

BOOK REVIEWS

Great River: An Environmental History of the Upper Mississippi, 1890-1950. By Philip V. Scarpino.

(Columbia University of Missouri Press, 1985. 219 p. \$24.00.)

THE UPPER Mississippi River today is not the same river it was in 1817, when Major Stephen Long described its water above the mouth of the St. Croix as "entirely colorless and free from everything that would render it impure, either to the sight or taste." Its water has been polluted by urban sewage, clouded by siltation accelerated by settlement along its tributaries, and impounded by 26 locks and dams built to maintain a nine-foot navigation channel. These changes have dramatically altered the biological community of the river and its floodplain. People have radically changed the river, sometimes in conscious attempts to make it more useful to them, sometimes through the unintended consequences of developing the resources of the river and the territory it drains.

Philip Scarpino, assistant professor of history at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, tries to explain the attitudes which led groups of people to alter the river and then to show how attitudes changed as people experienced the often unintended consequences. His goal is not to detail the changes in the ecosystem as much as to explain how people perceived and reacted to them. To do this, he tells the stories of the building and consequences of the 1913 Keokuk dam and hydroelectric project, the United States Bureau of Fisheries' attempts to aid the pearl-button industry, the Izaak Walton League's crusade to preserve the river valley as a fish and game refuge, and the contrasting responses of the Twin Cities and St. Louis to water pollution problems. Scarpino argues that the experiences of the scientists of the Bureau of Fisheries and the outdoorsmen who joined the Izaak Walton League led them to perceive the changes in the river valley's environment as a threat to their interests and to see the waterway as a biological community to be protected rather than a set of resources to be developed.

For anyone intrigued by the river and concerned about its future, this book is far more useful than the usual invocation of romantic steamboat days. Beyond its regional interest, it makes a useful contribution to the growing literature delineating the social, political, economic, and technological contexts of decisions that have caused environmental problems. Scarpino deftly shows, for example, that the Keokuk hydroelectric project and its consequences grew from several factors: a broad cultural consensus that natural resources were wasted unless tamed for human profit; local dreams that the Des Moines Rapids could be harnessed to ensure prosperity in the "Power Zone" in the wake of the collapse of the white pine industry; and the national development of an integrated electric power industry. He points out the co-operation be-

tween the Corps of Engineers and local boosters promoting the nine-foot channel project and explains how urban sewer and navigation lock technologies combined to produce a pollution crisis in the Twin Cities.

The book is at its best delineating the interaction of local and national developments in the Keokuk hydroelectric project and in tracing the emergence of the perception of the river as an ecosystem among the Bureau of Fisheries scientists. The sketchy discussion of the response to increasing water pollution, however, lacks the sensitive attention to local nuance shown in discussing the Keokuk dam project. Focus on the Izaak Walton League and the Bureau of Fisheries enables Scarpino to trace how those groups' perceptions evolved, but sometimes causes him to miss other perspectives. He explains, for example, how the "Ikes" and Bureau of Fisheries challenged design of the nine-foot channel project, modifying it to protect fish and wildlife in a way that would not have happened 20 years later. But he makes no attempt to explain the changes in the river valley ecosystem actually caused by construction of the 26 locks and dams impounding the Mississippi. Although his focus on perceptions of and attitudes toward the river is very useful, an environmental history needs an explanation of the ecological impact of the largest intentional human alteration of the river.

Nevertheless, Scarpino has given us a new and much needed perspective on the history of the upper Mississippi River. It will be valuable to anyone interested in environmental history, and it is essential for anyone concerned about the Mississippi River and its future. Fully footnoted and based on extensive primary research, the book is well written and easily accessible for the general reader.

Reviewed by PAUL HESTERMAN, *whose doctoral thesis dealt with the history of river-front development in St. Paul. He is currently working with the Ramsey County Historical Society, interpreting the history of St. Paul and the Mississippi.*

Historians and the American West.

Edited by Michael P. Malone.

(Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1983. 449 p. \$24.95.)

