

ganized way. All in all, this massive work is a sweeping, panoramic view of two of the most engrossing decades in our history.

Indianapolis, Ind.

Lester M. Ponder

A History of Missouri: Volume V, 1919–1953. By Richard S. Kirkendall. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986. Pp. viii, 438. Essay on sources, index. \$28.00.)

Few state histories venture far beyond the turn of the twentieth century. Historians, whether dilettantes or professionally trained, far too often focus on the frontier period or emphasize early territorial, economic, and political developments. This pattern is particularly true for the state histories in the trans-Mississippi West. Indeed, while the twentieth century is nearly over, few historians have written book-length studies about their respective states for this period. In Missouri, however, the story is different. Two major studies that deal with the twentieth century have appeared within the past year. The first, David A. Thelen's *Paths of Resistance: Tradition and Dignity in Industrializing Missouri*, analyzes the state during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The second is Richard A. Kirkendall's volume in the Missouri sesquicentennial series. It covers much of the midtwentieth century. Both prove that state history, broadly written and interpreted, is a legitimate area for scholarly research. Moreover, it also is a field of study that has a large audience of general readers.

Richard S. Kirkendall, Henry A. Wallace Professor of History at Iowa State University, has written a wide-ranging book on the history of Missouri from the end of World War I through the Truman administration. Kirkendall stresses the significance of economic change in shaping the history of the state. In many respects, he sees Missouri as a have-not state because poor lands in the Ozark Plateau, insufficient natural resources, and inadequate technological adjustment have kept it relatively poor. Economics, however, is not Kirkendall's only focus. He traces the major political issues that have influenced Missouri's course through much of the twentieth century, and he evaluates social change in the "Show-Me" state. Kirkendall uses the life of native son Harry Truman as a focal point around which to craft his narrative, always relating the events in Missouri to those of the nation as a whole. The result is a detailed state history that is integrated into a broader, national history.

Kirkendall's study is heavily statistical, and it is not light reading. He is most interpretative and the narrative most engaging from the period of the Great Depression to midcentury. Overall, however, Kirkendall has provided a solidly researched and thoroughly written history of Missouri from 1919 to 1953. It will provide an excellent reference for the study of the economic and

political affairs that affected Missouri during more than three decades of rapid change. Kirkendall's study should be a part of every library with a collection on the history of the trans-Mississippi West.

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