

EDITOR'S CORNER

As those of us who live here know, life on the Great Plains has historically been fraught with hardship. Sometimes these traumatic situations are caused by nature (drought, dust storms, blizzards), sometimes by economic forces beyond our control (the Great Depression), sometimes by human agency (the conflict between native inhabitants and white encroachment).

Two of the three articles in this issue of *Heritage of the Great Plains* concern the latter. Brian Craig Miller's essay considers how in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries disease, commerce, and alcohol coalesced to form what some historians term "shatter zones," areas where outside forces cause catastrophic disruption among the current inhabitants, in this case the Blackfeet, Lakota, and other native tribes in the plains. Although the 1973 standoff at Wounded Knee did not have the immediate impact of the 1890 massacre there, its reverberations were nonetheless significant, as Joseph Roberson-Kitzman argues. Roberson-Kitzman, by the way, is a senior at Dickinson State University in North Dakota, and by publishing his paper *Heritage* is hoping to encourage Great Plains studies among other undergraduates at universities in the plains region. The concept of a shatter zone might also be applied to R. Alton Lee's thorough study of one aspect of the effect of the Great Depression on Kansas workers and farmers. Certainly that economic disaster effected lasting changes in social attitudes about relief and society's responsibility toward its most vulnerable citizens.