ALMOST a full century has elapsed since Frederick Jackson Turner delivered his famous "Frontier Thesis" to the American Historical Association and helped formulate a new area for scholarly investigation. Yet it has also been only 22 years since W. N. Davis, Jr., warned that the field of frontier studies was facing a crisis and would possibly perish unless researchers reversed the trend toward antiquarianism with imagina-

tive, multidisciplinary syntheses that could place the subject into a broader national or international context. The passage of time has proven Davis's judgments a bit too pessimistic because the teaching and writing of western history have not only survived, they have actually blossomed during the last decade. Precisely because the subject has been so attractive to professional historians and buffs alike, its promising future seems assured.

Historians and the American West provides eloquent testimony to the recent outpouring of new articles and books within the frontier genre. Editor Michael P. Malone, professor of history and dean of graduate studies at Montana State University, contends that the West represents not a monolith, but rather a mixture of diverse subregions whose geography and cultures dictated separate patterns of historical development. Because Malone basically defines the West within the context of Walter Prescott Webb's institutional fault line at the 98th meridian, the 17 contributors to this anthology follow his lead. Persons looking for a bibliographical examination of the Eastern Frontier will therefore have to await a future volume, but it should follow the pattern here defined.

Each of the contributors to this volume is well known for the quality of his or her research. All are, or have been teaching professors at well-known universities, and many have held offices within the prestigious Western History Association. Although the contributors followed their own instincts in establishing the coverage and organization of their particular articles, each scholar honored Malone's instructions "to describe what has been done, how well it has been done, and what needs to be done as we see it." What emerges is a gathering of critical appraisals, rather than a mere listing of sources or an annotated bibliography. Even though professional researchers are the primary target audience for this collection, the casual reader can likewise gain considerable historical information from a quick reading.

All of the articles assess their subject matter well, but several stand above the rest. Herbert T. Hoover's survey of American Indian history from prehistoric times to the Civil War delineates three types of works which dominate the field: (1) cultural studies of the internal affairs of tribes; (2) studies of federal policy; and (3) contact patterns between Indian and non-Indian groups. It is in the utilization of ethnohistorical techniques that Hoover finds the most promising future because only after the subtleties of tribal culture are understood can an accurate study of Indian motivations be written. Likewise, Frederick C. Luebke's analysis of ethnic groups goes beyond the filiopietistic praise of "great men and great accomplishments" to suggest a sophisticated methodology for determining ethnic impact on broader American themes. Equally well conceptualized is Richard Maxwell Brown's essay on the historiography of western violence, which transcends the "shoot-'em-up" romanticism of the cinema to suggest five specific areas for further cross-disciplinary investigation.

Three other authors examine subjects that were glossed over by Turner and the first two generations of his disciples. Sandra L. Myres addresses the recent outpouring of research on women in the West, and Bradford Luckingham does an equally commendable job with the impact of urbanization on western development. Even more encompassing is Rich-

ard W. Etulain's essay on the shifting interpretations of western cultural heritage. Surely this is one of the most underdeveloped aspects of the discipline since it deals with a large range of topics, including literature, music, the arts, architecture, education, and religion.

Other of the well-conceived articles include: Donald C. Cutter on the Spanish borderlands; Gordon B. Dodds on the fur trade and exploration; Dennis E. Berge on manifest destiny; Clark C. Spence on mining; W. Turrentine Jackson on transportation; Kenneth N. Owens on 19th-century politics; Robert C. Carriker on American Indians since the Civil War; Gilbert C. Fite on farmers and stockmen; William L. Lang on environmentalism; and Thomas G. Alexander on the Mormons. Lamentably, only F. Alan Coombs deals exclusively with the 20th century, and his essay is limited to political topics.

Despite its inability to survey all the possible topics associated with western history, *Historians and the American West* makes not one, but 17 important contributions to a lively field of scholarly endeavor.

Reviewed by MICHAEL L. TATE, *professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, who recently published The Indians of Texas: An Annotated Research Bibliography as volume nine in the Native American Bibliography Series.*

Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture.

Edited by Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach.

(Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1986. xxiv, 529 p. Cloth, \$50.00; paper, \$24.95.)

THIS is the kind of book that causes traffic accidents. The articles chosen are so informative, provocative, and enriching that you will find yourself looking afresh at every building, piece of furniture, or landscape—be it urban, suburban, semirural, rural, or any combination you wish to invent. This is also the kind of book that prevents traffic accidents. The essays chosen (all reprints) have been culled from many disparate sources and fit together so well that trips to libraries, bookstores (except to buy this book), archives, or generous friends will decrease. *Common Places* is worth its price for the footnotes alone; references range from the grand classics of the genre to obscure but important pieces.

