tion accepts that point of view, yet does not do so uncritically. The book focuses attention on comparative history; editor James H. Madison has encouraged the authors, all of whom live in the “heartland,” to define differences as well as similarities among the twelve states that are generally regarded as the “Midwest.” Even as the book recognizes diversity, however, a problem lurks within its pages: should states that differ from one another in so many important ways be regarded as parts of one region?

Diversity or complexity is the theme that appears most frequently in the book. Lawrence O. Christensen, for example, emphasizes Missouri’s complexity and suggests that this makes it “the most American of the midwestern states” (p. 105). Cullom Davis argues that Illinois is the most diverse of the heartland states and thus “the most representative among all fifty states of the national whole” (p. 129).

Diversity or complexity appears throughout the book as a feature of the entire region as well as a fact of varying importance in each of the individual states. Note the contrast between the politics of Minnesota as described by Annette Atkins and the politics of Ohio as interpreted by R. Douglas Hurt. Compare John D. Buenker’s interpretation of Wisconsin as “Model” and Martha Mitchell Bigelow’s view of Michigan as “A State in the Vanguard” with David B. Danbom’s and Herbert T. Hoover’s provocative conception of North and South Dakota as backward. Consider Dorothy Schwieder’s portrayal of Iowa as “The Middle Land” in a region that varies from east to west in degrees of industrialization and urbanization.

The disagreements among the authors, such as that between Christensen and Davis, reflect the difficulty of doing comparative history, especially when the focus is on a concept as hard to measure as complexity. Frederick C. Luebke, whose essay on Nebraska makes many comparisons, seems especially alive to the difficulties in the approach and defines a way of employing it.

Although the book raises fresh doubts about the existence of a reality that should be labeled Midwest, the skills of the editor and the authors strengthen one’s conviction as to the value of comparative history.

RICHARD S. KIRKENDALL, now the Bullitt Professor of American History at the University of Washington and a native of that state, received part of his education at one midwestern state university, Wisconsin, taught in three others, Missouri, Indiana, and Iowa, published A History of Missouri... 1919-1953 (1986), has written frequently of one midwesterner, Harry S Truman, and is at work on another, Henry A. Wallace.


In The State and the Non-Public School, Lloyd P. Jorgenson, professor emeritus of education at the University of Missouri-Co-
lumbia, provides an engaging and historically competent analysis of important but complex issues that deal with church-state relationships in American education. The author seriously questions the widely accepted belief that the origins of the policy of prohibiting public aid to non-public schools are constitutional. For Jorgenson, the historical origins of this prohibition occurred during the common school movement of the nineteenth century. In his well-researched and articulate narrative, the author develops his thesis that the common school movement was inextricably enmeshed with evangelical Protestantism. The movement for common schools also received support from nativist groups, such as the Know-Nothings, which manifested decided anti-Catholic attitudes.

For the hundred years from 1825 to 1925 that constitutes the time-frame for Jorgenson's analysis, he focuses on the two issues that comprised the school question: public aid to non-public schools, and religious observances in public schools. These two historically controversial issues continue to generate conflict today. The book's ten chapters provide a historical analysis of how contending religious factions defined these two issues and how the state, at the federal and state levels, attempted to resolve these issues.

Jorgenson's persuasive narrative, supported by extensive documentation from primary and secondary sources, presents a tightly reasoned argument. He contends public funds were used to aid voluntary schools in the colonial and early national periods. The common school movement, 1830–1860, was shaped and heavily influenced by the clergy of evangelical Protestant denominations. These clergymen not only were advocates of common schools but also served as state superintendents, textbook authors, and teacher educators. While the presence of Protestant clergy in key positions in the common school movement has long been part of the conventional history of American education, Jorgenson highlights their often anti-Catholic ideology. Believing that Catholicism was inimical to American republican institutions, these clergymen sought to curb the growth of Catholic schools by denying them public funds. This anti-Catholic attitude was reinforced by the nativist Know-Nothing movement and the success of the American party in state elections. By 1860, spokesmen for the dominant Protestant culture had defined the school question to mean that no public aid should be provided to non-public schools and that Bible-reading should be observed in the public schools which as institutions were to exemplify the milieu and moral values of Protestantism.

With their numbers increased by immigrants, Roman Catholics resisted the Protestant resolution of the school question. Catholics, led by many of their bishops, pressed for public funds for parochial schools and protested against Protestant religious observances in public schools.
Jorgenson then describes the hardening of the Protestant and Catholic positions on the school question that generated political conflicts and legal controversies in New York in 1842, Philadelphia in 1844, and Cincinnati in 1869. This description is followed by an analysis of Protestant and nativist efforts to enact compulsory attendance laws in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Illinois that were designed to compel attendance in public schools. The concluding chapter examines attempts in Oregon, overturned by the Supreme Court in the Pierce Case in 1925, to require all children to attend public schools.

On historical grounds, Jorgenson also questions the "incorporation theory," by which the Supreme Court determined that the Fourteenth Amendment made the provisions of the First Amendment binding on the states. The "incorporation theory" was the basis of the Court's decision in the Schempp Case (1963) that struck down state laws permitting or requiring Bible-reading and prayer in public schools.

For Jorgenson, the consequences of the history of the state and the non-public schools are that these schools are not only not funded but are virtually ignored by the state. Furthermore, the public schools are devoid of religious observances even for those who desire them. These historically derived consequences are exceptions to policies in other western countries that support and supervise voluntary schools and permit religious observances in state schools.

Jorgenson's book is highly recommended not only for historians of education but for students of educational policy as well. However, the title is somewhat misleading in that the book examines only non-public religious schools rather than private schools in general. With the exception of his commentary on Lester F. Ward's rationale for public education, Jorgenson's preoccupation with religious issues excludes consideration of the social and economic forces that are also pertinent to the history of the common school. The book contains a valuable bibliographical essay.

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Sophisticated nineteenth-century Afro-American alliances, both the prominent and the unsung, led the fight for black freedom and equality. This is a thesis for which ongoing argument remains necessary. R. J. M. Blackett's important previous study analyzed those