
R E V I E W S

Union Heartland: The Midwestern Home Front during the Civil War

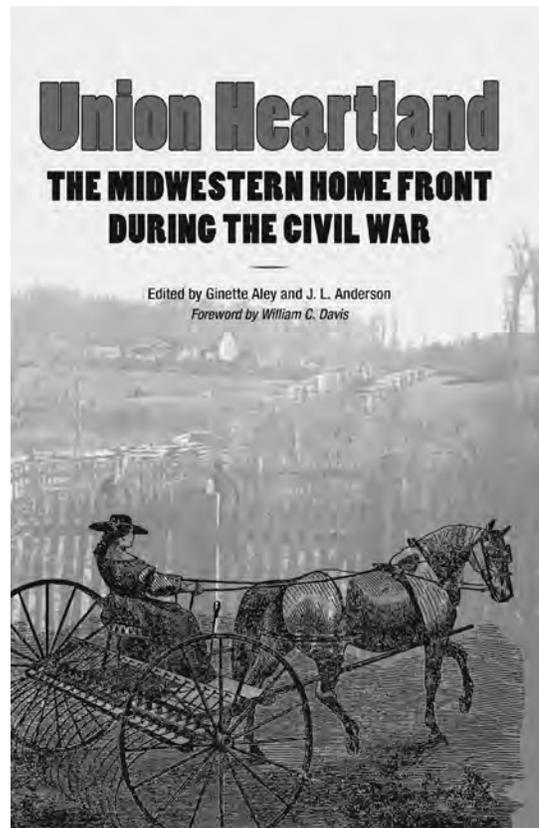
edited by Ginette Aley and J. L. Anderson

xiv + 196 pages, illustrations, notes, index.
Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013,
cloth \$39.50.

Noting the lack of comprehensive studies of the Midwest during the Civil War, Ginette Aley and J. L. Anderson have compiled an interesting collection of essays focusing on agriculture, gender, education, and dissent in the region. Undoubtedly, the Midwest deserves attention for its contributions during the war, which included crops, soldiers, supplies, and political upheaval. By treating the Midwest as its own entity as opposed to studying the North and Midwest as one monolithic region, these essays provide new insight into the wartime experiences of midwesterners.

The collection opens with an exhaustive review of the historiography of home-front scholarship done on the Midwest. The variety of works relating to the region during the war support the idea, according to Aley and Anderson, that “multiple Norths existed that were marked by regional differences and distinctiveness” (p. 2). This idea is most clearly articulated in R. Douglas Hurt’s contribution, which details the problems and profits associated with wartime farming. Landowners and farm workers alike stood to make substantial sums of money during the war, leading landowners to purchase more efficient equipment. This ready adoption of machinery increased the region’s agricultural power, during and after the war. However, the labor shortage common throughout the region left some farmers struggling to make additional improvements that would have bettered efficiency. Women, as Hurt points out, contributed to this profitability through field work and farm management.

J. L. Anderson’s offering also deals with the farm home front by elaborating on the farm labor performed by women in Iowa. Using the correspondence of couples, Anderson surmises that while women did the hands-on management of farms during the war, they did so with the input of their husbands. The letters between couples provide a glimpse not only of the dynamics of married life but also of the stresses of farm management. How much actual farm labor women did depended heavily on where they were in their life cycle; women with small children afoot could not safely spend their days in the fields driving equipment or teams. As a result, soldiers’ wives were less likely than unmarried women or women with older children to work in the fields during the war. Due to labor shortages, soldiers’ wives often moved in with relatives. Combining households became an effective way to cope with the loss of a male breadwinner, but often provoked stress by robbing women of the independence of running their own households.



Both Aley and Nicole Etcheson examine the issues associated with wartime marriages and the loneliness that came with separation. The remaining chapters outline elements of the war specific to disparate localities: Michael P. Gray examines the use of Johnson’s Island in Lake Erie as a prisoner-of-war camp; Julie A. Mujic reviews the behavior of University of Michigan students; and Brett Barker explores political dissent voiced in newspapers in southern Ohio. All three of these case studies offer valuable, new contributions, but each would have benefitted from additional context and stronger points of comparison. For example, Mujic neither reveals the socioeconomic status of the University of Michigan students who claimed college enrollment as a national contribution nor makes comparisons to other campuses. The behavior of the tourists cruising past Johnson’s Island provokes additional questions about how locals behaved around prisoner-of-war camps such as Camp Douglas in Chicago.

Overall, scholars interested in an updated, regional take on the Civil War will enjoy this collection, even though the localization of some of the essays does not provide an overview of the midwestern home front.

Reviewed by Megan Birk, assistant professor of history, University of Texas–Pan American, Edinburg.

The Tie that Bound Us: The Women of John Brown's Family and the Legacy of Radical Abolitionism

by Bonnie Laughlin-Schultz

ix + 276 pages, illustrations, bibliography, index.
Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2013, cloth \$29.95.

In November 1882, Mary Brown, widow of abolitionist John Brown, traveled by train to Topeka, Kansas. Her visit was part of a national tour that Mary, then in her mid-sixties, undertook to attend celebrations commemorating her husband in Chicago, Boston, and Topeka. This was Mary's first visit to Kansas, the land where her husband, four stepsons, and son had come in 1855 in a determined effort to prevent slavery from spreading into the territory. Mary's journey to Kansas took place against a backdrop of heated national debate. New revelations about Brown's participation in the Pottawatomie Creek killings in Kansas in May 1856 had recently reinvigorated arguments over not just the radical abolitionist's role in Bleeding Kansas but also the meaning of his legacy to America. In *The Tie that Bound Us: The Women of John Brown's Family and the Legacy of Radical Abolitionism*, historian Bonnie Laughlin-Schultz sheds light on the Brown family women—long neglected in historical studies of Brown—in order to “offer insight into nineteenth-century American women's lives and into how memory of radical antislavery and the Civil War was incorporated into popular understandings about Brown and his kin” (p. 3). As Laughlin-Schultz demonstrates, Brown's wife Mary and his daughters Ruth Brown Thompson, Annie Brown Adams, Sarah Brown, and Ellen Brown Fablinger were both the most ordinary and the most extraordinary of women.

The Tie that Bound Us offers a series of “snapshots” from the Brown women's lives, “chosen because they reveal important elements of their story as well as this broader sweep of Civil War-era history” (p. 7). Laughlin-Schultz begins these women's collective story in the 1830s and 1840s by offering “an examination of the Brown family's antislavery culture” and follows it through 1926, the year the last of Brown's daughters, Annie, died (p. 7). Throughout the book, Laughlin-Schultz shifts attention away from Brown himself, and also from his sons, in an effort to understand how the Brown women were both shaped by Brown's radical antislavery and contributed to it.

Laughlin-Schultz argues that the female members of Brown's family provided critical support for Brown's work during his lifetime. Mary and Ruth, for example, toiled at home so that Brown and several of his sons could be away for long stretches of time engaged in antislavery work. In the weeks before the Harpers Ferry raid, Annie, along with sister-in-law Bell, actually went to Maryland, where they played a crucial role in helping Brown prepare. Moreover, the Brown women continued to be active in preserving Brown's legacy after his death, defending and justifying his actions to the nation.