Like folklore, vernacular architecture is an interdisciplinary study that suffers identity problems. The editors, much to their credit, expand our conception of what the field is and how it can be analyzed and interpreted. Creative scholarship demands co-operation and sharing from all disciplines; this book, which includes architects, art historians, social historians, geographers, archaeologists, and folklorists, is exemplary. The series of articles presents opposite ends of the definitional spectrum, from the stereotypical images of log cabins to suburban bungalows and the urban commercial strips of McDonalds and Taco Bells of Anywhere, USA. Vernacular architecture, as the editors see it, is "ordinary, every-

day architecture" that includes almost anything material, from a Victorian hall chair to a house to an entire regional settlement pattern or urban landscape. While this architecture may be usual, once you read these essays no landscape should appear ordinary.

The articles are arranged to address what the editors feel are five inescapable questions concerning vernacular architecture, issues of content, construction, function, history, and design. What is vernacular architecture? How is it made? How does it work? How does it change? How is it thought? The result is a fine group of essays that really do complement one another. With few exceptions these are superb models for students to follow. The graphics, drafting, photographs, and maps in all the works are consistently excellent. The documentation is just terrific, proving the serious commitment to scholarship now required in this field.

Upton and Vlach did a great service by beginning with Fred Kniffen's "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion" (1965), the granddaddy of them all. In this classic he sorts houses and barns into types and plots them on maps. He establishes three "cultural hearths," the original points from which cultural traits disseminated: eastern New England, southeastern Pennsylvania and the Chesapeake Tidewater, and the Carolina low country. As people moved westward, new plans and houses appeared, traceable to origins and developing a regional diversity. This is the article that codifies the vocabulary of vernacular house types crucial to any serious study. It is the prerequisite for appreciating the rest.

Although most articles are historical in tone and direction, they offer some astonishingly pertinent insights into our behavior as modern Americans. Two outstanding and almost embarrassingly revealing works are Robert Blair St. George's "Set Thine House in Order: The Domestication of the Yeomanry in Seventeenth-Century New England" and Henry Glassie's "Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building." St. George interprets the 17th-century New England farmstead as a form that communicates the need to subdue and impose a strict divisive order on the land. He skillfully traces the gradual shift in attitudes as animals were kept a long way from people and as farming roles took men away from the house to the barn and confined women to the house. This was the time when rooms in houses acquired specific functions and names and when fences became more than good neighborliness. They registered an assertion of will and a control of the earth. This is the same attitude toward the land that has created the characteristic contemporary American suburban sprawl or commercial strips that some geographers, such as Edward Relph, deem the height of "placelessness."

Glassie extends this notion by viewing buildings as the product of desire and emotion. Through a systematic survey of mostly 18th- and 19th-century buildings, he accounts for the gradual evolution of house forms and farm layouts by delving into the minds of the builders. In doing so he explains the modern American landscape: "Then as now, the ash-tough American on the move felt that the physical environment was something to devastate. . . . Dispersion—separate buildings, separate holdings—is the major material manifestation of cultural response to the New World environment, and it has been from the beginning of European settlement."

Several articles should be of special interest to Minnesotans. Kenneth L. Ames's work "Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America" exhibits the all-too-rare quality of scholarly creative thinking. For example, he shows us how the ornate Victorian hallstand tells more about the Victorians' reverence for the umbrella than about hallstands themselves. Ames's article is followed by Lizabeth A. Cohen's "Embellishing a Life of Labor: An Interpretation of the Material Culture of American Working-Class Homes, 1885-1915." The two articles belong together, since they concern the same time period but different classes. Cohen proves, contrary to popular opinion, just how unsuccessful the middle class can be in imposing its values on a class that proudly rejects them. The working class accepted the world on its own terms, as witness the choices of furniture and house styles. When you see any Victorian house, after reading these articles, you may think more deeply about how that interior affected the lives of its owners and, even more significantly, their servants. Those interested in learning about how Minnesota farmhouse styles came about on the landscape will be glad to read Fred W. Peterson's "Vernacular Building and Victorian Architecture: Midwestern American Farm Homes."

