

History Just Ahead: a Guide to Wisconsin's Historical Markers

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descending. Also missing is any significant engagement with natural history, which would have been particularly appropriate in the final essay, "Correctionville, Iowa," a reflection on the impact of the Jeffersonian grid. Still, this is a strong book overall, and should be part of any collection of midwestern literature and history.

History Just Ahead: A Guide to Wisconsin's Historical Markers, edited by Sarah Davis McBride. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1999; distributed by University of Wisconsin Press. xiii, 286 pp. Maps, illustrations, index. \$12.95 paper.

Reviewer Harold E. Gulley is associate professor of geography at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. His research interests include historical geography and cartography, cultural landscapes, and transportation.

This guidebook provides texts, locations, and erection dates for 412 Wisconsin roadside markers. A brief introduction outlines the marker program's historical context. Any marker program is challenged to describe present or past landscape features concisely and accurately for the public. Begun in 1944 and reinvigorated in 1994, Wisconsin's program has relied on input and funding from members of the public to identify cultural and natural features considered sufficiently noteworthy to attract tourists' attention. The results of Wisconsin's marker program are evident across the state's landscape. Native American culture is noted at Silver Mound, French exploration at Prairie du Chien, Yankee immigration at Cooksville, and Swedish settlement at New Genoa. Highlighted natural features include drumlins, the Northwest Portal and its abundant wildlife, Lower Narrows, and Wisconsin Dells. Agriculture and industry are represented by cranberry growing and paper making. Popular culture appears in such forms as sites associated with the ice cream sundae, four-wheel drive, American Springer Spaniel, and Green Bay Packers. Marker program officials now encourage nomination of neglected topics: the history of African Americans (Pleasant Ridge) and women (Ada James), ethnic diversity (Bay View), ordinary people (Alexander Noble), and routes (Western Escape).

Audiences for this book include travelers, both active and arm-chair, and students and scholars of Wisconsin history, both natural and cultural, and of popular history and culture. The selectivity evident in topics commemorated bears witness to the culture and values of Wisconsin residents. Inclusion of dates of erection for the markers is especially helpful to researchers desiring to examine historical and cultural contexts.

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