frontier family as an environmental unit, are perhaps the most illuminating portion of the book and serve as a valuable palliative to earlier scholarship in this field.

A few weaknesses detract from the high overall quality of this study. Hardeman seems overly prone to associate members of the family with the more famous and glamorous figures of their times. He sometimes burdens the reader with trivia, and in a few instances he adopts a dramatic writing style that seems unwarranted. These problems, however, are annoyances rather than significant flaws.

In general, this is a fascinating study which might well inspire other frontier historians to adopt a similar approach. The prosographical technique has been of value to historians of other fields. Studying a family over several generations can not only provide fresh insights but may also be a means for attracting a wider readership. Hardeman's book achieves both goals admirably.

_Purdue University, West Lafayette_  
Donald L. Parman


This small volume continues Robert M. Ireland's investigation of the counties of Kentucky through the period of the commonwealth's third constitution. During this period county government became elective for the first time, and the functions exercised by the traditional cooptative county courts were partially assumed by an elected county judge. But the counties remained the unit of government closest to the daily affairs of most Kentuckians. County officials successfully resisted most efforts by state or federal authorities to trim their autonomy, and they bore responsibility, Ireland argues, for much of the darker side of Kentucky's public life: localism, lawlessness, and the financial debility and mismanagement of most public services.

Ireland's method of analysis is impressionistic, proceeding from a review of the multiplication of counties and their constitutional status through discussions of county officials, election practices, the Civil War, law enforcement (or nonenforcement), court day as a social and economic institution, transportation policy, and finances. He makes no attempt to analyze voting behavior, the social characteristics of office holders, or
other quantifiable topics favored by the "new local history"; nor, except for concentrating on the Bluegrass in his discussion of court-day practices, does he analyze regional variations in the character and activities of county government. The most serious defect of the book is that it has no map.

It is clear from Ireland's discussion that the period under study was one of transition for Kentucky's counties and that neither popular sovereignty nor the Civil War nor the coming of the railroads shook up these little kingdoms to the degree one would have thought possible. It is also clear, however, that as the nineteenth century drew to a close, county governments were on the threshold of momentous changes. It is to be hoped that Ireland will pursue his research and report on those changes in a third volume.

West Virginia University, John Alexander Williams
Morgantown


On a sunny January morning in 1900 a rifle shot cracked across Kentucky's old capitol grounds, and Governor William Goebel slumped dying to the pavement. His assassination culminated thirty-five years of political discord, most of which is ably presented in this well-written and aptly named book. Indeed, the old capitol building now houses the state historical society, and the authors of this volume work there—Hambleton Tapp as state historian and James C. Klotter as editor of the society's Register.

Kentucky's history during the post-Civil War decades has a fictional quality about it that makes one wonder why it took so long to develop fully such interesting material. The authors, however, identify these decades as an "historical void," and their purpose in writing this volume is to present the "first full treatment of the 1865-1900 period" (p. xiii). In their book, the second of a four-volume series, they have achieved their purpose.

What is to be thought of a state which remained in the Union yet "joined" the Confederacy after the war was over, thus missing the fruits of victory; the mountaineers of which fought such savage feuds that a civil war nearly resulted with neighboring West Virginia; that watched legislature after legis-