The only disappointing article was Stewart G. McHenry's "Eighteenth-Century Field Patterns as Vernacular Art," a title with much potential. Although viewing field patterns as vernacular art is not a particularly new notion, it is worthy of being included in this collection. But to assert that "it is possible to say that the rural agricultural landscape can be viewed as a unique vernacular art form. Field patterns have been shown to have shape, texture, form, pattern design and color constituting a landscape mosaic that is not only man-made but may be identified with the different groups who settled in the Green Mountain State," is not especially original, creative, or insightful.

Common Places presents the rather slanted view that most vernacular landscapes are east of the Mississippi and have western European antecedents. It includes no mention of American Indian architecture such as Zuni or Navajo pueblos, or migratory structures such as the Dakota tepees. Vlach, however, does make an outstanding case for Afro-American origins of the shotgun house type so prevalent throughout the South, especially New Orleans. But this view of American vernacular architecture is symptomatic of the study of vernacular architecture in general. In this relatively young discipline, the historic-geographic method and preoccupation with origins, antecedents, and diffusion is still very influential. *Common Places* needs a sequel; there is simply too much material to cover in one volume.

The most conspicuous thing about this collection is its obsession with history; reference to a living person is desperately rare. I would have liked to have read at least one quote from someone living in one of these structures *today*. This is not so much a complaint as a request for more. These articles have traced the origins and figured out the hows, whats, and whys. Some have even ventured inside the minds of the builders. Now these structures deserve to be "peopled."

Reviewed by JAMES C. MOSS, whose doctoral thesis and other publications explore the interrelation of a sense of place (including vernacular architecture) and narrative.

The Canadian Prairies: A History.

By Gerald Friesen.

(Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984; published in the United States by the University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln. 524 p. \$24.95.)

THIS VOLUME is the first major history of western Canada since A. S. Morton's landmark work, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, in 1939. Both the tone and scale of Professor Friesen's work are vastly different from Morton's, but the scholarly significance is likely to be as great.

The Canadian Prairies is a work of synthesis that discusses the prairies from prehistoric times to the 1980s. Its approach has some similarities to Morton's: a concern for the geographical setting, an interest in linking the historic record of the region to larger themes in Euro-American history, and a refusal to develop a single thesis to explain all of the region's past. Mostly, however, the reader notices new perspectives. The focus of the narrative has shifted away from European traders and explorers to a recognition of the richness of native traditions and culture and to the interplay of the native and European in commercial pursuits. The broad social, intellectual, economic, and political context in which Friesen sets his history represents a real advance in understanding the vast changes that have taken place. His approach not only restores Indians and métis to center stage, it also considers the west in terms of itself rather than merely as an extension of eastern Canada.

This shift in focus has been made possible by the research of the last 20 years. To follow Friesen's footnotes is to be brought up to date on most aspects of prairie history. Recent studies of the fur trade, the social divisions of Red River society, attitudes toward class, and ethnic studies permit Friesen to recast prairie history in new proportions. Many of the standard events—school controversies, the Winnipeg General Strike, and the depression era—appear in the broader perspectives of labor and capital, immigration, and urban development. The author's treatment of natives is only the most striking of these recastings.

Readers of *Minnesota History* are likely to be interested in Friesen's appreciation of pre- and postcontact native society. Something of the tone is suggested by his comparison of native cultures with preindustrial French peasant society, and by his remark that "The hunting and gathering societies of the western interior achieved economic, political, and religious arrangements as satisfactory and as conducive to human happiness, for most members of the community, as those of any other society." Moreover, the native chiefs who negotiated land treaties with Canadian government officials appear to have been wise and intelligent leaders who were reluctantly driven to make hard choices in the face of harsh reality. Certainly, Chiefs Poundmaker and Big Bear appear in something of a heroic light. Poundmaker ordered his soldiers to withdraw rather than take full advantage of his position to annihilate Canadian troops at Cutknife Hill in 1885. All this is a long way from earlier historical writing.

Similarly, the chapters on the métis, the fur trade, and the Red River deserve attention. Friesen places greater emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of the trade than on its commercial impact. "Sexual liaisons, marriages, and children

were . . . a fundamental aspect of fur trade history." The métis community that resulted from these contacts might have found advancement after 1821 through the trade had not the Hudson's Bay Company maintained an unrelenting discrimination against them. Social cleavages in the Red River Settlement were also heightened by changing European attitudes toward race and class.

