Rumors of Indiscretion: The University of Missouri Sex Questionnaire Scandal in the Jazz Age

by Lawrence J. Nelson

xv + 323 pages, photographs, notes, essay on sources, index.

Lawrence Nelson has put forth a fine volume that uses solid scholarship to recount and evaluate a truly sensational story. This 1929 scandal garnered national attention. To say it rocked the University of Missouri community would be an understatement. One of the most compelling attributes of this work is how skillfully Nelson negotiates the fine line separating actual events and the controversy surrounding them. The fact that the story revolves around Jazz Age sexuality makes this feat all the more impressive.

In brief, the “scandal” stemmed from an undergraduate student research project for a sociology course entitled The Fateful. As Nelson makes plain, survey research was very common during this period. This survey, however, proved anything but ordinary. Three questions directly addressed sexuality and relationships, another inquired about “trial” or “companionate” marriage. When the public learned of the survey, the university was immediately thrust into a high-profile public relations nightmare. What makes the tale especially intriguing is that the university was mired in a drama in which it was the central spectacle. Nelson records the many influences that had bearing on the situation from appropriations debates in the state legislature to key personalities on and off the campus and a wildly divergent public opinion. After a hasty investigation by the Curator’s Executive Board, two faculty associated with the survey, Max Meyer and Herbert DeGraff, were dismissed; the Mizzou senior whose survey set off the firestorm, Orval Hobart Mower, lost his appointment as a lab assistant but was allowed to continue his studies. Nelson notes “an internationally renowned scholar with nearly three decades of service and one of the most popular and effective professors on campus had been summarily fired by a country editor and two Ozark lawyers” (p. 90). This move was validated by the full Board of Curators, which, in turn, led to an major AAUP investigation. This resulted in the ouster of the university president Stratton Brooks.

There is much to praise in this work. Nelson examines this controversy from multiple angles. He shows how the survey did not occur in a vacuum, but was emblematic of an era marked by sweeping social changes. Each chapter, following a chronological progression of events, contains sub-sections that provide helpful markers and elaboration on the various issues. Transitions between chapters are marvelous—all but compelling the reader to begin the next chapter without taking a break. Furthermore, one gets an almost palpable sense of the strained emotions and escalating political significance through well-chosen and carefully honed testimony from a variety of related transcripts. This deft use of quotations, combined with twenty-four illustrations, gives the narrative an almost interactive quality. Nelson’s nearly thirty pages of meticulous notes are an absolute historiographic treasure. In general the work is a rich blend of social and political history. It also has the added value of filling an important chapter in the history of twentieth-century American higher education.

The central issue, according to Nelson, was the growing gulf separating youth from those of the Victorian generation. As it related to the frankness of the survey in particular, Nelson observes: “here was a university with a president who didn’t want such things discussed, presiding over a student body that included those who were determined to do so” (p. 198). Though the survey was a scandal in many respects, Nelson demonstrates that the real battle was for social stability and meaning in a period of profound change—and one especially pitched in the Midwest.

This book deserves to be taken seriously. It is most suitable for upper-division undergraduate courses and could be useful in any number of graduate seminars. The story is engaging, carefully exploring the boundaries of decency in the late 1920s; the fact that Nelson tells it well only adds to the value of this new and noteworthy monograph.

Reviewed by Frank E. Johnson, professor of history, Mid-America Nazarene University, Olathe.
Interpreters with Lewis and Clark: The Story of Sacagawea and Toussaint Charbonneau

by W. Dale Nelson


The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in 2004–2006 has been the catalyst for many new books and articles about the Corps of Discovery and their remarkable expedition across the continent. The numerous scientific, diplomatic, geographic, and social components of the twenty-eight-month journey provide a plethora of avenues by which to explore this epic journey. W. Dale Nelson has chosen the small Charbonneau family as the lens through which we view the expedition. He has done a commendable job searching out the scant records about the lives of Toussaint Charbonneau, Sacagawea, and Jean Baptiste to provide an intriguing story about these three historic figures during and after their time as members of the Corps of Discovery.

