Iowa and other midwestern states harbored anti-black racism before the war, she points out that white Iowans' extensive service in the western campaigns, where they often fought side by side with black units, helped to enhance the drive for integrated GAR posts after the war. In Iowa, only Keokuk had an all-black GAR post, and "about forty racially mixed posts existed in Iowa, from Davenport in the east to Red Oak in the west" (90). The relatively lower population of African American veterans in any one location in Iowa may also have contributed to GAR integration.

Gannon's research is impressive, and historians and genealogists alike will find her lists of integrated and segregated posts invaluable (although they might wish she had also included a list of all-white posts). Unfortunately, Gannon's bold historiographical argument and her attempt to understand the meaning of GAR integration in the era of Jim Crow are less successful. Gannon shows that white GAR members thought of black members as comrades and that they constructed an image of Civil War victory that included both saving the Union and ending slavery as goals of the war. She does not convincingly argue, though, *why* the GAR did not do more to fight racism and segregation or how whites could reconcile their personal racism with their acceptance of African Americans in the GAR. Her contention that American imperialism somehow intervened is not well proven or convincing.

*The Won Cause* brings an important new perspective on the GAR, but it does not dismantle the arguments of previous scholars as much as Gannon contends.



*Illinois: A History in Pictures*, by Gerald A. Danzer. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011. xi, 264 pp. 170 photographs, other illustrations, charts, maps, bibliography, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Jane Simonsen is associate professor of history and women's and gender studies at Augustana College, Rock Island. She is the author of *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860–1919* (2006) and essays on Alexander Gardner's photographs of the Kansas prairies and on twentieth-century photographs of Sauk descendants of Black Hawk.

Understanding history through images demands active engagement from viewers willing to mine the arguments these documents offer. Gerald Danzer's pictorial history of Illinois illustrates this principle, inviting readers to appreciate the state's rich legacy while urging them to grapple with claims about economic prospects, social relationships, and civic identity that lie beneath the pictures' surface. Claims offered by images are often implicit, but this book's overarching argument is that Illinois history has been shaped by its denizens' interactions with the land, from the mounds of Cahokia to the mirrors of Millennium Park.

Chapters range from geologic history through early indigenous settlement and encounters before 1700, pioneer settlement, railroad development and the consequent growth of Chicago, industrialization, and postwar suburbanization. Each chapter begins with a timeline charting landmarks in Illinois history alongside world events and, later, Chicago history. Brief chapter overviews set the context for 15–20 images accompanied by substantive captions. Many of these helpfully invite readers to make comparisons with other images. For example, a lithograph of U. S. Grant's postwar return to Galena is tellingly different from the photograph it was based on; the caption for a 1922 deco-style pamphlet cover featuring a steamer plowing between skyscrapers toward Lake Michigan refers us back to a lithograph of the simple Du Sable trading post that once occupied that site.

Danzer's focus on the state as it has been defined and remade over time is a refreshing departure from "people and events"-style state histories. Images provoke critical readings of space and push perspective into the foreground. Plat maps, stylized farmstead lithographs from the mid-nineteenth century, and journalistic efforts to depict events by collapsing time all reveal the power of images to project ideals, convey their makers' values, and manipulate reality in ways that contest the notion of "pure" documentary. As such, the book could be an invaluable tool for investigating the interplay between midwestern lands and social forces.

But the focus on geography sometimes comes at the cost of social history. Captions often lack artists' names, and images are organized

by events depicted, not when they were made, which downplays perspectives of myth and memory. There is also the inevitable shift toward Chicago, particularly in state histories that privilege geography. Finally, while Danzer includes class struggles, African Americans and women are generally sidelined. Racially motivated violence in Alton, Springfield, and Cicero between the 1840s and the 1950s is not mentioned; the land- and society-altering Great Migration appears only in a timeline. The book does include an image of the oft-ignored 1982 ERA march on Springfield; the caption notes that ERA opponent Phyllis Schlafly hailed from Alton, but neglects Schlafly's rival, Peoria native Betty Friedan.

The celebratory tone is in keeping with the author's intention to usher in Illinois's 2018 bicentennial, and the book thoughtfully presents a visual narrative of state history for a general audience. For scholars and teachers interested in teasing out the limits of perspective and memory and in questioning the intentions of image makers, the book would be fruitfully paired with textual studies of the state's environmental history and social geography.

*Atlas of the Great Plains*, by Stephen J. Lavin, Fred M. Shelley, and J. Clark Archer. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011. xvi, 335 pp. Maps, tables, graphs, illustrations, bibliography. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Molly P. Rozum is associate professor of history at Doane College in Crete, Nebraska. Her dissertation (University of North Carolina, 2001) was "Grasslands Grown: A Twentieth-Century Sense of Place on North America's Northern Prairies and Plains."

Perhaps it says something essential about the Great Plains that an encyclopedia devoted to its history and culture inspired a hefty atlas. The entries in the *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains* (2004) generated "mapping ideas" (xv) now beautifully rendered by the hundreds of maps in this volume's eight chapters. The cultural impulse to map suggests the region's residents' longstanding preoccupation with space. Chapters on land and environment, history, population, rural settlement and agriculture, urban settlement and economy, politics and government, recreation and services, and social indicators show "a Great Plains that has integrity as a region" (1). That conclusion is reinforced by the inclusion of Canada's Prairie Provinces and the rise of a distinct Great Plains region out of "midcontinental North America" (1).

The colorful, meticulous maps are all compelling. One of the most stunning is "North America and the Great Plains at Night." The map charting "Census Year of Maximum Population" shows that many

Great Plains counties reached population highs in 1900 and 1920, not surprising for typical perceptions of the region, but John Hudson, who wrote the volume's introduction, argues that the atlas corrects the region's "steady depopulation" myth (7). Many people left the land, but not the region. The ways people have moved across grasslands spaces provide one base of the regional integrity the atlas celebrates.