No single volume can do justice to every significant topic. One of the disappointments—perhaps caused by the trends of current scholarship—is the lack of attention to the interplay between the American West and the prairie region of Canada. Occasionally a whisky trader, an army troop, or even a rival railway passes by on the horizon. Apart from these, Friesen largely overlooks the commercial and population links between neighbors. This, however, is a small matter compared with his over-all achievement. *The Canadian Prairies* is at once an absorbing and evocative account of a fascinating region and its people, and an indispensable work of reference.

Reviewed by CHARLES QUINN, a free-lance writer and historian with a long-standing interest in western Canada.

A Guide to the Records of Minnesota's Public Lands.

By Gregory Kinney and Lydia Lucas.

(St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society, 1985. 121 p. \$8.00.)

THIS GUIDE is one product of several years' effort to process, inventory, and describe historical land records at the Minnesota Historical Society. In addition to the processing of over 800 cubic feet of paper records, the society also microfilmed many of the most vital and most used. This effort was part of a larger project on public lands funded by the Legislative Commission of Minnesota Resources in the early 1980s. All of the material described in the guide—either the original material or microfilm—is available for use in the society's archives and manuscripts reading room.

The introduction to the guide is a short history of state land management since 1857. It also discusses various federal agencies involved and the processes which transferred land from the federal government to the state and then to private ownership. The guide itself provides a very good summary of the various categories of state land and talks about the inter-related function of numerous state land offices.

The first major section deals with the records of state agencies that have been involved with public land since shortly after statehood. The available records include those from the State Land Office, the State Auditor, the departments of conservation and natural resources, the Governor's office, the Secretary of State, and over 20 other agencies, boards, and commissions.

The two major federal agencies responsible for surveying the land and transferring it from the federal government to other owners are discussed next. Among the nearly 20 types of records from the United States Surveyor General's office, housed at the historical society, are microfiche copies of the official township survey plats. These plats, which were done

between 1847 and 1976, are the backbone of all land records in the state. The recorded legal descriptions of all land in Minnesota is based on these original surveys. The following 56 pages deal with the General Land Office and its various district offices which processed the transfer of federal land to individuals, companies, and the state. A short history of various district offices, a series of maps showing their geographic coverage at different times, and the materials from each office are included.

The final three sections of the book contain information from the Northern Pacific Railway's Land Department activ-

ities in Minnesota, a list of federal and state legislation regarding Minnesota land, and a bibliography. This publication is more than a guide to historical, yet vital, records. The brief histories of the processes and agencies involved make for very interesting reading, and the guide is recommended to anyone wanting to learn more about these written records. It is also useful for those who want to research one of the state's greatest resources—its public lands.

Reviewed by DONALD P. YAEGER, a planner/analyst for the Minnesota State Planning Agency.

NEWS & NOTES

THE SOLON J. BUCK Award of \$500 for the best article to appear in *Minnesota History* during 1985 goes to Margaret Walsh for her work entitled "Tracing the Hound: The Minnesota Roots of the Greyhound Bus Corporation," which appeared in the Winter issue.

Patricia L. Dooley receives the Theodore C. Blegen Award of \$400 for the best contribution by an MHS staff member for her article, "Gopher Ordinance Works: Condemnation, Construction, and Community Response," which appeared in the Summer number.

The awards judges for this year were Wilbert H. Ahern, professor of history at the University of Minnesota-Morris; Joan R. Gundersen, professor of history at St. Olaf College in Northfield; and Mary D. Cannon, editor of this magazine.

ERNEST OBERHOLTZER's "lost journal found in an attic at Rainy Lake" in 1983 provides the material on which R. H. Cockburn's article, "Voyage to Nutheltn" is based. Appearing in *The Beaver* (January-February, 1986), the story tells of "one of the most commendable canoe voyages in history," one that "has gone all but unrecorded to the present day." Cockburn skillfully weaves Oberholtzer's journal of the six-month trip in 1912 into a compelling adventure that took Ober and his friend and guide, Billy Magee, from The Pas in Manitoba north to Reindeer Lake and into the Northwest Territories to Nueltn Lake and Hudson Bay. J. B. Tyrrell, whose 1894 route Oberholtzer and

Magee had followed in part, congratulated the two "on having made a good adventurous journey which will add materially to our knowledge of that portion of Northern Canada." More than half a century later Oberholtzer flew in to the Manitoba-Northwest Territories boundary; "With my own map," he wrote, "... we had not the slightest difficulty finding our way."

