

Shaping the North Star State: A History of Minnesota's Boundaries

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on the grounds that such a line would conform to its statehood act provision that the northern boundary had to be on the latitude of the Des Moines River rapids. Iowa Territory officials charged that there were no rapids in the Des Moines River and Missouri was only promoting an illegal land grab. Contention peaked in 1839. An acerbic war of words between Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs and Iowa Territorial Governor Robert Lucas led to the activation of rival militias. Despite their bombast, the governors and their supporters realized that the dispute could only be resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court—the final arbiter of interstate boundaries. Finally in 1849 the court ruled that the Iowa-Missouri boundary had to be the one that existed before Missouri attempted to adjust its northern boundary.

The Iowa-Missouri boundary dispute has been covered previously to varying degrees in Iowa's histories. Nonetheless, it is certainly worth retelling, and Everett's well-documented and entertaining description should be of great interest to anyone concerned with Iowa's history. [See also Everett's article on this topic in the Fall 2008 issue of this journal. — Ed.]

I highly recommend this excellent book to anyone specifically interested in the development of Iowa's southern boundary as well as those who are curious about the political evolution of the trans-Mississippi West.

Shaping the North Star State: A History of Minnesota's Boundaries, by William E. Lass. Saint Cloud, MN: North Star Press of Saint Cloud, 2014. x, 230 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$16.95 paperback.

Reviewer Derek R. Everett is adjunct professor of history at Metropolitan State University of Denver. He is the author of *Creating the American West: Boundaries and Borderlands* (2014).

In this comprehensive and enthusiastic explanation of how the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes came to be, the dean of Minnesota history turns his attention to the invisible bounds of the North Star State. William E. Lass incorporates vital events and issues of local, regional, national, and even international importance to create a thorough and well-contextualized story, illustrating well the complicated process by which Minnesota took shape.

Drawing on a blend of his previous scholarship as well as new research, Lass leaves no stone unturned in his quest to depict the physical creation of Minnesota. He organizes the work chronologically as well as geographically, focusing on each of Minnesota's boundaries as it emerged through factors both near and far from the future state. First,

he draws on and elaborates some of his earlier work on the international border between the United States and British Canada, the first line to appear that eventually served to embrace the state. He draws in events of broad significance, ranging from the 1783 Treaty of Paris through the 1842 Webster-Ashburton Treaty to show the global implications of the line that emerged. From there, Lass shifts to internal American disputes over land organization, starting with Iowa's statehood and its shared boundary with Minnesota. The third chapter explores how the Northwest Territory's legacy affected the barrier with Wisconsin, and the fourth traces a decade of Minnesota territorial history as newcomers debated how to orient their prospective polity. Lass's final two chapters explain the surveying, marking, and enforcing of Minnesota's boundaries as well as the controversies and consequences that extended far beyond the mid-nineteenth century.

For aficionados of Iowa, the second chapter of *Shaping the North Star State* offers unique and compelling insights into Hawkeye history. The history of the southern boundary with Missouri, in particular the bloodless "Honey War" of 1839, has demanded more attention than the other four. Lass turns the focus northward to the generally overlooked limit with Minnesota, but in doing so he tells a great deal of Iowa history as well. To understand the existence of the northern Iowa line, Lass leads readers through an overview of territorial history and debates within Iowa over its future. Familiar names appear—including Robert Lucas, John Chambers, and Augustus Dodge—as Lass follows political disputes in Iowa and Washington, D.C., that crafted Iowa's limits. In the process, Lass incorporates the emerging geographical knowledge of the western United States, the work of mapmaker Joseph Nicollet in particular, to show how cartography affected visions of the region, such as whether geographic features or geometric lines should play the greatest role. The chapter concludes with a discussion of surveying and marking the line six years after Iowa achieved statehood with its geometric northern division.

As Lass does in each chapter, he brings readers into the Iowa-Minnesota debates intimately, giving the sense of sitting in the corner listening to impassioned oratory of the nineteenth century rather than reading a dusty account. In doing so, Lass emphasizes the legacy of each line and boundary making in general, recognizing the complications inherent in the process and the lasting consequences of political organization. His book offers a vital and valuable contribution to Minnesota and regional history, as well as an example of how to incorporate factors from local to global in telling a rich tale of special places on the map.