

stages from teachers college to part of a pluralistic state university system. Such schools have often been criticized by educational purists but praised by others as "peoples' colleges" supplying local and inexpensive training to a near cross section of the nation's youth. Whether a different type of institution could have better performed this service is irrelevant to the historical process. The American social revolution was still alive in the field of educational opportunities.

The authors have produced a carefully researched, well written history with an attractive format. Much labor, love, and care have obviously gone into its production. The work's semiofficial nature, however, is sometimes too apparent. Academic changes that were largely products of their times are likely to be too closely attributed to a particular dean or president. The treatment of extracurricular life of women students might well have focused more on them and less on the dean of women.

Within this context, however, the book is worthy of the appreciative audience which it will have. At some future time, when the golden age of escalation of higher education can be viewed in perspective, more definitive philosophical conclusions can be attempted with respect to all current educational efforts.

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*Growing Up in Minnesota: Ten Writers Remember Their Childhoods.* Edited by Chester G. Anderson. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976. Pp. 250. Illustration, note, biographical notes. \$7.95.)

Minnesota has a mild, middle of the road reputation. Its scenery, wildlife, cities, and politics hardly arouse feverish emotions. Even the Vikings, the state's professional football team, seem quiet, well behaved fellows. And visitors to the state can stay indoors when the weather turns *really* cold.

Belying the public image of the state, the autobiographical essays contained in *Growing Up in Minnesota* are intense, sharply etched, and extremely varied reports of life in the Gopher State. Correspondent Harrison Salisbury, poets Robert Bly and Gerald Vizenor, writers Meridel Le Sueur and Shirley Schoonover, Kierkegaard scholar Howard Hong, and

the other contributors emphasize the particularity of their youths.

For example, the young black writer Toyse Kyle, brought up in poverty in Minneapolis, brings her account around to the night her mother tried to kill the two of them by pulling her off a Minneapolis bridge into the Mississippi. Vizenor, an American Indian, quotes the police officials who explained why they had never found the killer who slashed his father to death in 1936: "We never spent much time on winos and derelicts in those days . . . who knows, one Indian vagrant kills another" (p. 81).

Meridel Le Sueur's memories are of her parents' radical doings in the Iowa and Minnesota of sixty years ago. "They lived through many progressive movements, gave their lives to them, and never called anything defeat" (p. 37). She recalls "huge picnics where whole families and villages came in buckboards, the women setting out a rich feast and singing, 'The Farmer Is the Man that Feeds Us All,' 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic,' and sometimes 'The People's Flag Is Deepest Red, It Waves above Our Martyred Dead.' If you never heard the people singing together when you were a young person, shaking like an aspen in the thunder of history, then you can't imagine these political bacchanals in the cottonwood groves . . ." (pp. 39-40).

Robert Bly, born in Madison, Minnesota, speaks of "the Norwegian-American culture of the farms, where the social tone is a maddening cheerfulness, with no one ever admitting to being depressed or suicidal. No serious conflicts are ever found between separate areas of church doctrine, nor between capitalist practice and Christian practice. Only the oldest settlers, born in Norway, and socialists when they came, went around muttering in indignation at the latest news of corporate takeover" (p. 211).

A few themes emerge and re-emerge through the essays. The most significant is the centrality of the baffling, irreconcilable tragedies and cruelties in the history of this happy and successful state: the rape of the environment, the theft of the land from the Indians, the daily cruelties still visited on Indians and blacks. *Growing Up in Minnesota* reveals a different Minnesota—more varied, more deeply experienced, less perfected—than *Time* magazine depicted in its famous (to Minnesotans) cover story about the state some years ago.

But precisely because of their honesty, these essays are absorbing and affirmative commentaries on the history and culture of Minnesota.

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*The Prairie State: A Documentary History of Illinois, Colonial Years to 1860.* Edited by Robert P. Sutton. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976. Pp. xiv, 383. Maps, notes, illustrations, indexes. Paperbound, \$5.95.)

*The Prairie State: A Documentary History of Illinois, Civil War to the Present.* Edited by Robert P. Sutton. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976. Pp. xiv, 426. Notes, illustrations, maps, tables, indexes. Paperbound, \$5.95.)

These books are intended as companions to Robert Howard's *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State* (1972). Many selections are drawn from older publications of the Illinois State Historical Society and Library as well as other out of print materials. This new set should be especially helpful to Illinois History classes in the newly established community colleges that may not possess the older works.

Although the readings are balanced between original sources and excellent secondary materials written by competent historians, the editor offers no insight into his selection criteria. Both volumes concentrate on social history, often to the exclusion of political events and important Illinoisans such as Adlai Stevenson, whose rhetoric captivated thousands.

Editors, even when not working directly from documents, are obligated to inform readers how material has been treated. Sutton has not done this, and the careful reader will be disturbed by a number of irregularities. Punctuation and missing letters are sometimes silently corrected while in the same document other missing punctuation has not been added. (II, pp. 33-37). In the Gershom Flagg letters (I, pp. 140-44) there is no indication that the document is actually a composite of three letters. It is impossible to distinguish between originally bracketed material and that added by the editor. Transcription errors can be found through comparison with