

The Sangamo Frontier: History and Archaeology in the Shadow of Lincoln

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As Fred Andersen argues in his magisterial *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* that the Seven Years' War was the central event of the eighteenth century, Skinner demonstrates that the standard narrative of North American history cannot be cast as proceeding east to west. However, as a regional history, *The Upper Country* stops short of truly connecting French imperial and colonial enterprise to the larger processes of North American development. For example, by ending the narrative before the Seven Years' War, Skinner misses the chance to show how the French persisted, often through intermarriage with the region's Indians and their continued importance within the Great Lakes' fur-trade economy, to influence later British and American political, social, and economic understanding.

Postured toward undergraduates and survey courses, and largely eschewing historiographical debate, except when Skinner writes that "expediency has always taken precedence over culture" (xii), *The Upper Country* richly deserves a place in the classroom or on the bookshelf. While light on historiography, which the author readily admits, the book includes a detailed and informative bibliographical essay that alerts readers to the major historical literature on the French and the Great Lakes. What most makes this book useful and important to those interested in midwestern history, however, is that Skinner goes beyond politics, economics, and war, and actually details the cultural and social lives of the French and Indians in the Great Lakes, which is a difficult task. Moreover, Skinner's mining and close reading of primary sources, along with his well-written and concise narrative, brings the historical actors and events to life and succeeds in re-creating and contextualizing the Great Lakes world those individuals inhabited.

The Sangamo Frontier: History and Archaeology in the Shadow of Lincoln, by Robert Mazrim. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. x, 352 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$55.00 cloth, \$20.00 paper.

Reviewer Debra A. Reid is associate professor of history at Eastern Illinois University. She teaches and writes about material culture, public history, and African American history.

Robert Mazrim has produced an engaging forensic analysis of what occurred during the frontier era along the Edwards Trace in Illinois. That focus might not attract readers, but the more provocative title should. Mazrim draws from a period place name, Sangamo, thus accurately reflecting the blending of Native, French, and American cultures that occurred in the region between the 1790s and the 1840s.

Mazrim emphasizes the years between the War of 1812 and the end of the Black Hawk War as the period when Native culture ceased to exist in the area and French influence gave way to American ideals based on entrepreneurship and consumerism. His reference to Abraham Lincoln in the subtitle reflects the ways the notable American's legacy has drawn amateur and professional historians and archaeologists to study the places Lincoln trod, particularly Springfield and New Salem, but also indicates the ways his legacy has obscured and even helped obliterate material evidence of what really occurred over a transition period during the early nineteenth century. Mazrim studies what lies buried literally beneath the sod and figuratively under accretions of memory and forgetfulness, myth and abandonment. This book is about so much more than the title implies.

The Sangamo Frontier addresses a goal that anyone interested in local history can appreciate. Mazrim sets out to show that "this place (like many places) was once much different" (3). He uses archaeology to ferret out the difference because "archaeology has a peculiar ability to enhance and also to challenge the written word" (3). Examples abound, starting with the term *frontier*, which could denote isolation and cultural change, as Frederick Jackson Turner argued, but which Mazrim argues became a zone where Americans tried to be civilized by possessing the most fashionable ceramics, building rural industry, and creating opportunities for commerce. They brought their culture with them.

Mazrim combines traditional historical sources (public records, correspondence, period accounts, and secondary sources) with archaeological evidence. The structure of the book reflects this blending. History and archaeology coexist throughout *The Sangamo Frontier*, but the last half of the book emphasizes the application of the method to the place. Mazrim's expertise shines in this section as he shares findings from professional excavations that he managed in places along Edwards Trace. Those excavations occurred more often in the shadow of the wrecking ball than in Lincoln's shadow. Mazrim balances places that prospered during the frontier transition era, such as Ile's store in Springfield, with places that progress bypassed and founders abandoned, specifically Sangamo. Then he concludes with a sobering account of how public enthusiasm for Lincoln led to historic manipulation at New Salem, starting during the 1880s and culminating in the 1930s with the apparent destruction of historic evidence so the myth associated with the place survived and contradictory evidence in the form of the actual site of the Rutledge Tavern could be eradicated.

