

many comments on financial woes. Lindberg-Seyerstedt concludes that it was partly a shortage of money that prevented the Tates and Ford from "settling in their respective paradises" (a Southern country house and a villa in Provence), but she adds that their lack of any "fixed abode" might be equally due to "their need to seek the stimulus of fellow artists and writers and ever new milieus" (p. xxxii). The correspondence collected in *A Literary Friendship* gives vibrant testimony to the editor's insight.

--Joan Wylie Hall

***Percyscapes: The Fugue State in Twentieth-Century Southern Fiction.* By Robert W. Rudnicki. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999. Pp. xx + 167, preface, abbreviations, bibliography, index. \$30.00, cloth)**

Readers of modern American literature should be fairly familiar with its frequent concern with the alienation of the self from itself and with that alienation's expression through the trope of flight and return. That fact is the one real trouble in Robert Rudnicki's study of what he describes as the "fugal state" in Southern fiction, because once the observation has been made that the fugue as motif and metaphor characterizes many modernist and postmodernist narratives, much of the ground that Rudnicki covers--the nature of the modern apperception of placelessness, of deracination, of the ubiquitousness of the figure of the isolato--is fairly familiar territory. The truth is that much of what Rudnicki describes as "fugal" has been elsewhere described with fair thoroughness (though in different terms) as the classic theme of escape.

That having been said, though, it must be noted that Rudnicki's pursuit of the motif of the fugal state--a disassociation of self characterized by either (or both) amnesia and flight--in the modern, and most particularly Southern, novel is particular and persuasive, and his terms do offer a relatively fresh way of looking at a much-observed phenomenon. As he describes it, the fugue as motif most often amounts to a quest for escape from the extremes of immanence or transcendence and often functions in a way that produces what might

be best described as a "semiotic bildungsroman," a movement from innocence to experience through a loss of naiveté about the function and meaning of the signs by which we define ourselves and our places. Rudnicki uses Walker Percy's fascination with the functions of language and his fondness for the theme of escape and return as a "heuristic tool" with which to consider the fugue's etymology and connotations in the work of all the writers he considers, and he does seem at his best when he's drawing the structures which connect Percy's use of fugue to the metaphorical and theoretical play of language theory. His exploration of the way in which Percy and other twentieth-century Southern writers describe in their work a "tension between fugal 'goings' and semiotic 'comings'" (p. xiv) is deft and convincing.

Still, while Rudnicki recognizes that "the fugal nature of writing and reading is deeply American, not simply a southern or modernist phenomenon" (p. 33), he is most persuasive in his reading of the Southern novelists which are his central concern. To provide ground against which to argue his thesis about the Southern novel, he traces the progression of this theme forward from Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle, and unfortunately he is here less persuasive. When Rudnicki writes, for instance, "Thus beneath all the optimism even Emerson had a Percean and modernist concern: that we are in danger of being lost in the cosmos. After all, few images more succinctly describe abstraction and deracination than a 'transparent eyeball'" (p. 28), he is clearly going very much against the grain of scholarship concerning the passage and offering a reading with which few other serious readers of Emerson would agree.

Even so, much about his study is intriguing, and Rudnicki offers more than a fair amount of fresh insight into the way in which Walker Percy's use of the fugue as a semiotic construct and metaphor illustrates one of the most persistent motifs in American literature.

--John Blair

***Dictionary of Missouri Biography.* Edited by Lawrence O. Christensen, William E. Foley, Gary R. Kremer, and Kenneth H. Winn. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999. Pp. viii + 832,**

preface, list of contributors, index.
\$49.95, cloth)

The publication of the *Dictionary of Missouri Biography* is a welcome event for those interested in the Show-Me State's history and culture. University of Missouri Press's claim that this is "the most important reference work on Missouri biography to be published in the last half century" (jacket) is justified. Floyd C. Shoemaker's four-volume work *Missouri and Missourians*, published in 1943, is considered the standard reference work on this topic, but it has been out of print for some time. The only newer work that has similar coverage is Dains and Sadler's two-volume *Show Me Missouri Women*, published in the early 1990s, which has the obvious limitation of covering only one half of the population. This volume is an important supplement that updates the existing reference books on the topic.