This thin volume, just 131 pages of narrative, covers the events of the expedition in which Toussaint Charbonneau and his wife, Sacagawea, play prominent roles. Newcomers to this topic may want to supplement this volume with books on the expedition by James Rhonda, Stephen Ambrose, or Gary Moulton. Interpreters with Lewis and Clark does include some of the more remarkable and harrowing events experienced on the expedition.

The author seems particularly interested in revising history’s view of Toussaint Charbonneau. Meriwether Lewis, who was never fond of Charbonneau, may have done the most damage when he described him as “a man of no particular merit.” Nelson seeks to redeem Toussaint’s character through numerous examples of his skills and contributions to the expedition. Charbonneau is credited as being a first-class cook (by frontier standards), having a strong knowledge of Indian tribes, serving as a very able interpreter, and having the ability to strike better trade bargains with tribes than most others in the expedition.

Although Nelson provides a number of examples where Charbonneau assisted the expedition, in many situations he remains a character of questionable morals and value. Nelson describes one particularly unnerving incident where Clark, York, Charbonneau, Sacagawea, and their baby, Jean Baptiste, almost met their end. A sudden downpour turns into a flash flood. Trapped in a ravine, where they had sought shelter, it now becomes a deathtrap. Clark, who was fonder of Charbonneau and Sacagawea than was his co-captain, describes Toussaint in this situation as “much scared and nearly without motion.” Although Charbonneau finally assists in pulling his wife to safety, credit really belongs to Clark’s swift actions.

Another well-documented incident occurred when a pirogue nearly capsized that Charbonneau was piloting. When recording this near disaster, it was Lewis who described Charbonneau as “perhaps the most timid waterman in the world,” not an asset when 80 percent of the journey was spent on the river. The journals also record incidents where he lost horses and gear and withheld vital information attained from the Shoshones. One of the more disturbing accusations against him, which occurred prior to the expedition, involved Charbonneau being accused of raping a young Indian girl. It appears that Charbonneau’s greatest loyalty always remained to himself and his enterprises as a free trader and interpreter for hire.

The number of date errors in this volume is disturbing. The first is on the book jacket itself, where it states that Lewis and Clark’s first meeting with Sacagawea was 1803 when in reality it was November 4, 1804. Also, pages 6 and 7 contain a number of errors regarding ages of members and when events took place. An editor easily could have corrected these and I question why they were not caught.

Charbonneau outlived most of the other thirty-two-member Corps of Discovery. He provided service on Stephen Long’s expedition in 1806 and was later employed as a government interpreter from 1819 to 1839. His son, Jean Baptiste, was raised by William Clark in St. Louis, but he, too, chose a life in the western frontier. Nelson includes interesting information about Jean Baptiste’s service as a guide for Stephen Kearney in 1846 and his activities relating to the California and Colorado gold rushes.

History has been much kinder to Sacagawea than to her husband. Nelson strives to bestow Charbonneau with a better place in history. He succeeds in providing the reader with an interesting story and a healthy bibliography from which to draw your own conclusions.

Reviewed by Mary W. Madden, assistant director of education and outreach, Kansas State Historical Society.
African American Women Confront the West, 1600–2000

edited by Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore

390 pages, photographs, notes, bibliography, index.
Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 2003, cloth $34.95.

In African American Women Confront the West, 1600–2000, editors Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore have brought together new and exciting scholarship to add to our understanding of the diversity of the western American experience. The volume includes eighteen chapters, a useful bibliography, and a selection of primary source documents detailing African American women’s experiences in particular locales. Quintard and Taylor’s introductory essay sets the scene and provides a helpful historiographic context for the volume. The editors have selected a very broad range of topics for inclusion, such as the lives of African American women in the Spanish Southwest; the story of Jane Elizabeth Manning James, an African American Latter Day Saint; and the experience of women in the Black Panther Party.

