

Reviews

Steam Coffin: Captain Moses Rogers and the Steamship Savannah Break the Barrier, by John Laurence Busch. New Canaan, CT: Hodos Historia, 2010. 726 pages. \$35.00, cloth.

As all historians know, technological “firsts” are seldom, if ever, made in isolation. Independent historian John Laurence Busch makes this point very clear in his extensively researched monograph on the Steamship *Savannah*. Detailing not only the construction, the accomplishments, and the demise of the first steam-powered ship to cross the Atlantic Ocean (1819), the book provides an in-depth look at the fits and starts of steam-powered maritime engineering in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The rivalries between ship owners with big egos, as well as the limitations of patent enforcement in the first quarter-century of the American republic make for fascinating reading, over and above the ship’s own story. The life of *Savannah*’s skipper, Moses Rogers (1779-1921) is also well-chronicled.

Always a dilemma for maritime writers is how to deal with nautical terminology when writing for general audiences. Busch chose to provide parenthetical definitions for the terms he uses. He also provides the reader with phonetic spellings of the place names where the uninitiated might struggle—places like Groton and the Thames River in Connecticut.

The book’s length and detail would probably preclude it from use as even a supplemental text for the classroom, but the wealth of information it contains makes the book an asset for libraries. Teachers pointing students to research projects can be assured that this is a reliable, scholarly resource, but the depth and breadth of its detail might tempt the less ambitious students to limit their research to this one source.

The book is indexed, annotated with notes at the end of the text, and provided with a lengthy bibliography.

Stephenson County Historical Society, Freeport, Illinois

Edward F. Finch

Invisible Enemy: The African American Freedom Struggle after 1965, by Greta de Jong. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 248 pages. \$29.95, paper.

In *Invisible Enemy: The African American Freedom Struggle*, Greta de Jong, Associate Professor of History at the University of Nevada, Reno, offers a compelling narrative about the roots of black inequality in the United States and African Americans' responses to these developments in the closing decades of the twentieth century. She argues that institutional racism and racial inequality were fixtures of the American republic from its beginnings and remain fixtures in American society in the early twenty-first century. The Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century undermined legal obstacles to African Americans' search for freedom and justice, she suggests, but did little to break down the "mechanisms that continued to allocate wealth in racially biased ways" (p. 1). Thus, after *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and black activism of the 1950s and 1960s, when white policy makers, legislators, and large segments of the white population were calling for a color-blind society, millions of black people in the United States remained victims of racism that may have changed in appearance but did not change in its debilitating consequences of black geographic isolation, high unemployment, compromised health, and disparities in wealth acquisition. The gaps in life chances between blacks and whites led many to participate in activist pursuits to push for multifaceted and far-reaching local, state, and nationwide reform to address institutional racism even in the face of white opposition.

The narrative is organized into eight thematic chapters with a loose chronology. Chapters one, two, and three look at the historical origins of racism, state-supported segregation, and how anti-black policies developed and became entrenched in the United States. Chapter four provides the reader with a survey of the political issues that Post-Civil Rights Movement activists confronted from 1965 to the early twenty-first century, including, but not limited to, education reform, the criminalization of black people, and the environmental justice movement. Chapter five considers the national debate about affirmative action, while chapters six and seven discuss attempts to reform electoral politics and redistribute wealth, respectively. The final chapter reminds the reader that the African American freedom struggle and the attempts to contain it by local, state, and federal governments and white popular opinion must be understood as part of larger trends in global capitalism, transnational corporations, and international political movements.

The value of the book lies in de Jong pushing the reader to question insipid notions of color-blindness and reconsider the so-called meritocratic nature of our society—ideas to which broad segments of contemporary society cling, but have little evidence to support. The era she discusses and the myths she dispels should be incorporated into every United States history class from grade school to the university. In this way, her ideas and evidence would expand easy textbook renderings of modern United States history. Consequently, this book is necessary reading for anyone who teaches post-1865 United States history or courses wherein the Civil Rights Movement and black activism are discussed, including grade school, middle school, high school, college, and university instructors.

The book itself, however, would only be suitable for college and university students examining contemporary developments in United States history and politics. Because so many traditional college-age students unquestioningly hold to notions of color-blindness and tend to see racism as individually based rather than institutionally situated, instructors should guide them through the book carefully and explain de Jong's findings. Since one of the author's goals is to document the continued existence of racially based inequalities and African Americans' responses to them, one helpful method of guiding students through the book would be to consult several of the many primary sources de Jong utilizes as the students read each chapter. This will allow students to situate the documents chronologically, determine African Americans' concerns and goals, and extend the timeline for the African American freedom struggle. They can then see history unfold,

place black people in this unfolding process as active participants, and use de Jong as an historical interpreter.