Most interesting is Laughlin-Schultz's assertion that, in their later years, these women functioned as “sites of memory” for a



nation grappling with the meaning of the Civil War and its cause and consequences (p. 6). Mary's visit to Topeka is a telling case in point. As Laughlin-Schultz notes, Kansas in the 1880s may have been the most contentious battleground in the fight over Brown's legacy: “Debate there was fueled by the new revelations about Pottawatomie, as well as by the broader question of whether Brown had been important or irrelevant to Kansas” (p. 126). Some Kansans supported a courageous memory of Brown, while others believed that his actions in the territory had been counterproductive. His radical racial policies—never popular in Kansas—had taken on renewed relevance as several thousand African Americans known as Exodusters entered the state.

During Mary's visit to Kansas, however, these tensions were temporarily set aside, and Kansans used Mary's stay to come together and celebrate the important role their state had played in the struggle against slavery. Mary was feted with a “royal reception” in the old State Capitol intended to honor the widow of “the man who struck the first blow for the abolition of slavery in America” (p. 127). Kansans muted Brown's radicalism and embraced his widow to honor the history of their own young state.

The Tie that Bound Us is a significant contribution to women's history and to studies examining the ways that Americans have remembered the Civil War. It also fills a major gap in Brown historiography. Though Laughlin-Schultz's focus is not on Brown himself, what she reveals about the women of his family—especially their support and devotion to him—is nonetheless important to understanding the abolitionist.

Reviewed by Kelly Erby, assistant professor of history, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas.

Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri: The Long Civil War on the Border

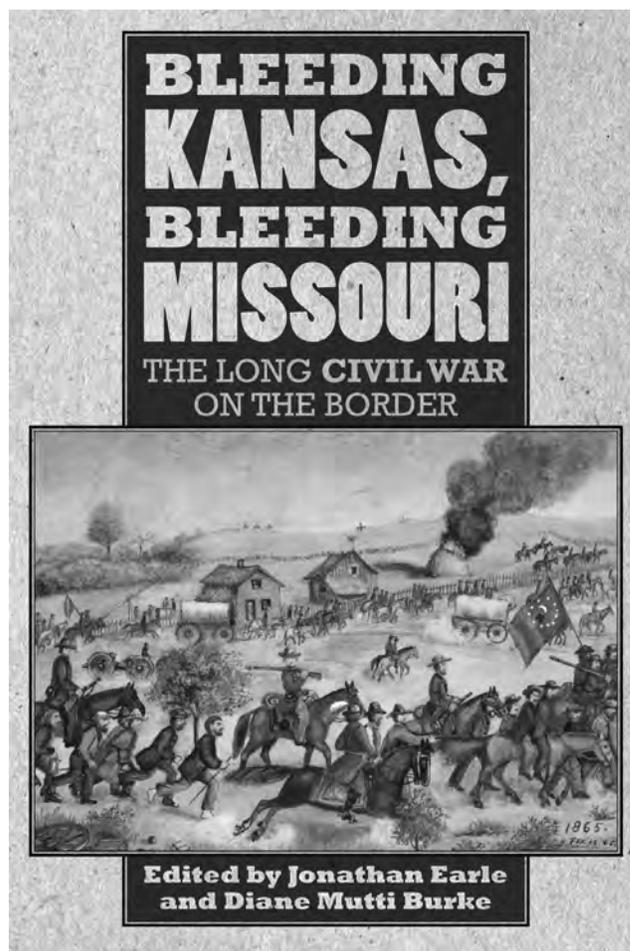
edited by Jonathan Earle and Diane Mutti Burke

xii + 346 pages, illustrations, notes, index, maps.
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013, cloth \$37.50,
paper \$19.95.

In November 2011, to the wails of sports enthusiasts on both sides of the Kansas-Missouri border, the University of Missouri announced that it would depart from the Big 12 Conference in 2012 for the greener pastures of the Southeastern Conference. The move greatly deflated a sports rivalry between the flagship universities of the two states, a rivalry that many saw as a manifestation of a heritage of tension and conflict dating to the clash over the fate of slavery in Kansas Territory in the 1850s. This conflict along the Kansas-Missouri border, which played a critical role in the rise of the Republican Party, was briefly quelled by the victory of free-soil forces in Kansas. However, it resumed with a level of ferocity during the Civil War that made the border and those who battled along it notorious.

In *Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri*, Jonathan Earle of the University of Kansas and Diane Mutti Burke of the University of Missouri–Kansas City offer a compilation of fifteen essays, written by accomplished scholars in the field, that consider various aspects of the sectional conflict in Missouri and Kansas. These essays offer compelling testimony to the popularity of the subject in recent years, which is due in part to the distinctive nature of the conflict. Dominated by irregular rather than conventional military operations, it was inextricably intertwined with the region’s particular social, political, and cultural dynamics. In conceiving of this project, Earle and Burke hoped to push the contributors to this book (and others) to give greater attention to the border dynamic when thinking about matters within the two states. In the editors’ words, scholars need to “examine the region in conversation with each other” (p. 7).

After the introduction, Michael Fellman, whose 1990 study *Inside War* marked the beginning of modern scholarship on the war in Missouri, opens the book with a forceful, wide-ranging essay on religion and violence. In particular, he considers the often problematic relationship between religious conviction and the levels of brutality that agents of violence, such as those who shed blood in wartime Missouri, are able to attain. Fellman’s piece is followed by four essays that consider how slavery and race interacted with other social, cultural, political and economic forces at work in the country during the antebellum years, and how these forces shaped and were shaped by the experience in Kansas and Missouri. The next section, “Making the Border Bleed,” offers five essays that look at the transition between the Bleeding Kansas years and the Civil War, and at aspects of the wartime experience. The final section consists of five essays that consider such postwar subjects as an unapologetically white supremacist Missouri newspaper, the reunions of William



Clarke Quantrill’s command, and how the border war was appropriated by those endeavoring to market and stoke the sports rivalry between the University of Missouri and the University of Kansas.

All of the essays are well-researched, informative, and solidly written, though the value of each will inevitably vary depending on the interests of particular readers. Readers wanting to know more about the course and conduct of military operations along the border, for instance, will not find a great deal here to suit their tastes. Only one of the essays has military operations as its main focus, although some of the others touch on them in passing. Those concerned with how slavery and race shaped affairs in Missouri and Kansas, though, will find plenty to enjoy, as these are central themes of a large percentage of the essays. That emphasis makes this a work that both advances our knowledge of what happened in Missouri and Kansas before, during, and after the Civil War and offers a good window into what academic historians studying nineteenth-century Missouri and Kansas are interested in today.