LAVISHLY illustrated, *Pillsbury's Best: A Company History from 1869* by William J. Powell (Minneapolis, The Pillsbury Co., 1985, 252 p., \$19.95) ranks with the best of Minnesota's corporation-commissioned histories. The author was Pillsbury's chief legal officer and later a member of its board of directors. He relies heavily on the research of business historian Doniver C. Lund from Gustavus Adolphus College.

The book spans 1869-1984. The pioneering flour-milling venture of the original Pillsbury partners—Charles A., John S., George A., and Fred C.—is shown as part of the rise of the industry in Minneapolis. For the succeeding era, 1889-1911, the focus is on the firm's convoluted internal affairs during its period of English ownership. Here is a fascinating and candid revelation of the company's shocking financial scandal of 1908. Involving wheat speculation and a secret million-dollar debt, it forced Pillsbury into receivership and almost killed it altogether. The remainder of the volume traces 20th-century expansion and diversity of the reorganized company: more mills, plants, and subsidiary enterprises in distant

cities; new products and marketing strategies; and administrative changes. Appendixes, notes, and a detailed index make this volume particularly useful.

Robert M. Frame III

THE James Jerome Hill Reference Library announces that it will award a number of research grants of up to \$2,000 for scholarly research in the James J. Hill Papers. The deadline for applications is December 1, 1986, and the grants may be awarded for any time in calendar year 1987. For information or applications, write W. Thomas White, Curator, James J. Hill Reference Library, 4th and Market Streets, St. Paul, Minn. 55102.

"MATERIAL culture research is both an old and a new scholarly enterprise in the United States," begins the first essay in *Material Culture: A Research Guide*, edited by Thomas J. Schlereth (University Press of Kansas, 1985, 224 p., cloth, \$25.00, paper, \$9.95). The book's chief concern is to assess the major material culture scholarship of the past two decades as well as various new directions of work-in-progress. Rather than attempting to be exhaustive, this helpful collection focuses on the scope and usefulness of material culture research in the disciplines of cultural geography, vernacular architecture, the history of technology, the decorative arts, and folklife studies. All six authors concern themselves with questions of improved methodology as well as theories. The book concludes with a "deliberately brief and general" bibliographic guide to general research resources.

STEAMBOAT aficionados will want to note two recently published articles on that form of transportation. William E. Lass's account of "Steamboats on the Yellowstone," which appeared in the Autumn, 1985, issue of *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, describes navigation on that river from the 1870s to about 1910, a "last, brief flurry of commercial boating on the lower Yellowstone. . . . Although . . . it was vital at a time when soldiers and pioneers were opening the way for the occupation of the valley."

The Spring, 1985, issue of *Steamboat Bill*, the quarterly of the Steamship Historical Society of America, has an article by John Townsend Gibbons on "The Landlocked Steamboats of Lake Minnetonka" that traces "a surprisingly vast collection of craft" on that lake from 1860 to about 1926. The author points out that "at its zenith more than 90 steamboats plowed the bays of Lake Minnetonka." The article is illustrated with some excellent photographs.

"WHEN people think of folklore or tradition, they think of places other than their own and of people other than themselves," write Yvonne R. Lockwood, C. Kurt Dewhurst, and Marsha MacDowell, editors of *Michigan: Whose Story? A Celebration of the State's Traditions*. This catalog, produced in conjunction with a festival held in 1985, proves that each region, group, and occupation, for example, in the state has a rich heritage of its own. The 28-page book contains 46 photographs documenting traditions as diverse as baking pasties, calling ducks, singing gospel, and painting graffiti. Useful appendixes include a list of folklife resources in Michigan and a select bibliography of pertinent books, articles, and records. *Michigan: Whose Story?* can be ordered from Michigan State University Museum, Folk Arts Division, East Lansing 48824. Checks for \$2.00 plus \$1.50 postage and handling should be made out to Michigan State University.

