

Trust Company in 1830; the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company in 1834) as devices for pooling available eastern capital for investment in the West. Through the managerial skills of his son Arthur and protégé Butler, these accumulated investment funds helped underwrite the initial development of Toledo, Grand Rapids, Chicago, and several other "paper towns" in the Great Lakes region. Equally important, this eastern capital was made accessible to prospective purchasers of farm land in several of the Old Northwest states, including Indiana.

The writer acknowledges that the Bronsons and Butler were land speculators, but, as the term applies to them, he dismisses any negative overtones it may have. Despite their keen ability to turn a profit, all were honest, honorable, and judicious men. The elder Bronson is portrayed as an advanced economic thinker, whose views and policies might have helped the American nation avoid the financial pitfalls of the late 1830s if his advice had been heeded. Butler on occasion was more flamboyant and ready to take risks, but he was very skillful in promoting financial ventures within the context of political realities. He is the Charles Butler who played a prominent role in "settling" Indiana's internal improvements debacle in 1844-1845—after performing a very similar function in the state of Michigan just a year before.

Haeger's *The Investment Frontier* contains much enlightening information relating to the complicated land speculation issue. It is well researched and well written. If there is a criticism, it is that the writer may have pushed his contention beyond the facts arrayed. Were there as many Bronsons and Butlers around the Old Northwest as he suggests? Historians may not know for certain, but after reading this book they may be more on the lookout for them.

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*Boosters and Businessmen: Popular Economic Thought and Urban Growth in the Antebellum Middle West.* By Carl Abbott. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981. Pp. xii, 266. Maps, notes, tables, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$27.50.)

The process of town promotion has long attracted students of popular culture. Daniel J. Boorstin, Charles N. Glaab, Richard C. Wade, and many others have ably discussed the ways in which American optimism and ambition found release

in efforts to "boost" western towns. Carl Abbott attempts to join this group with his study of promotional activity in four mid-western cities—Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Galena—during the boom years 1848-1857. Most of this book is concerned with boosterism as "popular economic thought" in the four cities. Although Abbott acknowledges the flamboyant side of booster thinking, he chooses to emphasize a form of town promotion that featured "realistic analysis" of circumstances; those who look for the power of the driving dream will be disappointed. For the rest, he concentrates on the distinctive economic personalities and policies of each of the four cities. Indianapolis stands out here for its calm and reasonable pursuit of "well-measured economic goals" (p. 172), the most important one being to make itself the service center for Indiana; the author notes that neither the city nor its state exhibited the aggressive booster spirit evident elsewhere, a point the implications of which he chooses not to explore. In contrast, Cincinnati comes off badly as a city inhibited by its early success and by the complexities associated with its maturing urban character. Abbott calls attention to the fact that Galena once considered itself a commercial rival of Chicago. By the 1850s, however, it had lost out to booming Chicago, which had succeeded in attracting business talent and capital from the East.

*Boosters and Businessmen* adds to the knowledge of the urban Middle West. It is not, however, a book which can be recommended to either the general reader or the scholar. In style, it reads like a doctoral dissertation—even though Abbott is credited with three previously published works; it is but a pallid rendering of the enthusiasm and energy that infused one of the most extraordinary periods of growth in American history. More essentially, Abbott has clouded his subject by equating boosterism, associated with early town formation, with the response of maturing cities to the complexities associated with maturation. By so doing he has thrown away the opportunity to discuss the evolution of civic entrepreneurship from the days of open opportunities to times when realities were more compelling than dreams. He has compounded this failure by his indifference to the political side of town promotion, particularly the efforts of urban business communities to influence state and federal policy. How, one wonders, can popular economic thought be adequately discussed without reference to the most popular way of forming and implementing public thinking? In sum, this book provides much useful information, but it will disappoint those who are looking for understanding either of the ways that

urban midwesterners viewed their collective selves and futures or of the process of urban growth in America's heartland.

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*Growing Up in the Midwest.* Edited by Clarence A. Andrews.  
(Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1981. Pp. viii, 214.  
Illustrations. \$12.95.)

*Growing Up in the Midwest*, edited by Clarence A. Andrews, is a thoughtful, pleasant vaudeville of reminiscences by twenty-two authors, most of whom are alive and still writing. This is a collection that can be picked up in an idle moment or before bed, since the longest selection can be read in ten or fifteen minutes and the shortest is less than a page.

The Middle West has not had a towering literary figure who has clearly and powerfully defined the region for the world, as William Faulkner has done for the South, for instance. Most of the major American writers of this century, however—Ernest Hemingway, T.S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Willa Cather, Carl Sandburg, Bret Hart, Stephen Crane, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis—were born in the region, even if many of them drifted toward New York or Paris and wrote often of those places. If the Midwest has not thus emerged in literature in a dramatic, monolithic fashion, that is as it should be for a region so large and diversified.

Andrews, in his short introduction, shuns a strict geographical definition of the Midwest and instead quotes William Carter's definition of the region as "a home place: sometimes narrowly disapproving, but nurturing and loving, and preserving the style of the era before America moved away to the city" (p. vi). Again and again the selections will remind readers of the importance of this nurturing, of this home place, for these midwesterners as they scattered across the country and the globe. R. V. Cassill, in "An Orbit of Small Towns," uses a metaphor from physics to make the point: "it seems to me we were always headed back toward [the farm which was our home] as we moved away, governed by components of centrifugal and centripetal forces that permitted neither escape nor return" (p. 119).

The elegiac strain that runs through the collection stops well before it reaches nostalgia. For the most part these articles and stories and poems are convincing, believable, and realistic.