Of particular interest to readers of Kansas History will be Cheryl Brown Henderson’s new look at Brown v Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. In this essay Henderson examines the role of Topeka’s African American mothers in creating the impetus for the Supreme Court case, something that often is overlooked because Oliver L. Brown’s name appeared on the legal documents, obscuring the names of women plaintiffs under the title “et al.” In fact, Henderson argues, Brown was a reluctant convert to the cause, while the women whose names were subsumed under his were the driving force for the lawsuit. In addition to Henderson’s essay, other particularly useful pieces include Moya B. Hansen’s essay on African American women and the Denver job market, 1900–1970, and Claytee D. White’s essay on African American migrant women and gaming in Las Vegas.

African American Women Confront the West is filled with interesting essays, as well as useful primary source materials. It certainly deserves a broad readership. Potential readers of the volume, however, should be aware that it primarily is a post-1865 collection. Although the book includes two general essays, as well as three antebellum essays and three antebellum primary documents, the bulk of the material examines the post-Civil War period, with the great majority of essays and primary materials falling in the twentieth century. Those looking for a thorough treatment of earlier periods will have to find their material elsewhere. This qualification aside, African American Women

Confront the West is an exciting addition to the growing literature on women of color in the American West.

Reviewed by Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, associate professor, Iowa State University, Ames.

Quacks and Crusaders: The Fabulous Careers of John Brinkley, Norman Baker, and Harry Hoxsey

by Eric S. Juhnke

xvi + 215 pages, photographs, notes, bibliography, index.

Eric S. Juhnke’s Quacks and Crusaders is a thoroughly researched exploration of three midwestern alternative medicine entrepreneurs from the mid-twentieth-century. This enjoyable book establishes the distinct nature of nontraditional healing methods peculiar to the Midwest and Great Plains, and it has widespread implications for the history of twentieth-century medicine. By placing the careers of Brinkley, Baker, and Hoxsey in their appropriate agrarian and populist contexts, Juhnke has moved the analysis of quackery away from the commonly employed retrospective medical commentary and toward its appropriate position within the context of social history.
The book is structured in two parts. The first three chapters provide biographical detail on each of the three personalities of primary concern. The final two chapters explore patient perspectives and the social forces associated with big business/fraudulent alternative medicine. Although some portions of the text seem sparse on detail, the advantage is a journalistic narrative that engages the reader from start to finish.

The book's introduction links Brinkley, Baker, and Hoxsey through the similarities of their respective battles with legal regulatory bodies and the medical mainstream. Each was uniquely dedicated to monetary profit through charismatic medical practice building. And each used similar populist rhetoric to defend against attack. These commonalities serve the remainder of the text well and establish important themes that have been largely ignored by prior biographers and most medical historians. The entire text is eloquently supported with primary source references, and Juhnke has done a masterful job exploring archives in Chicago, Kansas, Iowa, Arkansas, Texas, and Maryland.

The primary chapter on John R. Brinkley describes a businessman who was a deliberate populist and advertiser in the same tradition as patent medicine salesmen from prior generations. Through his early rise to fame as a goat gland transplant surgeon, to the stewardship of the widely popular KFKB ("Kansas Farmers Know Best") radio station, to his near-successful bid to be the 1930 governor-elect of Kansas, Brinkley is portrayed as an aggressive and inventive physician and entertainer. His massive success as a radio personality and as a purveyor of glandular health, proprietary pharmaceuticals, and prostate treatments is carefully described throughout the course of the chapter.

Chapter two on Norman Baker of Muscatine, Iowa, elucidates how similar rural radio promotions were used to build a cancer-focused operation. Baker was extremely successful, even without the benefit of medical training or credentials, in hiring physicians, running a hospital and newspaper, and amassing a fortune between 1924 and 1932. At the height of his career Baker hosted five to ten thousand visitors each Sunday at his outdoor radio broadcasts. He eventually served three years in the Leavenworth federal penitentiary after being convicted of mail fraud for activities conducted from his relocated base in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Like Brinkley, Baker eventually was driven out of business following stints in Mexico and Arkansas.