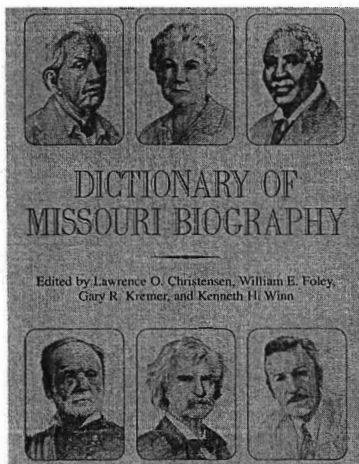
The 724 articles presented here were edited by four authorities on Missouri history who divided the work according to their areas of expertise. William E. Foley (Central Missouri State University) covered the pre-statehood era, Kenneth H. Winn (State Archivist of Missouri) the years from 1821 to 1875, Gary R. Kremer (William Woods University) the years from 1876 to 1925, and Lawrence O. Christensen (University of Missouri, Rolla) the years since 1925. Their stated aim is for the *Dictionary of Missouri Biography* to "serve as an authoritative reference to which scholars, researchers, and general readers can turn for . . . reliable information about noteworthy Missourians . . . based on the best current scholarship" (pp. v-vi). Having written an article for a biographical reference book myself, I know how hard it is to distill a notable person's life into two or three pages of print. Most of the 287 authors of these sketches have managed to do this admirably while writing in what the jacket calls "an easy-to-

read and accessible style."

Only those who were born in Missouri and gained statewide or national prominence or those who "touched" the state in some significant way were included in this volume. (Living persons or those who died after 1993 were ineligible.) The editors endeavored to illustrate the state's cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity through their selections, while attempting to cover all historical periods and geographic regions. As the preface states, the subjects of these biographical sketches "came from all walks of life and achieved distinction or notoriety in diverse arenas" (p. v). The sketches include chronological surveys of their lives, reports of their personalities, and assessments of their significance. At the end of each article there is a short bibliography which will prove useful to those who want to pursue further research. Within each entry, the names of people who have their own articles in the *Dictionary* are printed in bold-faced type, which makes it easy to trace further information on the time period, region, or profession.

From Goodman Ace to Thomas Zimmerman, the parade of subjects is fascinating. Included here are the famous, such as Daniel Boone and Walt Disney, and the infamous, such as Jesse James and "Boss" Tom Pendergast. There are long articles about favorite sons Harry Truman and Mark Twain, but those who are less well known are found here, too. There is an Irish priest who became a Confederate war hero, the founder of the ACLU, a former slave who trained horses, the only Nobel Prize winner born in Missouri, a Kansas City barbecue king, figures prominent in the Sharecroppers' Strike, Native American war leaders, U.S. senators, controversial artists, Civil War nurses, beer brewing families, Spanish territorial governors, mountain men and fur traders, authors, mayors, ragtime, blues, and jazz musicians, entrepreneurs, folksong collectors, and the man who made Washington, Missouri, the corn cob pipe capital of the world, among many other colorful figures.

Two things struck me as especially interesting as I perused these articles. First, many of the people in the *Dictionary* studied law even if they didn't practice professionally. This observation raises a chicken-and-egg question: do people become lawyers because they have natural leadership abilities, or do they develop their leadership abilities by becoming lawyers and then move into positions of



authority? The second thing that struck me was the truth of the stereotype that the western frontier was often a place for people to start over. Many articles mention that the individual or the family in question moved to Missouri to find new opportunities or to get a fresh start after fiscal or personal difficulties occurred in the towns or countries they left behind.

As I read through the sketches, I was also aware of the efforts the editors made to deal with the issues of diversity and inclusion. They had to decide if a book of this type should present a certain percentage of minorities and women, even if there were not as many people in these categories who achieved prominence according to our society's values. Women make up only about fifteen percent of the entries in this work, and a fairly high percentage of them were actors, dancers, or authors, or were known only because they were the wives or mistresses of rich, accomplished, or notorious men. However, while sensational and celebrated women such as "Calamity" Jane or "The Unsinkable Molly Brown" are here, there are also suffragists, social workers, business tycoons, doctors, educators, lawyers, and scientists.

How such a work deals with the constructs of race and ethnicity is also an interesting question. As far as I could tell from a scan of the sketches, a total of about ten percent of the subjects are African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Jews. Trying to designate people as belonging to a particular race or ethnic group is especially problematic in the early history of Missouri when there was a good deal of intermarriage between white males and women of color. Later waves of immigrants from Germany, Ireland, and other European countries were sometimes discriminated against when they first arrived, but when they gained critical mass became part of the establishment themselves. Should they be counted as minorities? On the whole it seems to me that the editors accomplished the difficult feat of balancing diversity concerns constructively.

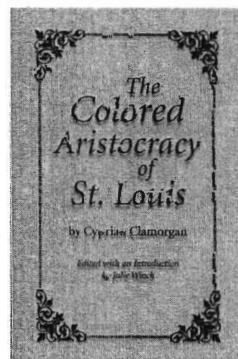
Minor quibbles and controversies aside, however, I can wholeheartedly recommend this book. The price is reasonable for a large hardcover. Many people will want to buy it for their personal collections, since it is enjoyable to read as well as useful for reference. As a practicing reference librarian, I can also unconditionally recommend it as a priority purchase for all libraries within the state of

Missouri as well as all libraries that specialize in genealogy and history. I think it will be the standard reference work on Missouri biography for quite a few years to come.

