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Editor's Introduction- Spring 2003

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In this issue we introduce two new features to *Great Plains Quarterly*. In the past, the journal has focused almost exclusively on printing previously unpublished work written especially for *Quarterly*. This issue includes two articles that break from this tradition.

With the kind permission of the University of Nebraska Press, we are publishing an excerpt from Gary E. Moulton's *The Lewis and Clark Journals: An Epic of Discovery, The Abridgment of the Definitive Nebraska Edition*. For over twenty years, Professor Moulton has edited and annotated the journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition, producing the most accurate and readable account of this historic event. This year, the University of Nebraska Press has issued his abridged version of the thirteen-volume set of original journals. Moulton has assisted us in selecting excerpts from the first two chapters of this edition that focus on their travels across the Plains; an abridged version of the abridged edition if you will. We are including these excerpts for several reasons. First, we believe the content and form of Moulton's work deserves the widest possible audience. In addition to the journal entries of Captains Meriwether Lewis and

William Clark, Moulton introduces readers to the writings of the enlisted men: John Ordway, Charles Floyd, Patrick Gass, and Joseph Whitehouse (all the extant journals of the expedition). Moulton also provides a thorough explication of each entry. A second reason we wanted to include this abridgment is the excerpts introduce readers to the beginning of the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition, giving a clearer context to understand the rhetoric that will surround the commemoration activities occurring over the next two years. Finally, we hope these excerpts will encourage others to find ways of using primary sources and original research with the same skill and intelligence exhibited by Moulton.

A second "non-traditional" essay in this issue is an excerpt from a forthcoming biography of Grace Abbott (1878-1939), *The Children's Champion* by John Sorensen. In this work, Sorensen, tells the story of this young woman from Grand Island, Nebraska and how she went on to make the kind of contribution to the rights of children, who some have compared to the contribution Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., made to civil rights. The first chapter of the story, "A Prairie Childhood," is told

in the words of her sister, Edith Abbott (1876-1957), herself a significant figure in the history of social work education. We included Sorensen's work because it illuminates an important figure from the Great Plains who has received far too little attention given the enormous difference she has made to American life. Also, the excerpt printed here was written in such a way as to bring to life the day-to-day experiences of young people on the Plains at the end of the nineteenth century. We want to issue a special thanks to the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer and the Nebraska Historical Society for helping us obtain the photographs that accompany Sorensen's essay.

This issue also includes Karen De Bres' essay, "Come to the 'Champagne Air': Changing Promotional Images of the Kansas Climate, 1854-1900." The manuscript was originally

presented at the Center for Great Plains Studies 2002 annual symposium, "Great Plains Migrations." Her work sheds light on an important part of the migration experience in early Kansas settlement.

We hope these new features of *Great Plains Quarterly* meet with the approval of the readership. Given the mission of the Center for Great Plain Studies, which is to promote a greater understanding of the people, culture, history, and environment of the Great Plains through a variety of means, we feel including scholarship in different forms fits well within the boundaries of what *Quarterly* should publish.

CHARLES A. BRAITHWAITE
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