

1960. This chapter will be revelatory for readers who only know of the Irish based on the southside of Chicago.

Of course, the authors do provide a fifth chapter on the “southside empire” that was Chicago from the 1930s up to when Irish political power was challenged in the 1980s. This is a narrative that will be familiar to historians of ethnicity and includes a penetrating discussion of the political influence and legacies of Edward Kelly and Richard J. Daley.

The book essentially ends in 1983 with the authors providing a very brief concluding chapter that only touches on the last forty years. If the authors are to be criticized it is for their decision to give such short shrift to the most recent generation of Irish influence in the state. More attention must be paid to Richard M. Daley and Michael Madigan, among others.

In keeping with the intent of this book, the authors do not vary from their stated topic. This is a book about the Irish in Illinois. Readers interested in Irish culture in the Midwest generally, or states adjoining Illinois specifically, should look to the work of David Emmons and other scholars.

Having noted these limitations, the authors do deserve applause for impressive and especially useful features that accompany the narrative. Each chapter has brief “sidebars” that focus on individuals who epitomized the Irish contribution to the history of the state. The guide to further reading and the bibliography are also particularly valuable. For these features as well as for the narrative, *The Irish in Illinois* will be a handy reference guide for years to come.

Grassroots Leviathan: Agricultural Reform and the Rural North in the Slaveholding Republic, by Ariel Ron. Studies in Early American Economy and Society from the Library Company of Philadelphia. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020. 324 pp. Illustrations, maps, graphs, notes, index. \$59.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Kyle B. Carpenter is a history instructor at the University of Arkansas Rich Mountain. His research focuses on economic and transnational history in antebellum America.

In *Grassroots Leviathan*, Ariel Ron recovers rural northern farmers' prominent role in antebellum American state formation. Ron challenges both the Jeffersonian ideal of the yeoman farmer and the declension narrative that the premodern northern American farmer disappeared in the face of the modern urban-industrial center. Instead, he depicts northern farmers as confident and creative actors who formed their own imagined community to pressure legislators to enact policies that would

modernize American agriculture. Ron argues that agricultural reformers built a popular state-building machine that openly confronted "Slave Power" and their slaveholders' republic. In doing so, they built what Ron calls a "grassroots leviathan" that became key to the Republican Party's agenda. Historiographically significant and conceptually creative, *Grassroots Leviathan* is essential reading for anyone interested in early American history broadly or rural history specifically.

Grassroots Leviathan tracks the development of the northern agricultural reform movement from its roots in the early nineteenth century through the conclusion of the U.S. Civil War. The question that drives the entire book arises from the end of the narrative: why did the federal government pass massive agricultural legislation like the Homestead Act and the Morrill Act during a war that hinged on the issues of slavery and sectionalism? Ron's short answer is that northern farmers organized to make the federal government work for them.

Divided into four parts, the book outlines each big step northern farmers made toward becoming a national force for state development. The first part describes the early iterations of agricultural reform at the turn of the nineteenth century and how the movement changed from one spearheaded by wealthy, upper-class landowners to a broader social movement. Scientifically based and organized around a nonpartisan agenda, the antebellum agricultural reform movement sought to be as inclusive to as many northern farmers as possible. Then, the book turns to illustrate how reformers tied their movement to the national economy. Rural people developed a more coherent way to communicate their notions of scientific agriculture on a broad scale through journals and fairs. The third part focuses on the specific agenda reformers had for their national program, the core of which centered on government research institutions and agricultural colleges. Iowa readers will appreciate the connections Ron makes between Benjamin Gue, a key founder of Iowa State Agricultural College, and the agricultural reform movement. In the final section of the book, the author sets up the ultimate confrontation between northern agricultural reformers and southern slaveholders in the late 1850s. Reformers tied themselves to the Republican Party because Slave Power remained the only obstacle on the path to creating federal agricultural agencies. The book's tightly woven structure and chronological narrative progression make it accessible to a broad audience.

