

The History of Wisconsin. Volume II, *The Civil War Era, 1848-1873.* By Richard N. Current. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976. Pp. xiv, 659. Notes, maps, illustrations, essay on sources, index. \$20.00.)

This, the second volume in the projected six volume *History of Wisconsin*, covers the first generation of statehood. Richard N. Current presents a balanced treatment of demographic, economic, social, and political developments too lengthy and detailed to be covered adequately in a brief review. Footnotes and an essay on sources give evidence of the extensive research in primary and secondary materials. Numerous excellent maps and pictures, including old photographs, illuminate and enliven the text.

Wisconsin was admitted to the Union thirty-two years after Indiana. Both states, however, were carved out of the Old Northwest, and there are parallels and similarities in developments in the two states in the era of the Civil War. For example, development of transportation was vital to both. Both experienced a plank road craze and a more lasting obsession with chartering and building railroads. In both states a network of short lines was consolidated into a few main systems by the 1870s. Though railroads brought economic benefits, they were viewed with suspicion and hostility by farmers in the two areas, but railroad lobbies were sufficiently powerful to block regulatory legislation. In both states the Democratic party was dominant at the beginning of the 1850s. By 1860 party realignments had occurred which led to the ascendancy of the new Republican party.

There were also, however, significant differences between Wisconsin and Indiana. Most striking perhaps were differences in the composition of the population. In Wisconsin one third of the population in 1860 had been born in foreign countries, and one half consisted of foreigners and their children. Germans were most numerous, constituting a larger percentage of the population than in any other state, but many other nationalities were represented. Of Wisconsin residents born in the United States, the largest number came from states of the Northeast.

Ethnicity was reflected in the diversity of religious groups and in social patterns and was an important force in

shaping politics. Catholics constituted the largest denomination. Ethnic attitudes were reflected on such issues as temperance, abolition, emancipation, and conscription. During the Civil War many of the foreign born were segregated in companies and even regiments of a single nationality. Current believes that the war increased ethnic tensions and a sense of ethnic identity. Indiana, in contrast, was less affected by European immigration in this period than any northern state.

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Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City. By Kathleen Neils Conzen. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976. Pp. 300. Figures, tables, appendix [note on sources and methods], notes, index. \$16.50.)

During the past decade an impressive historical literature has appeared that focuses on the social, economic, and political characteristics of immigrant groups in America and on their relationships to the rest of society. Kathleen Neils Conzen's *Immigrant Milwaukee* is one of the best of these studies. Treating the first quarter century of Milwaukee's history, Conzen concentrates on the Germans, who by 1860 accounted for slightly more than half of the households in the city. Irish and British immigrants were much less numerous and are often analyzed in this account only as contrasted to the Germans.

Conzen presents extensive data to define the place of immigrants in the frontier city. Residential patterns, mobility rates, occupational distributions, family size, the status of women, literacy, and school attendance are among the variables examined, and all are related to ethnicity. She shows that while native born persons ranked disproportionately high on the economic ladder, the Irish were low, the British clustered at the middle, and the Germans were to be found at all levels. Thus, only the numerous Germans had the range and heterogeneity necessary for the development of a genuinely ethnic community with a full complement of supportive functions independent of the host society. By contrast, the more homogeneous Irish, smaller in number, were limited by their lack of wealth, education, and skills in