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Review of *The Great Plains: Environment and Culture* Edited by Brian W. Blouet and Frederick C. Luebke

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Great Plains: Environment and Culture,
Edited by Brian W. Blouet and Frederick
C. Luebke. Lincoln: University of Nebraska

Press. 1979. Maps, graphs, illustrations, notes. xxviii + 246 pp. \$15.95.

This collection of twelve essays presents a selection of the offerings to the 1977 symposium on the culture heritage of the plains sponsored by the Center for Great Plains Studies.

It was probably Walter Prescott Webb's famous *The Great Plains* (1931) that sparked interest in the study of the region. This interest has gathered momentum during the last two decades and has stimulated many publications on various aspects of the plains and its subdivisions. The study of the region is obviously not the sole preserve of any one discipline; Webb, Kraenzel, and others have shown that an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to unravel the region's development. The interrelationship between environment and culture, between attitudes and technology, between groups and individuals is aptly stated by Leslie Hewes in an introductory quotation.

A volume of essays written by archaeologists, geographers, historians, and sociologists runs the danger of becoming merely an assortment of papers whose only common thread is that they discuss the same region from a variety of different angles. No such danger arises here; without significant exception the chapters all show a sustained appreciation of spatial and temporal perspectives, and all are carefully attuned into the wavelength of cultural adaptation. To weld such a group of essays into a unified book is no mean task, and the editors are to be congratulated upon their success in producing a readable and instructive volume. The value of the work is enhanced by the introduction, in which Frederick Luebke discusses the twelve offerings that follow and relates them to each other, to their disciplines, and to the overall purpose of the work.

In a short review it is impossible to comment in detail on all the papers, and it is inappropriate to pick out what must be small points with which one might disagree. However, the quality of a few of the illustrations must be criticized. Although the authors are to be com-

plimented on the appropriateness of their photographs, maps, and diagrams, in some cases the value of this material is reduced significantly by the need of a magnifying glass to read the printing on some maps and the key to certain diagrams—for example, those on pages 1, 13, 36, 113, and 134. One appreciates the limits provided by page size, but in some cases the problem could have been overcome by putting the maps on a whole page.

This blemish aside, the overall impression is one of a scholarly and valuable addition to the growing literature on the Great Plains. One only regrets that additional papers from the symposium could not have been included. The volume will be of value to students of the region in a range of disciplines, especially in these days of increasing interest in interdisciplinary studies.

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