Harry Hoxsey, who eventually set up medical operations in Dallas, Texas, and other cities, is well described as the longest-lived of the nontraditionalists. His primary clinic operated with great success from 1936 to 1958. His proprietary herbal chemotherapeutic was purportedly passed down to him from his dying father and could be used as both a topical or internal cancer cure. Hoxsey maintained important friendships with Texas politicians, judges, and businessmen, and he eventually added to his fortune through oil well speculation. Juhnke does an excellent job pointing out Hoxsey's ties to radical right wing politicians such as Wichita-based evangelist Gerald Finrod, Oklahoma senator Elmer Thomas, and North Dakota senator William Langer. These ties set up key conclusions regarding the popular appeal and message development of all the healers under study.

The commonalities between Brinkley, Baker, and Hoxsey and Juhnke's ability to link these common threads to a socio-historical context is this book's major strength. It should become an important reference alongside a small group of other works on the social history of non-traditional healers, such as Norman Gevitz's *Other Healers: Unorthodox Medicine in America* (1988) and Barbara Claw's "Swapping Grief: The Role of the Laiety in Alternative Medical Encounters," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 52 (1997). The book richly tells the engaging stories of each healer, including the rags to riches to rags and courtroom dramas each experienced. The book's sole shortcoming is its inability to extensively explain the link between Brinkley, Baker, Hoxsey and the other alternative practitioners and products that preceded and followed the middle decades of the century. Juhnke delves into placebos, psychosomatic medicine, and the recent rise of complementary and alternative medicine briefly on page 113 and again on pages 149–55 in the conclusion. This mildly distracting look at a broader topic does not diminish the importance of the text's attention to the agrarian, rural, and populist influences on nontraditional medicine in the twentieth century. This book is a major advance over prior studies in this area and will be a must read for anyone with a casual or scholarly interest in the history of therapeutics, alternative or rural medicine, and medical marketing in the United States.

Reviewed by K. Allen Greene, assistant professor of family medicine and preventive medicine, University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City.
Kansas and the West: New Perspectives

edited by Rita Napier

viii + 416 pages, photographs, notes, tables, index.

With her publication of Kansas and the West: New Perspectives, Rita Napier provides an excellent service to all interested in Kansas history. Napier, who is an associate professor of American history at the University of Kansas, seeks to illuminate the diversity of Kansas history by examining the roles of race, class, gender, and environment to provide a more inclusive view of the past. How writers narrate the history of Kansas, Napier notes, shapes the identity of the people with the state. She hopes to point readers’ vision beyond accounts of rugged individuals taming the wild unbroken prairies, the exploits of the army in subduing Indian peoples, or hagiographies of elites—often white males. She insists that writers focus on questions of conquest, groups of “ordinary” people, and persistent problems and failures. A new understanding of one’s past, she believes, will inexorably lead to charting different paths into the future.

Napier fulfills this goal by editing a collection of recent scholarship. Her introductory essay, one initially published in Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains, reviews how current historical writing relates to an older, more traditional literature. In it, she illuminates the theme of her anthology: a new story depicting “complexity and diversity” in a society where instead “of an open, egalitarian society where the opportunity for social mobility was unlimited, there was a society structured by gender, race, class, and ethnicity.” Napier reminds readers that while not all of the events depicted in the anthology are pleasing, they allow us, as readers, to “distinguish more carefully between what we can praise and what we need to correct.”

An extensive scholarship addresses Napier’s themes, so selecting representative pieces illuminating these subjects assuredly presents difficult choices. In terms of addressing gender, the works of Elliott West, Angel Kwolek-Folland, Michael Goldberg, Ann Schofield, and Caron Smith were excellent choices. These chapters cover such diverse topics as how women lived in dugouts to the manner in which they supported their husbands’ labor activities in the mining industry of southeast Kansas. Several authors’ works, such as James C. Carper and Mary L. Dudziak, deal with the issue of race and the struggle for civil rights, especially desegregation in the public schools.

