Isolated, ignorant, suspicious of outsiders, and resistant to interference: this is the stereotype of the rural residents of the Ozarks that is often used in analyses of the historical and cultural interactions of the region, especially when explaining why Ozarkers have defied government edicts and programs. Blake Perkins uncovers the basis for this rural opposition and antigovernment attitude and finds that the grounds for Ozarkers’ disputes with those in authority are often reasonable and logical. Using a microhistorical approach focusing on the locale of the Arkansas Ozarks, Perkins shows how the area’s populist sentiments have evolved from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century.

The rise of populism in the Arkansas Ozarks began shortly after the Civil War. Before the war, the area was populated by small farm freeholders and scattered rural towns. The inhabitants continued to hold a frontier mind-set, valuing self-sufficiency and egalitarian principles. Modernization arrived with the establishment of the railroads. Initially, the railroad was welcomed by many rural farmers who hoped to have their goods transported to wider markets and thus improve their economic prospects.

However, the incursion of the outside world into the Ozarks resulted in the extraction of the region’s resources at cut-rate prices. Perkins explains, “Unpredictable and speculative market prices, vicious cycles of merchant credit, exorbitant freight rates charged by railroad companies and other middle men, and the burdens of regressive taxation soon had many small farmers in the rural Ozarks questioning the fairness of the new economic environment” (p. 16).

Far from being antigovernment, the average citizen looked first to the state and then to the federal government to mitigate economic hardship. Though political and fraternal groups formed to address Ozarkers’ concerns, no meaningful change materialized. While the common farmer felt the financial squeeze under the conditions of modernization, those with political clout or industrial connections benefited. This unequal experience became a recurring pattern throughout the next century, leading to a deep distrust of economic development and government policies.

Perkins begins with the most persistent archetype of the hillbilly: the moonshiners. As he explains, a bushel of corn brought only a few cents at market, but when distilled into liquor, its value increased twentyfold. For many farmers with poor soil, the cash earned from their home brew was the only way that they could sustain their farms. Not surprisingly, they resented the destruction of their meager earnings as the government imposed legal restrictions on distilling. Furthermore, those from more prosperous backgrounds could apply for a distilling license from the state, and it was in their interest to eliminate competition.

Further resentment was stoked by the conscription of young men into World War I. Many rural Ozarkers considered it a rich man’s war and an unwanted foreign entanglement. The loss of their young men caused true hardship for the poorest farm families. Since the draft boards were run by the local privileged class, this situation created even more discord between the haves and have-nots in the region.

The distinctions between the well connected and the less so were again highlighted during the efforts to eradicate Texas tick disease by requiring farmers to dip their cattle in liquid pesticide. The dipping vats were located close to large, prosperous landholders, costing smaller farmers transportation fees in addition to the dipping tax.

Moonshining, conscription, and tick dipping all fueled a populist defiance of government control among the common folk, especially as the enforcement of these measures was overseen by the local elite. Ironically, in the second half of the twentieth century, the same class that had prospered under previous government programs now resisted the changes proposed as part of the war on poverty. In this case, aid went directly to those in need, bypassing the control of the region’s elites. This system threatened the status quo of their advantage over a “malleable, low-wage workforce” (p. 8).

Perkins has meticulously researched the development of populism and the resulting defiance of the yeomanry of the Arkansas Ozarks. He makes a strong argument that the resistance to government power was actually an intraregional affair between the common folk and those from higher economic and social classes. By avoiding generalities, the author breaks through easy stereotypes to arrive at the specific circumstances that led to the development of the conservative Ozarker mindset.

Reviewed by Rachel Besara, director of the Ozark Studies Institute and associate dean of libraries, Missouri State University, Springfield.
Noted critic and curator Paul Chaat Smith (Comanche) closes Officially Indian with a fictive conversation between the United States and Native Americans “imaginary and real, past and present,” in which the United States tells its indigenous citizens, “without you, there is no us” (p. 165). The pages that precede this claim prove its truth. The United States was born in Native America, and grew to maturity, and continental dominion, by driving Native peoples from their homelands and forcing cultural change. That the conquest remains incomplete, that many of the peoples so treated persist and thrive, is important, but Cécile Ganteaume, associate curator at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., where the Americans exhibition related to this book will run until January 1, 2022, is after something else. She avers that as the United States spread over the land, its government created abstract, idealized images of Indians to deploy as positive symbols of American identity and democracy. This was no small feat, and it entailed no small amount of collective amnesia, cherry-picking, and stereotyping. For the most part, Ganteaume allows the images tell the story, and the result is by turns painful, shameful, triumphant, beautiful, weird, and, ultimately, enlightening.