De Jong has demonstrated a deft understanding of modern United States history through a compelling, well-supported, concisely written, and timely narrative. *Invisible Enemy* discusses an era in United States history that has only recently come under evaluation by historians and de Jong has succeeded in expanding the boundaries of our knowledge, especially the African American experience.

Salem State University

Jamie J. Wilson

Beyond the American Pale: The Irish in the West, 1845-1910, by David M. Emmons. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. 472 pages. \$34.95, cloth.

In *Beyond the American Pale*, historian David M. Emmons examines the role and influence of “Irish exiles” on the landscape, development, and evolution of the American west between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By exploring the contributions of these “two-boat Irish” and their descendants, Emmons hopes to move beyond the typical case study treatment of immigrants on the frontier, providing his readers with both a general history of the Irish in the west and their journey toward incorporation into American society. Along the way, Emmons questions traditional ideas of frontier scholarship, specifically as they pertain to the geographic dispersal of the transplanted Irish in the east and west. Driven by ideas that place culture and religion (particularly differences between Catholicism and Protestantism) at the center of his work, Emmons traces and connects the historic threads of binary opposition that defined Protestant America and the traditions that the Catholic Irish transported with them along their Atlantic and continental journeys.

The first part of this book sets the stage for discovering how and why the Irish went west as well as for examining the importance of market capitalism, industrialization, technology, the need for Irish labor on the frontier, and the clannish behavior of the sons and daughters of Erin in the United States. Chapter four (“Most Unlikely Westerners”) stresses the importance of communalism to the Irish and the ways in which “community obligation” factored into Irish consciousness and how these ideas appeared anathema to many Americans (p. 110). Emmons elaborates on debates surrounding the comparisons of the Catholic Irish with African slaves and Native Americans, and how this discourse shaped the worldview of the Irish, Protestant America, and ideas of republicanism from 1845 to 1910.

The second section of Emmons’ work explores the activities of the Irish after asserting their hegemony “out west” by settling there in significant numbers and their rationale for resisting assimilation into a Protestant America. Fears of the non-Irish (specifically from Protestant church and community leaders as well as intellectuals) that asserted an “Irish empire” in the United States was fast approaching due to the relative freedom that the Irish enjoyed in western territories only increased the chasm between the Irish and their critics. Central to this argument was a negative perception of the Holy See and fears that the Irish answered ultimately not to the democratically elected officials of the U.S. government, but instead to the Pope, thereby making the Irish incompatible with republican ideals.

Throughout his work, Emmons also critiques conventional scholarship about how the Irish “became white” and the role of race in this historic construction. Asserting that historians that rely solely on race-based perspectives of this issue walk a dangerous line between being “reductionist” and practicing “a form of historical imperialism.” Emmons believes that the issue resides much deeper in the psyche of the Irish; after all, as the author states, why would the Irish desire to become part of and emulate a Protestant-Anglo America when the Protestant-Anglos despised the Irish? (p. 6) In short, “It had to mean something to be Irish and Catholic” (p. 333).

Emmons’ work, impressively researched, uses a wide variety of primary source materials that include information from western public archives, government and local records, and newspapers, as well as secondary sources. The author’s prose flows well as does his overall organizational structure and style. A set of seven tables in chapter seven (“Finding a ‘Fair Living’”) related to the population statistics of the Irish in America are most helpful. Two minor criticisms concern the lack of any maps to demonstrate to the reader settlement patterns of the Irish in the United States and its frontier areas, and the absence of additional photographs, such as the picture found on the dust jacket. The lack of additional visual images is noticeable only because the photograph on the cover of miners in Butte, Montana in the early 1890s is so powerful; others like it would enhance the appeal of this volume.

Beyond the American Pale is suitable for upper-division undergraduate courses that desire to present a counter argument to traditional perceptions of the Irish on the American frontier of the United States in the nineteenth century. This monograph would also be suitable for graduate reading seminars dealing with American culture, immigration studies, religion, and the frontier. Public and academic libraries would benefit from including this tome in their collections. In short, Emmons’ book will be of interest to readers of western, Irish-American, and cultural scholarship.

Kent State University

Jeffrey O’Leary

Ohio’s Kingmaker: Mark Hanna, Man and Myth, by William T. Horner. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010. 360 pages. \$29.95, paper.