--Lyn Wolz

The Colored Aristocracy of St. Louis. By Cyprian Clamorgan. Edited by Julie Winch. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999. Pp. xiii + 122, acknowledgments, introduction, "The Clamorgans of St. Louis," annotations, bibliography, index. \$27.50, cloth)

In 1858 when Cyprian Clamorgan published *The Colored Aristocracy of St. Louis*, the city and much of the nation was engulfed in an emotional debate over the future of slavery. The outcome of that debate was of tremendous concern for the nation's free blacks, especially Clamorgan, who recognized that his future was also involved. Born in 1830, Clamorgan was the son of a free black woman and a white man. His father was the son of Jacques Clamorgan, who explored the Louisiana Territory in the late 1700s for the Spanish and French governments and acquired vast royal land claims from the French government in and around St. Louis in 1793 and 1796. Unlike his colleagues who married European or Creole women, J. Clamorgan married and lived exclusively with black women (p. 23). Since his various wives--and he had several--were legally his slaves, he freed them and his children and deeded them real estate in order to keep them from being sold as slaves in the event of his untimely death. C. Clamorgan, who was born in St. Louis, became an orphan while an infant and was placed in the care of white guardians who sent him out of state for an education. When he returned he was educated, articulate, ambitious, and determined to prove to St. Louis' white community that the local black community was a valuable asset and should be recognized as such. *The Colored Aristocracy of St. Louis*



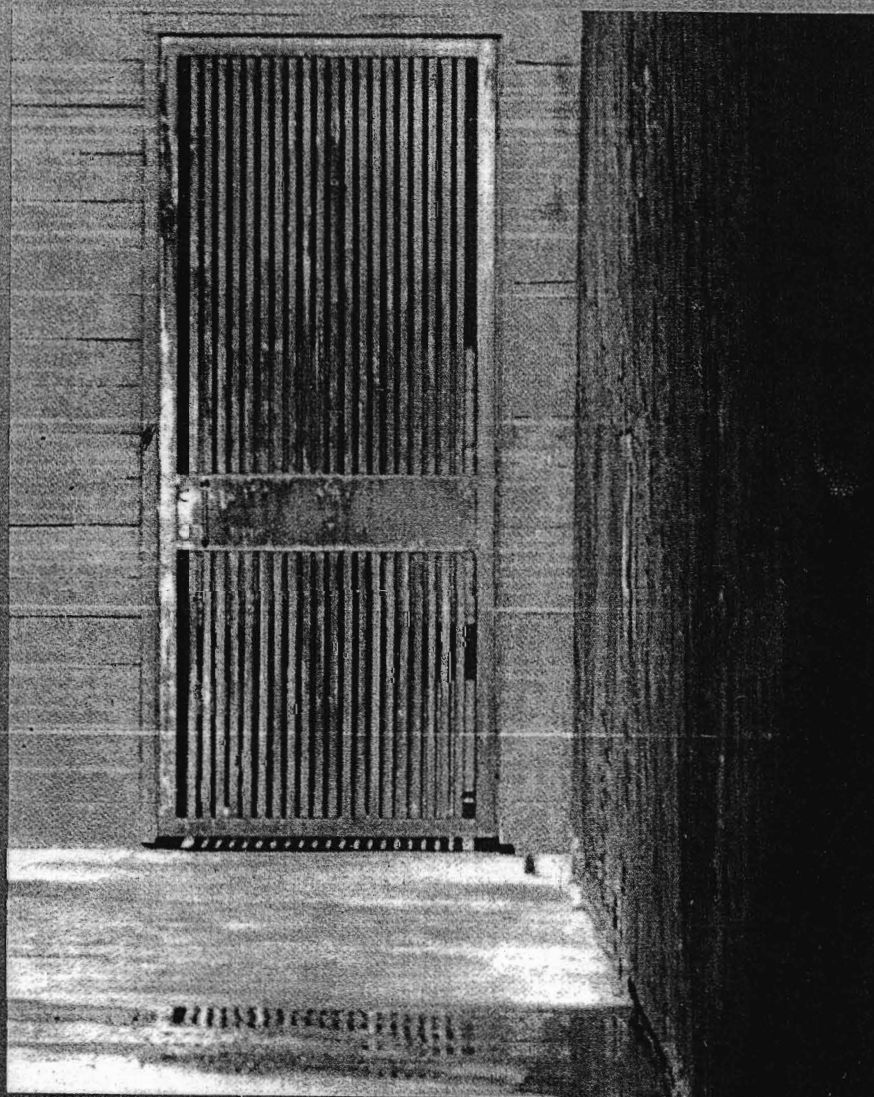
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