

prove popular with audiences? To what extent did the Ringlings modernize their circus to appeal to audiences, or did audiences expect the circus to remain virtually unchanged year after year? Did circuses change in order to appeal to an increasingly urban America? What was the relationship between the Ringlings' no-nonsense business dealings and their intuitive sense of showmanship?

Apps may not hazard bold generalizations about the growth of commercial amusements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but he does offer a thoroughly detailed history of the Ringlings' circus that was central to the rise of the show business. His book will be of considerable interest and usefulness to readers interested in the history of the circus and the show business, as well as Wisconsin. Apps's account of the 34-year history of Ringlingville and the stupendous growth of the Ringling Brothers Circus chronicles an era in which both the Midwest and the show business were transformed.

Jazz on the River, by William Howland Kenney. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. xii, 229 pp. Illustrations, tables, maps, appendixes, notes, index. \$27.50 cloth.

Reviewer John D. Baskerville is associate professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. His research interests include African American social and political thought, music of the African diaspora, and African Americans in Iowa. His latest book is *The Impact of Black Nationalist Ideology on American Jazz Music of the 1960s and the 1970s* (2003).

In 1880 John Streckfus, the first son of German immigrant and legendary Rock Island entrepreneur Balthazar Streckfus, defied his father's wishes and left the family's wagon-building business to establish a packet boat business—transporting produce and a few passengers to small towns along the Mississippi River. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the packet boat business was losing ground to the faster and more affordable railroads. In an attempt to salvage his riverboat business and to stay close to his beloved river, Streckfus converted his packet boat business to an excursion boat business, carrying "sightseers and excursionists" on day trips up and down the river.

In 1911 Streckfus bought the struggling Diamond Jo Line and converted the weary fleet of packet boats to excursion steamers. He equipped each boat with a large, polished-maple dance floor and an orchestra that played "hot dance music" out of the city of New Orleans to entertain passengers. Streckfus's family-run riverboat company "soon dominated the excursion trade on the Mississippi River, which the Streckfus family would come to treat as their exclusive domain" (19).

In *Jazz on the River*, William Howland Kenney demonstrates how the excursion boats of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio rivers transformed New Orleans jazz into a distinct style of dance music. He also attempts to "reveal the social, cultural, historical, and musical processes involved in riverboat jazz" (5). Kenney believes that the excursion boats linked white passengers "to simplified and romanticized historical commentaries and to literary interpretations of the Mississippi, the South, the North, the Confederacy, and the Union," while at the same time allowing riverboat jazz to become "a palimpsest, a message that concealed upsetting social, political, and economic realities of black life and American race relations" (6).

The excursions up and down the Mississippi River allowed white passengers to experience the sights, sounds, and locations of Mark Twain's best-known novels. The Streckfus family nurtured this experience through regular articles on Mark Twain and blatantly racist stereotypes presented in *Streckfus Steamers Magazine*; by hiring blacks to play the role of singing roustabouts; and by portraying local blacks along the river as Sambos and Mammies. For many whites, the excursions represented a nostalgic return to better days. Kenney writes, "Combined for the first time with powerful natural elements [water, air, whiteness, and graceful feminine movement], hot dance music animated the river experience with racial and musical stimulation" (30).

According to Kenney, Davenport, Iowa, played a major role in the excursion boat business (it served as the center of northern activities of the business during the 1920s) as well as in the history of jazz on the river. Kenney shows how many young white Davenport musicians, such as Leon "Bix" Beiderbecke, were drawn to the music and sought out the music along the riverbanks and at the jam sessions at the Blue Bird Tavern in Davenport's black section of town. Although Beiderbecke would come to consider the dance music of the excursion boats as somewhat tame in comparison to the jazz he heard at the Blue Bird Tavern and later in the black clubs of Chicago, he was influenced by and respected a number of the musicians who came to Davenport on the boats, including Louis Armstrong and Fate Marable. Beiderbecke and other Davenport musicians would go on to become jazz icons in their own right and contribute to the development of the musical form.

Although Beiderbecke and other white musicians were able to interact with black jazz musicians in Davenport and elsewhere, the orchestras onboard the boats remained segregated, a policy strictly enforced by the Streckfus family. As products of their time, the white musicians failed to consider the music's racial heritage or the realities and experiences of the black musicians they idealized and emulated.

For black musicians, the riverboats served as a way out of the oppressive South and as a way to explore the northern regions of the Mississippi valley as musicians rather than as some other type of manual laborer. Once in the North, many of the musicians left the boats and remained with the other thousands of blacks who had moved to cities of the North and West in the Great Migration. Their time performing on the boats prepared them for the demands of professional popular music of the North.

Kenney presents an interesting, well-written, and concise study of American jazz music and its manipulation for economic, social, cultural, and historical purposes. He achieves his goal of writing a significant history of jazz without approaching it from a musicological perspective. *Jazz on the River* is accessible to the non-musician and provides the jazz studies canon with another view of jazz in the Midwest outside of Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City.

Waiting for Elijah: A History of the Megiddo Mission, by Gari-Anne Patzward. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002. xviii, 280 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth.

Reviewer Linda K. Pritchard is professor of history at Eastern Michigan University. Her research and writing have focused on religion from a regional perspective and religious pluralism.

This first book-length study of the Megiddo Mission, a small Christian sect now located in Rochester, New York, provides a case study of one of many American premillennial Protestant groups. Like others, the group's members eschew the "trappings" of organized religion because they await the imminent End Times apart from the corruption of the secular world. Founder L. T. Nichols, in the tradition of Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, and William Miller, intended to "restore" the Christian church based on rigorous Bible study. He calculated that the Second Coming would begin with the return of the prophet Elijah between 1891 and 1896, later altering the dates.

Originally from Wisconsin, Nichols gathered his band in Oregon in the 1880s, briefly moved the group to Minnesota, where some of his hometown relatives had relocated, then to a riverboat traversing the Mississippi River, and finally to Rochester in 1904. The name of the group evolved, beginning as the Christian Brethren, then True Christadelphians, and finally Megiddo Mission (originally used as the name of their riverboat mission). When Nichols died in 1912, Maud Hembree, a female convert from Oregon, took over as pastor. Since she died in 1935, both men and women have led the sect.

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