The course of George W. Bush’s presidency has been scrutinized by political scientists and pundits since his exit from office on January 20, 2009. These analyses focus on characters like senior advisor Karl Rove as well as Oval Office machinations. This initial wave of political works encounters the problem of critical distance in historical study. The absence of internal White House documents and the reliance on contemporary media accounts bring the reliability of these works into question. William T. Horner addresses the problems of historical myth and critical distance in *Ohio’s Kingmaker: Mark Hanna, Man and Myth*.

Horner starts *Ohio’s Kingmaker* with an extensive dissection of why media outlets are unreliable sources for historians. Throughout this book, Horner uses the oft-repeated comparison between Cleveland businessman Mark Hanna and Rove as an example of media distortion. This comparison emerged during the contentious 2000 presidential election as Karl Rove moved from campaign advisor to White House figure. Horner details the inaccuracies in comparisons between Rove and Hanna in the first chapter, the epilogue, and a brief analysis in Chapter Seven. These inaccuracies include giving too much credit to Hanna for McKinley’s fortunes and assigning too much motivation behind

Hanna's political activities. The author deftly turns this comparison into an examination of the reverberations of media biases into future generations.

Mark Hanna is portrayed by Horner as a Cleveland businessperson who wanted to maintain Ohio's role in national politics. Hanna worked on behalf of Republican Senator John Sherman at national conventions in 1884 and 1888 to no avail. The transition from Sherman to McKinley by 1892 is attributed to Hanna's Ohio roots rather than any characteristics possessed by McKinley. Horner describes Hanna as a politico who sacrificed financially to fulfill his vision for Ohio. Proof for this description includes Hanna's transfer of controlling interest in his business to his brother prior to the 1896 presidential election. Once Hanna had achieved influence in the Republican Party, he viewed as his next step the Senate rather than a role in the White House. In all of these endeavors, Horner shows opposition by moneyed opponents as well as Republican politicians entrenched to Hanna's rise.

Ohio's Kingmaker opens myriad historical myths about Hanna and McKinley to renewed examination. Hanna's reputation as puppet master behind McKinley in 1896 is disputed with a discussion of how Charles Dawes had a greater influence on McKinley. This discussion detailed Dawes' role in securing delegates from Illinois in the 1896 Republican National Convention. Once McKinley was inaugurated, the author notes that Dawes had the President's ear more readily than Hanna due to his position as Comptroller of the Currency. Horner makes a compelling argument that McKinley's success in 1896 came from external factors like an influx of gold supplies. This influx boosted the federal supply of gold, expanded circulation of currency, and diminished William Jennings Bryan's campaign for free silver.

Horner's efforts to separate Hanna from McKinley occasionally betray his efforts at an objective analysis. In Chapter Eight, Horner attempts to dispel the belief that Mark Hanna was unique in raising millions of dollars for William McKinley in 1896. His argument is that Matthew Quay raised similar funds for Republican presidential candidate Benjamin Harrison in 1888. According to the author, Hanna was merely playing within looser guidelines for political fundraising prevalent in the Gilded Age. Horner's defense of Hanna seems to say that his subject was merely perfecting Quay's fundraising techniques. This defense is weakened by the absence of independent fundraising figures for Gilded Age elections. Horner also uses letters and journals from figures in the 1896 presidential election rather than financial ledgers as supporting evidence.

The author offers sufficient background and historiography to make *Ohio's Kingmaker* accessible to first-year students. The extensive biography of Hanna and asides about national politics allow young readers to comprehend Gilded Age politics. Horner goes to great lengths throughout the book to discuss other texts that inform his views on Hanna and McKinley. *Ohio's Kingmaker* features a wealth of illustrations from Homer Davenport at the *New York Journal* to highlight the media barbs faced by Hanna. This contribution to the historiography on Mark Hanna, William McKinley, and Gilded Age politics would benefit undergraduate and graduate students alike.

Carroll University

Nicholas Katers

Bohemia in America, 1858-1920, by Joanna Levin. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010. 480 pages. \$65.00, cloth.

Beginning in the 1850s, Americans feeling stifled or bored by workaday middle-class life started to drift towards an alternative: *la vie bohème*. Joanna Levin traces the his-

tory of bohemia through American lives and American literature, beginning with Walt Whitman's 1860s poems and ending with 1910s issues of *The Masses* magazine. As she engages relevant literary criticism, theory, and historical scholarship, Levin argues for the importance of the bohemian strain in American culture, while also giving us absorbing portraits of Americans straining against convention.

