

exchange of pemmican “created an inseparable society of people where food was produced, traded, and consumed between them” (261). Much of the book traces the cascading consequences of this expanding pemmican trade. For instance, commercial expansion intensified hunting, trapping, and violence as commercial entities competed vigorously to control access to the pemmican that had become so vital to their operations. Among plains peoples, the growing commitment to pemmican production encouraged longer-distance travel, transformed trade patterns, and even propelled the formation of new peoples like the plains Métis, whose emergence Colpitts connects to the economic niche created by the pemmican trade. This book shows how bison meat and fat, just like potatoes, sugar, or other foodstuffs, powerfully shaped human histories. Colpitts shows how bison fat and the energy it provided drove British imperial expansion in northwestern North America.

This “Pemmican Empire,” however, was built on the unsustainable harvest of bison. Although much has been written about bison and its demise, this book’s geographical focus on the northern plains adds a new dimension to those stories. Colpitts shows, for example, how the familiar story about the decline of the bison commons with the intrusion of the market played itself out in very different ways on the northern side of the “fat frontier.” Just as important, he shows how the trade relations that grew up around the preparation and exchange of bison flesh provided the foundational imprint for interactions between indigenous peoples and their would-be colonizers that differed in important respects from that found elsewhere in North America.

Securing the West: Politics, Public Lands, and the Fate of the Old Republic, 1785–1850, by John R. Van Atta. Reconfiguring American Political History. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. xiii, 295 pp. Maps, tables, notes, essay on sources, index. \$54.95 hardcover and e-book.

Reviewer James W. Oberly is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. He is the author of *Sixty Million Acres: American Veterans and Public Lands before the Civil War* (1990).

More than a century ago, the historian Payson Jackson Treat apologized for writing a book on the history of public land policy, acknowledging that the “subject is dull in itself.” Nonetheless, like a physician prescribing a distasteful medicine, Treat insisted in his 1910 book, *The National Land System, 1785–1820*, that some knowledge of the workings of the public lands system was necessary to understand the larger subject of westward movement. Treat offered readers a periodization for understanding the history of public land policy based on the method Con-

gress set for disposing of the national patrimony: (1) credit sales to 1820 with a large minimum acreage for purchase; (2) cash sales, 1820–1841, but with smaller acreage minimums; (3) pre-emption, that is, “squating” on public land without paying for a parcel for a period of months, even years; and then (4) after 1862, homesteading or “free land.” The period of pre-emption coincided with the settling of the Iowa Territory and early statehood. For several decades after Treat, historians more or less embraced his periodization. Almost 50 years ago, historian Mary E. Young wrote, in an influential essay, “Congress Looks West: Liberal Ideology and Public Land Policy in the Nineteenth Century,” that the antebellum Jacksonian period was characterized by multiple and overlapping means of public land disposal. Iowa’s settlement was dominated by the sale and use of military bounty land warrants, some 14 million acres of which were entered at Iowa land offices. Thirty years ago, Daniel Feller’s *The Public Lands in Jacksonian Politics* pushed back the chronology of critical decision making on federal land policy to the late 1820s and early 1830s, restoring to central place the 1830 Webster-Hayne debate in the Senate over the future of the West, as part of the larger debate about the future of the Union.

What new can be said about public land policy before the Civil War after a century of such writings? Are there new sources to be discovered or new historical methods to be employed to make sense of existing sources? John Van Atta’s *Securing the West* does not claim to tell a new story through the discovery of some hitherto overlooked manuscript collection. He uses the same sources Treat, Young, and Feller used. Nor does he bring any new scholarly method to his study; he does the same congressional roll-call counting as Feller. What is new and valuable in *Securing the West* is the author’s careful contrast of the Federalist land policy of the 1780s and 1790s, under both the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution, with policies a generation or two later in the Jacksonian period. Van Atta does fine work in connecting the ideas underlying pre- and post-revolutionary assumptions about virtue and that an independent landowning yeomanry could best guarantee the republic. His contribution is showing the Federalist shaping of such republican ideas away from independence and toward control from above. For Van Atta, the Land Act of 1820, a snoozer, if included at all in any history textbook, was the critical dividing line between a Federalist land policy, on the one hand, and a proto-Jacksonian land policy of rapid, pell-mell disposal of public lands to settlers. Seen from the long view of the eighteenth century, the changes toward giving settlers what they wanted after 1820 was a radical shift from the Federalist position, even more so than Young and Feller may have appreciated when they consid-

ered the change from credit to cash sales, and from cash to pre-emption entries, military bounty land warrants, and graduated (discounted) land prices. The wonder is that the Jeffersonians kept Federalist land policies for as long as they did.

Payson Treat was correct in 1910: Some knowledge of public land policy is needed to understand the way Iowa was settled. In the aftermath of Indian Removal from Iowa in the 1830s and 1840s, all the circumstances were in place to encourage a wave of Euro-American settlers to take into private ownership what became some of the richest agricultural land in the world. Iowa and Ohio may both be in the Midwest, but the policies designed to dispose of the public lands in Ohio in the 1780s were a continent away from those in place to dispose of Iowa's public lands.

A Store Almost in Sight: The Economic Transformation of Missouri from the Louisiana Purchase to the Civil War, by Jeff Bremer. Iowa and the Midwest Experience. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014. 239 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 paperback and e-book.

Reviewer Kim M. Gruenwald is associate professor of history at Kent State University. She is the author of *River of Enterprise: The Commercial Origins of Regional Identity in the Ohio Valley, 1790–1850* (2002).

Of *A Store Almost in Sight*, Jeff Bremer writes, “This is a story about people, the economic choices they made, and their struggles to build their lives” (4). In the debate over the transition to capitalism, Bremer sides firmly with those who favor the market-oriented interpretation. After delving deeply into dozens and dozens of collections of family history papers located in Missouri archives, he concluded that, rather than fearing capitalism as disruptive to society, frontiersmen and women actively sought market participation.

The first three chapters set the stage and introduce readers to “an enterprising and industrious population” (1). The first chapter sketches the background to U.S. settlement: the fur trade, French settlements, and a brief takeover by the Spanish. The second chapter details the rush to settle Missouri after the turn of the century. Settlers from the upper south and Kentucky moved west because elite planters controlled too much of the land back home. Initially, they settled in St. Louis's hinterland but gradually spread out along the Missouri River and its tributaries, bringing slaves with them. From the beginning, they exported livestock and crops. Chapter three focuses on settlers' motivations as they came looking for enough cheap land to make their families independent.