

ville or have any family interests there will find time to read this volume. More's the pity, for this is a fine presentation of the method of writing local history. If it stimulates the writing of more community histories, a well intended purpose will have been served.

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Taverns and Travelers: Inns of the Early Midwest. By Paton Yoder. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969. Pp. x, 246. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$6.95.)

Of a host of agencies and institutions which figured in the great trek to and through the American frontier, none is more picturesque than the tavern or inn. It is also among the most symbolic of frontier features, for its tenure was as transitory as the frontier which produced it. Traveler lodging places are most conspicuous on the modern landscape, but the kind of inns and taverns around which Paton Yoder has designed this very readable monograph reflect an era and way of life that can be recaptured only by diligent research.

As the author states in his preface, "The origin of this institution [the inn], its management as a business enterprise, the outworking of its sociological functions, its regulations by agencies of state and local government, and its disintegration are the topics of this book" (p. ix). The region surveyed includes the Old Northwest, the Upper South, and portions of the near trans-Mississippi West; the period covered is from the early 1800s to about 1850.

Viewing the frontier a concept, Yoder jumps freely from area to area and from period to period to illustrate his chapter themes. In one somewhat typical paragraph (p. 107) he uses representative examples from Wheeling, (West) Virginia (1806), Decatur, Alabama (ca. 1844), and Dubuque, Iowa ("in the middle 1830's"). Perhaps he is over generalizing to make his points, but certainly he does a creditable job of weaving in examples and bolstering the thesis that the frontier is indeed a phenomenon unrestricted by time or space.

In depicting the various facets of the frontier tavern or inn, the author draws most heavily from contemporary traveler accounts; his research into this valuable source is obviously prodigious. He also makes extensive use of reminiscences, legislative and court records, travel guides, newspapers, and secondary accounts. Contemporary tavern records, he concedes, yield only limited data (p. 235).

In addition to tracing the developments of an intriguing feature of American social history, the author has unearthed some topics which may be deserving of further serious study. For example, what role did taverns play in the establishment of major transportation

routes and ultimate location of towns and cities? Considering the rigors and low profit margin implicit in the enterprise, why were so many persons engaged in tavern keeping? Why—and this may be a question for the social psychologist—did early travelers “put up” at taverns when accommodations at many of them were decidedly worse than their own traveling conveyances or the open night air? Exactly who were the “wagoners” who patronized the taverns in such large numbers, and just how significant was their part in the prerailroad transportational pattern of America?

Perhaps the widest use of *Taverns and Travelers* will be as a bountiful source of colorful anecdotes. (Example: “A taverner in Tennessee in the 1830’s assured his guest that the only previous occupant using the present linen had been ‘governor Polk, and he had merely lain down on the bed without taking his clothes off,’ ” pp. 151-52.) Most certainly this book deserves a place on student reading lists at both the college and high school levels.

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Diary of Howard Stillwell Stanfield: Overland Trip from Indiana to California, 1864 via Virginia City, Montana Territory and Sea Voyage from San Francisco to New York, 1865 via Panama. Edited by Jack J. Detzler. *Indiana University Social Science Series*, Number 25. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969. Pp. viii, 232. Illustrations, maps, bibliographical notes, bibliography, appendices, notes, index. Paperbound, \$6.75.)

In the spring of 1864 young Howard Stanfield began a great adventure. An epileptic, plagued by general poor health, Stanfield was unable to join the army, and apparently in compensation, his father permitted him to go west. Stanfield set out from South Bend, Indiana, with an acquaintance and eventually joined other emigrants from his home town. This group followed the north bank of the Platte River as far as Fort Laramie, and then guided by John M. Jacobs, who had helped blaze the Bozeman Trail, followed a new road to the west of the Big Horn Mountains which was just being opened by Jim Bridger. The uneventful passage brought them to Virginia City, Montana, which Stanfield found a “dreadful dirty place.” It was a “port which I hope never to see again” (p. 73), he noted, as he departed in a makeshift stagecoach for Salt Lake City and eventually California.

Stanfield enjoyed his stay with relatives in California and even did some placer mining, but in the spring of 1865 he decided to return home via Central America. Thousands of people had made similar