Levin expands the timeline of American bohemia far beyond its most famous incarnation, the early twentieth-century Greenwich Village. She shows that Americans imported the bohemian idea from Europe in the 1850s, and used it both to critique the era's status-conscious urban middle and upper classes, and to define an alternative American culture—creative, cosmopolitan, and democratic. Levin breaks new ground in her research on Jews, blacks, and immigrants who lived and worked in bohemian circles. Artists and writers such as James Weldon Johnson and Abraham Cahan were fully aware of their roles as exotic, exciting “others” to bohemian native-born whites. Levin details these men's struggles with the costs and benefits of inhabiting such roles.

Bohemia meant many different things to different people; in various contexts, it promised an escape from materialism, provincial attitudes, restrictive gender roles, and an oppressive work ethic. Levin does not privilege any one of these meanings, or decide who qualified as a “real” bohemian. Instead, she argues that nearly all self-styled bohemians inhabited some middle ground between rebellion and respectability. Restaurant owners used bohemian ambience to attract free-spending tourists; local boosters in Texas titled a magazine the *Bohemian* in an attempt to declare their region's sophistication; and California writers invited doctors and lawyers into their Bohemian Club so that they might bankroll the annual retreat. In each case, bohemia mixed with the conventional groups and attitudes it supposedly stood in opposition to.

Most chapters revolve around literature, which Levin analyzes as an expression of bohemian ideals and also as a template for readers hoping to live more romantic, artistic lives. In the stories that appear here, women wrestle with questions of love, career, and ambition; men chafe at standard definitions of success. Most characters flirt with bohemian lifestyles, but eventually settle into conventional marriages and careers. This literature provides vivid examples of how young Americans attempted to free themselves from restrictive Victorian mores, while also showing how tight the grip of those mores could be.

A few of the chapters take up the lived experiences of bohemians. Of these, the chapter on San Francisco's Bohemian Club is the most colorful, and is especially suited for undergraduate reading. The all-male club counted Californians such as John Muir, Jack London, Frank Norris, and Mark Twain as members, along with local judges, bankers, and professors. A linked set of historical tropes—a crisis of masculinity, admiration for “barbarian virtues,” therapeutic leisure, and wilderness conservation—become more real and understandable as we read about these otherwise serious men chanting and dancing around campfires in a redwood grove.

Levin's analysis is impressively grounded in the many subfields she engages here. Her conversations with fellow scholars, however, could be confusing or opaque to undergraduate readers. A few of her topics may feel arbitrary, too, to the general reader. She provides a thorough treatment of previously unmined sources, such as Bret Harte's San Francisco newspaper columns, but no in-depth discussion of the nineteenth century's three most popular works about bohemia: Henri Murger's book *Scènes de la Vie de la Bohème*, George du Maurier's novel *Trilby*, and Giacomo Puccini's opera *La Bohème*. Overall, the book's literary focus makes it most useful to history teachers looking for a guide to the literature of bohemia. The bibliography assembles a vast assortment of novels, magazine fiction, regional periodicals, newspaper columns, and memoirs all written by

or about America's bohemians, most of which would make excellent springboards for classroom discussion.

In reconstructing a history of bohemia, Levin highlights an important cultural phenomenon that shaped the literary world and radiated outward into popular culture. *Bohemia in America* illustrates the changing ways that Americans felt confined by everyday norms, and investigates their attempts to escape those norms, for the space of an afternoon or a lifetime.

Yale University

Julia Guarneri

An Empire of Regions: A Brief History of Colonial British America, by Eric Nellis. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2010. 366 pages. \$32.95, paper. \$70.00, cloth.

Eric Nellis' *An Empire of Regions* serves as a companion to his other work, *The Long Road to Change: America's Revolution, 1750-1820*, but as he attests, it may serve as a separate read. Nellis thoughtfully includes an initial "Usage of Terms" section to clarify definitions such as "charter," "province," and "indigenous peoples," in addition to relevant colonial maps; tables exhibiting population distribution, congregation by denomination, and European-Native Wars; a timeline preceding each chapter; and a list of suggested sources, both primary and secondary, at the end to encourage further research.

