Volume VI of *The History of Wisconsin* is a superb and fascinating account of Wisconsin's recent past and a basic book for anyone wishing to examine the development of the Midwest during the last half century.

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This book is the second in a projected four-volume history of the Mennonite experience in America, an undertaking designed to tell the story of this significant family of religious outsiders in America and to provide a subtext of faithful testimony to Mennonite values. Theron F. Schlabach’s particular focus is the nineteenth century, a period that witnessed geographical and numerical expansion simultaneously with increasing diversity among Mennonites and Amish in America. The author traces the changing fortunes of the Mennonite tradition from 1790 when its members were concentrated in eastern Pennsylvania to the end of the following century, by which time they had spread across the Midwest, the Great Plains, and Canada. During the generations of westward expansion the members of these churches came into contact with evangelical revivalism, struggled through the Civil War, and accommodated a large influx of “new immigrants.” Each of these encounters was a shaping experience. Evangelical Protestantism, for example, challenged patterns of community life and the “way of humility” with its strident individualism and conversionist piety. The Civil War created immense tensions among these peace-loving Christians, some of whom rejected pacifism and took part in the conflict. The arrival of ten thousand or more Russian Mennonites late in the century taxed the generosity of resident groups and contributed to further schisms.

This book features Mennonite characteristics that were distinctive as well as traits the group shared with the larger culture. Schlabach’s discussion of the latter is especially useful because of the time-honored Mennonite witness of “separation from the world.” The author has packed his volume with anecdotes and biography, details that might have become bewildering had he not organized the study so clearly along thematic and chronological lines.
No doubt some within the Mennonite tradition will find in these tales of their religious ancestors confirmation of their own faith. Persons interested in the history of American religions will discover in this account striking parallels to the stories of more mainline religious groups. Those concerned with ethnic studies will find this volume a rich resource, too. Individuals focusing on the history of the Midwest, or even more particularly, on the state of Indiana, will not be disappointed either, for this study contains an extended discussion of the Indiana Mennonite community including, for example, those at Yellow Creek and Berne. Scholars who might wish for a more detached account will have to turn elsewhere: this work stands squarely within the Mennonite historiographical tradition by combining chronicle and testimony.

Stephen J. Stein, a member of the Department of Religious Studies and an adjunct member of the Department of History, Indiana University, Bloomington, is completing work on a book-length study of the Shakers in the United States.