The midcontinental swath of territory in which the Great Plains is set ensures that Iowans will enjoy the atlas. Although not considered part of the region, Iowa appears on every map with the same statistical representation. Textual explanation rarely mentions Iowa details unless the state bears some vital relationship to the theme mapped. Iowa leads in hog and soybean production nationally. Lower annual precipitation and the loss of soil fertility where corn once grew on the plains resulted in ground lost to Iowa producers over the twentieth century. Corn and soybean production translated to Iowa's leading role in the biodiesel and ethanol industries. More telling for mapping the region are the "substantial numbers of 'Great Plains'-named businesses in . . . Iowa" (162).

The atlas is full of thought-provoking detail. Only 20,000 purebred bison exist today on four preserves (three in the United States and one in Canada). Who knew that once these "large animals often refused to leave tracks and would delay trains for hours or even days" (54)? A Volga German beef-onion-and-cabbage-stuffed sandwich carried to Nebraska from Russia inspired a fast-food restaurant (established in 1949) called Runza (Iowa has four). Iowa also appears to have more franchises of the fast-food chain called Taco John's than Wyoming, where the restaurant was founded in Cheyenne in 1968. The authors reveal that "at least twenty" Walmarts serve every million Iowans, although the accompanying map indicates that Iowa has only between 15 and 19 stores per million (185)—a rare plotting incongruity. The text amplifying the production map of Canola (short for "Canadian oil, low acid"), now "related to turnips, cabbage, mustard, and brussels sprouts," recounts the breeding of the rapeseed plant in the 1970s (154).

The authors' decision to map the Great Plains as a North American region constitutes "a breakthrough not often achieved in previous atlases" (1). "Canada's portion has a flat to rolling topography and deserves the 'plains' label as much as any portion of the United States," says Hudson, but he notes that Canadians prefer to refer to their nation's share by its vegetation: prairies. The observation suggests, but the atlas does not explore, two different national cultures developed across the international boundary to defy the continuous "geologic structures" (3) and common ecology of one Great Plains re-

gion. The authors successfully overcame statistical barriers—different methods of collecting data (counties versus census divisions, for example)—to form appropriate points of comparison, but additional historical context would have increased their value. At least two thumbnail sketches of U.S. incorporation of its share of the Great Plains are provided, but no similar history of British/Canadian annexation was attempted. The 1848 U.S. treaty with Great Britain establishing the northern border from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast is mentioned, but not the 1818 agreement that settled the 49th Parallel boundary west across the grasslands to the Continental Divide. Canada's 1867 independence is acknowledged alongside a map of "Military Forts and Trading Posts, 1865–1900," but Canadian historians might take issue with the notion that "many of these forts were established in order to protect settlers from possible Native American attacks" (70). The authors explain the place French ancestry has in Canadian history but without regard to the métis population of mixed native and French ancestry, a distinct Canadian population category especially important to the grasslands. Still, the highly pleasurable "breakthrough" of this collection of insightful maps is not diminished by the user's desire for more.

*Store Per: Norwegian-American "Paul Bunyan" of the Prairie*, by Peter Tjernagel Harstad. Lakeville, MN: Jack Pine Press, 2011. xiv, 240 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$14.95 paper.

Reviewer Kathleen Stokker is professor of Scandinavian studies at Luther College. She is the author of *Remedies and Rituals: Folk Medicine in Norway and the New Land* (2007).

In *Store Per*, professionally trained historian Peter Tjernagel Harstad presents a well-documented and charmingly told tale of his great-grand-uncle, Peder Larson Tjernagel, more familiarly known as "Store Per" (Big Pete) because of his strength both in body and (as the story shows) character. In 1852 he emigrated from Norway to America at the age of 26. "A devout Christian and public spirited man," says Harstad, "he participated in the founding of a school and a church, built roads that intersected with Indian trails, and served as township trustee [thereby giving] notice that Norwegians were ready to assume responsibilities in their adopted country" (192–93).

Tracing Per's life from birth on Norway's west coast beside the Bomlø Fjord (halfway between Bergen and Stavanger), Harstad shows Per's realization as a young man that the life he wanted to live as an independent farmer and member of a church rooted in spiritual guid-

ance was no longer open to him in Norway. Finding that his cousin Malene shared similar goals, he married her and they struck out together for the New Land, where they faced cruel hardships and tragic loss, but also managed to rise from lowly farm laborers to influential agricultural entrepreneurs.

Harstad deftly interweaves a combination of well-chosen secondary sources and sometimes unique primary ones (such as the three eyewitness accounts written by Per's nephews). We follow the arduous emigrant voyage endured by the Tjernagel party and their continued journey to and eventual settlement in Scott Township, Hamilton County, Iowa. Supplementing his own family stories with information drawn from immigrant guidebooks (Ole Rynning's and Nathan Parker's) and current respected historians of immigration (including Odd Lovoll, Jon Gjerde and Alan Bogue), Harstad gives Per's story a rich texture and informative context that pleasurably initiates readers into the myriad economic, social, agricultural, industrial, and psychological factors that determined daily life in nineteenth-century Norway and Norwegian America.

Harstad manages, moreover, to engage readers' senses to make Per's story memorable: "As the Tjernagel party inched its way westward they heard a cacophony of languages emanating from other boats, met scores of east-bound grain boats, and heard swine squealing their way to market" (80). Drawings and maps help guide readers, as does an additional family document: a painting his ancestors commissioned 50 years after their immigrant journey that shows Per playing his violin to calm the nerves of his party as they sit, abandoned in the wilderness, surrounded by their immigrant trunks and apprehensively eyeing an approaching band of Indians.

Always welcome company with his fiddle playing and even-keeled personality, Store Per, as portrayed here by Harstad, is definitely a pleasure to meet and well worth knowing.

*Norwegian American Women: Migration, Communities, and Identities*, edited by Betty A. Bergland and Lori Ann Lahlum. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011. xii, 356 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer L. DeAne Lagerquist is professor of religion at St. Olaf College. She is the author of *In America the Men Milk the Cows: Factors of Gender, Ethnicity and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian-American Women* (1991).

The nine chapters in this fine collection are remarkable and welcome for their consistently excellent quality and the range of topics addressed.