Nellis strongly displays his knowledge of the interweaving events of European history with those of North America. As he writes, "To study the history of North American mainland colonies without reference to their European imperial neighbors or their transatlantic connections makes no sense" (p. xviii). In addition, his in-depth yet concise coverage of the influence of disparate topics as the Renaissance, Calvinism, and the Restoration are impressive, and he provides much insight into such events as Bacon's Rebellion, Leisler's Rebellion, the John Peter Zenger Affair, and others. Within his text, he also cites and includes information from works infrequently mentioned by historians: Sir Thomas Dale's *Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall* (1612), John Woolman's *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes* (1754), and John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England and the Summer Isles* (1624).

Nellis also provides numerous interesting tidbits of information: Rev. John Eliot's 1661 publication of a bible in the Algonquian language; the 1787 stoning of an elderly woman in Philadelphia for witchcraft; the line named after Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, who were commissioned to define boundaries which would soon denote divisions between "North" and "South"; and the coining of the metaphor, "Shot heard around the World"—not during the Revolution, but on July 4, 1837.

Although he writes in a lively, informative, readable style, Nellis' work is, in one respect, somewhat disappointing. While his stated intent is to focus on several distinct "regional clusters," most of Nellis' work reads more like a general colonial history that parallels a series of course lectures, covering numerous topics ancillary to regionalism. Specifically, in his text (p. 200), he identifies five regional clusters: New England farm- and town-based society; planter-slave society of the Chesapeake and tidewater lower South; religious and ethnic polyglot communities of the middle colonies; the backcountry beyond the older settled coastal areas; and the West Indies. While Chapter 7 (The Regions of Colonial America: Northern Society and Politics in the Eighteenth Century) and Chapter

8 (The Regions of Colonial America: Society and Politics in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and the South) clearly support the regional concept, other chapters appear off-topic: one introduces European Exploration, another delves into Imperial Wars, a third wanders into the Great Awakening, and still another provides a background to the American Revolution. The regional concept becomes lost.

While the author acknowledges in his preface that contemporary historians, unlike those of the past, target the role of natives, slaves, women, and families, Nellis devotes little attention to women; and while he also acknowledges the need to focus on the roots of capitalism, consumerism, and nascent individualism, these are granted minimal space. Regarding the slave trade, other historians may challenge his underrating of trade access across the Sahara Desert, which included a spider-web of trade routes in numerous directions. In his discussion of the Middle Passage, in addition to animists and Christians, he overlooks Muslims, who were shipped out of Africa in significant numbers. In highlighting slavery in the American South, he fails to mention the African contribution to the development of Carolina rice culture as highlighted in Judith A. Carney's *Black Rice* (2001). For Olaudah Equiano's work, whose authenticity is currently questioned, he might have substituted, Quobna Ottobah Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery* (1787). In his appraisal of slave labor, apart from his view that "slaves determined the amount of work they were prepared to do," Nellis neglects the fact that many were often worked to death, only to be replaced by others plentifully supplied.

An Empire of Regions is most appropriate for undergraduate college and advanced placement high school students who seek information beyond the textbook. It is also useful for general readers who wish to extend their knowledge of the British North American colonies. Most readers, however, will perceive it as a general history with little in the way of new interpretation when contrasted to a memorable work, such as Daniel Boorstin's *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (1958), a new interpretation for *its* time.

Center for Holocaust/Genocide Study, Drew University

Michael Gialanella

Native America: A History, by Michael Leroy Oberg. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 393 pages. \$49.95, paper.

Finding course material to teach Native American history is a challenge. For years, historians considered it an offshoot of U.S. West History and no text existed until Arrell Gibson published his in 1980. Since the late 1990s, however, a number of useful books have been published, giving those who teach the subject real choice for the first time. The newest addition to the list is by Michael Leroy Oberg, Professor of History at the University of Houston. Oberg has taken an interesting approach. Admitting that he cannot in one book cover all of Native American history, he has decided to focus on the history of eleven communities. This allows the reader to understand that all of the communities existed during the whole of history, pre-contact to the present, rather than to learn about Cherokees, for example, only during removal. This also allows Oberg to focus on well-known stories through novel perspectives. For instance, he recounts the rise of the Shawnee Prophet through the experiences of Potawatomis who joined him, removal through events concerning Mohegans, the Ghost Dance through Kiowa experiences, and the New Deal as it affected Crow communities.

Oberg has chosen the communities carefully and well to provide geographic and experiences diversely while still maintaining solid coverage of the main themes of Native

American history. He supplements his text with a series of nine short asides titled "A Closer Focus." In these, Oberg explains an issue of more recent scholarship, such as the importance of gender in Caddoan Hasinai contact with the Spanish, or focuses on an interesting personality, like Nancy McClure, a Dakota mixed-blood. In addition to the seven communities already mentioned, Oberg focuses on Pueblo, Chumash, Powhatan, and Seneca peoples.

