Robbins's thoughtful and jargon-free account makes an important contribution to scholarship on American political and class identity and will be of interest to a variety of readers interested in early-twentieth-century American history. Taking a step backward, historically, from the work of Lizabeth Cohen, the work suggests areas that require further exploration than Robbins himself provides, particularly concerning the interrelationships of gender, race, and class. Robbins outlines the efforts of white middle-class women's organizations as they provided volunteers for a variety of these efforts, noting their lack of attention to diversity, but existing scholarship documenting black and white women's gendered and racialized engagements with consumer identity could be drawn on more extensively. Nevertheless, *Middle Class Union* provides a good read, a careful rendering, and a tantalizing starting point for exploring those and other complications further.

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The Mechanical Horse: How the Bicycle Reshaped American Life. *By Margaret Guroff*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016. 287 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. Cloth, $24.95. ISBN: 978-0-292-74362-5.
doi:10.1017/S0007680517001180

Reviewed by Clifton Hood

Between the time I finished reading Margaret Guroff's book and when I wrote this review, I spent a weekend cycling a sixty-two-mile-long rail trail that runs through a spectacular landscape in northern Pennsylvania. In recent years, this trip has become my favorite way to decompress from the academic year.

In its relatively brief history, the bicycle has served not only as the mode of leisure and recreation that so many of us enjoy nowadays, but also as a means of commuting, of delivering goods and messages in big cities, of military reconnaissance and troop advances, of renowned races like the Tour de France, and of childhood play. Political pressure from organized bicyclists brought about the construction of better roads and streets in late-nineteenth-century America (hence making automobiles feasible) and the technology transfers accomplished by the Wright brothers, the most famous bicycle mechanics of all time, hastened the development of aviation in the early twentieth century. Clearly,

a trademark feature of the bicycle is its capacity for a wide range of uses and adaptations.

The subtitle of *The Mechanical Horse* promises an investigation of how the bicycle reshaped American life, but the book is better understood as a series of case studies of the bicycle's continuing technological, business, and social adaptation. Bicycles derive from a machine called the draisine that was invented in Germany in 1817. Draisines had the two wheels, frame, and saddle of modern bicycles but lacked handlebars, pedals, chains, and gears; instead, riders used their feet to push themselves forward and glide, as with a scooter, and they steered by means of a tiller. From the draisine evolved the ordinary—a high-wheeled device powered by foot pedals and capable of going as fast as sixteen or seventeen miles per hour—and, in the 1880s, the safety—the direct ancestor of our bicycles. Safety bicycles featured two thigh-high wheels, pneumatic rubber tires, and a chain that transmitted power from the pedals to the rear wheel, thus driving the machine.

The advent of the safety tremendously expanded the market for bicycles: safeties were cheaper to buy than ordinaries, were less likely to crash, and required less athletic skill and less strength to ride. Although women were still encumbered by prevailing clothing styles and had to either shorten their traditional long skirts or don trouser-like garb, Guroff says that the invention of the safety made it possible for them to cycle, too. Far more people could ride now, and they rode in different ways and for different purposes than before. The adaptability that characterizes modern bicycles thus first became evident with the safety and helped make bicycles an important part of everyday American life by the 1890s.

However, bicycles were also prone to fads and fashion that periodically have disrupted the industry. After the bicycle craze of the 1890s, bike sales plummeted—a decline that was probably due in equal measure to competition from automobiles and to the loss of community that occurred as bike ridership fell. Adults had comprised virtually all bike riders in the nineteenth century, but, in their desperation to halt the loss of sales, American bicycle manufacturers created a new audience—children. By 1941, Guroff says, 85 percent of all bicycles produced in the United States were children's models. At the time, American grownups generally disdained bicycle riding as a juvenile activity ill-suited to mature life stages, while conventional medical opinion held intense physical exercise to be a health risk to adults. Popular understandings changed drastically in the 1960s and 1970s. On account of revised medical findings about the importance of exercise, a new environmental consciousness, and the dissemination from Europe of lightweight bicycles with derailleurs, cycling acquired newfound popularity

in American society as a key component of an emerging recreation and leisure culture, which my recent outing on Pennsylvania's Pine Creek trail exemplifies. Guroff acknowledges that "cycling may once again fall out of fashion," but expresses confidence that even "if the bike goes away again, it will be back. It is already here to stay" (p. 166). That seems like a sound bet.

The Mechanical Horse is first-rate popular history that ought to interest professional historians of business, capitalism, and technology. Although Guroff does not utilize archives, her research is nonetheless far reaching. She makes extensive use of printed primary sources (newspapers and magazines, annual reports, company catalogs) and draws on relevant scholarly literature. This is a well-written and well-organized book that could be assigned to an undergraduate lecture class or seminar and used to illuminate different approaches to analyzing historical change.

Clifton Hood is professor of history at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. He is the author of 722 Miles: The Building of the Subways and How They Transformed New York *(1993) and* In Pursuit of Privilege: A History of New York City's Upper Class and the Making of a Metropolis *(2016), and he is currently writing a cultural history about imposters in the United States from the 1840s through the 1940s.*

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The Capitalist and the Critic: J. P. Morgan, Roger Fry, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. *By Charles Molesworth*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016. xii + 244 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. Cloth, $29.95. ISBN: 978-1-4773-0840-0.
doi:10.1017/S0007680517001192

Reviewed by David C. Hammack

Charles Molesworth, who has written books of literary criticism and biographies of Marianne Moore, Alain Locke, and Countée Cullen, offers in this book an interesting account of the life of the English artist and art critic Roger Fry, with some comments on Fry's brief and disappointing encounter with J. P. Morgan and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Others have written biographies of Fry and Morgan as individuals. Here, Molesworth explores the brief encounter between "the capitalist" and "the critic," strongly emphasizing the critic's perspective.

This book provides detailed and well-informed observations on Fry's life, emphasizing his experiences at Cambridge University with the group known as the Apostles and later with the Bloomsbury set of writers and