

honest altruism and hungry egos, each of her characters stands ultimately as a man of his times, when the "Progressive" spirit dictated the actions of ordinary people. Thus, argues Sealander, the "grand plans" conceived and carried out by the Dayton business community in the early twentieth century were neither public relations posturing designed to dupe the public, nor were they entirely altruistic. Rather, a genuine desire for reform—and an equally strong desire to achieve results—permeated these Ohioans as they sought to maximize the potential of the Miami valley and its citizens by making it a model of change and reform.

By its very nature this is a small book with limited aims, and that trait creates the book's one failing: Sealander's carefully ordered limitations constrain a potentially richer analysis. She often refers to—but never fully discusses—two important side issues. One is the nature of democracy and the ways in which local Progressives tampered with its meaning and structure in the name of reform and efficiency. In Dayton the "democratic process" lay at the heart of an intense political struggle between the business community and its opponents. Sealander's brief, almost casual, mention of the consequences of that struggle leaves the reader begging for a larger discussion. The second issue involves the role of women in the community's Progressive movement. Sealander repeatedly claims that Dayton Progressives deliberately eliminated women from the reform scene, but her rather vague references to the subject fail to substantiate her argument.

Even those shortcomings, however, do not detract from the book's merits. *Grand Plans* is a well-written, well-organized, and carefully researched work that takes the complexity of the Progressive Era out of the big city and places it in the Midwest, and in the process raises important questions worthy of further study.

Art and Popular Religion in Evangelical America, 1915–1940, by Robert L. Gambone. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989. xvii, 278 pp. Color plates, figures, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ERLING JORSTAD, ST. OLAF COLLEGE

Here is a major breakthrough in the intricate world of interdisciplinary studies: a splendid study of how American painters, both well known and obscure, portrayed the prevailing folk and popular themes in American religion in the interwar years. Originally a doctoral dissertation in art history and American studies at the University of Minnesota, this work has been enlarged to demonstrate the deli-

cate, often bewildering interplay of religious, moral, economic, ethnic, and aesthetic forces that shaped the major direction of popular religious art during that quarter century. By any standard of measurement, the author has succeeded.

Gambone has brought together, often after extensive personal searching, a rich array of sixteen color and eighty black-and-white paintings to demonstrate how art, politics, and religion all inspire and shape each other's sensibilities. Rather than organizing his discussion by "school" or by artist, Gambone traces the unfolding by using themes; in each chapter he evaluates the reactions of the artists to the theme of that unit: "Baseball, Booze, Bass Drums, and Ballyhoo," "Prohibition, Politics, and Prophets," "Dixie Divines and Harlem Heavens," "Holy Hymns and Sacred Songs," "Shall We Gather at the River?" and a summary chapter, "Revivalism Redirected." For each topic the illustrations show how popular artists interpreted such matters as prohibition, Billy Sunday revivalism, sports celebrities, black preachers, rural revivalists, Fascism, and related themes. Of special interest to readers of this journal are the interpretations of the Midwest Regionalists of the era: Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton, and John Steuart Curry. Gambone is able, given his skills with interdisciplinary insights, to shed new light on each of these.

The author wisely avoids placing one major interpretative thesis on all of these works. The subtleties and nuances inherent in popular religion are given full freedom of expression. He gives careful attention to both the immediate, and hence temporal quality of some works; yet he also explores the permanent, transcendent importance of others, especially the Regionalists. Here, in brief, is a thoroughly documented fresh look at the interweaving of art, social class, and politics within the ever changing American scene.

Readers may wonder about the rather high price tag; in this reviewer's estimation the cost is amply justified by the quality of the prints, the convenience of having them (some very hard to find) in one place, and the high quality of binding and paper. May other such specialists in midwestern life follow Gambone's example. Every public and college library as well as art and religion buffs will profit by adding this work to their collection.

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