Native America is a great read and provides a number of excellent anecdotes for an instructor to use in class. Its usefulness as an assigned reading in a college or advanced high school course, however, is complicated by a number of factors. The book reads like a monograph, but is shaped and priced as a textbook. Since it contains no primary sources and has only some maps and illustrations (thirty-six to be exact), an instructor wanting students to benefit from these types of pedagogical tools will have to assign additional books or provide them all as handouts. In particular, the dearth of maps (ten are included) would allow students to easily lose the sense of geography as they read about the eleven communities all at once. (Possibly the only benefit of teaching Native American history as primarily a process of contact from east to west, which is how most texts present the story, is the sense of geography that students obtain.) Another complicating factor is the lack of source citations. Oberg uses many quotes and usually identifies the speaker/writer in the text; however, he often simply attributes a statement to "one observer" (p. 194) or "Quaker observers" (p. 213). With no footnotes or chapter bibliographies, it would be very difficult to find Oberg's material. It is a challenge to convince students to cite sources correctly, so this instructor is reluctant to use a textbook that does not do so. A third limitation of the book for use in class is that it is very heavy on colonial history. It is no surprise that Oberg, whose major publications have been about colonial America, would devote nearly half of his book to that era. Those who see the importance of stressing twentieth-century Indian history will be disappointed, however, in a text that spends a little more than two chapters on the period 1900 to the present. These criticisms should not dissuade anyone from reading Oberg's interesting book or from using it in class if they do not share these concerns. It is a very good account of Indian experiences.

Cottey College

Angela Firkus

The Rule of Empires: Those Who Built Them, Those Who Endured Them, and Why They Always Fall, by Timothy H. Parsons. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2010. 480 pages. \$29.95, cloth.

This chronologically and geographically wide-ranging study contains an introductory chapter, "The Subjects of Empires" (pp. 1-19) in which the author defines the crucial terms for his study (empire, imperialism, empire building, citizen and subject, etc.). This chapter is followed by chapters, chronologically arranged, dealing with seven empires in world history, each with significant chapter subheadings: Roman Myth: The Myth of the Civilizing Empire; Muslim Spain: Blurring Subjecthood in Imperial Al-Andalus; Spanish Peru: Empire by Franchise; Company India: Private Empire Building; Napoleonic Italy: Empire Aborted; British Kenya: The Short Life of the New Imperialism; and France under the Nazis: Imperial Endpoint. Each of these chapters contains a map of the empire discussed. The work concludes with a chapter entitled "Imperial Epitaph" wherein clear parallels are drawn between these various empires of the past and the current United States effort in Iraq. The concluding two sentences of Mr. Parsons' work deliver

a warning thesis of his study: “Inkan nobles, Mughal emperors, and twentieth-century Frenchmen all learned that it was possible to go from ruler to ruled virtually overnight. Conquerors may self-servingly portray defeated peoples as exotic or backward, but we are all potential imperial subjects” (p. 450).

The author challenges the idea of a “new imperialism” in the 19th and 20th centuries by suggesting that the imperial experience from the perspective of the subjects looks much the same throughout history. Thus: “In recent centuries . . . imperial conquerors have tried to hide their naked self-interest by promising to rule for the good of their subjects. This was and always will be a cynical and hypocritical canard. Empire has never been more than naked self-interest masquerading as virtue” (p. 4).

Parsons suggests that the study of empires shows that they are no longer feasible in the modern world due to technological changes and globalization. Starting with the Roman Empire and proceeding to the French under the Nazis, the longevity of the empires becomes shorter and shorter. A chapter on, for example, the late 19th- and 20th-century Japanese imperial endeavors would have added a good counter-balance to the idea that empire-building is a distinctly European phenomenon, which is sometimes suggested in Atlantic history studies (Latin America, Africa, Caribbean). The only non-European empire the author presents in this work is that of Umayyad Spain, though he clearly states that he could have dealt with several non-European empires (p. 5). Parsons’ chapter on Umayyad Spain is the least satisfying of the chapters, possibly hampered by his understanding that the Umayyad rulers there felt obligated to convert all of their subjects (p. 6). This thesis is contradicted in his own presentation of many parts of this chapter.

