

## Illinois: Crossroads of a Continent

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Union army, to viewing the Civil War from the perspective of its impact on a single southern marriage.

There are few shortcomings in this volume. More of the articles focus on the South than North, but that reflects scholarly trends and not the editors' deficiency. There are only two essays covering Reconstruction, but the social history of that period deserves a separate volume. All in all, this is an excellent book. It includes a good mix of articles by senior scholars, junior scholars, and doctoral students. Its authors investigate important topics and raise significant questions for future investigation and analysis. Finally, it confirms the centrality of the Civil War in U.S. social history.

*Illinois: Crossroads of a Continent*, by Lois A. Carrier. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993. xi, 283 pp. Illustrations, maps, charts, graphs, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT P. SUTTON, WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Lois A. Carrier fulfills a long-standing need to provide "young people" with an up-to-date narrative of the Prairie State (xi). In twenty-six chapters divided into five chronological segments, she introduces the "many gifted men and women who were born in or lived in Illinois" (ix), and analyzes briefly the major events in which these individuals participated. The author keeps a focus on the constant interaction between state and national developments. She emphasizes the importance of the changing roles of women during and after the Civil War. Her chapter, "Sampler of Frontier Towns," adds a new dimension to the state's urban history. By covering Illinois history from 1945 through the four terms of James Thompson, she provides a necessary supplement to Pease's *The Story of Illinois* (which for all practical purposes ends at World War II) and Robert Howard's *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State* (which stops with the Kerner administration). At the end of each chapter she includes a list of books "For Further Exploration." The author's writing is crisp and lucid and moves along at a fast pace.

*Illinois: Crossroads of a Continent* has some defects—some minor, others serious. For example, in treating communal societies, Carrier discusses the Jansonists and Mormons but says nothing about the Icarians, Illinois' most successful sectarian utopia at Nauvoo from 1849 to 1860. Many chapters are much too superficial. She deals with the troubled history of labor unions during the Gilded Age in only eight pages. The chapter "Decades of Conflict" treats Korea, Vietnam, the

Civil Rights movement, the chaotic Democratic Convention of 1968, and the E.R.A. crusade in six pages. Most alarming is the research. There are no footnotes. The bibliography has no mention of the vast periodical literature on Illinois. It has no citations for significant recent studies such as John Mack Faragher's *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (1986) or Milton Derber's *Labor in Illinois: The Affluent Years, 1945-1980* (1989). Although she mentions Richard J. Jensen's *Illinois: A Bicentennial History* (1978), she makes no effort to incorporate his provocative thesis about "modernizers" versus "traditionalists" into her story.

Carrier admits that her book is just a beginning, and so it is. It will delight the general audience. But a caveat is in order. Because of its loose ends and paucity of historical research, college and university students will find little use for this book, and scholars will find nothing new in it.

*Hard At Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940*, edited by Kathryn Grover. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: Strong Museum, 1992. vi, 262 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY BENJAMIN HUNNICUTT, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

*Hard at Play* is the third in a sort of series of books published by the Strong Museum and edited by Kathryn Grover. The previous books, *Dining in America, 1850-1900* and *Fitness in American Culture*, were published following special exhibits at the museum on their respective topics. *Hard at Play*, by contrast, resulted from a symposium sponsored by the museum, "American Play, 1820-1900," held in late 1987, which was followed by three exhibits.

Like a good museum special exhibit, Grover's book is organized around a simple theme—"the interpretation of the history of leisure pursuits and children's play"—a theme she develops by relying on arguably the most influential play theorist of this century, the historian Johan Huizinga. Grover notes in the introduction that in "this society" we generally define leisure and play negatively, as the absence of work. Huizinga, in *Homo Ludens*, questioned this modern tendency to oppose leisure/play and work as opposites. Taking his cue, Grover sets out to show that the "scholarly study of leisure and play is serious stuff indeed." Incidentally, Huizinga also argued that play transcended the serious/non-serious dichotomy, and that the serious study of play is a paradoxical undertaking, one that raises

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