Dina Tolfsby's bibliography and the extensive notes to each chapter document the wealth of primary source material available for such a study of Norwegian American women as well as the growing scholarly attention to women and immigration. Along with Hasia Diner's *Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1983) and Joy Lintelman's more recent *"I Go to America": Swedish American Women and the Life of Mina Anderson* (2009), three dozen theses and dissertations and an equal number of journal articles and book chapters concerned specifically with Norwegian American women are cited in the bibliography—many by the authors in this collection. Nonetheless, this book is something of a first in its sustained attention to "heretofore neglected dimensions of women in Norwegian American communities" (319). Bringing the questions and methods of feminist history to bear on the rich tradition of Norwegian American history is overdue and promises an enriched understanding of that tradition. May this volume open the presses to longer works by its authors.

The book is arranged in three parts along with a substantial introduction by editor Bergland that locates the book in the scholarship of American history, migration history, and, most specifically, Norwegian American studies; it also includes an epilogue pointing toward areas for further research. Readers who come to the book without prior knowledge of Norwegian conditions and immigration will find particularly useful Elisabeth Lønnå's and Odd S. Lovoll's essays in part one, "Gendered Contexts: Norway and Migration." Part two, "Creating Gendered Norwegian American Communities," includes five essays of varying scope. Lori Lahlum focuses on rural settings from early Norwegian immigration (1840) until restrictive legislation (1920), and David C. Mauk considers urban areas (including Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York, and Seattle) from the 1880s through the 1920s. The remaining essays are more topical, treating textile production (Laurann Gilbertson) and health (Ann M. Legreid) and comparing Norwegian and Dakota female landholding near Devil's Lake, North Dakota, in the first third of the twentieth century (Karen V. Hansen). Bergland's essay on life writings and Ingrid K. Urberg's on fiction constitute part three, "Constructing Gendered Identities and Meanings." Particularly in the second and third parts some sources and names recur, offering readers a sense of joining a community that spanned several states and decades. Photographs, such as Thalette Glaby Brandt's 1883 wedding portrait and a shot of women working inside the Rossing Department Store, reinforce that sense by giving faces to the women discussed. Iowans will recognize references to Gro Svend-

sen from Estherville along with pastors' wives Linka Preus and Elizabeth Koren, who lived in the orbit of Luther College.

These essays will repay careful reading, singly and as a set. Each yields new insights, even when returning to familiar materials, and reading them together produces a multi-layered conversation about the book's common concern for a gendered investigation of Norwegian American life. One longs to attend a conference where the authors discuss their findings, offering additional perspectives on their overlapping topics. Although the chapters on textile production, health, and work and community take up examples from across the Midwest and Texas, even the cases not from Iowa are suggestive about women's experience in that state. The location of Hansen's fascinating study is sharply bounded; it nonetheless offers provocative suggestions for a more nuanced understanding of interactions between Dakota women and white women who were also outsiders to American culture. Urberg's use of the folkloric notion of a "hungry heroine" adds depth to her reading of fiction by Norwegian American women and hints at ways to understand the experience of the characters' real-life counterparts. Adding census data and other quantitative sources to the usual mix of letters, memoirs, oral history, and material objects, Mauk is able to trace changes in urban work patterns between generations and thus suggest how women adapted to the American setting. His move from description to analysis is typical for the whole collection.

*Putting Down Roots: Gardening Insights from Wisconsin's Early Settlers*, by Marcia C. Carmichael. Madison: Wisconsin State Historical Press, 2011. xviii, 237 pp. Illustrations (most in color), sidebars, recipes, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Jill M. Nussel is a lecturer at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. In her research and writing, she has used cookbooks to shed light on immigrants and their communities. She is completing a book manuscript, "From Stewpot to Melting Pot: Charity Cookbooks in America's Heartland."

Gardeners looking for gardening advice to create picturesque landscapes might be disappointed in this book, but historians and historical horticulturalists looking to increase the contributions to midwestern or rural historical narratives will appreciate Marcia Carmichael's *Putting Down Roots*, a book that examines the rich cultural heritage that European immigrants brought to Wisconsin in the nineteenth century. Carmichael is the historical gardener at Old World Wisconsin, where she specializes in the historical accuracy of the gardens at that 576-acre complex.

The historical record of beautiful gardens planted by wealthy Americans is fairly well documented in writing and art, but understanding how ordinary immigrants created their domestic space requires research into an uneven core of evidence and often has to be extracted from passing commentary in letters and diaries. Carmichael scours a wealth of sources gleaned from archives at Old World Wisconsin.

We often fail to distinguish among groups of Europeans who settled in the Midwest, and Scandinavians are often lumped together. Carmichael has deftly separated European foodways into specific ethnicities, comparing and contrasting German, Irish, and Polish settlement, and Scandinavians have been divided into Norwegian, Danish, and Finnish. Each chapter begins with a narrative of that group's challenges to reconcile the desire to preserve native food traditions with the reality of available produce. Each chapter ends with selected recipes of that immigrant group, including Irish soda bread, Polish pierogi, and Norwegian rhubarb custard. The recipes alone give significant insight into what was planted and how it was used.

Guiding readers through Old World Wisconsin's recreated nineteenth-century gardens, Carmichael shares drawings and photographs that provide insight into the practical and functional aspects of setting up housekeeping, planting a house garden, historical trends and practices, garden tools, popular plant varieties, and favorite flavors. This book not only illustrates how migrants who came here looking for a better life found it in Wisconsin, but it also tells a story of choosing which traditions were to be kept and discovering new ways to feed one's family. *Putting Down Roots* is not only an important contribution to the historical narrative, but will also satisfy those with a desire to return to organic and local foodways.

*From the Jewish Heartland: Two Centuries of Midwest Foodways*, by Ellen F. Steinberg and Jack H. Prost. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011. x, 207 pp. Illustrations, recipes, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.95 cloth.

Reviewer Jill M. Nussel is a lecturer at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. In her research and writing, she has used cookbooks to shed light on immigrants and their communities. She is completing a book manuscript, "From Stewpot to Melting Pot: Charity Cookbooks in America's Heartland."