Reviewed by Ethan S. Rafuse, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

The Last Days of the Rainbelt

by David J. Wishart

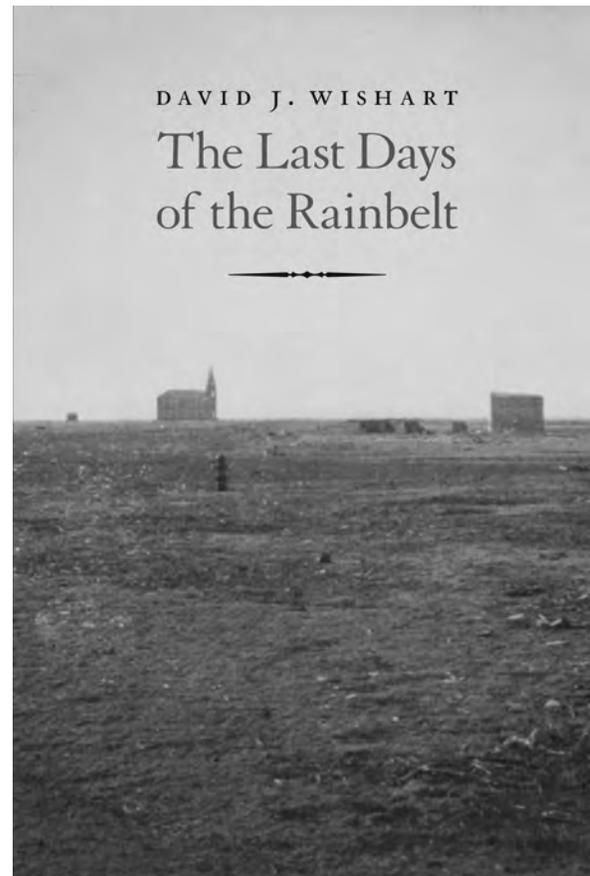
xviii + 202 pages, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.
Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013, cloth \$29.95.

Everybody knows about the Dust Bowl. John Steinbeck and Dorothea Lange captured its impact with words and photographs, and many survivors told their stories to reporters. This assemblage of collective memory is important, of course, but its prominence has meant a relative neglect for an earlier, equally catastrophic episode of regional life. In the 1890s, severe drought similarly combined with a more general economic depression and drove off up to two-thirds of the population of eastern Colorado and adjacent counties in Kansas and Nebraska. This important event is David Wishart's subject in *The Last Days of the Rainbelt*.

Because of a combination of physical remoteness and technological limitations, documentation of the 1890s disaster is scarce. A few photographs exist, but federal agencies sent no aid. Most survivors' stories were ignored as well in the face of prosperity during the late 1910s and then a new disaster in the 1930s. Luckily, however, a short-lived New Deal agency, the Civil Works Administration, joined forces with the Colorado Historical Society in 1933 and 1934. By hiring local people to interview several hundred elderly residents of eastern Colorado about their pioneering experience of four decades before, they created an archive rich in detail that included almost as many women's voices as men's. Wishart makes these stories the heart of his book.

Wishart, a long-time scholar of Great Plains life, does a beautiful job of interspersing interview information with broader contextual material and statistical data to provide a clear and convincing narrative. His book is short (only 162 pages of text), graceful, and understated. Four chapters together with a brief introduction and epilogue provide the format. The first, as preamble, describes the settlers' march across Kansas and Nebraska from the 1850s through the mid-1880s. He characterizes this process as a series of pulsations dependent upon rainfall and the economy, each one accompanied by small-scale speculation and hopes for the good life. Chapter two details the optimism of the pioneers as they took up the last available central plains land during the generally wet years of 1886 to 1889. Chapter three, drawing heavily on the interviews, describes daily life and its challenges circa 1890, while chapter four treats the regional exodus when a dry year in 1890 was followed by three even drier ones from 1893 to 1895.

Descriptions of frontier life will linger in readers' minds: how weeds were nonexistent in the early years, for example, and how first-season crops were lush in the newly exposed humus. Because ranchers controlled river access, drinking water was a problem, and so people sunk barrels into dry creek beds to



capture seepage. One learns that chickens and milk cows were critical sources of cash before the first crop came in (six cents per dozen eggs or pound of butter), and that the pay for linemen on a railroad was almost twice as much as that for herding cattle, teaching school, or running a post office (\$45 compared to \$25 per month). People recalled, too, that neighborhood women tended to look alike because all their dresses came from a single bolt of material in the country store.

Nineteen maps, thirteen historical photographs, and ten graphs nicely supplement the narrative. The maps include isoline depictions of place-to-place variation in precipitation for each year from 1890 through 1895. Photographs draw heavily from the work of pioneer geologist Willard Johnson and beautifully evoke the emptiness of the region. Unfortunately, several of these illustrations are too small. The central reference map, figure 20, definitely deserves enlargement, and the same is true for most of the precipitation series and the one on Indian land cessions. Quibbles about graphics aside, however, *The Last Days of the Rainbelt* is an impressive book. By combining previously overlooked archival material with an informed understanding of the region, Wishart makes an important time and place come alive.

Reviewed by James R. Shortridge, professor of geography, University of Kansas.

American Girls, Beer, and Glenn Miller: GI Morale in World War II

by James J. Cooke

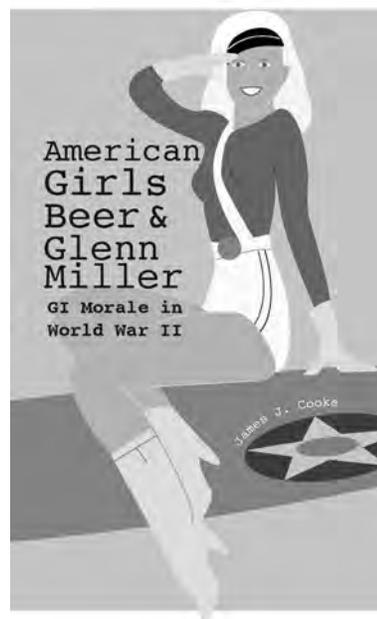
ix + 206 pages, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.
Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2012,
cloth \$40.00.

This volume, the latest entry in The American Military Experiences series, compliments James Cooke's *Chewing Gum, Candy Bars, and Beer: The Army PX in World War II* (2009). Whereas Cooke's earlier volume focused on the Post Exchange System (PX), *American Girls, Beer, and Glenn Miller* delves more deeply into the Special Services Division of the United States Army. In both, Cooke argues that the PX system and the Special Services Division were crucial to soldiers' morale and were largely successful, even though the soldiers of World War II had much higher expectations than their counterparts in World War I.

Staffing the Special Services Division proved a major challenge. It was difficult to justify manpower to organize baseball games and movie screenings when more men were needed constantly at multiple fronts, but maintaining morale was critical to fighting the global conflict. The military also had to find a way to manage civilian groups that had good intentions but often lacked understanding of military discipline and bureaucracy. Cooke deftly explains these challenges and the overall success of the Special Services Division in bringing the relative comforts of home to GIs overseas who longed for cigarettes, American beer, girls, and candy.

