

as they are to Woody Guthrie for his haunting ballads of social protest. But it is a mistake to link them with writers working in a different idiom and a greater tradition.

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The Old Northwest in the American Revolution: An Anthology.

Edited with introductions by David Curtis Skaggs. (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977. Pp. vii, 497. Maps, bibliography. \$21.50.)

This volume of twenty-one reprinted essays, scholarly apparatus removed, includes many of the important contributions to the history of the area "north and west of the River Ohio." The collection is edited by David Curtis Skaggs, whose previous writings dealt mostly with the history of colonial Maryland. Skaggs' laudable interest in the region, stimulated by service on Ohio's Bicentennial Commission, led him to conclude that few interested citizens knew much about the Revolutionary West. He wished to inform them and also to show scholars gaps in the secondary literature.

Having attended and taught at schools much devoted to teacher training, Skaggs probably has heard the dictum: "take the students from where they are." In this case, it may be feared that most citizens are far from able to understand the articles in Skaggs' anthology. In effect, he has assigned a "readings" book without a text. To compensate one might first read Beverly W. Bond's *The Foundations of Ohio* (garbled in Skaggs' extensive bibliography with another Bond book). Even with some background much of the writing in *The Old Northwest in the American Revolution* is hard to follow, in some cases because of the complex themes, in other instances because the essays contain minutia or irrelevancies. Neophytes looking for clear exposition will find much strained argument instead. Staughton Lynd's essay, which tends to the "I think, therefore it is" position, may disillusion the beginner regarding one's ability to recover the essential past, especially when compared with Jack Eblen's largely opposing views on the same topic. Longer, more carefully structured introductions and more closely pruned texts could mitigate problems in this publically supported work: but is that possible when the editor refers to "accurate" dialogue that is "not historically verifiable," or declares that Pontiac's war ended in 1765 instead of 1766, or implies the land to be "woodlands," ignoring extensive prairies and swamps? An index would have been helpful too.

This reviewer confesses an inability to make a content summary in allotted space. The book contains loosely connected pieces valuable to both professional and lay audiences, showing American alienation from the later British colonial practices, inconclusive western fighting, and the shifting postwar settlement to 1787. How the West influenced its destiny is debated still. This anthology does show that the grand systematizing writers of the quantitative, ethnic, feminist, or psychohistorical persuasions have not taken over Old Northwest history. Remarks about lack of pertinent secondary literature are puzzling given the extensive bibliography. The original articles show that some primary matter is yet unused.

In sum, experience teaching undergraduates and putting regional books into lay hands raises doubts that many will read through this challenging compilation uncoerced. Confronted by the specialized and diffuse, most will continue opting for fiction, television, or drink, all for under \$21.50. If so, American and regional history—pronounced of declining influence in a falsely pragmatic and determinedly sensate society with weakening local bands, but continuing to ignore the need for clear public statements of their purpose and substance—will lose another skirmish.

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Finding the Grain: Pioneer Journals, Franconian Folktales, Ancestral Poems. By Norbert Krapf. (Jasper, Ind.: Dubois County Historical Society and Herald Printing, Inc., 1977. Pp. 120. Illustrations, maps. Paperbound, \$4.00.)

Here is a random collection of material that for the most part has merit, but in this particular arrangement does not quite work together. Norbert Krapf's title is clever and well chosen, but the three distinct and only vaguely related sections of the book do not form the strong whole that the title suggests.

Part I, containing pioneer journals, is a valuable collection of the writings of John L. Betz, August Betz, and Herman Philipp Gerdemann, plus a letter from Christian Dupps to his wife. All these people were part of the hardy German transplantation in Dubois County, Indiana, during the middle years of the nineteenth century. Some of the journal entries were made in the old country and give explicit dates of important family events. This material will be invaluable to genealogists. Gerdemann's journal is particularly interesting for its accounts of his ocean voyage and his trek across the American continent to Cincinnati.