

Nichols sees Black Hawk as a traditionalist caught up in a world that was changing too much too fast. Short-tempered and impatient, he was easily manipulated by those who told him what he wanted to hear. Unschooled in politics, he was naive, gullible, and prone to action rather than contemplation. The Black Hawk Nichols describes is an unsophisticated conservative with his vision firmly fixed on the past. Black Hawk should not have crossed the Mississippi, but Nichols does not blame him for the war's outbreak. That was the fault of ignorant, sloppy, self-serving whites who over-reacted, refused to listen, and fired too quickly.

Nichols has produced a solid, well-researched and well-written book. It should interest the general reading public as well as teachers looking for a good brief volume for their students. As the number and quality of Native American biographies continues to grow, we gain a clearer understanding and appreciation of the humanity of those Indian people who have shaped the histories of their tribes and influenced American history as well.

Yankee Merchants and the Making of the Urban West: The Rise and Fall of Antebellum St. Louis, by Jeffrey S. Adler. *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modern History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. viii, 274 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$42.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY KAREN SAWISLAK, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

What makes a city grow? What leads to its economic decline? How do regional rivalries contribute to the shaping of a national "urban system"? In his study of antebellum St. Louis, Jeffrey S. Adler offers some compelling revisions to what have been long-standing verities in the study of the urbanization of what was then the West—the battle to establish the dominant entrepôts of the region we now describe as the Midwest. Other scholars (most notably and most recently William Cronon, in *Nature's Metropolis*) have detailed the processes by which cities spring out of a complex set of interdependencies with their rural hinterlands. What the land provides is essential to the creation of these constructed forms. But as Adler demonstrates, midwestern entrepôts needed to rely on more than their shrewd locations, easy access to natural resources industries, or their booster's sense of "destiny": to be the central city of the Midwest (and the United States), urbanites had to look East. "Yankees"—merchants and financial professionals with ties to the well-developed capital markets of the East Coast and Europe—had the deep pockets to underwrite the large-scale ventures (such as

banks, factories, and railroads) that extended and cemented lines of credit and commerce across the nation.

St. Louis, as Adler shows, was an early example (and casualty) of the power of Yankee dollars to make and break a midwestern city. Sited at a far from ideal locale, St. Louis, though plagued early and often by floods, fires, and disease, began its remarkable ascent in the 1830s. Thanks to a range of publicists who heralded this up-and-coming town as the "New York City of the West," St. Louis captured the imagination of a crop of ambitious East Coast urbanites—the well-educated and often well-financed sons of middle- and upper-class families. Lured by the chance to sow the seed of fortune in what was thought to be an especially fertile field, Yankee entrepreneurs (including a notable chain migration of Bostonians) quickly turned St. Louis into what Adler aptly describes as a "colonial city." Homegrown commerce, crippled by largely anti-urban politics of the state of Missouri that constricted the local money supply, soon ceded all hopes of preeminence to Yankee business savvy—an expertise bolstered by the access to credit insured by kinship ties. Missouri's internal xenophobia thus ironically opened the door to Yankee "colonization" of the commercial potential of its preeminent city.

But for all the economic and cultural authority of such Yankees, St. Louis would not escape the larger meaning of its regional identity. To explain the city's downfall—a cataclysmic commercial slide begun in the 1850s that ensured that St. Louis would always remain in Chicago's shadow—Adler makes the astute and original argument that the charged politics of the 1850s fundamentally redrew the city's image. National politics, he persuasively suggests, often play a crucial role in regional and local development; nothing, for example, had more lasting import for St. Louis than the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. When Missouri became the staging site for some of the worst atrocities of "Bleeding Kansas," the Yankees who meant so much to the city's commerce became uneasy. With St. Louis increasingly identified as the commercial locus of an area that many northerners (and especially Bostonians) viewed as a place emblematic of "southern savagery" (131), more and more eastern capital was withdrawn from the city—and redirected towards its great rival, Chicago. By the end of the Civil War, the local business class had mounted a small-scale regeneration. But with St. Louis largely redefined as southern, urban growth for the rest of the century would ultimately be connected to regional rather than national forms of commerce.

Adler has produced a nicely written and clearly argued monograph that should forever dispel the idea that any real explanatory power can be attached to abstract notions of geographic "destiny." What happens to a place is almost always the product of controllable and historical forces: the choices made and actions undertaken by the *people* who create its economy, culture, and politics. Adler's sophisticated sense of the cultural and economic meanings of "region" adds further depth and innovation to his argument; like all other discernable areas of the country, as he shows, what seems particular to the Midwest must be located within a national history of markets and capitalist development. Anyone interested in the complex interrelations of eastern finance and (then) western economic potential, the power of imagery to determine the fate of a place, and the meaning of cities in this mostly agrarian region will find much of value in Adler's fine study.

The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920, edited by William H. Truettner. Washington, D.C., and London: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Museum of American Art, 1991. xiv, 389 pp. Illustrations, artists' biographies, references, notes, index. \$60.00 cloth.

The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting, c. 1830-1865, by Albert Boime. New Directions in American Art. Washington, D.C., and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. xi, 188 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY BRIAN W. DIPPY, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Revisionism in western American history took a national turn in 1991 when the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., opened its most controversial exhibition ever, "The West as America." With the exhibition long since dismantled, the passions it aroused by "reinterpreting images of the frontier" are hard to recapture simply from a reading of the catalog. The didactic labels accompanying individual works in the show were the flash points for public anger, and their didacticism is much muted in the six major essays that make up *The West as America*. The paintings were refractory material for revisionism. They remained appealing even when arranged to argue the exhibition's premise that nineteenth-century western art can best be understood as propaganda for expansionism. A collaboration between mostly eastern artists and patrons with much to gain from the dispossession of the natives

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