

written, well argued, and deeply humane, and it deserves an audience among anyone interested in the history of U.S. women, cities, capitalism, criminal justice, and state formation.

**Hanzlick, K. David. *Benevolence, Moral Reform, Equality: Women's Activism in Kansas City, 1870 to 1940*.
Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2018. 222 pp.
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Over the years, scholars of women's activism in the United States have developed many theories to understand the actions and behaviors of the women they study. Perhaps the most widely known is the "wave" metaphor, used to partition women's activist history into manageable pieces. Such mechanisms can be tremendously helpful in painting a broad picture of women's activism: they provide a ready-made structure onto which simple narratives can be built and disseminated. But the particularities of historical context are easily lost in the vastness of such theories. In *Benevolence, Moral Reform, Equality: Women's Activism in Kansas City, 1870 to 1940*, historian David Hanzlick does much to counteract the totalizing influence of another of these grand theories: the "eastern thesis" of women's activism.

The eastern thesis, Hanzlick explains, describes the fragmentation of U.S. women's activism after passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Once suffrage was won, the tenuous coalition of women that worked to gain the vote broke into smaller cohorts, each with their own goals and preferred strategies. Scholars often group these splintered efforts into three categories: benevolence, moral reform, and gender equality. In general, benevolence indicates a preference for Christian forms of charity; moral reform describes reliance on the politics of maternalism to rid society of evils, such as the temperance movement's focus on alcoholism; and gender equality encompasses efforts to end discrimination against women on the basis of sex. According to the eastern thesis, these factions often failed to fully meet the needs of those they sought to serve and male-led organizations stepped in to fill the void. Hanzlick argues, however, that this general theory for the evolution of women's activism in the United States does not accurately capture what was happening on the ground in Kansas City, Missouri. Or, as he puts it, "While this meta-narrative may hold true in eastern cities, the unsettled character of rapidly growing western cities ... provides an occasion to reexamine this 'eastern' thesis of women's organizational structures" (5). In other words, the eastern thesis is not a one-size-fits-all solution for understanding the development of women's activism in the expanding American West. As Hanzlick points out, most of the scholarly research conducted on early American women's activism focused on large cities on the East and West Coasts, or in the Upper Midwest. Kansas City, a Midwestern metropolis on the rise during the

Gilded Age and Progressive Era, therefore provides an important case study for new understandings of the development of U.S. women's activism.

According to Hanzlick, the unique geographic position and mixed demographic makeup of Kansas City help explain why women's efforts in the city did not splinter as readily as in other eastern locales. Kansas City is unique in that it developed along the border of a "deeply divided border state" (6). Here, proslavery forces in Missouri lived and worked alongside free state advocates, many of whom had relocated from the East to Kansas Territory. Consequently, the business elite who wanted to develop Kansas City into an industrial hub found it necessary to cultivate a deep and abiding commitment to pragmatism, both for civic unity and economic progress. This does not mean that conflict never arose, as indeed it often did. It means that city leaders had to actively and diligently maintain some measure of stability. Put another way, the civic and financial well-being of the growing city was often valued over regional and cultural differences. Hanzlick also finds this pragmatic streak prevalent among the city's leading charitable women's organizations. Whether an individual woman adhered primarily to the movement for benevolence, moral reform, or gender equality, Hanzlick finds that these differing factions worked together more often than not in their efforts to improve Kansas City, both before and after the battle for suffrage was won.

Hanzlick provides ample evidence to support his claims. He opens the book with a thorough examination of Kansas City's explosive growth in the years leading up to and immediately following the opening of the Hannibal Bridge in 1869. Soon, Kansas City became the second-largest rail hub in the United States, trailing only Chicago. The attendant increase in people and goods flowing through the region led to the creation of the area's first relief agency. Hanzlick explains that "the rapidly growing and transitory frontier population was vulnerable to natural and economic disasters yet was not served by any organized relief organization—a void that women would fill through collective action" (9). They did so through the formation of the Women's Christian Association (WCA) in 1870. The group's membership spanned all three strains of female activism—benevolence, moral reform, and gender equality—although leadership at the WCA would eventually prioritize the interests of its wealthy, elite members who were most interested in performing benevolent charity. As Kansas City's population grew, the needs of its people grew, too, and the WCA found itself increasingly focused on providing immediate relief for those in extreme poverty.

While women organized for relief, male-led organizations such as the Provident Association and the Board of Public Welfare (created in 1880 and 1908, respectively) formed to address some of the longer-term needs of Kansas Citians. The eastern thesis would suggest that such male-led relief agencies marked the beginning of the end for female-led activism in Kansas City. However, as Hanzlick demonstrates so convincingly, Kansas City's women pressed on in their efforts "to participate in the process of governing their community" (11). From the turn of the century onward, these women increasingly developed and participated in local chapters of national women's organizations. One of the true strengths of *Benevolence, Moral Reform, Equality* is the thoroughness with which Hanzlick brings to life these women's efforts. Utilizing newspaper coverage from the period alongside archival material from groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Association of Colored Women, the Catholic Women's Association, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Women's Relief Corps, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Hanzlick deftly sketches an incredibly busy landscape of women's activism in Kansas City. Such

“clubwomen” worked tirelessly on campaigns as diverse as child labor laws, consumer protection and price gouging, public kindergartens, and public swimming pools and playgrounds.

In his conclusion, Hanzlick reiterates the central question of his study: “How did women claim political power and influence in this western city?” (219). Women in Kansas City accomplished considerable change through collective action and the continual expansion of the feminine sphere of influence. Rather than settling for influence within only the four walls of their homes, these women “extended the hearth into the streets” and redefined issues of “poor relief, moral reform, equality, and Progressive reform” as women’s issues (219–20). With incredible attention to detail and deep archival research, Hanzlick’s study fills a significant gap in the literature on U.S. women’s activism.

Shaw, Christopher W. *Money, Power, and the People: The American Struggle to Make Banking Democratic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. 400 pp. \$30.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-2266-3633-7.

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In 1907, brothers Arthur and Otto Heinze made a risky speculative play to boost United Copper Company stock and squeeze the short-sellers who had bet against it. The Heinzes’ attempt to corner the market failed spectacularly. Their failure might not have impacted more than a small clique of financiers, except wary depositors at the Knickerbocker Trust Company, a bank whose president was close to the Heinzes, withdrew their money in response. Knickerbocker Trust suspended withdrawals. Soon, financial institutions across the country also faced their own bank runs. The crisis jeopardized the savings of Americans from coast to coast and threw the American economy into turmoil.

Christopher W. Shaw’s *Money, Power, and the People: The American Struggle to Make Banking Democratic* is a rich and detailed history of American efforts to reform or replace financial capitalism, from the aftermath of the “Banker’s Panic” of 1907 to the New Deal. During this period, the United States constructed a number of relatively durable institutions for stabilizing or managing the financial economy, such as the Federal Reserve and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. But Shaw is interested not only in the proposals that came to be but also the ones that never did, or those limited to a single state or region that failed to spread nationally. So, for example, while this book offers a comprehensive history of the legislation that resulted in the Fed, it also describes the financial reform program of Jacob S. Coxey, who, besides leading his “army” of the unemployed on an 1894 march to Washington, DC, promoted a plan for the massive federal purchase of state and local bonds.