I read and review a lot of books about food and cookery. Every once in a while a book comes along that fills in a hole in the historical narrative, and I want to jump up and exclaim, "Read this book!" *From the Jewish*



*Heartland: Two Centuries of Midwest Foodways* is one of those books. For midwestern, rural, or culinary historians or anthropologists, this book by Ellen F. Steinberg, a researcher and anthropologist living in suburban Chicago, and Jack Prost, an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago, makes a significant contribution to the growing literature of immigrant studies in the heartland.

Historians know much about Jewish migration to the East Coast, but information about migration beyond that is often anecdotal. In addition, writing about culinary experiences in the Midwest is expanding, but attention to Jewish foodways is often a sidebar. How did families keep a kosher home when they were far away from Jewish population centers? How did Jewish mothers decide what had to be packed for religious observations when they were traveling by steamer or covered wagon into the nation's interior? Melding faith and tradition with the Midwest's available produce, Jewish women created a host of delectable foods: baklava studded with cranberries, rye bread coated in cornmeal, Sephardic borekas made with Michigan sweet cherries—and all of the recipes are in the appendix of *From the Jewish Heartland*. Readers see that Jewish women were often perplexed by the meaning of kosher, but also that what they chose to eat or what they believed to be taboo defines them as a community, an ethnicity, and a faith.

Most historians have a story about chasing down impossible leads and coming up with a great source. Beginning researchers should read Steinberg and Prost's story of purchasing a tattered manuscript recipe collection compiled by "Mrs. L. F. D." Their unrelenting search in some unorthodox places led to the discovery of Ruth Dunnie, a Lithuanian immigrant who spent most of her adult life in St. Louis and whose recipes provide a keen understanding of what it meant to be Jewish in the early twentieth century. In addition, the authors scoured several handwritten manuscripts, many scribbled in the back of commercial or fundraising cookbooks, recipes published in Jewish newspapers and magazines, and oral histories taken from homemakers, bakers, and delicatessen owners.

The book begins with the earliest known Jewish settler to Mackinaw City, Michigan, before the American Revolution, and then traces Jewish migration through the big cities of Detroit, St. Louis, and Milwaukee as well as through midwestern small towns and hamlets. Even though we know little about Jewish foodways in the Midwest, probably the most successful charity cookbook of all time was the *Settlement House Cookbook*, which was compiled for the benefit of Jewish Settlement House in Milwaukee in 1901 and went into subsequent printings for nearly a century. Its recipes, including recipes for shell-

fish and Easter dishes, were not always kosher, but it raised funds for countless Jewish projects.

Collectors of Jewish cookery will treasure the recipes. The book as a whole fills many holes in the narrative of Jewish immigration, and the appendixes and bibliography are invaluable for scholars. This is a "must read" for any cultural scholar.

*Creating Dairyland: How Caring for Cows Saved Our Soil, Created Our Landscape, Brought Prosperity to Our State, and Still Shapes Our Way of Life in Wisconsin*, by Edward Janus. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2011. xi, 208 pp. Illustrations (many in color), sidebars, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.95 paper.

Reviewer Barbara J. Dilly is associate professor of anthropology at Creighton University. Her research and writing focus primarily on ethnocultural issues related to the sustainability of farming communities in northeast Iowa.

In *Creating Dairyland*, Edward Janus argues that over the years those Wisconsin dairy farmers who succeeded in the dairy industry did so because they became missionaries of the "Gospel of the Cow." By professing faith in cows to improve their way of life socially and economically, they also dignified their labors and saved their soil. Through detailed historical analysis of the Wisconsin dairy industry and nine comparative ethnographic accounts of contemporary dairy farmers and their families Janus reveals the central themes of their lives: sustainability and prosperity, both of which are central values in midwestern family farming.

This study offers an opportunity to examine Iowa family farming experiences with social and economic reform agendas compared to those of Wisconsin farmers. According to Janus, the "Gospel of the Cow" emerged out of a progressive reform movement during the "Golden Age of Agriculture" to redeem a fallen agriculture. Speculators and frontier farmers had worn out the soil by growing wheat for quick profits. The reform agenda promoted a new kind of "yeoman farmer-entrepreneur-intellectual" who would apply scientific principles to more efficient management of the local environment with the aid of improved dairy cow herds. Increased milk production for urban markets would bring them prosperity and social advances. As was the case with all scientifically driven reforms in midwestern agriculture, however, greater efficiency meant more control by capitalists, cheaper prices for commodities, and less profit for farmers. Janus explains in detail how farmers learned that profits were not just a matter of over-

coming ignorance of modernization through scientific principles to better manage resources; profits were also about control of markets.

Janus skillfully chronicles several eras of Wisconsin dairy farmers' strategic scientific adoption of new technologies and modernization agendas. Each of these increasingly intensive strategies was quickly overwhelmed by capital forces and consumer demands for cheaper products. Ever faithful to the "Gospel of the Cow," a new generation of dairy farmers in Wisconsin is writing a new testament in intelligent and efficient strategies to stay in business. These farm families are prospering by adopting a more sustainable system of harmony with the soil, animals, and people. Through detailed accounts of these diverse, locally specific adaptations, Janus reveals that there is no one model for survival in the twenty-first century. But in each case, those who prosper in the dairy industry all demonstrate a willingness to practice soil conservation and improve farming practices. They are willing to change direction and to engage in hands-on labor. These farmers avoid large debts and add value to their products by developing new skills and markets. Most importantly, they define prosperity in moral and spiritual terms.

Janus's work here is prophetic. Can a more spiritual connection to land, animals, plants, and consumers through hard work and better science shape a moral philosophy for farm families to live by as well as guarantee environmental and economic sustainability for the future? Iowans who farm or care about farming should be engaged in this conversation.

*Principle over Party: The Farmers' Alliance and Populism in South Dakota, 1880–1900*, by R. Alton Lee. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2011. ix, 255 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.95 cloth.

Reviewer Jeff Kolnick is associate professor of history at Southwest Minnesota State University. His dissertation (University of California, Davis, 1996) was "A Producer's Commonwealth: Populism and the Knights of Labor in Blue Earth County, Minnesota, 1880–1892."