This reviewer strongly recommends this work for all instructors of world history survey courses. It is probably beyond the reach of most high school and undergraduate history students. As with any good work of history, it is also clear that most readers will want to read some of the chapters more than once. As this reviewer was writing this short review, I was drawn again and again back into the chapters. Each of the chapters contains material for starting points for discussion with students on issues that are quite relevant to a study of contemporary world affairs, such as identity, nationalist history, corruption of empire, religious justifications and explanations, restitution for human rights violations of the recent as well as the distant pasts, etc. At various points in the study, Parsons points to the role that the mythologizing of previous empires, particularly that of Rome, had on various Western cultures in their more recent imperial endeavors as well as to the debt they owed to systems of governing worked out by earlier empires, such as indirect rule.

As one might expect for such a wide-ranging study, the book relies on secondary sources. Mr. Parsons, a historian of Africa who specializes in the study of twentieth-century social history, is clearly most at home in the chapter on British colonial rule in Kenya (Chapter 6). He uses well-placed primary source evidence from that imperial experience in various chapters in the book for comparative purposes, though this is not reflected in the index. The index is glaringly brief (pp. 473-480) for such a lengthy work. The publisher has chosen to present endnotes with no accompanying bibliography. The notes are often frustrating to this reader, as whole paragraphs go by without any source citations at all. These publishing decisions lead to some frustration in locating the complete citation for a source or trying to guess exactly where to find more information on the material discussed in the text. This reviewer hopes these lacunae will be corrected in a paperback or second hardcover edition with the addition of Works Cited.

Pío Pico: The Last Governor of Mexican California, by Carlos Manuel Salomon. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. 233 pages. \$31.95, cloth.

Carlos Manuel Salomon has provided the first full biography of Pío Pico in this concise monograph. Pico appears here as a transitional figure in a critical period as California moved from Mexican control to becoming part of the United States. As the last Mexican Governor of California, Pico resisted the loss of the territory. However, once California became part of the United States, Pico adapted to American business and political realities, successfully working within those systems to rise in wealth as a cattle baron and real estate owner. Moreover, according to Salomon, “his utilization of the legal process demonstrates his enthusiasm for facing change” (p. 7), even while he retained his Mexican culture. Salomon argues that, although Pico eventually lost his empire, he should not be seen merely as a victim, who was inevitably overwhelmed by Anglo institutions and prejudice. Rather, Pico “controlled his own fate” (p. 9). This biography brings overdue attention to a significant figure in California history, yet disappoints by not bringing him to life and by presenting a debatable argument.

Salomon’s work does well locating Pico’s life within the broader framework of California and Mexican history. Sources include oral histories, transcripts of court cases, numerous manuscript collections, and letters from across California as well as archives in Mexico. Among the sources are Pico’s narrative and personal papers. Unfortunately, the author draws too little from Pico’s own words to illustrate how he viewed the individuals and events he encountered. The text also does not engage fully with particular discrepancies others have about the facts of Pico’s life. For example, Salomon accepts the legitimacy of Pico’s children at face value, while other sources point to evidence of Pico’s infertility and adoption of some of his siblings’ children.

Salomon begins with Pico’s family’s origins as Afro-Mexican pioneers during the Spanish colonial period. Salomon asserts that because of its frontier locale, California was a “meeting place for intersecting cultures” (p. 15), and racial hierarchy proved less an obstacle for the Picos than poverty. Nonetheless, Pío Pico maneuvered into local politics, winning a position in the San Diego town council and becoming a member of the territorial *diputación*, then governor. Salomon situates Pico’s politics firmly within the liberalism that inspired the Mexican Revolution and generated a desire among Californios for greater autonomy in Alta California from federal authorities. Pico also benefited from family unions, as his sisters married into prominent families. He became a land and cattle baron, owning Rancho Jamul, Rancho Santa Margarita, a house on the Los Angeles Plaza, the Pico House luxury hotel, and “El Ranchito” in Whittier. One of his paths to wealth was through secularization of the missions. Although *liberalismo* promised that replacing the mission system with parish churches would emancipate the natives and transform them into functional citizens of secular society, secularization profited administrators who controlled former mission lands and forced the native populations to work for them. As *comissionado* at Mission San Luis Rey, Pico expanded his cattle empire. While governor, Pico completed the sale of mission lands, including San Fernando to his brother Andrés and San Juan Capistrano to his brother-in-law John Forster.