Following a brief foreword by Colin Calloway and an introduction by Ganteaume which previews some of the major themes of the book and exhibit, most notably that America’s use of Indian imagery distinguishes it from other nations and defines the nation for its citizens, Officially Indian presents photographs of a breathtaking array of objects and symbolic images. A brief essay accompanies each photograph. Some of the essays are rather matter-of-fact, while others delve deeply into the intertwined histories of representation and settler colonialism. Each situates its particular artifact within its respective historical context. The collection is impressive for its chronological range, from the early sixteenth century to the early twenty-first, but even more for the diversity of objects it analyzes, from cartouches to coins, flags to photographs, stamps to statues, and helmets to helicopters. I do wish that the captions accompanying the images noted their object’s size, along the lines of a catalogue of an art exhibition, such as Ganteaume’s Infinity of Nations, but this is a minor concern.

The state use of Indian symbols shares some elements with the wider, and more studied, trend of the use of similar images and themes in popular culture. The images that Americans use of Native Americans trade in positive as well as negative stereotypes, and often bear little to no connection to actual Native–U.S. relations in a given era. While these symbols were (and are) promulgated by an empire that has continuously assaulted Native sovereignty in various ways since its inception, it is an oversimplification to suggest that the images are solely deployed by a colonialist power. In the 1930s, the government commissioned multiple Native artists, including Allan Houser (Chiricahua Apache) to paint large murals in the new Department of the Interior Building. Houser’s Breaking Camp during Wartime brilliantly combines elements of the Western tradition and symbols of Apache civilization. Speaking of Apaches, many people are probably aware that the most powerful attack helicopter in the American arsenal bears the name Apache. However, they may not know that White Mountain Apaches have been present at the dedication of every generation of this fearsome aircraft, even offering blessings on behalf of the machines and their pilots. There are gems of knowledge like this throughout Officially Indian. This beautiful book will prove useful for scholars and laypeople alike as it forces them to consider issues of identity, representation, and power in a diverse, sprawling, and contradictory republic.

Reviewed by Matthew Jennings, associate professor of history and political science, Middle Georgia State University, Macon.
Populism and Imperialism: Politics, Culture, and Foreign Policy in the American West, 1890–1900

by Nathan Jessen

x + 331 pages, illustrations, notes, index.

In Populism and Imperialism, Nathan Jessen traces the ways in which Populists within the United States addressed the potential and reality of U.S. foreign intervention during the 1890s and then the immediate aftermath. Jessen centers his argument largely upon three western states, Nebraska, Colorado, and Washington, contending that these case studies encapsulate the concerns of the West as a whole.

In short, Jessen argues that Populists in the West were a conglomeration of different reform impulses that included “free silver” monetary policy, concerns about corruption and favoritism in government, and alarm that more of U.S. life was being controlled by big business and (international) finance. These issues shaped state and national politics in the early 1890s. Jessen traces the political movements in Nebraska, Colorado, and Washington, showing how local politics and individual personalities impacted the ways in which Populists attempted to gain power (usually amid deeply fractured state politics). The end result was, as Jessen states, “the emergence of a new party [that] dramatically shifted the region’s political landscape” (p. 65). As Populists gained political power, they pushed Democrats and Republicans to at least pay attention to Populist concerns and sometimes to adopt a portion of the Populist political agenda.