Cooke argues that "the United States Army's attention to morale issues had been a problem for as long as there was an army . . . [but] up to World War I, little attention was paid to the morale of the soldier in the ranks" (p. 5). He begins by discussing the Army's attempts to study and improve soldiers' morale during the Civil War and World War I, before turning to World War II. He then details the creation of the Special Services Division and the PX system, following them through the war and the immediate postwar period. Cooke relies heavily on military records to explore morale from the perspective of military leaders, and he uses letters from individual soldiers home to demonstrate how those policies played out on the ground.

Cooke's larger argument is that the men who fought in World War II were fundamentally different than their World War I forebears because of the development of mass consumerism during the interwar years. As a result, World War II soldiers had much higher expectations than World War I doughboys. The Special Services Division sought to meet these expectations by providing not only traditional comfort items provided by the PX but also entertainment and educational opportunities. The GIs wanted to see first-run movies, to hear the most popular radio shows, and to spend time with American girls. The Special



Services Division tried to provide all of this and more—even to men on the front lines and in remote locations around the world. According to Cooke, the division was overwhelmingly successful even though it could not overcome some logistical challenges.

The book is arranged chronologically, with some occasional backtracking, but Cooke may have been able to provide deeper analysis if it had been organized thematically. The book is also occasionally repetitive—it describes religious groups' concern over supplying beer to soldiers with almost the exact same language in a couple chapters—and also devotes only cursory attention to the unequal support given to African American troops, who are mentioned only in passing. Indeed, Cooke skims over additional negative aspects of his story. For example, he mentions several times that American troops stationed in Brisbane were involved in skirmishes with Australian troops, but he never provides any details. Much of the military's efforts at improving morale focused on giving soldiers wholesome alternatives to avoid situations like those in Brisbane. More detail from Cooke could have shed light on soldiers' sometimes bad behavior in spite of the military's best efforts. Further, in his discussion of the occupation of Italy, Cooke recounts one soldier's disgusted reaction to an Italian man who prostituted his daughter to American soldiers but does not explain the desperation of the civilian population which led to this, or the fact that Allied forces did at times take advantage of this desperation.

Overall, however, *American Girls* is well-documented and persuasive. It illuminates an important but often overlooked part of modern warfare and significantly contributes to the literature on war and society.

Reviewed by Michael Smith, adjunct professor of American Studies, The College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Arming Mother Nature: The Birth of Catastrophic Environmentalism

by Jacob Darwin Hamblin

x + 298 pages, notes, index.

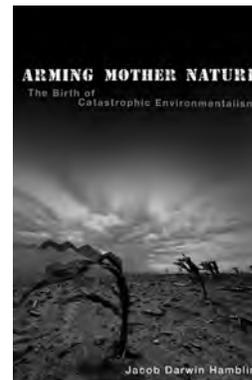
New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, cloth \$29.95.

Much of America's post-1945 history focuses on the Cold War. From the maturation of thermonuclear bombs to the exploding use of pesticides, postwar events blurred the lines between military might, ecological fragility, and cultural uncertainty. Although many scholars have explored the geopolitical duel between the United States and the Soviet Union, few have used an environmental lens. Yet agricultural, hydrological, and ecological warfare all played a key role in U.S. efforts to combat the communist threat.

In *Arming Mother Nature*, historian Jacob Hamblin makes three key arguments in narrating "the interplay of science in the Cold War and the history of environmental thought" (p. 11). First, warfare went well beyond soldiers, countries, and ideologies. Government scientists studied crops, seas, forests, and landscapes for vulnerability and manipulability—all could be used as both weapons and targets. Second, this kind of militarized ecological research encouraged a belief that "large-scale human induced changes already were within the power of American and Soviet scientists" (p. 12). These experts were "quite willing to tamper with the earth, the oceans, and the atmosphere" (p. 12). Third, Cold War geopolitics "fundamentally shaped how scientists, economists, military leaders, and politicians responded to the scientific evidence of large-scale human actions" (p. 12). Crop radiation experiments, weather modification projects, and harebrained schemes to build artificial radiation belts around the earth all show how the Cold War "transformed thinking about humanity, the vulnerabilities of the earth, and the poisoned fruits of human labor" (p. 13).

Arming Mother Nature is organized into three main parts. Part one surveys how the search for "bacteriological weapons" linked climate fluctuations and ecological fragility to military strategy. American and NATO scientists envisioned climates, landscapes, and crops that fought communism. They also planned a global stockpile system to preserve a pre-fallout life. As Hamblin suggests, "man's simplifications of the landscape had made him extraordinarily vulnerable. . . . With the arms race came an increasing military interest in environmental sciences on a global scale" (p. 82).

Parts two and three explore the expansion of environmental surveillance, testing, and "geo-physical" war planning. NATO countries followed American President Dwight D. Eisenhower's plan to collect geophysical data to encourage peaceful cooperation. The International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957–1958 was a global project, which, Eisenhower hoped, would ease Cold War tensions; in his view, "science itself was not nationalistic, knowledge knew no borders, and ideas were



universal" (p. 90). However, while the Soviet Union and its allies met to exchange data, the United States and NATO countries were secretly scheming to melt polar ice caps, raise water levels, and design global warming zones.

Hamblin offers an astonishing account of these "wildcat ideas for environmental warfare." Strategists built on the work of scientists such as Gordon McDonald and Charles Elton and crafted global war plans—reports on making volcanoes erupt on command or steering lightning storms over enemy camps read like science fiction novels. American policymakers used the threat of harm, risk, and vulnerability as both shield and spear—they could claim that the Soviets were threatening human civilization while planning scenarios of mass destruction.

For readers of *Kansas History*, Hamblin's concepts of ecological warfare can be used to study Great Plains agriculture during the Cold War. As Joe Anderson, Kendra Smith-Howard, and I have all argued, conceptualizing risk, anticipating vulnerability, and calculating toxicity guided agricultural production in Iowa corn, Wisconsin dairy, and Kansas wheat. More can be done on how vulnerability played out in the region. Future scholars could also study links between land-grant colleges and larger national plans for environmental warfare.

Arming Mother Nature takes a new look at Cold War history through an environmental-military-scientific lens. However, Hamblin's analysis of environmental risk assessment is lacking. Although he addresses how environmental security contributed to the 1970s pesticide debates, he might have engaged Frederick Rowe Davis's history on toxicology. Chicago Tox Lab scientists pioneered assessment practices that determined the risks, benefits, and vulnerabilities of pesticides. Hamblin also keeps to professional war-planners and scientists while offering little on the local practitioner's role.

Arming Mother Nature makes clear that the modern scientific, scholarly, and political roots of catastrophic environmentalism have a strange and storied Cold War past. As scientists experimented with weaponizing agriculture and altering climates, they also learned about ecological fragility on a global scale—the more they armed the earth, the more they endangered themselves.

Reviewed by David D. Vail, public services archivist and historian, Morse Department of Special Collections, Kansas State University.