A wide range of readers should find Mazrim's book appealing, including historians of the early Midwest, frontier and borderland

experiences, state and local history, and public history. Critical analysis of the public's role in preserving the past has appeared recently in, for example, a collection of essays edited by John H. Jameson Jr., *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstructions in the Public Interpretation of Archaeology and History* (2004) and in an article by Barbara Burlison Mooney, "Lincoln's New Salem: Or, the Trigonometric Theorem of Vernacular Restoration," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 11 (2004), to which Mazrim contributed. *The Sangamo Frontier*, along with Jameson's and Mooney's studies, and other studies like them, could lead readers to conclude that all preservationists lack integrity and ethics. If such resignation surfaces, keep reading Mazrim. He concludes with the excavations he conducted in Peoria during 2001 when a small post-in-earth French dwelling was discovered. "The local citizenry were elated with the overdue appearance of their French history in the ground. There was never any question that the village had been here, but that unassuming impression in the subsoil gave the stories an inescapable and haunting authenticity" (324). Such finds also indicate that the past can be buried, literally and figuratively, but with patience, planning, integrity, and persistence, that past can be recovered and its meaning taken into account.

Inkpaduta: Dakota Leader, by Paul N. Beck. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. xx, 188 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewer William E. Lass is professor emeritus of history at Minnesota State University, Mankato. His most recent book is *Navigating the Missouri: Steamboating on Nature's Highway, 1819–1935* (2008). He has also written about interactions between Indians and whites on Minnesota's frontier.

Inkpaduta, a Wahpekte Dakota Indian chief, is remembered in Iowa history as the perpetrator of the so-called Spirit Lake Massacre. In March 1857 his small band of about a dozen warriors murdered 32 settlers in Dickinson County's lake region. Most of the killings occurred between the east and west Okoboji lakes, but only Spirit Lake to their north appeared by name on Joseph N. Nicollet's widely used map, *Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River* (1843). Consequently, Iowa's greatest Indian-white conflict was identified with the area's best known landmark.

Although he had a relatively long life (ca. 1805–ca. 1879), Inkpaduta's fame is derived primarily from the Spirit Lake incident and its aftermath. As Beck explains, most of the extant information about Inkpaduta is for the period from 1854 (when he became band chief) to

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274 the annals of iowa. Map from the 1839 General Land Office report on the Missouri-Iowa Territory boundary dispute. The lines are, from north to south: Missouri's 1837 claim intersecting the Des Moines River rapids; the 1808 Osage treaty limit as missurveyed in 1816; the Osage line as it should have been marked; and a division intersecting the rapids in the Mississippi River. 263, serial 240, 2; "Northern Boundary of Missouri," 25th Cong., 2nd sess., 4/6/1838, H. Rep. 768, serial 335. Technically not part of an Indian reserve, the "half-breed" lands were opened to settlement in the late 1830s by both Wisconsin and Iowa territories. See Laws of Iowa, 1st Territorial Assembly, 1/24/1839, 224; ibid., 1/25/1839, 225; Burlington Hawk-Eye, 4/16/1846. Home > Shsi > Annals-Of-Iowa. Follow. A quarterly, peer-reviewed journal of history published by the State Historical Society of Iowa. Current Issue: Volume 79, Number 4 (2020). Third Series. Front Matter. PDF. Front Matter, The Annals of Iowa, v. 79 no. 4 Fall 2020 <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.12693>. Articles. PDF. Category:Annals of Iowa. From Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository. Jump to navigation Jump to search. Subcategories. This category has the following 3 subcategories, out of 3 total. A. Annals of Iowa (1882) (8 F). Annals of Iowa (1899) (19 F). Annals of Iowa (1909) (27 F). Media in category "Annals of Iowa". This category contains only the following file. Frank Leverett 1900.jpg 2,010 × 2,561; 1.22 MB. Retrieved from "https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=Category:Annals_of_Iowa&oldid=344538820". The University of Iowa (10.17077). Latest articles in this journal. Working Hard and Living Out. Jennifer E. Mack, University of Iowa, Dustin S. Clarke, University of Iowa. Published: 1 October 2020. in The Annals of Iowa. The Annals of Iowa, Volume 79, pp 311-342; doi:10.17077/0003-4827.12694. Publisher Website. Full-Text. 120 annals of Iowa. VI PREFACE. referring to your Notes, with the hope that you will very soon publish them to the world. You have said much for the country, but I do not believe that you could have said too much in commendation of its fertility and natural resources. I am, with very great regard, Your obliged humble servant, GEO. W. JONES, Of Kaminawa Mound, Wisconsin Territory. 126 annals of Iowa. 12 notes on the timber necessary for farming purposes, a distance of one, two or three miles, is trifling. Taking this District all in all, for convenience of navigation, water, fuel, and timber; for richness of soil; for beauty of appearance; and for pleasantness of climate, it surpasses any portion of the United States with which I am acquainted.