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Review of *The Great Plains during World War II* By R. Douglas Hurt

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impressive as his work is, it does have one major flaw: its neglect of the Great Plains, a major sector of the West. In order to correct this imbalance, Douglas Hurt presents a multifaceted history of the region during the war. *The Great Plains during World War II* is a thorough analysis of the period from the war's beginning to its conclusion.

Hurt fills his study with the voices of the people of the shortgrass country as he examines the politics of war, the impact of a wartime economy, and the social changes the war brought to the Plains. His best chapters are those that distinguish the Great Plains experience from that of the rest of the country. The war's impact on the Great Plains is reflected also in Hurt's attention to the military presence in the form of bases and training facilities, which brought an economic boom to the region. Military personnel had money to spend, as did the federal government. Concomitant with soldiers and bases were internment camps for Japanese Americans and prisoners of war, especially those from Germany and Italy. The contrast of local attitudes towards prisoners of war and their own fellow Americans is striking.

Hurt is determined to leave no one out of his largely social history of the period, whether he is writing about women, African Americans, or Native Americans. He does a fine job in this regard, though at times the density of his study interferes with the themes he attempts to explore. His ability to make this truly a study of the Great Plains without it spilling over into the Midwest, the Rocky Mountain West, or even the South is, however, a dilemma. On numerous occasions his evidence for a specific point originates from one of these border regions, a circumstance difficult to avoid since many sources inevitably arise from outside the Great Plains. Nevertheless, this is a small problem, even if a bit jarring when reading a source from Albuquerque or Kansas City. More importantly, Hurt's study is a solid contribution to western history for he reveals that the Great Plains did not transform in ways similar to those of the Far West. In fact, according to

The Great Plains during World War II. By R. Douglas Hurt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008. xiii + 507 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

The historiography of the American West during the Second World War is still largely dominated by the works of Gerald D. Nash. As

Hurt, the region remained predominately agricultural at the end of the War.

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