

curtailed opportunities for oral argument, without discussing the importance of such argument.

Because the book was produced for the court's historical society, it is highly complimentary of the court, raising questions about the author's objectivity. The book is obviously intended primarily for lawyers and judges and may leave lay people wondering about how the court functions. There is no discussion of how cases are filed, how they are set for argument, how the panels to hear the cases are selected, how decisions are reached, or how and why cases can be heard by the entire court after they have been heard by a panel. Morris assumes the reader knows all of these things, but it may be disconcerting to a lay public accustomed to seeing all nine of the Supreme Court justices present for oral argument.

But all in all, the book is a successful exposition of the work of a busy and capable court intent on bringing legal finality to much of the litigation in the region. Iowans should find interesting discussions of cases involving bridges over the Mississippi River, the attempted repudiation of municipal bond obligations, the right of students to exercise disruptive speech at school, and a host of others. Like all of their midwestern brethren, Iowa readers can take pride and pleasure in learning from this thoughtful and perceptive analysis of one of their government's most important but least understood entities.

The Great Strikes of 1877, edited by David O. Stowell. The Working Class in American History Series. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008. ix, 197 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$65.00 cloth, \$20.00 paper.

Reviewer Colin J. Davis is professor of history at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is the author of *Power at Odds: The 1922 National Railroad Shopmen's Strike* (1997) and *Waterfront Revolts: New York and London Dockworkers, 1946-61* (2003).

In this commendable new volume on the 1877 railroad strikes, editor David O. Stowell has collected a stellar cast of historians. Joshua Brown's examination of the illustrated press's treatment of labor unions and the 1877 strikes sets the tone for the book's collection. Brown discusses how *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* captured and then modified the imagery of downtrodden Pennsylvania miners and railroad workers. *Leslie's* tried to distinguish between rioters and strikers, arguing that each group held a different place in the unfolding dramas. The examination is an interesting one but left this reader wondering about the *Leslie's* editors' political view of workers and strikers.

Shelton Stromquist concentrates on the railroad town of Hornellsville, New York. By the time of the 1877 outbreaks, Hornellsville was already an established union town. When the strike reached Hornellsville, the population was ready to oppose the wage cuts. Rails were soaped by sympathetic supporters (women and children), and train crews were forced from their cabs. After 1,500 state troops were dispatched to the town, the strikers adopted a more secretive stance by organizing late-night meetings in the woods surrounding the town.

Richard Schneirov's essay takes a more traditional tack by looking directly at the 1877 strikes as they unfolded in Chicago. Schneirov frames his approach by examining the political battles between established political elites and the newly arrived immigrants from Ireland and Germany. Schneirov identifies women who took an active role in the conflict but does not fully explain their actions. What does their activity say about working-class female status and action?

Steven Hoffman's essay takes the reader to the South. By doing so he succeeds in extending treatment of the strike beyond its usual northeastern and midwestern borders. Although no major strike outbreaks took place in Tennessee and Kentucky, its effects were nonetheless keenly felt. Hoffman convincingly shows that although railroad workers and others in the South did not join the great upheaval, they benefited from it in terms of wage increases.

Michael Kazin takes the reader farther west to San Francisco. There the effects of the 1877 uprising were racial: the instability occasioned by the upheaval led white workers to blame Chinese immigrants for the economic woes of the 1870s. For San Francisco's white workers, the 1870s were fearful times. Initially demonstrations and rallies were called to support eastern strikers, but they quickly degenerated into mob action in which Chinese workers were attacked and brutally killed. The mob action merely allowed the established trade unions in the city to cement their power and embark on a remarkable political road well into the twentieth century.

In the final chapter David Miller examines Mexican American conceptions of the 1877 conflict in the Hispanic press, notably *La Cronica*. According to Miller, *La Cronica* sympathized with strikers and mob action against the San Francisco Chinese. Such a position was riven with contradiction and peril, though it is difficult to determine who took this position because the editors of *La Cronica* are not identified.

All of the essays highlight the Paris Commune as an example of widespread fear of insurrection. Perhaps the editor could have taken the study beyond the national border and incorporated an examination of the connections between the Commune and the 1877 strikes.