

BOOK NOTES

The U.S. Army in the West, 1870-1880: Uniforms, Weapons, and Equipment. By Douglas C. McChristian. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006, xix + 315 pages, paper \$24.95.)

The post-Civil War years were an eventful time for the U.S. military. The army was attempting not only to reunify itself but also to prepare for any conventional wars that might occur between the United States and the increasingly well-armed European powers. At the same time, the Indian campaigns in the West required much time and energy from those in the service. In *The U.S. Army in the West*, Douglas C. McChristian examines the years between 1870 and 1880, a period that is known as a decade of experimentation. By examining smaller topics such as uniforms, equipment, and small arms, McChristian is able to give his readers a clear idea of what life in the army might have been like. Over two hundred photographs add wonderful images to this already detail-rich volume. *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* calls this book "a landmark study that belongs in the library of every scholar, museum curator, and collector interested in the evolution of military policy and materiel."

Moonshine Harvest. By Don Hayden. (North Charleston, S.C.: BookSurge, 2006, 186 pages, paper \$13.99.)

Although *Moonshine Harvest* is a work of fiction, readers of *Kansas History* will value this excitement-filled adventure set in post-World War II Kansas. The author, Don Hayden, was born and raised in Marion, Kansas, which serves as the basis for his fictional town of Afton; his memories of being a teenager during this historically significant time period are the foundation for this work. By cleverly using the murder of the town drunk as his central plot, Hayden is able to explore important issues such as political attitudes, fundamentalism, and bigotry through his characters. Both humorous and insightful, this novel can be enjoyed by everyone from young adults to those who actually recall the Truman era. In writing about small-town Kansas in the late 1940s, Hayden tries "to give the reader a feel for that time and place." For those Kansans who remember that time, *Moonshine Harvest* will be an enjoyable journey back to their early years; for those too young to remember, this book will be a pleasant look at what they missed.

By His Own Hand? The Mysterious Death of Meriwether Lewis. Edited by John D. W. Guice. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006, xxi + 178 pages, cloth \$24.95.)

The story of the expedition of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark is well known to most Americans. But what many do not realize is that only a few years after the explorers' triumphant return, Lewis was found dead in Tennessee, felled by two gunshot wounds to the head. At the time, the incident was ruled a suicide, a judgment that was widely accepted by those close to Lewis. But since this tragedy in 1809, historians have wondered: Was this "suicide" actually a murder? *By His Own Hand* reassesses the evidence and places this controversial episode in its proper historical context. Four historians of the trans-Appalachian West contributed to this well-written volume, and they chose to follow the format of a postmortem court trial. Not only is this bizarre event examined from every angle, but readers will also learn more about the era in general. According to Landon Jones, author of *William Clark and the Shaping of the West*, "What is most tellingly revealed here is the paradoxical nature of life on the frontier during the Early Republic."

The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945-1965. By Amy L. S. Staples. (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2006, xvi + 349 pages, cloth \$55.00.)

Recent histories of foreign relations have argued that the Cold War was not just a battle between the democracies of the West and the evil Communists of the East but actually a North-South struggle over economic development. Historian Amy L. S. Staples carries this theme even further by examining the role of international organizations. By focusing on the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization, Staples makes it clear that these three organizations did attempt to increase programs in agricultural reform and public health and to aid general economic development. Staples convincingly argues that the goals of the individuals involved in these projects were actually more important than the results. Grounded in thorough archival research, *The Birth of Development* should appeal to readers of *Kansas History* not only because of its focus on agricultural issues but also because it places the past fifty years of American foreign policy in the proper historical context.

"Circumstances Are Destiny": An Antebellum Woman's Struggle to Define Sphere. By Tina Stewart Brakebill. (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2006, xx + 255 pages, cloth \$34.95.)

"Circumstances Are Destiny" is the study of Celestia Rice Colby, a middle-class, literate white woman living in northern Ohio during the Civil War era. Although not directly related to the history of Kansas, readers will learn much from Colby's experiences. By using Colby's own writings, as well as secondary sources, author Tina Stewart Brakebill allows us to see what life was like for a seemingly ordinary woman during the mid- to late-nineteenth century. However, Brakebill argues that Colby was actually unique because she was not satisfied with the typical destiny of women during this time. Rather than being content with her somewhat limited role as a wife and mother, Colby challenged ideas about conventional gender expectations. Anyone interested in nineteenth century women and gender relations or the Civil War era in general will find this work both useful and enjoyable.

The National Grasslands: A Guide to America's Undiscovered Treasures. By Francis Moul. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006, xiv + 185 pages, paper \$19.95.)

Readers of both environmental and political history will appreciate this insightful analysis of the nation's grasslands. The accompanying photographs by Georg Joutras alone would make this book enjoyable for readers, but Francis Moul's in-depth study of the four million acres of America's grasslands make it essential reading as well. Moul places his environmental study in historical context as he explains how the establishment of the grasslands was actually an important part of the New Deal programs. He continues by elaborating on the history of the grasslands and also gives a regional guide to these areas. According to Dan O'Brien, author of *Buffalo for the Broken Heart: Restoring Life to a Black Hills Ranch*, "Francis Moul has written a book that has been neglected for a long time. The history of the national grasslands and their ecological and economic importance should be common knowledge for all Americans."