R. Alton Lee has been laboring in the vineyard of rural history for many years; his latest contribution is a fitting tribute to a person who has helped us understand the ways politics shapes the struggles and lives of farmers and workers in the American Midwest. The case of South Dakota Populism is particularly instructive in this regard. For students of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party, this book will reinforce many common threads; for those new to the literature, it is

an excellent introduction whether your interest is South Dakota or the Midwest more generally.

Readers learn of the hard times of the 1880s and 1890s and the innovative ways the Farmers' Alliance used cooperatives to stay on the land. We encounter the optimistic turn to politics after cooperatives failed to deliver sufficient protection from the ravages of the market and the monopoly practices of grain dealers, railroads, and milling interests. And we discover how the turn to politics contributed to the withering of cooperative work in the face of political organizing and the confusion and frustration of victory though fusion.

Lee excels at covering the economic crisis of the 1880s and 1890s and the Alliance activity aimed at resolving the crisis. So much of the Gilded Age seems familiar to us now: farms covered with mortgages and under water (though at much higher interest rates than today); giant corporations and fabulously wealthy executives and bankers extracting tribute from small producers and wage earners while exercising enormous influence on political leaders. Dakota farmers knew that to stay on the land they would need to protect themselves while building bridges with workers.

South Dakota provided the nation with some of its most important Populists, and Lee highlights their roles with care. Henry Loucks and Alonzo Wardell played leading roles in shaping the history of the Dakota Territory, the state of South Dakota, and American business and politics. Loucks was a classic nineteenth-century reformer. He was a farmer, an editor, an organizer, a cooperative entrepreneur, and a political operative. At different times, he was the president of the Northern Alliance and the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union, and he played key roles in founding a massive cooperative enterprise known as the Dakota Farmers' Alliance Company as well as the People's Party.

Only in comparison to a giant like Loucks could Alonzo Wardell seem diminished in significance. Wardell was the key figure in what Lee calls "the Dakota model" of cooperatives. Wardell held office in the Alliance and promoted Populism, but his role in cooperative enterprises, funded by the small stock purchases of farmers, and in mutual farmers' crop and life insurance saved farm families throughout the Midwest many hundreds of thousands of dollars. Under Wardell and Loucks, South Dakota led the nation in economic and political challenges to corporate capitalism.

The book moves rapidly away from Alliance cooperative activity toward the political challenges farm families faced in the largely one-party context of the Dakotas. The Republican Party dominated the

Dakotas from territorial days into the twentieth century, and no amount of cooperative economic activity or pressure-group politics could overcome the cozy relationship that characterized corporate interests and the ruling Republican ring. Lee details the complexities and challenges of fusion politics. In the end, over the objections of Loucks, South Dakota Populists fused with the Democratic Party and won the votes of numerous Silver Republicans to make impressive inroads into elected office. James H. Kyle was elected as a Populist to two terms in the U.S. Senate, and Richard Pettigrew drifted from his Republican base to become a Silver Republican during his second term. Meanwhile, Andrew Lee served two terms as the Populist governor of South Dakota.

Sadly, as happened in other areas of Populist strength, the agrarian radicals were unable to capture both executive office and legislative majorities for sufficient time to accomplish their goals, which included moderate inflation for indebted farmers, government ownership of railroads, fiscal and grain trading regulation, and a raft of political reforms that eventually became law during the Progressive Era.

America is experiencing another Gilded Age of corporate excess, significant inequality, government corruption, fiscal crisis, and a resurgence of populist activism, whether among the Tea Party or those who see themselves as part of the 99 percent. For just about anyone interested in today's economic and political crisis, Lee's book will make you think even while expertly telling the story of South Dakota's Populist movement.

*Eastern Iowa's Aviation Heritage*, by Scott M. Fisher. Images of Aviation Series. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011. 128 pp. Illustrations. \$21.99 paper.

Reviewer Jan Olive Full is managing member of Tallgrass Historians L.C. She is the author of *Iowa City Municipal Airport: Opening the West to Aviation, 1918-2007* (2007).

Following six pages of introductory matter, Scott M. Fisher's pictorial history book contains more than 200 black-and-white historical images of wide-ranging subjects in the history of aviation in eastern Iowa, from hot-air balloons to presidential helicopters. Each image is accompanied by a long caption, which usually but not always interprets the image. The book is organized chronologically into six short chapters dated between the late 1800s and 2010. The first and last chapters each cover several decades, but the middle chapters address only single decades, indicating the author's main focus on the years from 1910 to 1950.

There are no notes, bibliography, or index, which is the typical format for this publisher's local history series, but each image is credited.

Fifty-nine of the 7,500 publications in Arcadia's Images series have Iowa subjects. What is most useful about the series and this book is the potential for uncovering previously unpublished images held in private collections. When combined with better-known images from public archives, the subject is presented in an extremely accessible format. One learns a little history along the way from the captions. Without sources, however, the photo credits offer the only useful research tool. Unfortunately, the credits in this volume may not always be accurate. This book is of interest to aviation enthusiasts who do not want or need to replicate the research for their own purposes, surely the intended audience.

*Freedom Betrayed: Herbert Hoover's Secret History of the Second World War and Its Aftermath*, by Herbert Hoover, edited by George H. Nash. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2011. cxx, 957 pp. Notes. \$49.95 cloth.

Reviewer Glen Jeanson is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His articles and books about Herbert Hoover include *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Fighting Quaker, 1928-1933* (2012).

*Freedom Betrayed* is Herbert Hoover's last will and testament about foreign policy, a landmark in diplomatic, revisionist scholarship at the hands of a former president. Thoroughly researched and meticulously edited by George H. Nash, the dean of Hoover scholars, it is a labor of love for both the author and the editor. *Freedom Betrayed* begins with an incisive, detailed introduction by Nash. The editor traces the evolution of the manuscript through numerous revisions and places each portion of the narrative within the historical context in which it was written. Nash reveals glimpses of early drafts in order to establish the evolution of Hoover's thought. The editor describes the materials Hoover used and identifies the ex-president's research assistants, proofreaders, fact-checkers, and secretaries. Nash pieced together hand-written, annotated scraps, determined which to include, and edited for clarity.

