

nineteenth century. The balance of the volume—eight more essays in all—looks at the landscape itself and later developments along the river corridor, including pieces on logging, fishing, water and resource management, high-speed passenger rail travel, and the character of river towns. These essays are readable, if eclectic, and the collection serves best (as one blurb on the cover suggests) as “the souvenir book that passengers on the original excursion never got.”

Keillor's far more ambitious volume, handsomely produced in an oversized format, tries to use the Grand Excursion as a focusing lens for exploring the tangled history of America's geographical expansion, technological progress, and cultural turmoil in the generation that brought us the Civil War. Vaguely reminiscent of Bernard DeVoto's famous *1846: The Year of Decision*, Keillor's book portrays the excursion as a mural-sized canvas on which he paints portraits of individual participants and vignettes from the trip itself, interspersed with “excurses” on contemporary historical themes or issues: gender roles, antebellum politics, Mississippi steamboats, law, medicine, and the writing of history and travel literature. Unfortunately for Keillor, this 1854 steamboat ride holds none of the urgent narrative drama DeVoto found in the 1846 convergence of the Donner Party disaster, the Mormon Trek, the Oregon Crisis, the Mexican-American War, and the California Revolution. Furthermore, DeVoto's readers in the 1940s were far more patient with literary scenery and long digressions, because reading was entertainment in those days. Twenty-first-century general readers (presumably the intended audience) may find that Keillor's account of the Grand Excursion gets bogged down in minutiae the point of which is not immediately clear.

Boosters, Hustlers, and Speculators: Entrepreneurial Culture and the Rise of Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1849–1883, by Jocelyn Wills. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005. ix, 290 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

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In Jocelyn Wills's *Boosters, Hustlers, and Speculators*, the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul follow the same model of commercial ascent as Peoria, Omaha, Sioux City, and dozens of other cities in the American heartland in the decades just before and after the Civil War. Economic progress in this part of the country occurred in fits and starts, and cautious investment and slow growth were dictated by unpre-

dictable weather, invasions of insects, and periodically shaky markets. Added to these factors was a fledgling transportation system that featured rough roads, what remained of the Mississippi and Missouri river steamboats, and, toward the end of the period covered by Wills, just the beginnings of east-west railroad service.

The author divides the Civil War era into three distinct periods: (1) 1849–1861, when the cities' position on the Mississippi River—Wills terms it "the Mississippi gateway for regional expansion"—gave them primacy in the river-based commerce of the era; (2) 1861–1872, when the end of the war unleashed mass settlement into the hinterland and the beginnings of an agriculture-based economy; and (3) 1873–1883, when the cities' dominance in transportation, commerce, and manufacturing would reach across Minnesota and beyond, to Iowa and Wisconsin, to the states bordering Canada, and to the distant Pacific Northwest.

In its broad outlines, Wills's story of the Twin Cities has little to distinguish it from the many urban histories published each year. But Wills had the good fortune of access to the voluminous James J. Hill Papers at the Minnesota Historical Society. Drawing on the Hill Papers and other sources, she is able to examine at close range the men and women who led the Twin Cities into the market revolution of the nineteenth century. The Hill Papers yield information showing the business partnerships, community leaders, and social networks that shaped Minneapolis and St. Paul as they evolved from frontier outposts to agricultural service centers and ultimately to regional hubs in an increasingly industrial economy. Wills is particularly adept at explaining the ambitions of the successive generations of entrepreneurs who developed the social overhead capital—the transportation, banking, warehousing, and other support services—that are essential to economic progress.

There are points in the text where readers may wonder if the author's abundance of sources is a blessing or a curse in telling her story. The text is dense, and the book's endnotes and bibliography run to more than 62 pages, 22 percent of the total page count. Wills has imparted a great deal of knowledge and interpretation about the dynamic links between the Twin Cities' rise and the regional and national trends sustaining their economic growth. Perhaps because she presents such a plethora of information, Wills pauses frequently in the course of her narrative to summarize her key points thus far and to preview what lies ahead. In at least one case, however, the preview is so extensive that much of the successive chapter is redundant. The author also pauses periodically for capsule explanations of how a local

phenomenon fits into a larger theoretical context. These intrusions upon the narrative tend to be repetitive and probably unnecessary for an understanding of urban development in nineteenth-century Minnesota. Wills's narrative is rich and her sources deep. In her capable hands, the Twin Cities story does not need the extra help.

Field Armies and Fortifications in the Civil War: The Eastern Campaigns, 1861-1864, by Earl J. Hess. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. xix, 428 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.

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When used in the context of the American Civil War, the word *fortifications* usually conjures images of the slugfest late in the war between entrenched Union and Confederate armies, when weapons technology and massive earthworks stymied the quest for decision and provided a chilling glimpse of the future of modern warfare. But how Civil War armies arrived at that point, how the use of fortifications developed during the war, and what impact new weapons had on that development have been tantalizing – yet daunting – historical questions.

Building on Edward Hagerman's *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare* (1988), Earl Hess has tackled an ambitious project: to assess "how and why fortifications played a role in the success or failure of Civil War field armies" (xiii). More than a mere technical study, he provides fascinating insights into the development of wartime fortifications and looks at the influences of Dennis Hart Mahan, Henry Wager Halleck, and French military theorists on attitudes toward fieldworks within the U.S. Army. Moreover, this volume, which covers the period 1861-1864, is but the first of three studying fortifications in the Eastern Theater, with the last two projected volumes to focus on the final campaigns in Virginia in 1864-1865.

An interesting aspect of this volume is the chapter titled "Engineering War," which examines prewar theoretical influences and shows clearly that American officers (their experience in the Mexican War notwithstanding) embraced both the tactical offensive and field fortifications. However, as Hess points out, officers trained at West Point – as well as the available literature on fortifications – focused more on the technical aspects of construction than on how to employ armies and fortifications in a coordinated, effective manner. Nevertheless, fieldworks became more sophisticated as the war progressed,

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