

complacency in the Fifties. Galena, increasingly drawn into Chicago's orbit, tried vainly to fix upon new directions after the end of the lead-mining bonanza.

A subordinate theme which emerges from *Boosters and Businessmen*, in both popular thought and reality, is the importance of manufacturing in a period which has been seen as primarily an era of the growth of regional commercial centers. Another theme is the evolving configuration of the cities' commercial hinterlands and the close congruence of popular perception of hinterland extension with objective statistical evidence. It is clear that ideas of the nature and extension of trade areas were themselves significant factors in shaping patterns of commercial penetration. Local thinking of this matter did not so much emerge in the abstract as calculation of the most efficient gathering of the elements of production. It rather pointed to the potentiality of creating in space the equivalent of dependent political empires in the hinterland. Thus aggressive promotional thinking vigorously implemented could operate, in some measure, as self-fulfilling prophecy.

Although one cannot fault Abbott's selection of cities, other than possibly the choice of Galena, it would be instructive, where sources exist, to supplement his view from the larger city, with a study of the role of boosterism in a sample of smaller towns, those which flourished and those which declined precipitously or disappeared. How was boosterism manifested in these locations? Was it as typically instrumental or did delusionary miscalculation of opportunity more frequently result in ill-conceived growth strategies? In any case, Abbott has shown that optimistic vision and practical nerve, the American Dream of Success, must be reckoned in these years as vital driving forces, along with more structural determinants of economic growth and decline, in the early urbanization of the Middle West.

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Indian Traders on the Middle Border: The House of Ewing 1827-54. Robert A. Trennert, Jr. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981. pp. xvi, 264. Endnotes, bibliography, index. \$17.95.

Indian Traders on the Middle Border is a welcome addition to the literature on Indian-white relations. Using the fortunes of the mercantile house of Ewing, Robert Trennert examines the Indian trade on the midwestern frontier from 1827 to 1854. The book fills a lacuna in historical scholarship for, as the author points out, the Middle Border has not received the attention given to other American frontiers.

The brothers George and William Ewing were the founders and directors of an Indiana business which became deeply involved in trade with the Indians. The success of the house of Ewing can be measured by its ability to challenge such frontier economic powers as the American Fur Company and Pierre Chouteau, Jr. Trennert traces in perhaps excessive and repetitive detail the mercantile and political activities of the Ewing brothers. Beginning with the Potawatomi and Miami Indians of Indiana, the house of Ewing expanded its trade to more western tribes, including the Sac, Mesquakie, and Winnebagos of Iowa. Trennert also discusses at length the political activities of the Ewing brothers for success in the Indian trade necessitated effective lobbying.

Trennert relates all of this in a matter-of-fact, direct style with no heroes and no villains. The greed and sharp dealings of the Ewings and other Indian traders are excused as typical of the capitalism of that time. Similarly, the use of the spoils system and the obtaining of political favors by those engaged in the Indian trade is presented as normal. Indeed, Trennert concludes that the Ewings and their fellow traders served a useful, even necessary purpose in this period of forced migration of Indian tribes to western reservations.

While all of this has validity, still *Indian Traders on the Middle Border* almost unwittingly provides yet another chapter in the sordid story of white exploitation of Native Americans. In ordinary circumstances selling baubles and trifles at exorbitant prices may be viewed as simply shrewd business dealings. When the purchasers are a people reduced to utter despair and hopelessness, such activity is outrageous. Although the author's dispassionate prose does nothing to stress this, what remains after reading the book is a clear recognition that the Ewings and other white traders considered the Indians and their misfortunes as simply an opportunity to enrich themselves. One can only agree with Governor Chambers of Iowa Territory when he described these traders as "bloodsuckers."

A trifling fault of Trennert may indicate some insensitivity to the unhappy situation of the Indians. He consistently refers to the Mesquakie tribe as the Fox, a derogatory label given to these Indians by their French enemies.

If Trennert fails to do justice to the Indians, his work still deserves commendation. A scholarly, clearly written book, *Indian Traders on the Middle Border* provides reliable information about a relatively neglected aspect of American history. The inclusion of extensive endnotes as well as an excellent, up-to-date bibliography add to the value of the book. At a time when some revisionist historians, seeking to counter traditional

bias against the American Indian, rely too heavily on emotion and rhetoric, Trenner's calm narrative has its attractions. Still a soupçon of indignation would make the dish more palatable.

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Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country, by Jennifer S. H. Brown. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980. pp. xxiii, 255. Illustrations, map, tables, bibliography, index. \$24.00.

Jennifer Brown has contributed an important, in some ways ground breaking, work to the large body of fur trade scholarship. Her book, *Strangers in Blood*, is a study of the familial patterns which developed in the fur country of the Canadian Northwest during the period 1780 to 1860. Focusing on the differing family relations adhered to by Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company officers, Brown provides an excellent comparative analysis which explicates social conditions in the evolving fur country frontier.

By the end of the eighteenth century, most traders were aligned with native women in unions commonly referred to as "marriages according to the custom of the country." Such unions were regarded by both Indians and whites as socially and economically useful in furthering the fur trade. Previous scholarship has noted the differing social and ethnic backgrounds of the traders who comprised the field officers of the rival Hudson's Bay and North West Companies, but Brown demonstrates these differences held important consequences for the domestic relations that developed in the fur country during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Senior officers of the London-based Hudson's Bay Company were predominantly Englishmen and Lowland Scots. As their unions with native women produced mixed-blood children, they looked to the ranks of company clerks for suitable mates for their daughters. This social pattern was underpinned by the company's apprenticeship system. The Hudson's Bay Company used the apprenticeship system to recruit clerks and junior officers by indenturing young Lowland and Orkney Islands Scots. Since these youths were usually marginal members of society and had few family ties to Britain, the social and economic mobility offered by the fur trade formed them into loyal company men. Frequently, they came under the paternalistic influence of senior officers who could offer career assistance and kinship ties through marriage to native-born daughters. By this method Hudson's Bay Company employees commonly built lasting relationships with their native-born families.

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