Part history, part memoir, the manuscript pertains exclusively to foreign policy and communist subversion from 1933 to 1952. Hoover relates as much of the story as possible via documents and quotations in order to render the narrative more objective. He remained during that time the spokesman of the GOP and attempted to exert influence on foreign policy. Hoover published seven books during the last five

years of his life and left unpublished his most important one. He was driven not simply by an effort to redeem his name but also by his desire to make a difference.

Iowa readers will find new insights into one of the lesser-known facets of their famous native son, whose philosophy as an aging elder statesman continued to resonate through his roots in the rural Midwest and his Quaker rearing. He might have left Iowa at ten, but he never left behind the work ethic, the spiritual idealism, fortitude, and seriousness of purpose he absorbed there. It is fitting that he and his mate are now buried at West Branch, where they wanted to be.

Hoover considered Franklin D. Roosevelt intellectually dishonest, superficial, self-centered, and naïve about communism. He viewed the FDR and early Truman era as a period of debacles, flawed judgment, and setbacks for American foreign policy. He is also critical of the British. The guarantee of Polish security by Britain and France was a major blunder, Hoover believes. Given logistical obstacles, there was no practical way they could defend Poland from Hitler. Further, Hitler intended to expand eastward, and their declaration drew them into an unnecessary confrontation. Once Hitler attacked Stalin, the United States should have permitted the dictators to exhaust themselves rather than sending Lend-Lease and ultimately joining the Soviets as an ally. Britain was never in danger once the Nazis were locked in deadly embrace with the Red Army. Sanctions against Japan only made the Pacific war inevitable. There was a strong peace faction in Japan, and by refusing to compromise on reasonable terms with Prince Konoye, Roosevelt ensured the demise of the peace faction and the ascension of the militarist Tojo as prime minister. Hoover devotes a long section to "the March of Conferences," a series of follies and duplicity. Among other blunders Hoover cites are FDR's destruction of the London Economic Conference, his recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933, the demand for unconditional surrender, the use of the atomic bomb, and the failure to deliver China from the claws of communism. In his discussion of the Cold War, Hoover presents case studies of four nations that the United States under FDR and Truman permitted to fall to communism: Poland, China, Korea, and East Germany.

*Freedom Betrayed* is not a military history but a study in the problems of statesmanship. Hoover repeatedly warns of the consequences of wars and believes America should fight only to defend the western hemisphere. Neither does he believe the United States can police the world or build enduring democracies everywhere. Many of his predictions appear not anachronistic but prophetic. Few historians, and certainly not the general public, appreciate Hoover's contributions to

statesmanship. Nor do they realize the quantity and quality of his literary output, some 33 books. Usually Hoover's foreign policy message is given short shrift, distorted by a preoccupation with his perceived failure as a Depression-era president. This manuscript will help rectify that. Given Hoover's reputation for intellectual honesty and his stature as an ex-president, *Freedom Betrayed* is a fresh contribution, a piece of serious scholarship by a man with a serious purpose.

*Six: A Football Coach's Journey to a National Record*, by Marc Rasmussen. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2011. xv, 155 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, bibliographical essay, index. \$16.95 paper.

Reviewer Terrence J. Lindell is professor of history at Wartburg College. His research has included a variety of topics in the history of Iowa and South Dakota.

First-time author Marc Rasmussen tells the engaging story of Bill Welsh, a phenomenal high school coach whose six-man football team compiled a national record 61-game winning streak between 1947 and 1953. Welsh, a native of Aberdeen, South Dakota, earned a spot on the 1923 football team at the University of Illinois, where he was coached by the legendary Robert Zuppke and practiced with "Red" Grange. Injury and illness ended his career there after one year, but he completed his education and earned accolades in sports at Northern Normal College in his hometown. After successful multi-sport high school coaching runs at Kimball and Webster in his home state, Welsh took a post at Forest City, Iowa, where his young son died in a tragic accident. Grief-stricken, Welsh and his wife returned to northeastern South Dakota, starting a game lodge in the small community of Claremont. There he rediscovered his passion for coaching and introduced six-man football, a fluid and high-scoring version of the game developed for small schools. His Claremont Honkers—a moniker derived from the Canadian geese that filled the fall skies—dominated the sport in the region, winning their first game and sixty more to follow. Rasmussen's father played on Welsh's last Claremont team.

*Six* ably tells the story of midwestern small-town football in the post-World War II era, before school consolidations made larger teams possible. The book also conveys the power of an extraordinary coach to inspire his players and mobilize a community.



*A White-Bearded Plainsman: The Memoirs of Archaeologist W. Raymond Wood*, by W. Raymond Wood. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011. xvii, 364 pp. Illustrations, appendix, references, index. \$49.95 cloth.

Reviewer David Mayer Gradwohl is professor emeritus of anthropology and founding director of the Iowa State University Archaeological Laboratory. He has worked in prairie and plains archaeology for 60 years.

This book traces the formative childhood experiences and long professional career of W. Raymond ("Ray") Wood, a leading scholar in the anthropology of the plains and prairies of North America. Attaining his professional goals and status was certainly not guaranteed to him as a child who was born and grew up during the Depression years in small rural towns of western Nebraska. Wood modestly attributes his success to the fact that he "unconsciously managed to be in the right place and the right time" (332). To be sure, serendipity was one factor in Wood's accomplished career. But more critical would be his boundless curiosity, dogged determination to find answers to his questions, a dash of chutzpah, and a driven work ethic to finish and publish all of his research. Never content with loose ends, Wood always had an eye out for his next project, whether something relatively new or a further insight into matters he had researched decades ago.

