

tered by moonwalks and lasers. . ."; and third, "As a Christian, Riley has been all but ignored. But those who carry a *Holy Bible* in the buggies of their lives will forever find a ready witness in Riley" (p. vii-viii). Those who already share Kriebel's admiration for Riley will likely endorse these conclusions, but other students of his life and work may not find sufficiently weighty evidence in Kriebel's text to reach the same conclusions.

In claiming that Riley's dialect is merely a transcription of what he heard on the streets of small-town Indiana, Kriebel, like others before him, inadvertently undercuts a primary aspect of the poet's creativity. Riley used what he heard as inspiration for a poetic language that was distinctively his own. He was no folklorist, attempting to preserve a record of life as it was actually lived. His career was spent creating an appealing persona both for himself and for the Midwest and then popularizing his creations through his books and on the stage. Kriebel's second point about the enduring truths underlying Riley's writings is true, but surely can be seen as the goal of most literary effort and not at all unique to Riley. Regarding Kriebel's third point, about the degree of Riley's religious faith, others have reached a different conclusion, most recently Elizabeth J. Van Allen in her 1999 book, *James Whitcomb Riley: A Life*.

There are some stylistic lapses in the book that bear mentioning. While the work is documented, many of the quotations used, particularly from newspapers, are not fully cited. In addition, picture credits are often not included. Despite these minor editorial defects, and whether or not one agrees with the author's final assessment of Riley, he does attempt to provide at least a glimpse of all sides of the Riley myth. Readers should look on this work as an aperitif to the fuller repast offered in Van Allen's work.

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Destination Indiana: Travels through Hoosier History. Text by Ray E. Boomhower. Photography by Darryl Jones. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 2000. Pp. 203. Illustrations. \$49.95.)

Readers of *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* have been entertained for many years by Ray Boomhower's series of columns titled "Destination Indiana." In crisp, short essays, he has taken us throughout the state to look at Indiana's historic sites and the personalities associated with them. Indiana University Press has now assembled twenty-three of these essays into a delightful coffee-table book. Boomhower limits himself to sites regularly open to the public, and several of his studies take us to places as familiar as the Corydon Capitol State Historic Site, New Harmony, and the Harrison homes in Vincennes and Indianapolis. But he is also careful to include less

familiar sites, such as the Ruthmere mansion in Elkhart and the Colonel William Jones State Historic Site in Gentryville. Most areas of Indiana are represented, with the bulk of twentieth-century buildings drawn from northern counties.

The best essay is the beautifully focused treatment of the Culbertson Mansion State Historic Site in New Albany; the most difficult is the search for meaning in the decisions made by the architects of the current State Capitol building. The text concentrates on the most important individual or family associated with each building, and the resulting capsules are as incisive, skeptical, and entertaining as their subjects. Most essays include brief recognition of the various preservation groups that have secured and maintained these properties.

Their great variety invites us to review the processes by which we have made, and in the future might make, the decisions to select sites to preserve. Boomhower's selections show a preference for dissenters and eccentrics, writers and artists, politicians and entrepreneurs. The essays remind us that personal associations, rather than historical context, have driven much of the Hoosier preservation scene. Thus they challenge us to ask if we will bring a similar set of attitudes, historical and aesthetic, to the post-World War II built environment as we approach the bicentennial of Indiana's statehood.

Readers eager to gain a sense of the buildings themselves will be delighted by the eight-to-ten color photographs from Darryl Jones that accompany each essay. Jones is the preeminent local color photographer of Indiana in this generation, and many of the features that distinguish his work are apparent here. In particular, watch his use of both natural and artificial light to evoke the particular effects of shadow, texture, and context sought by the architects and decorators of these sites. Note also his simulation of earlier processes of illustration, from studio art to postcards, as visual linkages to affirm the ties of past and present. Jones's photos and Boomhower's sprightly text make *Destination Indiana* a good introduction to Hoosier historical tourism.

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The American Midwest: Essays on Regional History. Edited by Andrew R. L. Cayton and Susan E. Gray. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. Pp. vii, 251. Map, notes, index. \$35.00.)

This recent addition to the *Midwestern History and Culture* series, published by Indiana University Press, brings together ten essays originally presented before the "Writing Regionally: Historians Talk about the Middle West" conference held at Miami University in 1998. Two related themes animate these essays: a historical