However, Republican and Democratic co-optation of some Populist issues meant that many people who were sympathetic to Populism remained in the Republican and Democratic Parties, with the Populists remaining a small third party. This situation culminated in the 1896 presidential election, in which William McKinley defeated William Jennings Bryan (who was more partial to Populist concerns). In the wake of the election, the potential annexation of Hawaii and the War of 1898 put further pressure upon Populists and caused additional fractures in what was already a fragile coalition. The issue of what to do about Hawaii, Cuba, and the Philippines was a watershed moment, as Populists struggled to balance U.S. nationalism with their suspicion of big government and finance. The fissures generally occurred around issues of expansion (if the United States continued its territorial expansion, where would it end?); the consent of the governed (undemocratic systems were a threat to democracy at home because colonized people were virtual slaves); and concern that not only would the military incur expenses that would be passed on to the taxpayer but also a few wealthy people would end up possessing the land overseas (shutting out ordinary people from access). With the advent of war, Populist politicians had to balance their concerns with the demands of patriotism, as any opposition to the war was often viewed as inherently unpatriotic.

With this situation in mind, Jessen turns to the election of 1900, in which Bryan and McKinley again faced one another. In this election, the pro- and anti-imperialists continued to wage verbal battles, and Jessen points out that both sides used international events such as the Boxer Rebellion and the Boer War to paint their least favored candidate as the enemy of American freedoms. In the West, Populists and Democrats were generally allied against McKinley, whom they saw as supporting international money interests through his administration’s support of the gold standard, dispatching of U.S. troops to quell the Boxer Rebellion, and backing of the British against the Boer settlers. When Bryan again lost in 1900, it was a failure that proved to be the death knell of the Populist movement.

While Populism and Imperialism has many strengths, most notably Jessen’s connection of national concerns to local politics, the splintered nature of the Populist movement means that Jessen focuses a great deal on individual congressmen and state leaders. On the one hand, this approach personalizes the story, allowing Jessen to include the interpersonal dynamics that are often at the heart of major political movements and decisions. On the other hand, his emphasis on tracing fractures within the Populist movement means that he sometimes loses sight of why these ruptures were important. While Jessen’s stated focus is on the West, the composite nature of Populism itself pulls at that boundary. At times westerners had their own concerns that were discrete from those of the eastern Populists, while at other times they were united. Overall, Populism and Imperialism is a valuable contribution to the field of U.S. politics, even as it reflects (perhaps a bit too much) the unruliness of its subject matter.

Reviewed by Karen Phoenix, clinical assistant professor, Washington State University, Pullman.

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Justice Robert H. Jackson’s Unpublished Opinion in Brown v. Board: Conflict, Compromise, and Constitutional Interpretation

by David M. O’Brien

xxi + 229 pages, illustrations, notes, indexes
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2017, cloth $34.95.

In the relatively little-known collection of Supreme Court opinions written but never issued, among the most significant is Justice Robert H. Jackson’s concurrence in Brown v. Board of Education. On May 17, 1954, when Chief Justice Earl Warren announced his opinion for the court in the landmark ruling striking down racial segregation in public schools, he made a point of emphasizing that the justices spoke as one on this contentious issue. There were no dissents and no concurrences. Warren’s Brown opinion has achieved canonical status not because it offers particularly powerful insights, legal reasoning, or rhetoric—the opinion falls short on each of these measures—but because it changed history. Brown pushed aside a half century of legal precedent, sparked a massive resistance movement of the white South, and signaled the new direction that the court was about to undertake behind the leadership of its new chief justice. Warren’s opinion, in other words, was significant more for what it did than for what it said. The same cannot be said of Justice Jackson’s unpublished opinion. As a concurrence, it would have done little, but it had a lot to say. Jackson struggled with the legal issues, and he strove to locate the words and images that would capture the significance of the court’s actions.

In Justice Robert H. Jackson’s Unpublished Opinion in Brown v. Board, David M. O’Brien tells the history behind Jackson’s concurrence. Jackson wrote six drafts of his opinion in late 1953 and early 1954. (O’Brien includes the final version as an appendix.) The final version is a striking document, notable in particular for its tone of pessimism and fatalism. It opens on an ominous note, describing the nation since the Civil War as “hesitating between two worlds—one dead, the other powerless to be born” (a quotation from Matthew Arnold) (p. 123). War and constitutional amendments ended slavery, but racial inequality remained, Jackson noted. To now uproot entrenched “social customs,” such as racial segregation in schools, required nothing less than “a substantial reconstruction of legal institution and of society” (p. 123). Jackson sought to assure his readers that he was sensitive to the segregationist position: “We cannot deny the sincerity and passion with which many feel that their blood, lineage and culture are worthy of protection by enforced separatism of races” (p. 123). He also insisted that declaring segregation in schools unconstitutional required the court to abandon “conventional material of constitutional interpretation,” and he spent considerable time identifying the obstacles that court-ordered desegregation would face (p. 127).

