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Review of *Nebraska Moments*. By Donald R. Hickey, Susan A. Wunder, and John R. Wunder

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Nebraska Moments. By Donald R. Hickey, Susan A. Wunder, and John R. Wunder. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. xix + 403 pp. Maps, photographs, index. \$23.95 paper.

The original version of *Nebraska Moments*, authored by Don Hickey in 1992, admirably filled an important niche as an accessible, eminently readable introduction to many of the highlights of Nebraska history. Susan and John Wunder have thoroughly revised and updated this delightful book for a new generation of readers. The changes to the earlier edition are substantial, including a number of entirely new

chapters. The book opens with one of them, on the ill-fated Spanish Villasur expedition, which allows the Wunders to explore the pre-Louisiana Purchase era of Nebraska history. All five final chapters—on the Kearney Arch, the rape and murder of Brandon Teena, the “Big Red” football phenomenon, the 1986 Kay Orr-Helen Boosalis governor’s race, and a Malcolm X-Gerald Ford essay—are new, as are chapters covering Nebraska’s leading visual artists and early twentieth-century anti-immigrant attitudes and racial intolerance, the latter focused on the 1923 *Meyer v. Nebraska* Supreme Court case.

Much of Hickey’s original material has also been extensively expanded or altered. A chapter on “Nebraska’s Scientists” adds discussions of Harold Edgerton and George Beadle to Hickey’s essay on Loren Eiseley, while the chapter on World War II POW camps has been enlarged with a discussion of the North Platte Canteen and other WWII home front themes. Bess Streeter Aldrich now appears with other important Nebraska literary figures. The chapter on Louise Pound includes other members of the remarkable Pound family. Father Flanagan and Boys Town share billing with Progressive Era children’s rights advocates Grace and Edith Abbott, while Charles Bryan accompanies Charles Dawes as Nebraska’s vice-presidential candidates.

Overall, this new edition is significantly broader and more comprehensive than the original. Women and minorities play a more prominent role. Multicultural components have been strengthened, partly by loosening the standards for who qualifies as a “Nebraskan” to include individuals like Malcolm X and Aaron Douglas. If many of these changes are improvements, there are also losses and a few missed opportunities along the way. A chapter on Ernie Chambers, a Nebraska original if ever there was one, would have been a tempting choice. The original edition’s lack of notes and bibliography might have been addressed by brief chapter reading lists. Most of all, this is a substantially (nearly 50 percent) longer book, with a somewhat heavier, “textbookish” feel that lacks Hickey’s brevity and limpid, concise, seemingly effortless prose style. Don’t

throw away your original copy if you have one. But by all means add this new edition to your Nebraska history shelf.

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