Peacekeepers and Conquerors: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1821–1846

by Samuel J. Watson

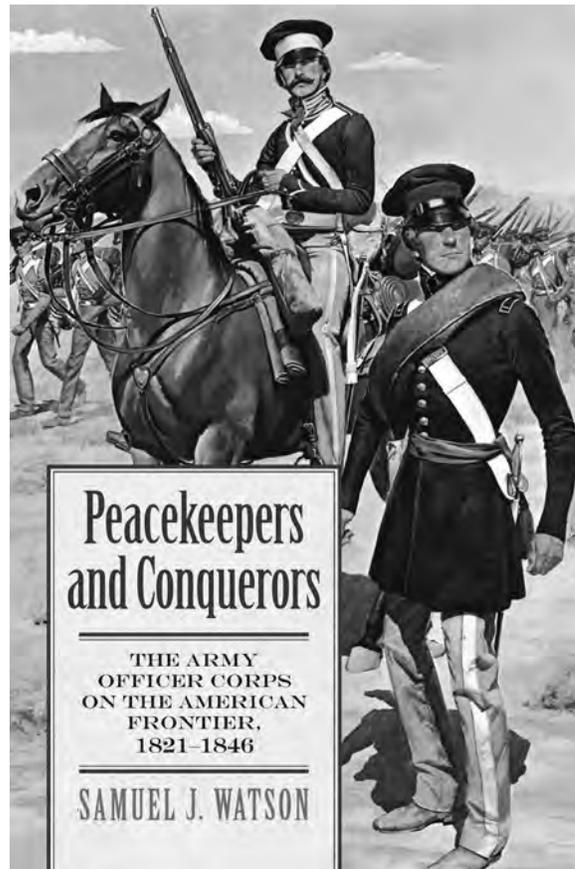
xvi + 636 pages, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013, cloth \$24.95.

“The officer corps’ role as the principal defender of the national sovereignty meshed comfortably with officers’ individual and organizational search for security, legitimacy, and authority” (p. 414). This one sentence concisely captures the thesis of Samuel J. Watson’s *Peacekeepers and Conquerors*, the author’s latest study of the U.S. Army’s officer corps in the early to mid-nineteenth century. In Watson’s analysis, the officer corps benefited from the growing centralization of power, while the officers’ support of the process strengthened their own position in society and the national hierarchy. The author provides an extensive array of research and sources to support his contention. Although not written for general readers, *Peacekeepers and Conquerors* must be taken seriously by military scholars.

Watson challenges the older notion that the frontier army was weak, ineffective, and merely reactive. According to this interpretation, officers played a passive role, springing into action only when a situation demanded their service. Watson contends that this notion of near haplessness is based on well-known army losses to western tribes. Watson points out that despite the complete debacles experienced by Josiah Harmer, Arthur St. Clair, and even George A. Custer, these defeats amounted to temporary setbacks in the nation’s overall campaign against Indians who inhabited both sides of the Mississippi River. Ultimate success resulted from the gradual professionalization of the officer corps coupled with the organization of resources brought to bear by an increasingly more powerful centralized national government.

Watson discusses the irony of developing a strong nation state in an age traditionally thought to be dominated by independent-minded Jacksonians. In 1821, as *Peacekeepers and Conquerors* begins, frontiersman and filibusters were active in shaping borders; by 1846, however, the army had gained control over these non-state players. Watson argues that the army provided the control and security needed to maintain boundaries and support internal development. In another ironic twist, the once independent residents of the frontier increasingly called on the army for assistance instead of taking matters into their own hands as they formerly did.

Watson reexamines the place of the officer corps in American society. He posits that instead of being isolated from the rest of society, officers were actually part of the developing middle class. They formed part of polite society and interacted amicably with civilians of their own social class wherever they were posted. Although that may be true, by their very education and world view, officers belonged to an elite group of men in position to carry out national policy as well as shape it. Instead of siding



with the frontier’s rowdier elements, who demanded action against Indians and Mexicans, officers held more to the Whig notion of law and order as opposed to the raw, unregulated expansionism proposed by strident followers of Manifest Destiny. This ideological bent may explain why some officers, even while carrying out their orders, still expressed sympathy for ethnic groups they were ordered to fight or remove.

Watson’s work is important because it places the evolution of the U.S. Army’s officer corps in the context of the development of the United States from a fledgling republic to a definite nation state. The two formed a symbiotic relationship: the increase in national power gave officers authority to more effectively perform their tasks while the national government benefited from having a group of reliable and efficient public servants to carry out its policy. Rather than being weak and unable to control the frontier, the army—as an agent of the state—used the appropriate amount of force needed to achieve policy makers’ goals. In the process, the professional officer corps took precedence over the traditional frontier defense provided by the states and individuals. As Watson concludes, under the command of its officers, the U.S. Army truly had become a force for nationalism by the dawn of the Civil War.

Reviewed by Richard Bruce Winders, historian and curator, the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.

Llewellyn Castle: A Worker's Cooperative on the Great Plains

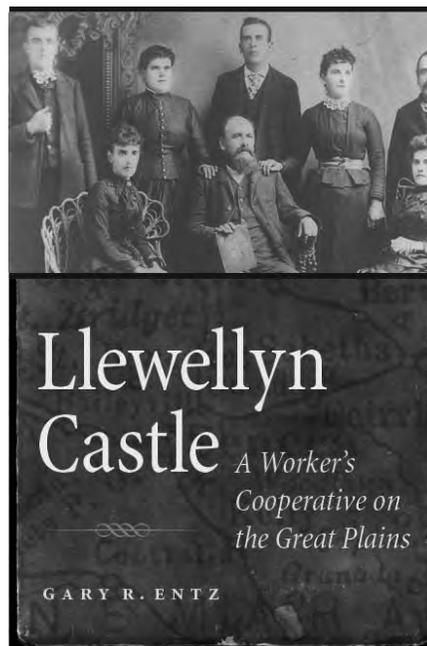
by Gary R. Entz

xvi + 279 pages, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.
Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013, cloth \$50.00.

The prairies of northeastern Kansas, thousands of miles from Europe and hundreds of miles from America's great industrial centers, seemed an unlikely front in the English working class's nineteenth-century campaign for social justice. Gary Entz's *Llewellyn Castle: A Worker's Cooperative on the Great Plains* illustrates how one group of English socialists fought to advance democracy at home by building a cooperative colony on the Kansas frontier during the mid-nineteenth century. The author connects this colony to the history of British Chartism, the transatlantic reform dialogue, the western experience, and the budding late nineteenth-century farm revolt, while telling its tale in an engaging and accessible manner.

The Workingmen's Cooperative Colony, dubbed "Llewellyn Castle" in local lore long after the settlement had failed, was founded in 1869 by followers of leading Irish Chartist reformer James Bronterre O'Brien as a proving ground for his socialist ideas about land, wealth, and democracy. The colony, located approximately fifty miles west of Atchison, Kansas, was the object of tremendous enthusiasm among O'Brien's disciples, who were enchanted by American railroad company propaganda describing the Great Plains as a veritable garden with a temperate climate and limitless opportunity. Instead, the colonists discovered formidable economic, environmental, and operational challenges that ultimately doomed their enterprise. The story of the Workingmen's Cooperative then faded from view, languishing as little more than a historical curio until Entz's work restored it as part of the nineteenth century's international conversation about the relationship between rights and wealth.

