

just at Vauxhall) as 'insignificant' and the 'Affray' as a 'wretched affair' (p. 235) the authors' antiquarian approach ceases to be quaint, and becomes almost petulant.

In keeping with their 'antiquarian' approach, the authors express a hope 'that these pages will provide a mine of detailed information . . . the essential building blocks from which future scholarship may be constructed' (p. ix). Now the antiquarians have rounded up the facts, as it were, the historians can do whatever it is that they do. This is to posit a false distinction between archival research and historical interpretation. In writing a history of Vauxhall Gardens, Borg and Coke have indeed presented 'an abundance of facts' (p. ix), in those areas that they consider 'significant', but (as we have seen) not in others. In the process, they have advanced their own interpretations. That is both necessary and inevitable: a history of an institution like Vauxhall Gardens should offer something more than 'building blocks for future scholarship'. Unfortunately, large chunks of this book, particularly the sections on music, read like a gazetteer. There is much here (text as well as images) that would have been better placed on the authors' excellent website.

There is no gainsaying the many years of painstaking effort that has gone into collating the material for this volume and its several appendices, which include detailed maps allowing the reader to track changes in layout with unprecedented detail and accuracy. After more than a century, we at last have an illustrated and expanded study of one of London's most important leisure resorts, a study that Warwick Wroth would have been proud of. While the authors may consider that a compliment, urban historians may find themselves wondering if a more open-minded and self-aware approach would not have been welcome.

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Minoru Yasumoto, *The Rise of a Victorian Ironopolis: Middlesbrough and Regional Industrialization*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011. xv + 230pp. 5 plates. 119 figures and tables. Bibliography. £60.00.
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This latest offering from the 'Regions and Regionalism in History' series, a source of several works of interest to the urban historian over the past decade, provides a timely analysis of the demographic, economic and social developments that underpinned the rapid growth of Middlesbrough as a major iron manufacturing centre in mid-Victorian Britain. Consistent with Professor Yasumoto's earlier work on industrialization, urbanization and demographic change in Leeds, this thoroughly researched study makes use of an impressive array of sources in providing a detailed quantitative analysis throughout.

The narrative of the planning and emergence of Middlesbrough found in Chapter 1 will be familiar to those versed in the history of the town, yet is complementary to existing work in its detailed statistical representation of these developments, gleaned from impressive exploration of sources including the papers of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, poor rate books, improvement acts and charters. In doing so, Yasumoto identifies a number of developments of interest to the urban historian including the emergence of urban institutions and, through astute exploitation of financial records, the shift from earlier dominance

of local affairs by the Owners to tripartite governance in the 1870s, consisting of the municipality, the Owners and the ironmasters. The importance of the ironmasters in the town's economic organization is apparent in the next chapter, concerned with agglomeration, productivity and markets. Through discussion of the numerous trade organizations that emerged to support industrial expansion, including the Chamber of Commerce and employers' organizations such as the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association, the importance of regional manufacturing networks as mechanisms for consolidating trade circles and weathering economic downturns is shown.

While the first two chapters might loosely be considered narratives of the *Rise of a Victorian Ironopolis*, the two chapters that follow, dealing with demography and urban growth and the Cleveland iron and steel industries' labour market, are dominated by tables and graphs with accompanying explanatory text of their contents. The first, with a strong reliance on census enumerators' books, presents a meticulous longitudinal migration profile of the town showing the potential of computer-aided record linkage in facilitating comparisons with other boom towns in Britain, the Continent and across the Atlantic. Changes in age-structure, comparisons with population increase, in-migration and out-migration in other areas, as well as detail of birth, marriage and mortality rates, show convincingly the centrality of migration in Middlesbrough's industrial expansion. The differences that existed across socio-economic groupings, interactions within the community, similarities with industrial conurbations elsewhere and even the relationship between migrant persistence and criminality are explored. In a similar vein, the following chapter explores various facets of Middlesbrough's youthful, male-dominated labour market. The role that print media, kinship and workplace networks played in aiding the recruitment of skilled workers and managers, coupled with analyses of marriage patterns, birthplace of offspring, accommodation of migrants, trade union supported mobility and the migration patterns of two selected individual migrants, all help to provide an insight into the links that facilitated the development of the town's workforce and determined interactions within it. In laying stress on the manufacturers' reliance on importing skilled workers into Middlesbrough owing to the lack of training and education provision fit for developing an indigenous labour force, Yasumoto contends that this contributed to the steel industry's failure to match the boom generated by the earlier iron industry.

The final section of the book investigates the medical services available to victims of industrial accidents, taking the form of a case study of the major hospitals serving the town – North Ormesby Hospital and North Riding Infirmary. The emphasis on the divergent nature of the two institutions' financial support base and management structures up until the 1900s is particularly salient to urban history's recent concern with governance and contestation of urban space. The juxtaposition of the working-class-dominated North Ormesby Hospital, heavily reliant on workers' subscriptions, with the North Riding Infirmary, developed as a 'means through which the Cleveland local elite might extend its role in regional governance' (p. 187), is particularly intriguing.

Yasumoto's undoubted passion for both Middlesbrough and its demography shine throughout. However, the copious tables and datasets limit the ability to project a central narrative or argument, whilst the diversity of topics discussed sees the work essentially form a collection of essays. Nevertheless, in covering

areas as diverse as urban growth, business organizations, labour markets and the contested terrain of medical provision, *Victorian Ironopolis* is sure to have broad appeal to urban historians researching a range of topics.

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Eric J. Morser, *Hinterland Dreams: The Political Economy of a Midwestern City*. Philadelphia,: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. xi + 266pp. Bibliography. £36.00.
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Hinterland Dreams is an enjoyable and innovative look into the forging of American individualism and exceptionalism. Through the history of La Crosse, Wisconsin and its self-reliant entrepreneurs, historian Eric J. Morser explores the previously underestimated role of small Midwestern frontier towns in shaping twentieth-century American economic and political culture. An expert in state-building and early American history, Morser's book focuses on the regional urbanization of the Midwest in the late nineteenth century. This is not about one town, but about how Midwestern cities were integrated as a regional resource, transportation and economic centre, creating a conurbation that fuelled American industrialism and connected the western frontier to the larger world. Like many Midwestern cities, La Crosse offers an intriguing look into how state and local governments empowered residents of smaller cities to influence the region's economic history. In this way, the author is able to explore the history and historiography of the Midwestern frontier that made American exceptionalism possible.

The resource-rich surroundings of the Midwest, along with its vibrant community leaders, have long been cited by historians for their role in the American Industrial Age. The resource-abundant municipalities of the Midwest, conveniently located at the intersection of the Mississippi River and the rising railroad lines, served as transportation and financial centres that linked the frontier lands to the larger world. Although well known for providing the key resources used to fuel the large urban centres of the time, this understates the grander economic infrastructure required to support a wide-scale industrial transformation. In addition, these towns were forged by immigrants who developed entire industries and linked merchants from surrounding areas to facilitate the bustling industrial centres and diverse economies that allowed them to flourish. Despite this, historians typically overlook the role of hinterland communities, portraying them as backwards and unimportant. As a consequence, the important role of these towns and their citizens has largely been underestimated in the process of industrialization.

What makes this work unique is Morser's convincing illustration of how political choices made in these small cities had important consequences for the entire region. Largely missing from past conceptions, he argues, is the additional and yet fundamental role that government played in funding and promoting the underlying legal and political economy necessary to support the transformation of these cities. Federal, state and municipal officials built military outposts to provide protection, while funding regional railroads and local telephone and electric systems. At the same time, they passed laws, issued rulings and created a lasting