

North and South, freedom and slavery. The extension of railroads east to west across Ohio in the 1850s usurped the role of both rivers and canals and thus further attached Ohio's fortunes to the North and drew its regional identity away from the river and the South.

In a succinct and efficient narrative, Gruenwald gives readers a good sense of the region of the "western country" that existed before Ohio became the Buckeye State. This study is a fine model of how historians should trace how the dynamics of regionalism interact with the ever-shifting identity of a place.

*The River We Have Wrought: A History of the Upper Mississippi*, by John O. Anfinson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. ix, 365 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Patrick Nunnally is adjunct assistant professor of landscape architecture at the University of Minnesota. His work with the Mississippi River spans more than a decade, and includes serving as the program manager of the "Imagine the River" project for the University of Minnesota.

John Anfinson's book examines an important yet easily overlooked topic in the history of the upper Midwest. For a century between the 1820s and the 1920s, the Mississippi River provided a central transportation link between the growing region and the outside world. Immigrants by the thousands flooded into Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin on riverboats. The products of farms and lead mines left the area by steamboat, and millions if not billions of board feet of logs and lumber floated downstream to build cities throughout the mid-continent.

Anfinson's story is of the Mississippi as a transportation corridor, and how that corridor changed over time in response to imperatives of engineering, transportation, economics, and regional self-image. The upper Mississippi is not Mark Twain's river, and is not as well known as the mythic river south of St. Louis. But Anfinson goes a long way toward rectifying the gap in our understanding and has produced a book that will be essential reading for future students of the river.

Anfinson does a wonderful job of evoking the "natural" river. He draws extensively from the travel literature of the nineteenth century to describe the shallow, changeable, island-studded wilderness that was home to diverse cultures of native people. The "natural" river, which sometimes flowed as shallow as 18 inches in places due to ever-changing sandbars, was the major avenue of travel in the region. But it was an unreliable corridor, with two major sets of rapids plus the sandbars blocking freight and passengers, sometimes for days at a time.

Even before the Civil War, the Army Corps of Engineers was at work on the river, modifying it to facilitate transportation.

Anfinson's real subject, though, is the succession of projects that began in 1866 to maintain a navigable channel. Successively, Congress charged the Corps with maintaining a four-foot, then four-and-a-half-foot, then six-foot channel over a forty-year period. The point of these efforts was to allow for continued commercial navigation, which would keep shipping prices low by providing a viable alternative to the monopolistic railroads. Community boosters throughout the region organized, petitioned Congress, and worked in myriad ways to maintain this vital link to the markets of the world.

Ultimately, all of these projects failed, and commercial navigation had essentially ended on the Mississippi by 1920. Boosters did not quit, though. They pressed Congress to authorize one of the largest engineering projects in the country's history, the creation of 26 locks and dams between St. Paul and St. Louis that would maintain a navigable nine-foot channel. These facilities, along with the establishment of the Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge in 1924, have produced the landscape that we have today, the upper Mississippi of floodplain forests, sloughs, and small river towns that are, through tourism, again becoming a major part of the region's economy.

Anfinson ranges broadly across American history to provide context for his narrative. Antebellum federal debates over "internal improvements" contextualize early nineteenth-century efforts to "improve" the river. Progressive-era rationalization of economics and resource management provides the backdrop for later efforts. Anfinson's primary attention is to the political and economic conditions that affected advocacy of successive improvement projects. As a former historian for the Corps of Engineers, with access to its voluminous historical files, Anfinson puts the Corps at the center of most of his narrative. Some readers might want to learn more about the communities that were so tied to the river, or the social histories of the construction projects and the thousands of workers who created the lock and dam system as public works projects during the Great Depression. But no single book can cover all aspects of the Mississippi, and Anfinson should not be faulted for not writing a book that he did not intend to write.

Anfinson, now with the National Park Service in St. Paul, is a public historian. Public historians face complementary, almost contradictory pressures as writers addressing multiple audiences. On one hand, Anfinson addresses scholars, with heavily documented arguments closely based on primary evidence. On the other hand, he addresses a public audience broadly interested in the river, which means he some-

times eschews analytical detail for generalizations and narration. The result is a slightly uneven treatment of the subject. Some chapters are broad-based and suitable for introducing the subject to nonspecialists, while others are highly detailed analyses of the subtle nuances of public argument and advocacy that may only interest specialists.

Anfinson's stance as a public historian contributes to what is perhaps the book's most enduring contribution. That is, he speaks directly and self-consciously to current public policy issues, hoping to shed historical light on how we got to where we are in managing the Great River. Once again, as the twenty-first century opens, the river's future is at a crossroads. In 1986 Congress determined that the Mississippi is nationally significant as both a transportation and an ecological resource. Determining how those two competing interests will be managed and balanced has been the subject of strong, even vituperative debate, and the cause for the expenditure of tens of millions of dollars in planning studies. As many try to find a way to establish and maintain a "river that works and a working river," John Anfinson's voice is a welcome addition to the debate, a voice that reminds us how often the river has been managed in the past, and what the terms and stakes of the discussion have been. Many scholars talk about the potential value of a historical perspective that informs public policy. Anfinson's rich work provides such perspective on future management of the upper Mississippi River.

*Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels: The Radicalism of American Womanhood, 1830–1865*, by Barbara Cutter. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003. ix, 285 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$44.00 cloth.

Reviewer Joanne E. Passet is assistant professor of history at Indiana University East. She is the author of *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality* (2003).

In this well-grounded and thoroughly researched work, Barbara Cutter explores the impact of gender ideology on antebellum American women's participation in public life. Like many historians of women, Cutter challenges the relevance of Barbara Welter's "Cult of True Womanhood" (with its emphasis on piety, purity, morality, and submissiveness) and the concept of separate spheres for any except white women in the emerging middle class. The key gender ideology shaping an antebellum woman's activism or even violence, she contends, "was not her submission to male authority or her presence in the domestic sphere, but her ability to use her special moral, religious, and nurturing nature to redeem others" (7). Proposing the ideology of re-

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