

Gill's argument is fascinating. Whether or not Mother Earth has ancient or recent origins is problematic, and Gill's book is more the opening shot rather than the concluding volley in the battle to decide her fate. Some scholars will argue that Gill, who stresses the great diversity in Native American religions rather than any similarities, cannot see the forest for the trees. Others will attack his limited research base, suggesting the need for more detailed analysis of additional Indian religions. Still others will applaud his exposure of the slipshod work done on the subject by established scholars and praise his meticulous unraveling of the Mother Earth story.

This brief but provocative volume should spark a lively debate. While it may not disprove Mother Earth's existence as an ancient and universal goddess, it nevertheless shows that she has not yet been proven to exist.

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*America's Northern Heartland.* By John R. Borchert. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. Pp. viii, 250. Illustrations, maps, figures, graphs, tables, notes, index. Clothbound, \$39.50; paperbound, \$19.50.)

"My hope is to capture the reality, the spirit, and the dynamics of the region," writes University of Minnesota Regents Professor John R. Borchert about his study of the history of development on "One-tenth of America's Land" (p. viii). The region extends from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to the Rocky Mountains, between the Canadian border and a line drawn roughly from Rapid City, South Dakota, through Storm Lake and Oelwein, Iowa, to La-crosse, Wisconsin. Economic geography is featured in the numerous maps scattered through the text. The book contains many photographs, most of which present historical or contemporary scenes in Minnesota. The major themes of *America's Northern Heartland* are "dissolving the wilderness" (p. 31) through a period of burgeoning population from 1870 to 1920 and cultural maturation through urbanization, industrialization, and economic diversity since 1920. Borchert fashions the products of some thirty-five years of research into a demonstration of how the heartland of the United States has taken shape, with Minnesota as its lynchpin, over the past one hundred twenty years.

As a study of economic geography, Borchert's book is fairly successful. Most important trends are portrayed well enough. Some, however, are missing. Tourism, for example, is not featured as it might be in the histories of the states west of Minnesota. From

appearances, the range of material included is restricted by the selection of sources. Borchert has relied mainly on books, articles, published documents, and fieldwork, and from appearances has worked very little in manuscript collections. Otherwise, his book seems wholly adequate and complete.

The heartland Borchert describes is not as great or diverse as that featured in a volume edited by James H. Madison, entitled *Heartland* (Bloomington, 1988), about the larger Middle West. Borchert's breadth of analysis is not as great as that of the authors of the twelve essays contained in Madison's volume. A reviewer might easily take issue with the perception of the geographical boundaries and with the range of subject matter contained in the text by Borchert. But this interesting study must be recommended as a substantial contribution to literature about the history and nature of Middle America. With eighty-two figures and nine tables, it doubles as a reference work on economic geography and as a historical survey of cultural growth. General readers, scholars, educators, and librarians all are advised to regard it as an important work.

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*The Organic City: Urban Definition & Community Organization, 1880-1920.* By Patricia Mooney Melvin. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987. Pp. xii, 227. Figures, tables, maps, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$25.00.)

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Progressive thinkers evolved schemes to create a cooperative commonwealth based on new forms of community organization. Patricia Mooney Melvin's *Organic City* studies one such scheme, the social unit plan. Readers may be disappointed that the book is not as broad as its title suggests, for this is essentially a case study—a good one—of the social unit plan's development and its implementation in Cincinnati. In addition, Melvin weaves into this study the biography of the social unit plan's chief advocate and prophet, Wilbur C. Phillips, using his unpublished writings and his autobiography, *Adventuring for Democracy* (1940). Phillips, a Robert Owen-like figure, attracted considerable support for his social unit plan between 1912 and 1920, and like Owen (who also believed that society would be redeemed cell by cell) Phillips is still to be found, a quarter century after the abandonment of his experiment, "constant in his belief that the social units could remake America into an organic democracy" (p. 167), seeking backers and funding for his hopelessly defunct schemes.