

of the order of publication)" to his *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810–1914*: it gave this reviewer a better understanding of how London gained and kept that small "beachhead of empire" a half a world away that was to become British Columbia, once the Spanish had been beaten out at Nootka ("skilful diplomatic chess").

A few pages of general remarks about the "tyranny of distance", which might just as well have formed a part of what they introduce or been adapted as a proper introduction, are followed by a section on 'Pacific Probes'. Drake and Byron, Dampier, Defoe and Rogers, Bering and Chirikov all make swift appearances, before the greater seaman, Cook, takes centre stage in chapter 3. Next come the best researched, most satisfactory two chapters of the book: 'Spanning the Pacific' and 'The Fortune Seekers'. Taking as his cue David Macpherson's observation in *Annals of Commerce* (1805) that "commerce is universally known to be the chief source of prosperity, and also the Power, of the British empire", Gough warms to the maritime-cum-economic essence of his topic. Mears and Martinez are allowed to walk on stage, squabble, and leave (chapter 6, 'Beachhead of Empire') before the scene changes to Anglo-Spanish conflict (chapters 8–9, 'Imperial Dreams and False Starts' and 'Conflicts of Ambition'). Having dealt with the Dons in chapter 9, Gough moves on gratefully and more expansively to 'The Surveyor-Diplomats'. Vancouver's work on and about the Northwest Coast is well presented, on the basis of original materials and sound archival work in the Public Record Office, London, the Public Archives Commission in Ottawa, and the Perkins Library at Duke, North Carolina. Lastly, there are ten packed pages on 'The Overlanders', and a six-page epilogue. The suitability of these brief cameos for conveying a large and complex picture, every part of which relates to others, may be questioned: in this reviewer's opinion Gough would have done better with half-a-dozen chapters of, say, 30 pages each. Having elected to employ mini-chapters, one must say in fairness, Gough handles them well.

The work has an excellent bibliography, with a separate section for the 14 theses consulted. (Would that all West Coast historians were as aware of recent dissertations in their field and prepared to make the effort to consult them.) It has useful notes, and is handsomely illustrated with 25 plates. All in all, this is a very useful contribution to North Pacific naval and commercial history. Historical geographers should also benefit from a concise and balanced treatment of a subject long neglected by geographers, Canadian or otherwise.

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JUDD KAHN, *Imperial San Francisco: Politics and Planning in an American City, 1897–1906* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979. Pp. 263. \$17.95)

Since the Second World War the interaction between politics and planning has been a subject of great interest to historians, politicians, and planners of all persuasions. This volume is a study of the interaction in a particularly intriguing time and place; San Francisco during the decade preceding the earthquake and fire of 1906 and the years immediately thereafter.

The book first considers San Francisco in the nineteenth century. Dr Kahn gives us a synoptic view of his historical context, and the city's geographical setting, spatial organization and social structure. The burden of this first chapter is that, by 1900, San Francisco's dominance was declining relative to its potential rivals on the West Coast. The following chapter on municipal politics in the years 1897–1906 introduces the dramatis personae. The major figures are the political boss Abraham Ruef, the labour leader Eugene Schmitz, and the Democrat James D. Phelan, one of the most important landowners and bankers of the city. Phelan, who was Mayor from 1897 to 1901, was the moving spirit behind the City Beautiful Movement in San Francisco and the commissioning of Daniel H. Burnham to prepare his famous plan of 1904. Kahn writes at

length of the complicated politics which surrounded the debate over the adoption of the plan in 1905, and his narrative is somewhat hard to follow. Suffice it to say that there were powerful forces for and against the plan, and that the nonpayers were strong enough to forestall its adoption. Clearly Kahn thinks that this was a good thing. The disaster of 1906 would appear to have provided a magnificent opportunity for the proponents of the Burnham plan, but its opponents, notably the conservative business interests, remained obdurate. This should not surprise us. As the author rightly remarks, history shows that “. . . disaster seems more likely to beget substantial continuity in urban form, rather than radical innovation” (p. 201). And so planning, at least the Burnham variety, was defeated.

The virtues of this book are substantial. It chronicles in great detail the fate of one of the finest of D. H. Burnham's plans. There can be no doubt of the thoroughness and finality of the research. In fact, there is probably too much detail for those without a special interest in San Francisco. In my view the chief weakness of the book is the paucity of graphic material. Much of the book is about the Burnham plan, yet it is shown only in a half-page bird's-eye view. Surely we could expect more extensive illustration; its lack means that we have no sense of the physical reality of the place. Certainly the photographs of the city after the earthquake and fire are helpful, but most of the book's readers will have seen these before. Probably the Burnham plan was “Imperial”, as the title states, but without more illustration few of us will have any idea of what that adjective actually meant.

Finally, one's feeling about the writer's contention that San Francisco was fortunate to have avoided any adaption of the Burnham plan will, of course, depend on how one feels about the City Beautiful variety of planning. Since Lewis Mumford wrote his chapter ‘The Imperial Façade’ in *Sticks and Stones* (1924), which Kahn calls “dazzling”, a good many opinions have changed about both the architecture and planning of Daniel H. Burnham. A number of American cities appear to owe some of their most attractive features to the City Beautiful Movement. In view of what has been built since, the neo-classical railroad stations, city halls, and grand boulevards of the early twentieth century do not look so bad. It is worth noting that Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, architects of the new Symphony Hall in San Francisco, were at great pains to design a building which fitted well within this academic tradition. There is at least room for difference on this point.

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LEONARD K. EATON

SHERRY H. OLSON, *Baltimore: The Building of an American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. Pp. xii+432. \$22.95)

GARY LAWSON BROWNE, *Baltimore in the Nation, 1789-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980. Pp. xiii+349. \$20.00)

Students of the urban growth process in relation to social, economic, and political change will welcome these fine histories of Baltimore. The similarities and differences between their approaches to urban history are instructive, for they reveal much about the biases and idiosyncrasies of scholars and disciplines, while suggesting fruitful avenues for future research.

Olson has attempted to draw a sweeping panorama of the physical growth of a major American metropolis from earliest settlements to the present day. Within this urban landscape, the effects of the global processes of industrialization, immigration, class struggle, and economic specialization are examined during periods of ebb and flow in the local economy. The consequences of urban rivalries, entrepreneurial decisions, and state and federal policies are traced through Baltimore's changing landscape. Olson assumes a broad familiarity with economic and social change, national patterns of urbanization, and concepts of economic interdependence and regional economic modelling.