INDIANS in Minnesota (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1985, 326 p., cloth, \$25.00, paper, \$12.95), is the fourth edition of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota's book, first published in 1962. Compiled by Elizabeth Ebbott and edited by Judith Rosenblatt, it is a useful compendium of information on Minnesota's Dakota and Ojibway Indian population.

Based on statistics from the 1980 census and information compiled by League members around the state, the book deals with such topics as governmental policies; federal, state, and local relations with tribal governments; urban Indians; economic development; education; housing; welfare; chemical dependency; and the criminal justice system. In most cases the book puts current problems and situations within the context of past events, laws, and treaties and as such makes a handy reference guide. The book also contains a 16-page section of mostly recent photos of Minnesota Indians in various activities.

NINE booklets, each containing a preface by D. Jerome Tweton, a brief bibliographical essay, and illustrations, make up the North Dakota Mini-Biography series. Published in 1986 by that state's historical society, the series provides studies of "plain people" from the state's past. Its goal is to present "useful and verifiable studies of people who made an impact upon North Dakota." Not only do the individual booklets accomplish this goal but, taken together, they provide an impressive range of experiences and stories: missionaries, schoolteachers, politicians and political activists, and immigrants are included. The series can be purchased for \$9.00 (plus \$1.00 for postage) or \$1.50 per booklet (plus \$1.00 postage per order) from the Education and Interpretation Division, State Historical Society of North Dakota, North Dakota Heritage Center, Bismarck 58505. A list of the individual titles follows.

Johanna Knudsen Miller: Pioneer Teacher, by Vito Perrone; *The Gentleman from North Dakota: Lynn J. Frazier*, by Nels Erickson; *Goodbye to Elbowoods: The Story of Harold and Eva Case*, by Cristyann Ranck Maxfield; *Daphna Nygaard: A Woman in Politics*, by Lois Forrest; *Neil C. Macdonald: Schoolman*, by Janice Lookhart Ginger; *The Reformer: George B. Winship*, by Jack Hagerty; *The Americanization of Christina Hillius: German-Russian Immigrant to North Dakota*, by Gordon L. Iseminger; *Joseph Harris Heckman: Father of Tax-supported Public Libraries in North Dakota*, by Helen L. Porth; and *T. H. H. Thoresen: States Attorney, Tax Commissioner, and Lieutenant Governor*, by Cynthia T. Selland and Chandice Johnson.

A CALL for papers has been issued by the Oral History Association for its 21st annual meeting to be held in St. Paul, October 15-18, 1987. Any subject relating to oral history is welcome, but topics concerning the Upper Midwest are especially sought. Prospective participants should send a vita, a two-page typed prospectus, and relevant bibliographical information to Lila Johnson Goff, Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar St., St. Paul, Minn. 55101, by December 31, 1986.

"BE a forest ranger. Hunt, fish and trap. Cabin furnished. Vacation with pay," began the ad in a "slick" magazine that first attracted Don Wilson's attention to the forest service. His charming book, also entitled *Be A Forest Ranger*, chronicles the first ten years (1927-36) of his almost 45-year career in forestry in Minnesota.

Fire prevention, as well as fire quenching, was a major part of Wilson's work in those early years. Readers learn of life in lookout towers and of "slash inspections," for which the author walked a hundred miles in the woods in the course of a week, inspecting private lumbering operations and instructing the owners on approved ways to reduce the hazard of fires from the remaining debris. The author also recounts stories of fighting fires, sometimes when no water was available and his instructions were to use "number two shovels . . . and don't let it get any bigger!"

Be a Forest Ranger (1986, 211 p.) is a very readable and entertaining, as well as factual, account of forestry in a bygone era. It also presents a wealth of information about people and places in northern Minnesota. It may be purchased from the author at Route 3, Box 1215, North Branch, Minn. 55056 for \$7.95.

JOHN DOMINIK, author of *Minnesota History* articles on Sam Pandolfo's attempt to build an automobile-manufacturing empire, writes about another Stearns County industry in two recent issues of *Crossings*, the newsletter of the county historical society. Based on research by Bob Lommel, "Flour Mills on the Prairie" (December, 1985) tells the stories of businesses in Cold Spring, Paynesville, Rockville, Brooten, Belgrade, Holdingford, St. Augusta, Melrose, and Freeport, while "Flour Mills in the Village," (February/March, 1986) focuses on enterprises in St. Cloud.



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