The selections for any anthology such as this seldom please everyone. From my perspective, environmental issues, especially as they pertain to water, public park lands, wildlife, and agriculture, are given short shrift despite the inclusion of Donald Worster’s chapter on the Dust Bowl, and Donald D. Stull and Michael J. Broadway’s treatment of the beef-packing industry in Kansas. The importance of water and agriculture to this state are immense, and recent and insightful critical studies of both abound. However, the ever increasing role of the federal government in the economy of the state, whether in its industries such as aircraft or agriculture, is notably absent. I am quite sure that other readers will make their own lists of what they would have included.

Nonetheless, Napier’s selections and her inclusive introductory essay certainly provide a rich diverse sampling of the new history on the state. A work such as this has long been overdue. As a result, Napier has provided a great service to this state. Her achievement will appeal to a large audience, whether teachers using it in classes (as I do in mine), or scholars of the West or Kansas, or those who are simply interested in a handy collection of some of the freshest, original ways to read the history of this state.

Reviewed by James E. Sherow, associate professor of American history, Kansas State University.
Driving across Kansas: A Guide to I-70

by Ted T. Cable and Wayne A. Maley

xi + 243 pages, illustrations, references, index.

Traveling by car ain't what it used to be.

Until about forty years ago, an auto trip might be a lengthy undertaking in a small, hot, gas-guzzling vehicle, yet it was anything but tedious. The country's vast network of interconnected backroads took travelers on journeys through some of a state's most significant sites as well as by some of the more mundane yet culturally unique towns. The journey itself, and not necessarily the destination, provided many of the trip's most cherished memories.

But as road travel became more important to commerce, funds increasingly were allocated to construct better and more direct routes. Time itself evolved into an entity less suited to leisurely travel. And so has gone much of our interest in truly seeing a land through which we drive. Interstate highways traversing the flattest part of one state have become little more than seventy-mile-per-hour portals to the next state.

What Ted Cable and Wayne Maley hope to remind us in Driving across Kansas: A Guide to I-70 is that our state specifically (and any state, more generally) is filled with the unique: the historical and cultural aspects that make the land within our borders different from all other places. By driving the route from Kansas City to Goodland and making careful note of the sites, sounds, smells, and even tastes along the way, the authors have compiled a guide that helps travelers along Interstate 70 better appreciate the land and the people of Kansas.

The volume is divided into "Westbound" and "Eastbound" sections, each of which is subdivided into nine regions or areas, some geographic, some simply significant towns through which the highway passes. Mile marker numbers allow travelers to identify the approximate location of the features being discussed, and sketches offer "visual cues" that the user can identify. Rather than providing a precise duplicate image, the authors say, they hope that "by using simple sketches travelers will efficiently locate the object and form their own visual image from their vantage point as they pass" (p. xi).

Cable and Maley clearly conducted lengthy research in preparing this volume, and they have successfully anticipated and answered just about any question that might arise in the course of travel. More than just ecology and agriculture (their respective areas of study), the authors have delved into commerce, culture, eateries, education, geography, history, religion, sports, weather, and many other topics of interest. A typical entry might tell about the owners of the farm visible to the north, the story of a statue near a rest stop, the habits of particular birds that might be sighted along a stretch of road, or a brief history of a town on or within about thirty miles of the highway.

My initial reaction to the layout of the book, initially tracing the route westward from Kansas City but including references to significant features that are described in greater detail in the eastbound portion, seemed a bit redundant and energy intensive. Before long, however, it became clear that the authors certainly must have struggled with the design before deciding on this layout. To combine all the features in one straight read-through, from east to west, would mean that travelers coming from Colorado would, of necessity, have to read the book in reverse. Therefore, the division is necessary, although the eastward "half" of the volume is shorter than the westward segment.

Factual errors noted in the text were minimal. However, the section on the capitol in Topeka will need revision for future editions. The authors, speaking of the copper dome, say that "wings were added to the rotunda section in the shape of a cross, reflecting the strong role religion played in the state" (p. 21). In fact, the wings of the capital were the first structures to be built, the east wing during the late 1860s and early 1870s and the west wing beginning in 1878. These wings were briefly attached by a hallway referred to as the "cave of the winds" before work on the rotunda and the north and south wings began in 1884. Also, the statue atop the dome points specifically to the North Star.