Only after dedicating the bulk of his opinion to explaining all the reasons why the court should not issue a desegregation ruling did Jackson say, in a brief and anticlimactic conclusion, why he was writing a concurrence and not a dissent: race was no longer a reasonable classification for schooling; “present-day conditions” justified the court’s holding (p. 132).

Soon after Jackson wrote his final draft, a heart attack put him in the hospital for the next six weeks. Warren visited him to discuss the Brown decision. At some point, Jackson decided not issue his concurrence. In one of the more dramatic moments in the court’s history, Jackson left the hospital on May 17 so that all nine justices would be on the bench when Brown was announced.

Why did Jackson not publish his concurrence? O’Brien suggests that Jackson felt that Warren’s opinion was adequate and that he recognized the value of a single, unanimous opinion. He also notes that a lengthy critique of Jackson’s opinion by one of his clerks likely had an influence on him.

The book defies easy categorization. Between its covers one finds a short biography of Jackson, an inside-the-court account of Brown, six drafts of his opinion in late 1953 and early 1954, a close reading of Jackson’s concurrence, and mini-essays on topics such as the writing practices of different justices, the role of clerks on the Supreme Court, and theories of constitutional interpretation. O’Brien, a political scientist and the author of Storm Center: The Supreme Court in American Politics, an indispensable one-volume study now in its eleventh edition, is a font of information and anecdotes about the court. His book has the feel of a series of loosely structured lectures, with the narrative thread wandering at times, sometimes circling back on itself, and sometimes venturing off into some related issue. This slim volume overflows with fascinating details about Justice Jackson and the Supreme Court.

This collection of essays explores women’s role in professionalizing food production and distribution in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and the Netherlands during the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. In ten chapters, divided into three sections labeled “Education,” “Experts,” and “Extension,” the authors survey women’s work and activism as individuals and in groups that simultaneously promoted better food production and tested gender boundaries in agriculture.

In the first section, “Education,” readers learn about the efforts of the Langham Place group, a remarkable band of nineteenth-century middle-class feminists in Great Britain who sought through their publication, The Englishwoman’s Review, to increase the acceptance of farming as a respectable occupation for women. Although their arguments rested upon traditional ideas about distinctions between fieldwork and the type of farming that was appropriate for women, authors Karen Sayer and Nicola Verdon argue the Langham Place group laid the groundwork for the “New Women” of the Progressive Era to find a place in professional agriculture.

Historian Joan Jensen’s biography of Emily Hoag, an assistant economist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) illustrates both the possibilities and the limitations that women encountered in their new roles. According to Jensen, Hoag “was the first woman to have a place in the emerging fields of rural sociology and agricultural economics” (p. 64). However, Hoag “disappears from history” (p. 63) in part because of the USDA’s shift in emphasis toward women and home economics instead of women as agricultural producers. Margreet Van Der Burg’s article demonstrates a similar shift in the Netherlands when “farm household management” (p. 85) became the centerpiece of women’s role in the agricultural modernization movement there.

Women’s work as specialists in food production and marketing is the focus of the second section of the book. Whether the women analyzed in this section worked as poultry experts for the Montana state government, academic researchers studying the production and marketing of apples for the Massachusetts Agricultural College (MAC), or wives and mothers who founded the first Women’s Institute in Canada, their collective efforts contributed to improvements in the quality and efficiency of food production and a better understanding of the connections between producers and consumers. Lorian Jefferson is a perfect example of the lack of recognition received by women for contributing their expertise. Despite her education and research, MAC assigned Jefferson a job title with “clerical status” (p. 118).

Women’s dissemination of information about new ideas and research in food production assumed many forms in rural areas, including radio programs, women’s clubs, home demonstration agents, and publications. In the third section of the book, readers learn about how Mabel Webb’s popular post–World War I radio program, Farmhouse Cookery, broadcast food expertise into rural homes in Great Britain, how racism and segregation intersected with the work of African American home demonstration agents in Arkansas, and how Women’s Institute meetings in rural Ontario sometimes provided women with a “first step toward gaining access to education, community activism and political power” (p. 185). The publication by Frances Densmore, in collaboration with Mary Warren English, of Uses of Plants by the Chippewa shared important research concerning Native American plants and foodways with the public even as it raised questions about the exploitation of indigenous culture.