The book begins with the Workingmen's Cooperative's intellectual roots in Robert Owen's utopian socialism, William Corbett and Henry Hunt's demand for working-class political inclusion, and Thomas Spence's radical theories about land ownership and political equality. Next, it examines how these ideas inspired O'Brien, who helped to found the London-based National Reform League (NRL) after socialist revolutions were crushed across Europe in 1848. O'Brien shunned violence in pursuit of working-class social justice, instead embracing the notion that working-class economic equality would lay the foundation for later political rights. The NRL adopted O'Brien's seven-point plan for "Home Colonization," which envisioned relocating the urban poor to "colonies" where they would farm as tenants on community-owned land. O'Brien intended these colonies to be located in Britain, but his followers shifted their gaze to the American West after they became disillusioned by political developments at home. The author next focuses on the colonists' establishment of their "citadel of social justice" (p.



82) in Kansas. Entz documents the colonists' struggle to gain a foothold in the face of manifold hardships, ultimately resulting in the Workingmen's Cooperative wasting away during the mid-1870s. Finally, he explores how the scattered colonists continued to advocate their democratic ideals in America as leading figures in the Knights of Labor and the Populist movement.

Llewellyn Castle speaks to the fact that Kansas was a hotbed of radical ideas during the late nineteenth century, while highlighting the way that developments in Kansas influenced and were influenced by events far beyond the tallgrass of the Great Plains. Entz consistently draws connections between the Kansas Workingmen's Cooperative and the larger stage, linking the colony to developments in the British socialist movement, the current of international events, and the blossoming American reform movement. The work's only weakness of note is its reliance on local newspaper accounts of the Workingmen's Cooperative, which is problematic given the low journalistic standards of most late nineteenth-century newspapermen. The author's use of such sources in the relative absence of better accounts is certainly understandable, and overall the work is highly successful at weaving strong British and American primary and secondary sources into an engaging, informative narrative that both the scholar and the casual reader will find satisfying. *Llewellyn Castle* is an accomplishment that contributes much to our understanding of a social reform movement that stretched from London to Kansas, while reminding us that even lost and forgotten "footnotes" can inform us about larger historical trends.

Reviewed by Charles Delgadillo, instructor of history, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Post-Westerns: Cinema, Region, West

by Neil Campbell

x + 415 pages, notes, index.

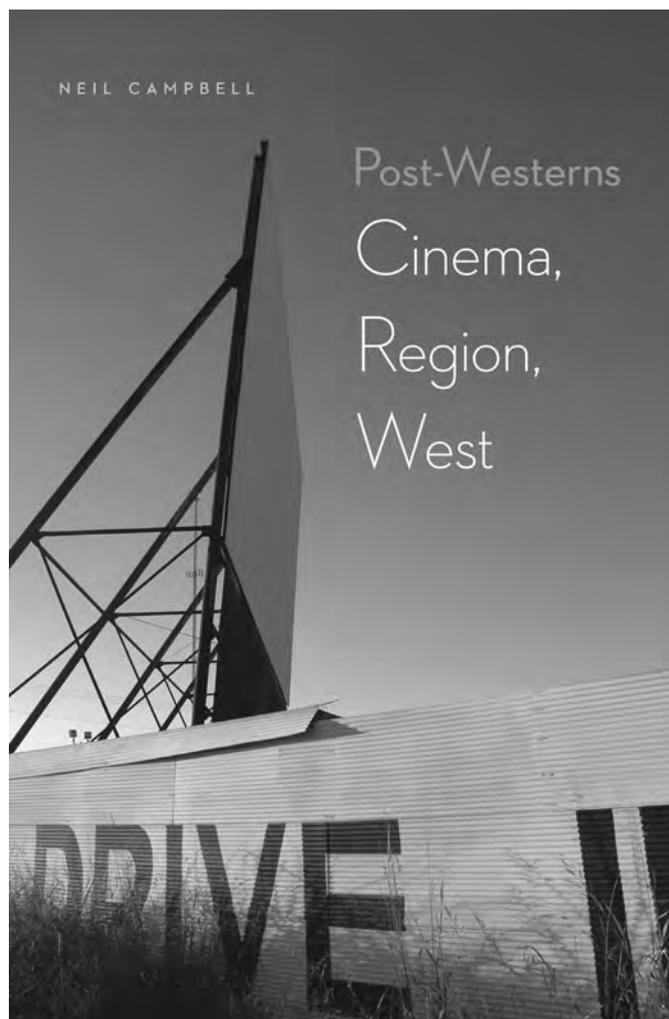
Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013, cloth \$65.00.

Ghosts. Hauntings. Phantoms. These words conjure film genres that exploit human fears and test watchers' abilities to endure trips to uncomfortable places in their psyches. For author Neil Campbell, these shades are the people, places, and themes of traditional Westerns that appear in perverted forms in post-Western films. Post-Western filmmakers call upon the established framework of the Western but use familiar western landscapes and cowboy archetypes as critical tools that do indeed create uncomfortable and socially challenging art. The Western, it seems, is not dead but constantly reinvigorated by its past lives. *Post-Westerns* is the final volume in Campbell's trilogy addressing the spatial and symbolic meanings of the American West. As both a work of synthesis and original analysis, *Post-Westerns* is a thought-provoking entry in the conversation about the New West or, perhaps, the post-West.

What will the future Western look like? This question is one of the many interesting thoughts that drive Campbell's work. To point toward possible answers, the author discusses several post-World War II films. Some are familiar, such as *Bad Day at Black Rock* and *The Misfits*, while others, such as *Fat City*, might not be typically catalogued as Westerns. Campbell identifies nine main ideas about the post-Western as he chronologically takes the reader from 1952 to 2007. In each chapter, filmmakers and writers push, pull, imperfectly reflect, and sometimes collapse the Old West as the author demonstrates that the thematic boundaries of the Western weaken with each passing decade. As filmmakers continue to challenge the traditional frame of the masculine hero confronting an untamed land, eventually we will stop expecting to see those elements in Westerns.

Some readers might find the author's choice of films somewhat scattershot, but his plan is not to create narrow coherence. This study is not a "best of" list. In Campbell's view, the shifts in the Western genre are best understood by exploring a diverse body of work. The omission of a favorite film actually invites readers to apply Campbell's analyses to their own collection of Westerns. Not all sub-genres of the Western receive equal attention. For example, *The Big Lebowski* is the only comedy considered, yet comedy seems to be a place where the Western might most easily warp in the hands of a clever filmmaker.

For the casual reader, or even the traditional historian, the language and style of critical theory in this work can itself be unsettling, but perhaps that is appropriate given Campbell's



overarching goal of destabilizing the West. Literature from film studies and postmodern theorists are featured in lengthy quotations, which sometimes distract from Campbell's own fascinating thoughts. He often invokes the ideas of postmodern film theorists Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Rancière, which are certainly useful but may require multiple passes for the reader to fully appreciate. The intellectual reward is well worth the challenge. It will now be difficult to watch a modern Western without looking for the Old West's specters.

