[Bascom] was president, whose college education was not thoroughly seasoned with this sense of higher moral obligation to serve the state" (p. 189). Bascom's successors at the university furthered his commitments to the public good by embracing the sentiment that "the boundaries of the University are the boundaries of the State" (p. 4). The University of Wisconsin would engage with agriculture and industry and create the Legislative Reference Library to aid lawmakers in crafting progressive legislation. And undergirding these activities was the intellectual legacy of John Bascom, "who brought this cerebral life into the political and social issues of the day" (p. 4).

There is little to critique in this work. As with many intellectual histories, it is not always easy to connect individual thinkers to social movements. On this, Hoeveler agrees by stating, "Intellectual history is rarely a matter of direct influence, one thinker to another, rarely a straight trajectory" (p. 207). While La Follette and University of Wisconsin president Charles Van Hise expressed indebtedness to Bascom's ideas, there were many other ideas that shaped reformers during the Progressive Era. Because of these cross-intellectual currents, readers will agree with Hoeveler that Bascom provided formative ideas to future political and university reformers but will have greater difficulty judging the magnitude and scope of that influence. In short, Hoeveler has again advanced the intellectual history of American higher education, and readers will applaud the author for shedding light on the richness of ideas in nineteenth-century colleges. As for Bascom, many readers may find a model for the current age, as we in higher education continue to strive for ways to transcend campus borders and rigid disciplinary boundaries to engage the problems in our communities.

Nathan M. Sorber
West Virginia University

doi: 10.1017/heq.2017.8

Benjamin Looker. *A Nation of Neighborhoods: Imagining Cities, Communities, and Democracy in Postwar America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. 432 pp.

Winner of the 2015 Organization of American Historians Lawrence Levine Award for cultural history, *A Nation of Neighborhoods* deserves wide readership among historians of education, especially those

https://doi.org/10.1017/heq.2017.9 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1017/heq.2017.9 Published online by Cambridge University Press

interested in "bridging the gap" between the fields of educational history and (sub)urban history.[1]

Benjamin Looker, an assistant professor in American Studies at St. Louis University, uses the interdisciplinary tools and the wide-ranging evidentiary sources of that field to paint a compelling portrait of the urban neighborhood as *the* preeminent site and symbol for articulating and contesting liberal visions of American citizenship, historical memory, and democratic practice in the three decades after World War II. For historians of education accustomed to understanding the institution of school and school curriculum as central to these struggles, *A Nation of Neighborhoods* compels us to both recognize relationships between schools and other neighborhood organizations as well as expand our traditional definitions of educative materials.

By paying attention to cultural productions and educative materials—novels, radio plays, museum exhibits, children's literature and television programs, and the works of block-level cultural activists—Looker is successful in challenging "much of the existing academic literature" (p. 10) that takes "urban dissolution and decay as the singular motif of postwar writings on the American city" (p. 8).

A Nation of Neighborhoods is divided into three parts, with each part consisting of three or four chapters. Each part narrates what Looker calls "broad historical arcs" (p. 12) related to liberal debates about the physical, civic, and cultural potential of the urban neighborhood. Part I, "Neighborhood Visions from Popular Front to Populist Memory," explores the rise and fall of a communitarian vision of the urban neighborhood between 1940 and the mid-1960s. Chapter 1 examines liberal cultural constructions during World War II that positioned city neighborhoods as "microcosms of democracy" (p. 21) in explicit contradistinction to the large totalitarian and fascistic states of Europe. From the wartime writings of Rachel Davis DuBois and the spread of her "neighborhood-home festivals" to the radio broadcasts of Louis Hazam's *Home Is What You Make It* and the Broadway production of *Street Scene*, the city neighborhood was idealized as a multiethnic, small-scaled community of "the common man" that had the potential to develop into a model of tolerance and unity. Looker argues that these rhetorical constructions were politically useful during the war, but the attention of postwar liberals turned to the physical (re)construction of the neighborhoods. Chapters 2 through 4 focus on

[1]Jack Dougherty, "Bridging the Gap between Urban, Suburban, and Educational History," in *Rethinking the History of American Education*, ed. William J. Reese and John L. Rury (New York: Palgrave MacMillan Press, 2007), 245–259. Available from the Trinity College Digital Repository, Hartford, Connecticut (http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu).

this turn by describing the debate among liberals over "urban blight" and the federal policies and neighborhood practices that might best combat it. These chapters include the "renewal" and "conservation" plans advocated by intellectual figures (such as Clarence Perry) and organizational actors (such as the National Association of Real Estate Boards) already well-represented in the literature, but also illuminate the educational materials of more grassroots organizations. For example, Looker finds that local affiliates of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC) produced urban narratives in the late 1950s that "aimed to prove African Americans' fitness for citizenship through neighborhood-centered community initiative" while at the same time they "publicly identified the discriminatory practices that underpinned deficient residential environments" (p. 103). Looker closes Part I by arguing that these grassroots efforts by black civic and civil rights organizations emerged just as a new brand of Cold War literature and television began depicting unified city neighborhoods as "clannish," "collectivist," or "conformist" and therefore counter to American traditions of individuality (pp. 121–122).

