**Sod Busting: How Families Made Farms on the Nineteenth-Century Plains.** How Things Worked Series. By David B. Danbom. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. xi + 129 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. $44.95, cloth; $19.95, paper.)

David B. Danbom has produced a tightly written, useful installment in the How Things Worked Series. True to his purpose, Danbom focuses on people building farms and communities on the Plains, especially Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas. His treatise starts with the period after the Civil War and follows the path from frontier settlement to the comforts and problems of creating more settled communities. The folks who fueled the Farmers' Alliance and Populist movements appear alongside other ordinary farmers and farmwives, giving faces and names to the generally unknown mass of individuals who struggled to survive and thrive on the Plains.

In five main chapters, Danbom details how settlers—American and immigrant—acquired land, built farms and homes out of the unfamiliar sod, recreated community life, and watched the Plains mature as the nation moved into the Progressive Era. Thus, the reader is able to see how the settlers succeeded and failed as the economy boomed and busted and boomed again. At that point, settlers had seen a significant population turnover, and in the short epilogue, Danbom gives a nod to those who left their parents' farms for the city.

Tasked with writing a nuts-and-bolts story, Danbom made the book even more clear and accessible to his readers with his crisp and clear prose. Moreover, he interweaves as much narrative as possible, as well as larger themes, to accomplish a higher purpose. First, Danbom deftly distinguishes between the simplicity of myth and romance and the complexity of reality. Second, while he focuses on the hard work of settlers, he also demonstrates the importance of outsiders in their struggle to succeed in the harsh and isolated region. These people had to have access to credit and transportation in ways that farmers further east had not needed, and much of this hinged on government assistance. Danbom goes beyond the idea of free land and railroad legislation to provide much evidence for the settlers' need for government financial support for transportation, children's education, and land grant colleges. Without banks and the government, settlers would have been hard-pressed to settle the Plains.

For a rural or western historian the overall story is not new. But the details are immensely useful for scholars. In a short space, Danbom synthesizes the information that might be gained from a half dozen monographs. Undergraduates and upper-level high school students will find the work readable and useful—if not a touch dry—for understanding the underpinnings of Plains settlement. The environment, farm failures, and the dependence on corporations are explained in such detail that the reader is ready to see why the Plains erupted in protests in the late nineteenth century.

Alexandra Kindell
Purdue University North Central


In this book, Paul J. P. Sandul introduces the “agriburb,” a unique rural-suburban type in turn-of-the-twentieth-century California. Boosters drew on the romantic suburban ideal of the nineteenth century and California's horticultural potential to develop and sell
the three agriburbs that Sandul examines: Ontario, Orangevale, and Fair Oaks. Boosters touted these “colonies” as ideal places for families that wanted to live in middle-class homes and enjoy urban amenities while making a living growing oranges or engaging in other horticultural pursuits. In part, they defined the colonies by what they were not; they were not cities, but they were not part of large-scale agriculture either. They were designed as places in between, where hard work, business intelligence, and a scientific approach to agriculture could lead to independence and good living.

While previous scholars have labeled colonies such as Ontario as “suburban” or “bourgeois,” Sandul goes further in his methodical examination of the colonies within the context of suburban history and suburban classifications. He traces the development of agriburbs, defining them in relation to growth and the California Dream. He then considers the boosters as individuals, examining their biographies for clues to the cultural origins and motivations behind their boosterism. Finally, he looks at the lasting legacy of boosters in the cultural memory of these communities.

California Dreaming adds a new suburban type to a diversifying field of suburban history. It also complicates our understanding of suburban placemaking and cultural memory by refuting the easy but increasingly challenged notion of suburbs as bland, placeless, and lacking in awareness of their own historical roots. Further, agriburbs provide us with another example of the California Dream running parallel to the suburban dream—the ideal of having the best features of city and country, of mixing outdoor and domestic pleasures. Sandul’s work helps us see the longer history of this ideal and its contribution to growth prior to the suburban boom of the 1920s.

The boosters receive individual attention in this study, and to good effect, but agriburb residents for the most part do not, as Sandul himself acknowledges, for that was not the purpose and scope of the book. What he has accomplished is to help pave the way for someone to look more closely at the residents themselves to better understand how they made meaning of agriburbs as places where they lived their lives.

Elizabeth Carney
Washington State University


Ethnohistorian Alison R. Marshall has done a remarkable job of assembling the scattered records of the hundreds of Chinese who went to Saskatchewan and Manitoba in the early twentieth century, where opportunities to become small-scale merchants (and possibly big shots) within the Chinese community were greater than in British Columbia or the United States. Drawing on her own archive and interviews collected for her book on Chinese bachelors in Manitoba, Marshall explores religion, racism, and gender in the creation of Chinese Prairie networks.

The key network, at least before 1949, was the Kuomintang (KMT), the Chinese Nationalist League, a global organization with branches in many prairie communities. It provided mutual support in a racist world but also could regulate lives. Chinese nonmembers were outsiders in the Chinese community in Canada and China. The KMT was closely associated with Confucianism, and many men combined Confucian and Christian beliefs. A few Christian converts, however, eschewed Confucianism. Reverend Ma Seung, for example, converted to Christianity in Canada,
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Spring 2015. Curriculum vitae. Lynda j. morgan. History Department Mount Holyoke College. South Hadley, MA 01075 (413) 538-2377. ljmorgan@mtholyoke.edu. Faculty Grant, Mount Holyoke College Fellow, Virginia Historical Society. Faculty Grant, Kenyon College Predoctoral Fellow, Carter G. Woodson Institute, University of. Virginia Research Grants, Carter G. Woodson Institute, University of. Western Historical Quarterly. Description: Founded in 1969, The Western Historical Quarterly, the official journal of the Western History Association, presents original scholarly articles dealing with the North American West - the westward movement from the Atlantic to the Pacific, twentieth-century regional studies, the Spanish borderlands, Native American history, and developments in western Canada, northern Mexico, Alaska, and Hawaii. Each issue contains reviews and notices of significant books in the field, as well as bibliographic lists of recent articles and dissertations. The Western H... The Western Historical Quarterly is the official, peer-reviewed...Â The Western Historical Quarterly is having a birthday! This special virtual issue celebrates and assesses fifty years of scholarship in the journal. The Western Historical Quarterly is having a birthday! This special virtual issue celebrates and assesses fifty years of scholarship in the journal. Western Historical Quarterly updated their profile picture. April 12, 2019 Â· Western Historical Quarterly. Home/AEB Publications/Business Quarterly (Autumn 2015). Business Quarterly (Autumn 2015). Back to the list. Tel. +7 (495) 234 2764. Email: info@aebrus.ru. Partners Contacts Code of Conduct Code of Good Practice in the Pharmaceutical Industry Good practices of car manufacturers / distributors. About Mediacentre Membership Committees and working groups AEB events. Mobile app: Get it on Google Play Download on the App Store. In accordance with Western Historical Quarterly's editorial policy, review content is not publicly displayed on Publons. Interested in reviewing for this journal? We can put registered members of Publons’ reviewer community in touch with partnered journals they would like to review for. Register now to let Western Historical Quarterly know you want to review for them. Editorial board members on Publons. No one has yet noted that they are on Western Historical Quarterly's editorial board. If you're on the editorial board of Western Historical Quarterly, you can add it in your profile settings.