Reviewed by Meg Frisbee, assistant professor of history, Metropolitan State University of Denver.

Rock Island Requiem: The Collapse of a Mighty Fine Line

by Gregory L. Schneider

xviii + 380 pages, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.

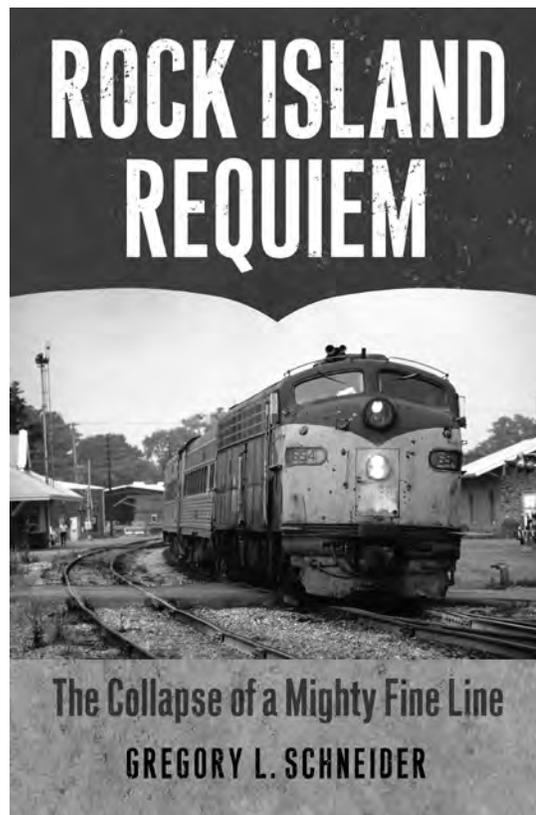
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013, cloth \$37.50.

For many rural Kansans, few railroads are more closely associated with the state than the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific. The Rock Island laced two long lines across Kansas; its northern route paralleled I-70 to Denver, while its southwestern extension ran through Dodge City to New Mexico. When the line folded in 1980, many Kansas communities found themselves without the familiar hum of rail traffic.

In this dense business history, Gregory Schneider sorts through the complex web that was the Rock Island's later years. In Schneider's analysis, the Rock Island becomes an example of all that plagued railroads in the twentieth century. Regulations that were levied in the Progressive Era, when railroad managers still behaved as the classic "robber barons" of the Gilded Age, weighed heavily on the lines as trucks, cars, and airplanes ate away at traffic and revenues in the post-World War II era. Labor costs were high, as old work rules more fit for the steam era often governed the workplace. Railroads could not set their own rates, and the Interstate Commerce Commission often made it difficult to abandon unprofitable routes. In the case of the Rock Island, it appeared the line could be saved through a merger with the Union Pacific, but another regional competitor, the Chicago and North Western, helped to thwart the move by lobbying the ICC.

Much of the text is devoted to complicated business maneuverings: Rock Island managers sought first a merger with the Union Pacific, and then made numerous futile attempts to stave off bankruptcy. The problems really started in the 1960s, when the Rock Island (and other railroads) were still saddled with cash-bleeding passenger routes. But the 1970s put the railroad in the vise grip of soaring fuel costs, an ill-timed labor strike, and falling freight revenues. Schneider finds, as have other railroad historians, that deregulation during the Jimmy Carter years contributed significantly to the resurgence of the industry. More specifically, the Staggers Act allowed railroads to establish their own rates, which for nearly a century had been controlled by the ICC, and to create contracts with shippers that would not have to be reviewed by the ICC. Before this act, rail companies were even prevented from cutting rates to attract customers. The Staggers Act led to a dramatic resurgence of the American railroad industry and a general decline in shipping rates. Passed in October 1980, however, this law came too late to save the Rock Island, and the company lurched to extinction in 1981.

Overall, this is a well-researched and well-crafted account based on extensive archival resources. Because the book is



written from the viewpoint of Rock Island executives, using corporate documents, it is not surprising that Schneider apportions much of the blame on government and labor. Labor's voice, in particular, is absent, but airing multiple voices is not the intent of this institutional history. Perhaps the major cause of death for the Rock Island was unfortunate geography. In the eyes of white settlers and railroad tycoons, everything was undeveloped territory in the nineteenth century. As companies built lines across the Midwest and Great Plains, the spread of farming fueled revenues. When the drought of the 1890s caused contractions, however, the Rock Island suddenly found itself serving some of the most sparsely populated parts of Kansas and the Great Plains. Promising in the nineteenth century, the Rock's corridors turned relatively ghostly in the twentieth.

Although some of the Rock Island's routes were abandoned, most ended up in the hands of other railroads and remain busy today, raising the possibility that the railroad should have been saved. In the case of Kansas, the Union Pacific has made the Rock Island's southwestern route a crowded pipeline of freight traffic. Although it focuses on company headquarters in Chicago, readers of *Kansas History* will find that this useful history illuminates much about railroads in the post-World War II American West.

Reviewed by Richard D. Loosbrock, associate professor of history, Adams State University, Alamosa, Colorado.

The Frontier Club: Popular Westerns and Cultural Power, 1880–1924

by Christine Bold

xx + 298 pages, illustrations, notes, index.
New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, cloth \$29.95.

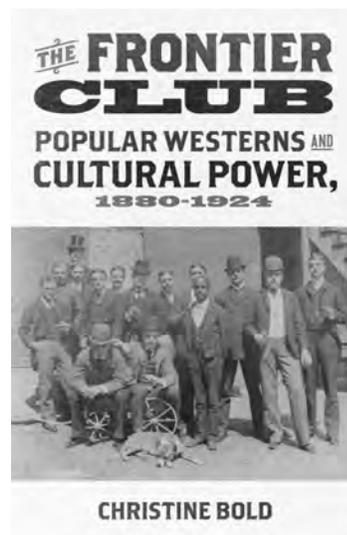
Christine Bold started this project by asking herself how what we know as the formulaic western story (basically Owen Wister's *The Virginian*) came to dominate the genre and what different narratives might have emerged if given a hearing (p. 241). Good questions.

In the nation's first century, white Americans used the receding frontier to the point of exhaustion. By the 1880s, however, a new use was found for the frontier. Doctors believed that many middle- and upper-class men suffered from nervous disorders—then termed neurasthenia—and advised their patients to flee crowded, modernizing cities and embrace nature on the frontier. Neurasthenia's champion in Philadelphia was Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell, a distinguished physician and writer. Significantly, he was related to the Wisters of Philadelphia, and was both doctor and advisor to Owen Wister.

