

## Greetings From the Lincoln Highway: America's First Coast-To-Coast Road

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between two sets of businessmen seeking to donate land for the capitol sheds light on early rivalries between the east and west sides of the Des Moines River. At several points, bulleted items explain provisions of the Iowa Constitution; perhaps this space could have been better used for more discussion of the building itself. The same can be said of a two-page test to identify the content of 14 photographs, although that device does add a light touch. The author does not mention another book on the same subject, *The Iowa Capitol: A Harvest of Design*, by Linda Nelson Johnson and Jerry C. Miller (1989).

*Greetings from the Lincoln Highway: America's First Coast-to-Coast Road*, by Brian Butko. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2005. 288 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Richard H. Thomas is professor of history emeritus at Cornell College. He is the author of "From Porch to Patio: The Desire for Privacy and the Need for Community" (*Palimpsest*, 1975) and the second volume of the history of Cornell College.

The history of westward expansion is inevitably the story of trails, roads, and railroads. Brian Butko has given us an interesting, heavily illustrated guide to driving the first coast-to-coast auto highway—the Lincoln Highway. The highway is an Iowa historical resource and has left many influences in our history as a "pass through" state on the way west. Others have given us the details of the creation of the route, and we have very early records of men and women who traveled the route, even before its official marking. The author refers to these accounts as we move with him across the nation.

In his narrative we see the many changes in the original plan and the conflicts between the planners (the Lincoln Highway Association) and state and local officials over the specific route. Splendid maps take us across the states, often through the cities, although the planners tried to avoid heavily populated areas. Butko patiently guides us through the maze of western routes where large portions of the original trail are difficult to find or no longer accessible, clarifying all options for the potential traveler. Along the journey, the author points out surviving structures from the commercial development that followed the designation and promotion of the highway. Butko presents the dynamics of attempts to mark the highway and describes the interest many communities and some states had in promoting alterations to the original route.

The details and context provided make this book a good, usable road guide. It incorporates the best of recent scholarship but adds little

to our larger understanding of the formation and history of the great road. This is not a casual read for general readers but an indispensable guide for travelers. Tracing the various routes through cities is helpful, but for many rural areas the book lacks much of the flavor of local history surrounding the route and its impact on communities. The focus is mainly on the route itself, but as a national guidebook there is much that cannot be covered. In the rush to treat more popular artifacts, such as markers or roadside food and lodging facilities, there are few references to many structures of local significance, such as college campuses and courthouses. For example, the Iowa section makes no reference to the three early colleges on the route—Iowa State, Coe, and Cornell. Butko mentions the Seedling Mile west of Mount Vernon and adds some fine comments but fails to note that it is the *only* one in Iowa, thus overlooking part of its true significance. The size of the work may limit how much local detail can be integrated into its highly generalized approach. References to the economic influence of the route are often made in the context of route changes but are not otherwise developed.

Butko provides an informative, entertaining guide that encourages anyone to make the trip from wherever one wants to start. Those seeking to make the whole trip will want to gather more detailed documentation provided by works such as G. W. Franzwa's state-based series. The bibliography and further reading sections are inviting and well selected.

*From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: The Transformation of Midwest Agriculture*, by Dennis S. Nordin and Roy V. Scott. *Midwestern Culture and History Series*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. xvi, 356 pp. Tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$65.00 cloth.

Reviewer Mark Friedberger is adjunct professor of history at Texas Christian University. He is the author of *Farm Families and Change in Twentieth-Century America* (1988) and *Shake-Out: Iowa Farm Families in the 1980s* (1989).

This book is a bit of a puzzle. First, it is a jointly authored, comparatively short volume of 205 pages. Its seven chapters follow a historical sequence in the twentieth century interspersed by a treatise on technological and scientific developments in farming. The first two chapters—on farming at the turn of the century and on the “Golden Age of Agriculture”—were probably written by Scott, while the remaining five chapters were Nordin's responsibility. Second, in addition to 60 pages of notes, the book has a 77-page bibliography, surely the most comprehensive bibliography ever compiled on the subject: it contains a huge section devoted to technical Experiment Station bulletins,

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