Grassroots Leviathan provides an important revision to historical interpretations of early American history. Primarily, it forces us to rethink Eric Foner's free labor thesis. While Ron encourages retaining Foner's

focus on the central role of independent producers, he argues that attention has to shift from the urban to the rural. The industrious urban wage earner did not have the same guiding influence in the Republican Party that middle-class farmers had. The imagined binary of the urban industrial North against the rural plantation South no longer holds up. *Grassroots Leviathan* convincingly argues that agriculture and the farmers who oriented their lives around it were at the center of the Republican Party's developmental vision. Further, the book frames nineteenth century farmers as modern people. They engaged in public scholarly debate, embraced scientific innovation, and adopted innovative marketing techniques. Ron attempts to dismiss for good the myth of the premodern yeoman farmer who impartially participated in the political process.

Ron provides several useful concepts when considering early American farmers. Primarily, he recovers the language of "scientific agriculture" from nineteenth century agricultural publications. Farmers defined the concept as an approach to agriculture that included the government in modernizing the countryside in order to create farming that would be intensive, sustainable, and profitable and make its practitioners both market and technologically savvy. Ron utilizes their language to demonstrate that farmers were engaged public actors who embraced change and kept abreast of advances in their field (6).

Another conceptual contribution the book makes is the evolving geographic space Ron calls the "Greater Northeast." The Greater Northeast was a space that changed over time because it involved the economic relationship between growing manufacturing cities surrounded by hinterlands with dense populations of free farmers who fed the cities (76). By 1860, parts of eastern Iowa met the criteria to be part of the Greater Northeast because of the relationship between rural people there and Chicago. Additionally, Iowans not only produced goods for the Greater Northeast's market, but also built vibrant agricultural societies that tied them to other states like Michigan and Ohio. The region's interconnected economic activity and push for agricultural research shaped this flexible region.

Overall, *Grassroots Leviathan* is required reading for anyone interested in antebellum American history. It changes how we should think about rural people, antebellum politics, and the sectional divides in the United States before the Civil War. The tidy narrative of urban laborers against slaveholding plantation owners no longer holds. Northern farmers demanded agricultural modernization that threatened the institution of slavery. They joined the Republican Party, sustained the

movement to challenge Slave Power, and were rewarded with the legislation they wanted in the Homestead Act, Morrill Act, and the eventual creation of the USDA.

Kingdom of Nauvoo: The Rise and Fall of a Religious Empire on the American Frontier, by Benjamin E. Park. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2020. 336 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$28.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Brady G. Winslow is a secondary school history teacher in Fremont, CA. His research focuses on the receptivity to Mormonism in the upper Mississippi Valley from 1830 to the 1860s, and he is the author of "David W. Kilbourne: The Creation of an Iowa Anti-Mormon" (*Annals of Iowa*, 2019).

In west-central Illinois on a curve in the Mississippi River there is a small town of two thousand residents called Nauvoo. While unassuming today, in the 1840s Nauvoo was a bustling city that at its height in 1845 boasted a population larger than that of Chicago. Nauvoo's population swelled under the leadership of the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith who made the city his church's headquarters as he attempted to build the kingdom of God on earth. The rise and fall of this religious community is the subject of Benjamin E. Park's *Kingdom of Nauvoo*.

Park, a historian and scholar of American religion, chronicles the Mormons' seven-year sojourn in and around Nauvoo from 1839 to 1846. While plenty of scholarly and devotional works have been written about the Saints' stay in Illinois, Park writes for a general audience, bridging the gap between the academic and the popular, combining his historical expertise with elegant prose to narrate this fascinating episode for lay readers. Drawing upon previously unavailable sources, he discusses the Mormons' political and social experimentation, which set them at odds with their non-Mormon neighbors. Park argues that the rise and fall of Nauvoo illustrates the still tenuous nature of American democracy only a few generations after the founding of the United States.

In the book, Park explains how prior to establishing Nauvoo state and federal governments had failed the Saints in their community-building efforts in Missouri. When the Mormons settled in Illinois, they looked for more aggressive ways to protect themselves. They secured a city charter from the Illinois legislature. Believing that the document "granted them the political sovereignty they had long coveted," they interpreted the charter in ways that brought them into conflict with non-Mormons (55). Becoming increasingly frustrated with American democracy and what they viewed as its failures, Joseph Smith and his followers looked to create a theocracy. Ultimately this proved too much for non-Mormon