This informative collection of essays will be useful to agricultural historians, gender historians, and others more broadly interested in the history of rural America. Most importantly in terms of women’s history, this book focuses attention on women in rural areas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; most examinations of women in this period highlight those in urban areas to explain transformative changes in women’s lives involving education, work, and professional training. The possibilities for additional research on rural women are many; for example, women as landowners are only lightly considered in this volume. In what ways did female landowners modernize and professionalize the use of the land for production of food? This collection should stimulate further study of such topics, even as it broadens our understanding of early-twentieth-century women’s work and agriculture.

Reviewed by Sara Brooks Sundberg, professor of history, University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg.
To get a historical sense of the American West means engaging with a cultural past that is peppered with frontier myths. An archetypal “West” narrative has long followed the crisp, simple lines of the frontier. Although historians have followed these contours too, some have begun to trace new interpretive trails, contesting the old stories to reveal an American West that is more diverse, complicated, and often violent.

In *The Perfect Fence*, Lyn Ellen Bennett and Scott Abbott focus on one of the most iconic technologies of the West: barbed wire. The authors argue that this technology’s storied past highlights an interdisciplinary set of relationships between material culture and commodities, between pastoral ideals and industrial landscapes, and between confinement and openness (social and environmental). Bennett and Abbott write, “The history of the invention, manufacture, and use of barbed wire is fascinating. Even more interesting to us is the question of what barbed wire came to mean and the ways those meanings were constructed” (p. 13).

*The Perfect Fence* traces this history of barbed wire through a cultural-technical-environmental lens in two parts. Part One follows the origins of barbed wire and the evolution of its role in the West: first as a technology to keep cattle in and rustlers out, then as a commodity to be sold and purchased, and ultimately as a solution to land debates that made and remade boundaries. This new device to “prevent stock from pushing against and through wire fences” made Henry Martin Rose’s early barbed wire one of the most ubiquitous technologies of the American West. Its popularity encouraged other inventors in DeKalb, Illinois, such as Joseph Glidden, Isaac Ellwood, and Jacob Haish, to quickly file their own patents in the 1880s to gain an economic edge on their competitors. Numerous agricultural periodicals touted the simple effectiveness of the wire, boosting the benefits for ranchers and farmers. However, just as many saw barbed wire as a threat to their lands and communities. Bennett and Abbott document this growing backlash with editorials from local papers throughout the West. Newspapers such as the *San Saba News* (Texas) in 1880 proclaimed that “the erection of a fence of barbed wire is a declaration of war; it is the expression of the farmer against the stockman; the pectinated wire speaks to the cow and says, ‘I forbid you to exist’” (p. 31).

In Part Two, the authors explore how various cultural motifs, commercial promotions, and technological improvements elevated barbed wire to an American West icon. This move, Bennett and Abbott insist, came largely from the “visual and verbal images with which barbed wire was sold” (p. 31) and the “visual and verbal images with which barbed wire was sold to the consumer” (p. 71). Through metaphor, advertisements, trade manuals, western literature, and cinema, barbed wire embodied the mythic frontier that continued to shape American identities throughout the twentieth century. Bennett and Abbott also highlight the influence of barbed wire on the “New West” of the mid-twentieth century by connecting the fence’s cultural potency with its practicality to better understand Native American dispossession and relocation, Japanese American internment during World War II, domestic nuclear testing during the Cold War, and its use as a barricade along the southwestern borderlands.

*The Perfect Fence* is a compelling study of how a well-known artifact that at first glance seems benign can tell a complex story of culture, technology, and region. Readers of *Kansas History* will appreciate the authors’ focus on the Great Plains as part of a barbed-wire West. Although well written and expertly researched, *The Perfect Fence* could have benefited from a more detailed conclusion to tie its multiple interpretive strands together. Nevertheless, “barbed wire was more than a vicious fence... it was a meaningful thing” (p. 6).

Reviewed by David D. Vail, assistant professor of history, University of Nebraska at Kearney.