Like many reference works, the quality of individual articles varies, perhaps due to the diversity of contributors, which includes independent scholars, high school teachers, and those affiliated with historical societies and universities. It is not clear from the information provided if the academics are students or faculty. The result is an engaging mélange with lively, sometimes passionate, writing. This can occasionally slip into melodrama as in these passages describing Stephen Austin: “Throughout Austin’s life, he was able to provide intense leadership in the face of dreaded opposition . . . while Austin was not the aggressive warrior that Houston was, his deeds, his courage, his sufferings, and his love for others entitled him to equal recognition. Perhaps no better qualities are possible for a father, most importantly a father of a republic” (41, 44).

In spite of the inevitable unevenness, this source has much to recommend it. Most essays provide concise overviews of complex and important topics in the history of the American West, the kind that can only be produced by someone versed in the field. All of the essays include a bibliography as an aid for those wishing to explore the topic further. Public and academic libraries with interests in the social history of the western United States will want to consider adding this source to their collections.—Eric Novotny, Humanities Librarian, Penn State University Libraries, University Park

The community sketches are not as detailed on immigration trends or demographics as might be expected. Issues related to rising Hispanic American populations in cities such as San Diego, Phoenix, and Salt Lake City are largely absent from the community profiles. At times the city and town essays read like something produced by a chamber of commerce, as in this concluding statement from the entry on Kalispell, Montana: “Today, Kalispell is a paradise for those wanting to experience the beauty and solitude of Glacier National Park. Flathead Lake offers amazing boating and fishing . . . Kalispell truly has it all” (366).