Upper-class men of the late nineteenth century belonged to men's clubs, and easterners who ventured to the frontier brought their personal excitement back home. In 1887 Theodore Roosevelt, not yet a legend but a published author of hunting experiences, invited a dozen gentlemen who embraced the West to meet in his Manhattan home. To prevent the extinction of big game in America, they formed the Boone and Crockett Club, the work of which absorbs the largest part of *The Frontier Club*. The Boone and Crockett Club would convert the private goal of helping big game hunters into the federal policy of expanding the national park system through lectures, popular magazine articles, and scientific research and expeditions. Moreover, Bold argues, by encouraging fiction that showed the frontier in a favorable light, the club drove the creation of the American western genre.

The club's conservationism was antidemocratic. Its members opposed immigration of all but western Europeans because they insisted that other immigrants were less likely to accept the aristocratic land use the club supported. When conflict developed between large ranchers who fed their cattle on publically owned lands and small ranchers who wanted similar rights, the eastern clubmen sided with the large ranchers; the clubmen had invested money in the large ranches, and turning the frontier into traditional American farms would contribute to the extermination of big game.

The chapter on the women of the Boone and Crockett outfit is particularly interesting because it shows that the objectives of the club members who went west and pretended to be cowboys differed from those of their wives and those of real working cowboys of any generation. Upper-class men generally married



well-educated and sophisticated women who had no desire to be subservient (though neither did they wish to turn themselves into Annie Oakleys). Owen Wister expected his wife Molly to find satisfaction in her role as wife and mother, but she had been a partner in his publishing and believed that women should be social leaders, especially in the area of children's education.

The chapter on immigrants and Indians documents unsurprising attitudes toward ethnic minorities. Most club writers were not interested in creating a Mexican hero despite the fact that one-third of the cowboys in the United States were Mexican. Only one member, George Bird Grinnell, was an authority on Indians. When Roosevelt became president, Grinnell received various appointments within the Indian Department, especially dealing with the Blackfeet Indians and the development of Glacier National Park. Because of his time in Indian villages, Grinnell was not an unsympathetic Indian agent, but he understood the government's position and the attitude of whites working for the government. When Congress wanted Indian land, for example to create Glacier Park, Indians were treated little better than during earlier times and were relocated.

Bold devotes a few pages to dime novels that portrayed cowboys as progressive or egalitarian figures. The sales of these populist cowboy novels were quite good, but the image of the populist cowboy did not make the social and literary impact that the aristocratic lobby led by Roosevelt did.

The strength of this study is its integration of many facets of American culture—business, technology, health, the arts, psychology, class structure, nature and government—into a meaningful whole represented by the cowboy. That is quite an accomplishment.

Reviewed by Ronald Miriani, retired professor of history, Park University, Kansas City, Missouri.

Citizen Explorer: The Life of Zebulon Pike

by Jared Orsi

xii + 379 pages, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.
New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, cloth \$29.95.

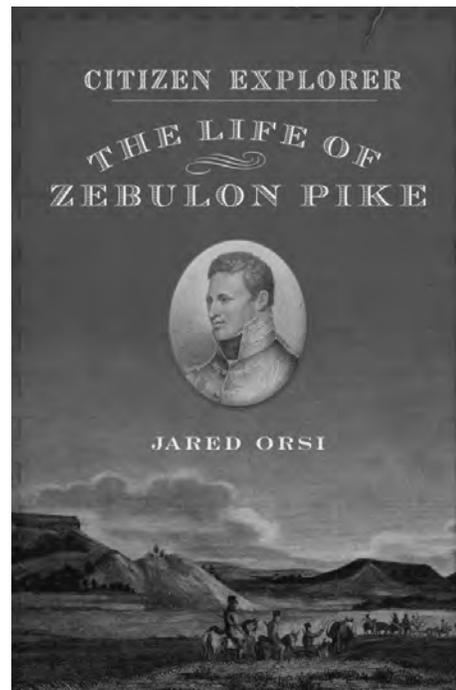
Brigadier General Zebulon Montgomery Pike was killed at the Battle of York (present Toronto, Canada), on April 27, 1813, during one of the few U.S. victories in the War of 1812. He was thirty-four years old and a great American hero. Today he is known for his failed attempt in 1806 to climb a mountain in Colorado that now bears his name, and little else. The bicentennial of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's Expedition from 1804 to 1806 was commemorated with generous funding and scores of special events. The bicentennial of Pike's Southwest Expedition of 1806 and 1807, arguably more significant than Lewis and Clark's for the expansion and development of the young nation, received no funding and scant recognition, even among scholars. A rare exception was the Spring 2006 issue of *Kansas History* devoted to Pike.

Although Pike's journals, letters, and other documents have been published, and there are several biographies, Jared Orsi ably fills the need for a fresh interpretive evaluation of Pike and his times, bringing to light new information and providing the perspective of an environmental historian. The result is a thoroughly researched, skillfully argued, and highly readable book, the definitive biography of Pike.

Pike's life and the life of the new United States were intertwined and reflected the conflict between liberty and order, independence and national growth. For Pike and the nation, overcoming environmental obstacles was essential for success. Pike was an "ardent nationalist who consciously cast his life with the nation" (p. 14). Orsi clearly states his thesis: "Pike's life thus exposes the social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental arrangements by which the young republic extended its sovereignty over distant lands and peoples" (p. 10).

Orsi discovered new documentation about the Pike family in America (beginning in 1635) and Zebulon's early life. His father, also named Zebulon, was a career army officer, and the younger Zebulon joined the infantry at age fifteen. He was devoted to self-improvement, was self-educated, and initially saw duty transporting quartermaster supplies on western rivers. Discipline and sacrifice were his virtues, and he was willing to die for his country. He married Clarissa Brown in 1801. They were stationed at Fort Kaskaskia, Illinois, in 1803, where Pike served as adjutant and later as post commander.

General James Wilkinson picked Lieutenant Pike to lead twenty men to explore the upper Mississippi River in 1805 and 1806, and to confront the British and their Indian allies in the region. Pike and his men suffered harsh winter weather in the



service of their nation. As soon as Pike returned to St. Louis in 1806, General Wilkinson sent him on the Southwest Expedition, which explored much of present Kansas and eastern Colorado before its members were arrested by Spanish troops and taken to Santa Fe and Chihuahua. Orsi focuses on the environmental factors of both expeditions, looking at the nature and people of the lands they visited, at the same time relating Pike's contributions to the nation. Pike never appears in a vacuum, and Orsi clearly explains Pike's settings.

Upon his release from Chihuahua and return to the United States, Pike was suspected of being part of the Aaron Burr Conspiracy, a plan to create a new nation comprised of lands taken from the western United States and northern Mexico. Orsi examines those charges more thoroughly than any previous scholar and concludes that "the incomplete, contradictory, and circumstantial evidence available points overwhelmingly to Pike's innocence" (p. 250). As his reputation recovered, Pike was promoted and ready to lead troops when war with Britain came in 1812. He gave his life defending his beloved country.

Orsi assesses Pike's many contributions to the developing nation to demonstrate that he deserved the accolades he received at the time of his death. Readers of this finely crafted biography will gain an appreciation of Pike's many sacrifices for and contributions to the young nation.

Reviewed by Leo E. Oliva, independent scholar, Woodston, Kansas.