Part II, "The Urban Crisis and the Meanings of City Community," traces a historical arc from the early 1960s to the early 1970s, when the image and vision of "the 'neighborhood' and the 'ghetto' were drawn together into a mutually constitutive relationship" (p. 137). Chapter 5 sets up the contours of the debate among liberals over the extent to which the black urban "ghetto" was different from earlier white ethnic urban neighborhoods. While Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Michael Harrington, and Nathan Glazer are well-known for their arguments about black pathology, cultural deficits, and the cultural emptiness of the black "ghetto," Looker devotes chapters 6 and 7 to cultural counters to those social science and policy representations. In chapter 6, Looker positions the "advocacy photographer" (p. 171) Bruce Davidson's representations of Harlem, Robert Coles's complex neighborhood portrayals in *The South Goes North*, and the grassroots public history work at the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum as significant critiques of and "counter-model[s]" (p. 187) for representing black urban neighborhoods. Perhaps most interesting to historians of education, chapter 7 explores the representations of urban neighborhoods in children's literature and children's television. The chapter includes a fascinating look at the contentious exchanges between popular children's author Ezra Jack Keats and a growing number of African American children's writers and poets who accused Keats's urban narratives and images of black

https://doi.org/10.1017/heq.2017.9 Published online by Cambridge University Press

families and spaces as "condescending liberal fantasy" (p. 213). *Sesame Street*— the well-publicized effort by the Children's Television Workshop to create what one journalist called "the 'electronic Head Start' for low-income toddlers" (p. 218)—also became a cultural text for widespread debate in the early 1970s. Did it reflect existing urban neighborhoods and provide urban children a mirror through which they could see themselves as learners and agents of neighborhood improvement? Was it just another white liberal fantasy of a pleasantly multicultural and depoliticized urban place? Looker argues that these questions and debates affected the ways that Keats and the Children's Television Workshop represented urban neighborhoods over time, toggling between portrayals of a struggling present and a "sunnier urban future" (p. 228).

After the keen analysis of cultural productions in previous chapters, the chapters in Part III, "Defining Urban Pluralism in the Age of the Neighborhoods Movement," revert to a more traditional social history. Chapters 8 and 9 examine political organizations central to the neighborhood movement of the 1970s, including the New Left's Institute for Policy Studies and the largely Catholic National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs. Initially touting decentralization as a progressive and pluralistic political project, Looker argues that the progressives' grip on this ideal slipped over the course of the decade because of several failed experiments in small-scale governance, opposition from conservative religious (Catholic) leaders, and a growing New Right. The "neighborhood feminism" (p. 300) of the National Congress of Neighborhood Women, the subject of chapter 10, provides a useful exception to the localists' drift to the political right. Its twenty-eight affiliates across the country organized women across racial lines and deftly secured federal monies for neighborhood-based services (including day-care facilities and affordable housing). The flagship New York chapter even launched a College for Neighborhood Women in 1975, the curriculum of which sought to create "usable neighborhood pasts" (p. 307) by foregrounding neighborhood-based women's history and activism in New York City.

Looker concludes that the national elections of 1976 and 1980 essentially "ceded the language of the neighborhood to the right" (p. 335). The result has been several decades of the conflation of neighborhood-based politics with NIMBYism as well as successful efforts at rolling back even modest desegregation policies in favor of "neighborhood schools." Yet *A Nation of Neighborhoods* demonstrates that the representations of, and politics in, urban neighborhoods were continually contested throughout most of the twentieth century. Such a history of contestation is needed in order to complicate

https://doi.org/10.1017/heq.2017.9 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the all-too-common rise and fall narratives of twentieth-century urban neighborhood institutions, including, but not limited to, schools.

Michael Bowman
Iowa State University

doi: 10.1017/heq.2017.9

Jennifer Oast. *Institutional Slavery: Slaveholding Churches, Schools, Colleges, and Businesses in Virginia, 1680–1860.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. 264 pp.

Institutional Slavery focuses on Anglican and Presbyterian churches, Free Schools, four colleges, and private industry. It seeks to complicate our understanding of both slave ownership and slave hiring by investigating institutions that owned slaves, and it argues that institutional slavery changed slavery in Virginia in three important ways. First, by visibly benefiting the three out of every four white Virginians who did not own slaves, it convinced them to support the slave regime (p. 9). Second, it argues that institutional slaves, by virtue of not being owned by an individual and frequently facing dislocation as a result of being rented out, experienced greater insecurity and hardship (p. 102). Finally, enslaved people owned by institutions, by virtue of lacking an appropriately "fatherly" master, challenged, and at times weakened, the paternalist defense of slavery (p. 9).

Oast defines an "institutional slave" as "[one] who was owned by a group of people united in a common purpose—nonprofit educational and religious organizations, the public… and for-profit companies" (p. 3). They "sometimes worked directly for the institutions" or "were owned *by* one and… hired out annually to raise funds" (p. 3). The category of institutional slave here represents a very broad and loosely defined one, coming to include even slaves rented to institutions.

Although the book challenges the reader to rethink slave owning and slave hiring in Virginia, it does not deliver consistently convincing results. Some of this may stem from the paucity of extant records. The chapter on Anglican churches cites vestry books or registries from ten different parishes and argues that from this "survey of all the extant Virginia vestry books… parish registers and acts of the General Assembly, it is clear that about half of the parishes owned slaves at some time during the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries" (p. 20).

https://doi.org/10.1017/heq.2017.9 Published online by Cambridge University Press