Another error, in reference to the Kansas Speedway, noted that its grandstand can hold more than eighty thousand people, "a crowd larger than the population of all but four Kansas towns" (p. 5). Lawrence and Olathe need to be added to the list of Wichita, Overland Park, Topeka, and Kansas City.

University of Kansas scholars might feel slighted to observe that the authors mark this institution by its basketball prowess, whereas Kansas State University's intellectual accomplishments are illuminated under the section about "Manhattan."

The main problem with this book is that the authors' writing style at times shifts annoyingly from adult readers to young children. For example, following a brief biography of Walter Chrysler, the authors suggest, in Weekly Reader fashion, "Maybe you are driving a car that bears his name" (p. 88). Similarly, following a discussion of bison herds on the plains, they encourage us to "try to imagine what it must have been like when millions of bison roamed this land" (p. 145).

Overall, however, this book provides a worthy overview of Kansas along its main shipping corridor. Travelers on I-70 will learn a great number of fun and interesting facts about the state if they keep this volume readily available in their glove boxes.

Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854–2000

by Craig Miner

xvii + 552 pages, illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index.

Kansas is fortunate. Any Kansan who doubts that ought to read this marvelous book and then count it as one of his or her blessings. This may be the best single-volume history available for any state, and it deserves to become a model for state histories to follow.

Not least of the reasons is that Kansas achieves the chronological balance that few other state histories even attempt. Moving with steady pace from the passionate era of Bleeding Kansas through the last years of the century just ended, it allotls fully a quarter of its pages to the post-World War II period. Holding it all together is an imaginative and effective narrative structure that turns on a series of "isolated historical moments that were pivotal in taking Kansas in a direction that could have been otherwise."

Quantrill's 1863 raid on Lawrence is one of those moments—an obvious one at that—but it takes Miner's retelling to make that familiar story as pivotal as it is compelling. In the same way, he introduces his readers to dozens of more recent if less familiar equivalents, each of them another signal that Kansas reached a crossroads and made its choice. Truman Capote introduced us to the one that occurred in 1965, when Richard Hickock and Perry Smith were hanged for killing the Clutter family. Exactly twenty years after that, the legislature cleared the way for both liquor by the drink and parimutual gambling, the state opened its first nuclear power plant, and a long-debated oil and gas severance tax was in place. Miner eloquently and persuasively explains why and how each of these meant just as much to shaping Kansas as did its experience with Quantrill's bloody raiders.

Although he has little option but to depend almost entirely upon primary sources for the recent past, Miner has consciously chosen to work from the primary sources almost everywhere. Not since William Connelley published five volumes of A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans back in 1918 has anyone tried to do that for Kansas, and Miner demonstrates what they thereby have missed, including those tiny pieces that perfectly illuminate a very large point. Consider, in February 1941 the busiest intersection in the state was at the juncture of Central and Broadway in Wichita, with fifty-five thousand cars zipping past every day. What could better measure the impact of the im-

pending world war? This may: when the war did come and Boeing–Wichita was turning out B-29 bombers around the clock, its switchboard had to handle seventy thousand phone calls each day.

A similar attention to detail enriches Miner's remarkable balance in describing some of the most contentious recent disputes in a state long given to conflict. The argument over building the Wolf Creek nuclear plant is one. The debate over turning a portion of the Flint Hills into a prairie park is another. On these and other questions, Miner presents both sides thoroughly; he even takes both sides seriously.

Craig Miner is right in arguing why local history deserves to be taken no less seriously: because it is from their shared local past that we will find direction, if we find it at all. For Kansans, that direction has been to face the day, like their state flower, and [survive] in their rough cheeriness as it does in the heat of summer when seemingly all else fades. They have done so largely because they have believed consistently in the knowability and applicability of morality and have pursued their belief in improbability, if not in perfectability, of the human species and its society, even at the risk of great ridicule by cynics.

Which is why Kansas is fortunate.

Reviewed by Danney Goble, professor of classics and letters, University of Oklahoma.