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Review of Nebraska Moments: Glimpses of Nebraska's Past

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Nebraska Moments: Glimpses of Nebraska's Past. By Donald R. Hickey. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992. Preface, photos, index. viii + 300 pp. \$30.00.

Nebraska Moments, by Donald Hickey, professor of history at Wayne State College in Nebraska, is a collection of thirty-nine essays about the state's past. The essays, which range in length from six to twelve pages, discuss personalities, institutions, places, and events that have shaped the state's history. Biographical sketches of such political figures as David Butler (Nebraska's first Governor), J. Sterling Morton, William Jennings Bryan, and George W. Norris; western and military heroes such as Buffalo Bill Cody and John J. Pershing; Native Americans such as Red Cloud and Standing Bear; and intellectual figures such as Louise Pound, Willa Cather, Mari Sandoz, John G. Neihardt, and Loren Eiseley capture both the character and the distinctiveness of a number of

leading personalities who have contributed to Nebraska's social, political, and cultural heritage. Essays on the founding of old Bellevue, the Oregon Trail, Fort Kearny, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Pony Express, Nebraska statehood, Fort Robinson, the Union Pacific Railroad, homesteading, Nebraska's ethnic heritage, doctors and disease in the nineteenth century, the rise of Omaha, Arbor Day, the blizzard of 1888, the Nebraska National Forest, agrarian protest, World War I, Boys Town, the development of the Nebraska State Capitol, the unicameral legislature, Nebraska's POW camps during World War II, Offutt Air Force Base, and the High Plains aquifer, focus on themes and events that illuminate Nebraska's frontier heritage, its rich cultural diversity, the rise of urban centers, and the role Nebraska has played in the general development of the United States.

The major strength of this volume is that the essays are interesting and very well written. Each essay stands alone and provides readers with a thoughtful introduction to one of a wide variety of topics relating to Nebraska history. Although the author credits the work of other historians in the introduction, scholars will be disappointed by the lack of documentation for the essays and by the absence of a bibliography. Also, the reader would have benefitted had the author attempted to relate each essay to broad themes that have structured interpretations of Nebraska's past. Still, I can think of no better place for students and general readers to begin their introduction to Nebraska history than this volume. This welcome contribution to our understanding of Nebraska is a fun book to read.

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