

## A Brief History of Nebraska

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Finkelman provides important historical context on the political milieu in which Abraham Lincoln operated. Lincoln spoke out against slavery, calling it morally wrong, and he said that African Americans were included in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, its natural rights affirmation. His statements seem all the more remarkable given the antiblack sentiment of his own state.

Finally, Bob Sampson's work is included twice in the collection, a reflection of his stellar if unsung scholarship on Illinois. In his piece on the Charleston riots of 1864, Sampson explains the conditions that produced the violence in Charleston, Illinois, violence that clearly reflected strong Democratic opposition to Lincoln administration policies, such as emancipation, and to the ongoing war in general. When Democrats from Coles and Edgar Counties fired on Union troops, they were, Sampson suggests, acting on a "logic of rebellion," responding to what they perceived as acts of repression on the part of the Lincoln administration, acts that, in their view, warranted an extreme reaction. Sampson builds on the work of Jean Harvey Baker and others and enhances our understanding of Illinois Democrats.

The collection features compelling articles on twentieth-century events and figures as well; indeed, no substantive period in the state's history is neglected. Anthologies and collections are notorious for incoherence and for the uneven quality of the assembled pieces. Mark Hubbard has succeeded in organizing a collection that is thematically coherent, informative, and interesting. Any scholar of Illinois history would profit from reading this fine work.

*A Brief History of Nebraska*, by Ronald C. Naugle. Lincoln: History Nebraska, 2018. v, 143 pp. Illustrations, map, index. \$14.95 paperback.

Reviewer Mark R. Scherer is professor of history at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. His research and writing have focused on Nebraska and Great Plains legal and political history.

As its title suggests, *A Brief History of Nebraska* is an abridged version of Ronald C. Naugle's familiar and highly respected *History of Nebraska*. That volume, coauthored with John J. Montag and James C. Olson, is now in its fourth edition and has become the leading narrative text in Nebraska history, long serving specialists, students, and general readers as an essential starting point for exploring the state's rich and complex past. With this extremely condensed abridgement, Naugle obviously seeks to reach a much more casual readership, one that—regrettably but probably accurately—reflects the shortened attention spans of so many readers in the Instagram/Twitter world we now inhabit.

Given the breadth and depth of Naugle's expertise in the field, the winnowing process for this book must have been especially difficult. While it is easy enough for an interested observer to identify topics that beg for more detailed coverage and analysis (such as the displacement of Native Americans or the long-term effects of the Homestead Act, to name just two), nitpicking of that sort is unfair and almost completely irrelevant in evaluating this volume. The book's brevity is actually its greatest strength. Naugle's goal here is to whet rather than to satisfy readers' appetites. Viewed from that perspective, the book can only be judged a success. Indeed, one of the most remarkable aspects of the author's work is not what he has been forced to leave out, but rather what he has been able to include. In less than 150 total pages, and using chapters that rarely exceed three or four pages each, Naugle introduces a truly impressive array of themes, topics, events, and personalities, ranging from the prehistoric geology of the Midwest and Great Plains to the rural-urban dichotomies that help to shape the state's current social, political, and economic dynamics. The author's analysis of these topics is perceptive but necessarily brief. Like the Platte River valley that has itself been so central to Nebraska's history, the treatment is, by design, "a mile wide and an inch deep."

Written in a lively, conversational, and accessible style and enhanced by well-chosen illustrations and maps, this is a book that meets its intended purpose and should find its intended audience. Academics, specialists, and advanced students will need to look elsewhere for the interpretive scrutiny, sourcing, citations, and footnotes that their interests may require. But for newcomers to the state, younger students, and anyone seeking a brief and highly readable introduction to Nebraska's colorful and sometimes controversial past, Naugle's volume will fill the bill splendidly.

*Gabriel Renville: From the Dakota War to the Creation of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Reservation, 1825-1892*, by Gary Clayton Anderson. Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2018. xi, 220 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Linda M. Clemmons is a professor of history at Illinois State University. She is the author of *Conflicted Mission: Faith, Disputes, and Deception on the Dakota Frontier* (2014) and the forthcoming *Dakota in Exile: The Untold Stories of Captives in the Aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War*.

Gary Clayton Anderson has written an important biography of Gabriel Renville, a Dakota man whose life intersected with the major events in Dakota history from the 1820s until the late nineteenth century. This