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Karl Raitz, Nancy O'Malley. *Kentucky's Frontier Highway: Historical Landscapes along the Maysville Road.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. ix + 411 pp. $40.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8131-3664-6.

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Based on an extensive array of documents, published material, and periodicals, Karl Raitz and Nancy O'Malley have produced a detailed account of the Maysville Road from Lexington to Maysville, and the landscape it traverses. As stated in the jacket notes for the cloth edition, *Kentucky's Frontier Highway* charts the transformation of the Maysville Road from an "ancient footpath to a central highway, examining the effect that its development had on the evolution of transportation technology as well as the usage and abandonment of other thoroughfares." With such a detailed focus on the Maysville Road, and its importance to the development of the central Bluegrass region, comparisons with Craig Thompson Friend's 2005 publication, *Along the Maysville Road*, are easy to draw. Such comparisons, however, do *Kentucky's Frontier Highway* a disservice. Whereas Friend discusses the road in terms of societal development during early settlement and the early Republic, Raitz and O'Malley have taken a different approach. Stating that "travel is a multidimensional process that blends predictable and unpredictable events," the authors draw attention to how people experience the landscape (p. 17). They explore how "the road, its companion roadside, and the society that builds and uses it are always changing, adjusting, and becoming something new and different" (p. 3).

The chosen structure of this book facilitates such a combination of historical development and geographic experience. Perhaps unusually, the introduction is not constrained to one section but is rather spread across the first two chapters of part 1. This decision allows the two main themes of *Kentucky's Frontier Highway* to be discussed independently, with chapter 1 introducing issues regarding technological development through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Stressing technological development on the Maysville Road offers an important argument to which the authors return throughout the discussion: that the means of transportation can often outstrip road-building techniques. While chapter 1 presents the role of road construction and technological development in shaping the route of the Maysville Road, chapter 2 concentrates on the changing traveler experience. This chapter outlines how travel conditions and the needs of travelers combine to influence the development of the landscape. The building of inns, taverns, and hotels to accommodate the people traveling the road lead Raitz and O'Malley to assert that "roads and travelers cannot thrive in isolation. Rather, they enable and reinforce one another" (p. 30). The themes presented in the introductory chapters are interwoven throughout this historical account of the seventy-mile road from Lexington to Maysville.

Part 2, encompassing chapters 3 through 10, offers a brief overview of the overland routes into Kentucky and early settlers' experiences of the journey. Through a mixture of discussions, part 2 ranges from a geological account of the central Bluegrass as an explanation for why settlers were drawn there, to a discussion of the funding of road construction and maintenance. Offering a historical context to those unfamiliar with the region, there is a great benefit to having such discussions in this book. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are particularly useful in providing background to how roads developed in Kentucky. Offering interpretations for why the Maysville Road developed from buffalo paths into a modern highway in chapter 5; an overview of how Indian and animal paths formed the early route (chapter 6); and an examination of the first legislative efforts at maintenance and improvement in chapter 7, the importance of the Maysville Road is clearly defined for the uninitiated. While part 1 introduces the main themes of the discussion, the chapters of part 2 define why the Maysville Road is worthy of such focused attention.

Encompassing chapters 11 to 34, part 3, "The Maysville Road: A Landscape Biography," is by far the most extensive section of this book. Raitz and O'Malley offer an incredibly focused account of the road, the landscape, and the regional development through the nine-

teenth and twentieth centuries. Building on the contextual aspects of the previous sections, part 3 acts as a historical guide, making continual efforts to relate the historical development with what today's travelers experience between Lexington and Maysville. For example, chapter 20, providing an extensive discussion on the development of Millersburg, takes care to point out where the original buffalo paths and eighteenth-century walls are still present on the landscape. Beginning from Lexington, part 3 proceeds in a mile-by-mile discussion of the road, projecting back from the present to show how the modern road differs drastically from the original route. This is clearest when chapter 13 breaks from the route to cover the development of Bryan's Station, an aspect of history missed by travelers on I-75 and I-64. The presence of detailed maps and photographs throughout this section increase the accessibility of such a focused discussion for those unaccustomed to traveling the route, something that gets taken for granted during some of the mile-by-mile discussion.

Despite the obvious strengths to this work, *Kentucky's Frontier Highway* can be hampered by its structure and scope. The frequent mile-by-mile approach in the third section feels slightly repetitive in places, and assumes that the reader has the same familiarity of the route as the authors–although these assumptions are tempered by the aforementioned inclusion of maps. The chronological scope of the work can also limit the extent of historical understanding in places. Interesting comments on Baptists utilizing the route to locate water deep enough for practicing "baptism by immersion" is introduced, but never fully resolved (p. 265). There is also a lack of discussion about the development of the road prior to Kentucky statehood and the implementation of turnpikes during the early nineteenth century. What discussion there is for the early buffalo paths and pioneer travel are dealt with quickly in part 2. From here much of the narrative concentrates on the second half of the nineteenth century onward, when road development involved construction rather than clearing. While there could have been a greater examination of the early road development–possibly omitted to avoid close comparisons or overlap with other publications–the decision to discuss the developmental direction from Lexington to Maysville is never fully stated. Is the intention to show society emanating *out* from Lexington, and if so, does the direction of travel play an important role into how a road is experienced?

Well researched with extensive maps and photographs, *Kentucky's Frontier Highway* provides a substantial account of technological change and development along the Maysville Road. However, due to the focused nature and the desire to show current travelers what gets overlooked on the modern route, this work is more suited as a historical guidebook to those familiar with the route, rather than a history of the region. While the visual resources help to make this accessible to a wide audience, the lack of discussion for road development prior to 1800 limits the aim to show how the landscape and route develops fully. Ultimately, *Kentucky's Frontier Highway* adds a great deal to the historiography of the Bluegrass in its role as a historical guidebook. For readers seeking greater knowledge of the Maysville Road's evolution, the full value of this book would be gained alongside more specific, social histories of the region.

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