Wood recounts his childhood in the Nebraska Sandhills in generally positive terms. His family was nurturing and supportive of his obvious intelligence and prodigious interests. But Wood's multifaceted interests and questions went beyond those normally dealt with in the small schools in Gordon and then Cody, Nebraska, where his father was a railroad station agent. Furthermore, the available municipal libraries had only limited books and reference sources on the topics Wood wanted to pursue—in particular, fossil hominids. So, undaunted, he wrote off to renowned experts at museums and academic departments in the United States and abroad. Some of those scholars replied by sending books and articles that were written for professional audiences, not schoolchildren. Wood immersed himself in reading those materials, increasing his vocabulary, appreciation for science, and awareness of worlds far beyond the Nebraska Sandhills. Given the meager educational opportunities available in his hometown, during his sophomore and junior years of high school Wood commuted to the preparatory school run by Chadron State Teachers College. During the week, he lived in a rented room near the college; on weekends, he took the train home via his father's railroad pass. Those years not only exposed Wood to some college-level classes but also conditioned him to living away from home and, to a large degree, fending for himself. Another formative factor in Wood's youth was that he spent the sum-

mers in Missouri with an aunt on the family's farm. Thus he became more aware of the great diversity in weather and environments in the American midlands.

Following the tracks of his older brother, Wood went to Lincoln to pursue his undergraduate college degree at the University of Nebraska. Academics, for the most part, were the least of his challenges. Constantly in need of funds for housing, food, books, and tuition, Wood had his own "work-study" program, taking an amazing number of jobs and becoming adept at various survival tactics along the way. As a result, by the time he graduated from college with an anthropology major, Wood had gained an unusual amount of field survey and excavation experience and had established life-long professional connections with a good many important archaeologists. Wood continued at Nebraska for his master's degree and then went to the University of Oregon for his Ph.D., writing his acclaimed dissertation, "An Interpretation of Mandan Culture History."

During his career, Wood secured employment with a number of institutions, including the Missouri River Basin Surveys (National Park Service), University of Arkansas, and University of Missouri, with sabbaticals at the University of Nebraska and University of Colorado. His research projects centered in Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri. In his book, Wood discusses his research topics, deftly weaving in goodly amounts of ecology, geology, ethnology, and history. As diverse as his geographic fieldwork throughout the Plains is the span of temporal contexts he studied, ranging from Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Woodland, Plains Village Tradition, and Mississippian to ethnohistoric and historic Native American occupations and historic Euro-American sites. He applied his analytical skills to a number of interdisciplinary questions, including cartography, zooarchaeology, ethnobotany, and the ethnohistorical approach in interpreting archival documents.

Wood's book is engagingly written and, in places, self-effacingly candid. The book demonstrates Wood's eclectic nature, expertise in scientific research, and skill as a raconteur on paper as well as orally around a campfire with a six-pack or in the hotel bar at a professional conference. (In the interest of full disclosure, I confess that I have known Ray Wood since our undergraduate days at the University of Nebraska.) Wood's occasional parenthetical asides and brief digressions usually reveal his wicked sense of humor and are often obliquely informative. Less amusing is the book's index, which is incomplete and inconsistent, rendering it less than reliable as a search tool.

Scholars interested in the history of research in the plains, changing methods in ferreting out data, and evolving theoretical paradigms, will find this tome of particular relevance. Beyond that audience, Wood's book will be of interest not only to anthropologists, archaeologists, and laypersons interested in the plains and prairies (including in Iowa), but more generally as a case study for those intrigued by how individuals anticipate, prepare for, and pursue their careers: what factors in their childhood backgrounds influence their interests, what opportunities they have to follow their goals, what serendipitous elements come into play, what mentors leave their stamp on their minds, and what influences these individuals have, in turn, on the younger people who work with them, whether as students, apprentices, interns, or coworkers.

## New on the Shelves

"New on the Shelves" is a list of recent additions to the collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa. It includes manuscripts, audio-visual materials, and published materials recently acquired or newly processed that we think might be of interest to the readers of the *Annals of Iowa*. The "DM" or "IC" at the end of each entry denotes whether the item is held in Des Moines or Iowa City.

### Manuscripts

Boyd, Cyrus F. Papers. ½ ft. + 4 tintypes and 1 cabinet card, 1857–1864. Diaries, tintypes, and miscellaneous documents of Cyrus F. Boyd (Goathill and Indianola). Includes Civil War diary kept as first lieutenant of the 34th Iowa Infantry, January–August 1864, and a diary of his 1857 travels in Kansas and Missouri that foreshadows his activities as organizer of a local "Wide Awake" club. DM.

Des Moines Oral History Project (addition). ¼ ft., 1998–2001. Transcriptions of oral history interviews with influential Des Moines residents Ralph Dorner, John Chrystal, John Ruan, Evelyn Davis, Margaret Swanson, and Reinhold Carlson. DM.

Des Moines City Railway Company. Records, 1922–1929. 11 newsletters + 1 map. Issues of the *City Railway News*, which was distributed weekly by the Des Moines City Railway Company; and map of streetcar lines and points of interest in Des Moines, 1922. DM.

Griffin, Lucia B. Booklet, 1906. Autographed and inscribed monograph, *Owl Hoots: Ways to be Wise and Otherwise* (1906), an advice booklet by Iowa author and performer Lucia B. Griffin. Pasted into the back cover is a publicity brochure for Griffin's public performance for Clara Barton, who was a friend. DM.

Hanson, Robert L. Correspondence. ½ ft., 1941–1945. World War II letters of Robert L. Hanson (Humboldt) of the 243rd Infantry Engineers, January 1941–December 1945; and small collection of photos and ephemera. DM.

Klopfenstein, Fred. Records. 1 vol., 1898–ca. 1909. Daybook of Fred Klopfenstein (1877–1958), a rural Wayland farmer. Includes a record of livestock bought and sold, horses owned, sows bred, lumber and hardware purchased, and improvements made to his house (includes sketch and floorplan of house). DM.

McDowell, Elliott and Palmer. Correspondence, 1861–1864. Ten Civil War letters of Elliott McDowell—and one of his brother Palmer McDowell—written during service with Company A of the 10th Iowa Volunteer Infantry. DM.

Stall, Frances (Briggs) and George. Papers. 1 ft., 1884–1947. Papers of Frances (Briggs) and George Stall family (Grimes), including incoming correspondence

of "Fannie" Briggs, 1884–1896; World War I letters received from Carl S. Stall, a U.S. Navy Seaman Gunner, 1918–1919; diaries of Frances and George, 1943–1947; and miscellaneous documents and ephemera. DM.