The text then moves to Pico’s life during and after the Mexican American War. It covers Pico’s rivalry with Californio leaders in the north, the Bear Flag Revolt (which Pico thought was a hoax conjured by José Castro to gain power), and Pico’s call to arms and flight to Mexico to plead for military aid that would never arrive. After the war, Pico returned to California and, Salomon asserts, “maneuvered his way through the land commission years, paid his taxes, effectively dealt with squatters, and kept his land” (p. 115) even while many

other Californios lost theirs. Salomon takes issue with previous histories, such as Pitt's *Decline of the Californios*, which presented a steady degeneration of Mexicans' political, economic, and social status after the American acquisition of California. Salomon insists that "the gringos did not come in and erase Californios from memory . . . many Californios fought back with brute force, others resisted politically and through the newly arrived system of justice" (p. 109). Pico chose this later route and "proved to be one of the most resilient Californio businessmen during the post-annexation period" (p. 126). He prospered by selling beef to miners during the Gold Rush and renting his real estate holdings. He also continued spending lavishly. However, with cash in short supply, Pico began to mortgage property to pay debts. While he could easily have sold assets and come out ahead, Pico took risks, believing his deals would succeed. Moreover, he trusted various associates and family members to help him, only to have them cheat him out of property. When his interests were threatened, he used the courts to sue for justice, taking no less than twenty cases to the State Supreme Court. Salomon cites some victories as proof that Pico "used the courts effectively" (p. 156). Ultimately, though, Pico lost his properties. Thus, Salomon's argument is overstated. Salomon acknowledges that Pico was a victim of fraud, yet argues that he "did not fail because of pressure from a racist society" but due to "his own reckless business practices" (p. 157). Salomon goes on, "It cannot be said that he could not compete in the new Anglo-dominated society . . . His ultimate demise was more associated with corrupt and cunning individuals who conspired to destroy the old governor" (p. 171). But why? Salomon does not explain what these conspirators had against Pico. Certainly, greed was a factor. Still, the fact remains that Pico succumbed to white claimants in courts run by white lawyers and judges who openly ridiculed his inability to speak English in a society that legally demeaned and defrauded minorities. In light of these facts, Salomon's arguments can only be taken so far.

Although it has some shortcomings, this book may be used effectively in courses on the history of California, the West, borderlands, and ethnic or multicultural studies. It is accessible and should provoke lively discussions.

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Not Written in Stone: Learning and Unlearning American History Through 200 Years of Textbooks, by Kyle Ward. New York: The New Press, 2010. 304 pages. \$22.50, paper.

Not Written in Stone is a historiographical account of American history conducted through the examination of elementary and secondary school American history textbooks. Kyle Ward's work provides an easily accessible introduction to the study of both American history and historiography. His balanced selections of historical subjects and textbook excerpts, as well as the discussion questions at the end of each chapter, are intended to spark conversations at the high school and college levels. Ward's chronological approach allows students to recognize the subtle changes American history textbooks have undergone in response to the era in which they were written.

Ward's study of American history is divided into six thematic parts (Discovery and Colonization, The American Revolution, Founding a Nation, Westward Expansion, The Civil War and Reconstruction, and The Old West and Industrialization) ranging from the historical view of Native Americans prior to European settlement, up to the late nineteenth century and the relationship between the United States and the Philippines. The thematic

break down allows readers to understand the changing perception and relevance of historical events over the years in American education. Ward is clear in explaining his methodology for his selections. The fact that few textbooks were written prior to the Civil War limits his excerpts to the works of Noah Webster (1832), William D. Swan (1856), and Ben John Lossing (1860). Later nineteenth- and twentieth-century selections illustrate the more cohesive and evolving textbooks developed following the Civil War and the advancement of education. Ward's greatest strength is his consistency in reinforcing the changing nature of historical study through the underlying bias, prejudice, and societal values imposed on historical events by their authors.

Not Written in Stone is a well-suited companion piece for any high school or college level student. The format of *Not Written in Stone* is accessible, providing a brief excerpt on the historical event covered in each chapter. Ward covers a wide range of historical events, from the familiar (Boston Massacre and Dred Scott) to the less familiar (George Rogers Clark and the assassination of President McKinley). The historical events addressed throughout the text illustrate the power authors of textbooks have in shaping the historical narrative for a majority of students and Americans.

Ward's selections from Anne Hutchinson, and from African Americans during Reconstruction, demonstrate the changing social and cultural attitudes America has experienced. These two chapters display through either omission or language the influence of an era on historical writing. Ward successfully delivers a work that can be incorporated into a wide variety of American history curriculum standards and skill levels, bridging the gap between primary sources and the standard textbook. *Not Written in Stone* has the potential to engage students on various levels of historical discussion and inquiry.

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