

neighborhoods that did not deteriorate. A larger portion of Polish immigrants in fact moved out of older neighborhoods into newer outlying communities and parishes, where they gained access to comfortable accommodations in residential areas that offered a wide range of amenities. They obtained better housing often with multiple occupancy, which provided them with rental income, and they received assistance from the Catholic church, which provided the social and religious institutions that gave structure and optimism to their lives.

Of most interest to Indiana readers will be Bigott's history of the founding and development of Hammond, a city that provides a good study for the social and economic origins of nineteenth-century cottage housing for a working-class population. Bigott is especially interested in the way corporate power transformed home ownership in industrial communities like Hammond at the end of the nineteenth century. His study covers a time when northwest Indiana underwent a significant transformation from prairie and sand dunes to one of the largest industrial districts in the world. The growth of this industrial area within the context of rising corporate capitalism redefined the nature of working-class home ownership and construction practices.

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An Early Encounter with Tomorrow: Europeans, Chicago's Loop, and the World's Columbian Exposition. By Arnold Lewis. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997. Pp. xv, 353. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$34.95; paperbound, \$21.95.)

In the generation following the horrific fire of 1871, Chicago thrived as no other American city. The city, and especially its "Loop," became an urban laboratory for architecture, civil engineering, innovative technology, and commercial activity. In 1893, ambitious city leaders hosted the World's Columbian Exposition to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's first voyage to America, an event that really served more to celebrate the progress of the host city during its short sixty-year history.

It is no wonder, then, that Europeans were fascinated by this upstart city in the midwestern United States, and that thousands of them visited Chicago between 1880 and 1900. Many of these visitors were experienced travel writers or architectural critics, and their articles form the basis of this book. Arnold Lewis, professor emeritus of art history at the College of Wooster in Ohio, has utilized literally hundreds of published sources in English, French, and German to present a comprehensive, detailed, and well-written study on what European visitors saw when they came to Chicago and what they thought about the city and its people. It might have been nice to

know more about how Chicagoans saw themselves at this time and how they reacted to the perceptions of visitors, but Lewis does not focus on those themes.

Lewis divides his book into two discrete sections, either one of which might have been the basis of a book in itself. The first, subtitled "Laboratory of the Future," records European travelers' impressions of the ambience and tempo of post fire Chicago. Chicago differed from the major European cities in ways that perplexed many who recorded their opinions. Chicago was too purposefully commercial, too smoky, dirty, and crowded. Chicagoans were too focused on the notion that "time is money." With no history upon which to fall back, they relied on technology and innovation to accomplish their goals, with the consequence that the city's attractiveness, gracefulness, humanity, and orderliness were all diminished. Of course, these were not unanimous opinions. Some critics admired Chicago's ability to adjust well to modern times and its "openness to change," and wrote somewhat wistfully about their home cities' dependence on tradition and a slower pace.

The book's second section, "Chicago: Modernity Materialized," deals much more specifically with architecture, as revealed in the tall buildings of the Loop, the single-family dwellings of the city's middle- and upper-class suburbs, and the World's Columbian Exposition. Much of the wonderment (and some of the criticism) of travelers stemmed from Chicago's distinctive downtown, which was so different from the central business districts of London, Paris, or Berlin. By the early 1890s, Chicago was sporting skyscrapers of twenty or more stories, while the typical commercial building in a European capital rarely exceeded six stories. Chicago's Loop was almost exclusively devoted to commerce, whereas in Europe, elegant apartment buildings were often intermingled with business establishments. For many, the contrast was hard to appreciate, and European travelers frequently scorned the tall buildings as ugly, inappropriate, and dehumanizing. That the world's fair featured refined and highly derivative neoclassical architecture was, if nothing else, confusing to visitors, since it seemed to fly in the face of what modern Chicago was all about. Although many thought the classical architecture of the fair was not very well executed, they were stunned by the visual spectacle of this ephemeral fantasy land.

Lewis concludes his book with a twenty-page appendix providing biographical information on more than 115 of the foreign travelers whose writings about Chicago he utilized and an eighty-page bibliography. The book is well illustrated and includes a good index. *An Early Encounter with Tomorrow* would be an essential choice for any library or reader with an interest in the history of Chicago.

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