

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Liquid Capital: Making the Chicago Waterfront* by Joshua A. Salzmann

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evidence, he assumes that most of the converts discussed sought out conversion less for pathways into American society or contact and more for truly religious reasons. He engages that old red herring argument: did the Native truly convert to Christianity or not? His answer appears, in the last three chapters, to be yes but it always caused too much stress. This answer unintentionally degrades Native choices.

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Joshua A. Salzmänn. *Liquid Capital: Making the Chicago Waterfront*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. Pp. 234. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Cloth: \$49.95.

Joshua A. Salzmänn offers a refreshing study on the rise of Chicago in *Liquid Capital: Making the Chicago Waterfront*. Rather than focus on the sprawling rail network that stemmed from the city, Salzmänn argues that a history of Chicago's waterways reveals the unique policies that spurred growth at the mouth of the Chicago River. *Liquid Capital* argues that the transformation of Chicago from a small settlement into the industrial hub of the Midwest is a history where "the state played a crucial role in promoting economic development" along the city's waterways (p. 5).

Salzmänn tracks nearly eighty years of economic debate, policy, and development in Chicago in order to demonstrate that the city's growth was never a simple product of market forces. Instead, the city's rise in the nineteenth century resulted from the patchwork coordination between federal and local governments as well as private and public funds. What resulted was a hybrid cityscape where private money and public land became so intermingled it became difficult to identify who paid for what along the city's waterfront. Salzmänn writes that by 1847, "The harbor . . . was dredged by the Army Corps of Engineers and the city of Chicago. The dock . . . was leased from the city and built by a private individual. The bridges . . . used to cross the Chicago River were constructed by the city, on public land, with private capital" (p. 38). Initially unconcerned with muddying the waters between public and private, Salzmänn demonstrates that Illinois politicians relied upon private capital to grow the city.

Balancing public interests and economic growth around the city's waterways became the constant struggle for politicians in the second half of the nineteenth century. Salzmänn creatively examines two prominent

court cases—*Munn v. Illinois* (1876) and *Illinois Central Railroad Co. v. Illinois* (1892)—as defining moments for the city’s waterways. Again in the 1890s and early-twentieth century, politicians advocated for state-sponsored growth along the water after technological advancements in shipping moved lake commerce to deeper harbors at the Calumet River and Northwest Indiana. Tourism and city beautification efforts inspired Daniel Burnham’s *Plan of Chicago*, and although the entirety of the *Plan* never came to be, Burnham advocated for what has remained an economic fixture of the Chicago lakefront—the Municipal Pier.

Salzmann situates his work against William Cronon’s *Nature’s Metropolis*—a history that depicted Chicago’s rise as “inevitable” (p. 3). Salzmann instead claims the city’s growth was a product of local legislators and businesses. Although he accurately uncovers the political jostling behind Chicago’s growth, Salzmann too quickly overlooks the sprawling connectedness between the metropolis and its periphery. For example, Salzmann only briefly outlines an attempt of the Escanaba and Lake Michigan Transportation Company (a corporation based in Michigan) to sue the City of Chicago over an 1881 law that regulated bridge closures on the Chicago River. Companies from the iron ranges and pine forests of the upper Midwest to the vast prairies of the lower Midwest saw their fortunes in the shape of Chicago. Salzmann’s study feels too localized given the sheer number of stakeholders concerned with the layout and regulation of the city’s waterways.

The “public” described in *Liquid Capital* is more of a legal abstraction than a body of real historical actors. Salzmann prefers lawyers and politicians to laborers and farmers in his telling of Chicago. Their absence, however, does not detract from a project that is focused on the business and political economy of nineteenth-century Chicago. In those terms, *Liquid Capital* will prove to be a fixture in the historiography of the city and the American Midwest.

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James E. Seelye, Jr. *Slovenes in Michigan* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2017. Bibliography. Illustrations. Index. Notes. Paper: \$12.95.

A robust literature chronicles the lives of Poles, Italians, Mexicans, and African Americans to Michigan, but few historians have focused on the role Slovenes played in developing the Great Lakes Region. In his