## Audio-Visual Materials

Buswell, Charles. 6 photo albums (842 black-and-white photographs), 1930s–1940s. Photo albums with snapshots by Charles Buswell (Des Moines) including local views of theaters, sports, downtown, etc. Two of the albums contain photos from the first Boy Scouts of America Jamboree held in Washington, D.C. (1937) and attended by Des Moines members. DM.

Civil War. Poster, 1897. Fundraising poster for proposed Grand Army of the Republic "Easel" monument, subscribed to by—or on behalf of—Civil War soldier Henry Shaw of the 21st Iowa, and including his service record. DM.

Highland Park College (Des Moines). 1 photo album (91 black-and-white photographs), ca. 1915. Photo album containing snapshots of Highland Park College campus and student activities (sports, pharmacy and business classes, leisure time in dormitories, etc.). DM.

Historical Society, U.S. 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, Southern Iowa District. 2 videodiscs, 2010. Video oral history interview with Hon. Louis W. Schultz, 2005; and recording of ceremony honoring Judge William C. Stuart, with remarks by Hon. Ronald E. Longstaff. DM.

Iowa—Churches and Religion. 1 black-and-white photograph, 1914. Panoramic photo showing Billy Sunday's Chorus and Tabernacle, Thanksgiving Day, 1914, Des Moines. Photographer: Fred Hebard, Des Moines. DM.

Iowa Postcards. 6 lithographic postcards; 3 photographic postcards, ca. 1910–ca. 1930. Postcard views of Iowa communities: Gardston Hotel, high school, Fourth Street bridge, bandstand (Estherville); West River dam (Humboldt); Arnold's Park monument; school (Lake Park); suspension bridge (Columbus Junction); bandstand (Cedar Rapids). DM.

Iowa—Rivers and Creeks. 29 black-and-white photographs, 1967. Photos showing repairs along the Des Moines River before Red Rock Dam was finished. DM.

## Maps

Mutual Hailstorm Insurance Association of Iowa. Map, 1914–1915. Map issued to Iowa farmers, showing locations of hailstorms in the state in 1914–1915. DM.

## Published Materials

*The Amanas Yesterday: A Religious Communal Society: A Story of Seven Villages in Iowa: Historic Photographs, 1900–1932*, collected by Joan Liffing-Zug; text edited by John Zug. Iowa City: Penfield Press, 1981, c1975. 48 pp. DM, IC.

*Decision Support Model for Assessing Archaeological Survey Needs for Bridge Replacement Projects in Iowa*, by Joe Alan Artz. [Iowa City: Office of the State Archaeologist, University of Iowa, 2006.] viii, 46 pp. IC. Accessible online at [www.operationsresearch.dot.state.ia.us/reports/reports\\_pdf/hr\\_and\\_tr/reports/tr513.pdf](http://www.operationsresearch.dot.state.ia.us/reports/reports_pdf/hr_and_tr/reports/tr513.pdf)

*The Golden Link*, by Mary C. Gift. Marshalltown, 1996. 28 pp. *The story of an elaborate tree house at Shady Oaks near Marshalltown.* IC.

*Hospital Income Study*. N.p.: Iowa Chapter, Hospital Financial Management Association, 1969. 22 pp. IC.

*Indian Creek Channel: The Evolution and Significance of an Historic Public Works Administration Flood Control Facility, Council Bluffs, Iowa*, by Austin A. Buhta and Harry F. Thompson. Sioux Falls, SD: Sisson Printing Inc., 2010. 12 pp. IC. Accessible online at [www.iowadot.gov/ole/documents/Indian%20Creek%20Channel%20Booklet%202010.pdf](http://www.iowadot.gov/ole/documents/Indian%20Creek%20Channel%20Booklet%202010.pdf)

*Iowans Support the United Nations on Its 60th Anniversary: A History of Iowa's Connections to the United Nations*. Iowa City: Iowa United Nations Association, 2005. 36 pp. IC.

*John Page: A Retrospective Exhibition in Three Parts*, curated by Allan R. Shickman with essays by Allan R. Shickman and Thomas H. Thompson. Cedar Falls: University of Northern Iowa, 1992. IC.

*Pilgrimage: The Mass of Pope John Paul II in Rural America, Living History Farms, Des Moines, Iowa, October 4, 1979*, photographs by Michael W. Lemberger; edited by LeAnn Lemberger. N.p., 1979. 64 pp. IC.

## Announcements

THE IOWA HISTORY CENTER at Simpson College seeks nominations for the outstanding master's thesis in Iowa history for 2012. Selection will be based on contribution to the knowledge of Iowa history; originality of the subject matter or methodology; use of sources; and written expression. Nominees must have completed their master's degree between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012.

The winner will be announced in fall 2012 and receive a \$1,000 cash prize and an award plaque. Three copies of the thesis and a brief letter of nomination from the thesis advisor, which includes contact information for the nominee, should be submitted to Bill Friedrichs, Director, Iowa History Center, Simpson College, 701 North C Street, Indianola, IA 50125. Application deadline is June 30, 2012.

For further information, contact Linda Sinclair, 515-961-1528 or [linda.sinclair@simpson.edu](mailto:linda.sinclair@simpson.edu).

THE THIRTY-FOURTH Annual Mid-America Conference on History will be held September 20–22, 2012 in Springfield, Missouri. Paper and session proposals on all fields and phases of history, including overview sessions and graduate student papers, will be considered. Proposals should include a paragraph about the content of each paper. The deadline for proposals is May 15, 2012. Contact Worth Robert Miller, Department of History, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO 65897 or [BobMiller@MissouriState.edu](mailto:BobMiller@MissouriState.edu). For more information go to <http://history.missouristate.edu/>.

## Contributors

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## The State Historical Society of Iowa

*The Annals of Iowa* is published quarterly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Historical Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs of the State of Iowa. The society operates from two centers, Des Moines and Iowa City. A museum, research library, state archives, special collections, community programming, historic preservation, and membership programs are located at 600 East Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50319, phone 515-281-5111. Publications, a research library, and special collections are located at 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240, phone 319-335-3916. The society also operates several historic sites across the state.

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