

of entry" for young people, while the historic ballpark and its surroundings have become "a key element in Chicago's drive to refashion itself as a metropolis rich in arts, entertainment, and sports venues" (p. 141).

United Center, which opened in 1994, has not had quite as dramatic an impact on Chicago's near west side as the lighting of Wrigley Field, but certainly has had a more salutary effect than Comiskey to the south. The reason, according to Spirou and Bennett, was the presence of an aggressive Interfaith Organizing Project, which won "substantial concessions" from the development group sponsoring the Center, such as compensation for property owners, relocation of displaced persons, and investment in a new park and library. The result? Residential and commercial markets bloomed.

The book's most interesting insight is its understanding of the impact of the shift of our economy from the smokestack to the computer. In our post-industrial, service-oriented society, sports have become a central, not peripheral, part of our culture. They help define a city. The authors postulate the rise of "the City of Leisure" in which "urban uniqueness is marked by a city's portfolio of arts, entertainment, and sporting institutions." Chicago has embraced this new model wholeheartedly, as these three stadia attest.

However, large sports facilities are not silver bullets that magically avert urban decline. The co-authors offer an important word of caution: "there remains considerable uncertainty concerning the utility of sports construction projects as tools for economic development and urban regeneration" (p. 19). The urban fabric is made up of many little things, not one or two big things, even in the city with "big shoulders," and we must not allow ourselves to be beguiled by the myth that sports teams and facilities will automatically assure a city's survival.

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*Rails across the Mississippi: A History of the St. Louis Bridge.* By Robert W. Jackson. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001. Pp. ix, 265. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

Since 1874 the St. Louis Bridge (more commonly known as the Eads Bridge) has spanned the Mississippi River at St. Louis, its graceful arches as much a symbol of the city's past as the gleaming Gateway Arch on the river bank. In *Rails Across the Mississippi*, Robert W. Jackson chronicles the financial and construction history

of Indiana-born James Buchanan Eads's monumental structure. The story of the bridge has been told before, most recently in words and pictures by Howard Miller and Quinta Scott. They focused on Eads the visionary engineer and architect. Jackson approaches the man and the bridge from a different perspective. He competently retells the construction story, but Jackson's Eads is primarily a visionary entrepreneur, his bridge an artifact of American corporate capitalism in its formative age.

The St. Louis Bridge was built with borrowed money, as were all other long-span railroad bridges across major western rivers. Like any good detective, Jackson follows the money. Eads prevailed over his rivals in 1868 not because he proposed a better bridge, but because he was a better capitalist. The primary goal for nearly everyone involved in the enterprise was making money, not bridging the Mississippi, and Jackson relates their financial maneuverings in engrossing detail.

The money men behind the bridge were a syndicate of local businessmen and East coast and foreign investors, all orchestrated by Eads, Andrew Carnegie, and officers of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Each had overlapping financial interests and personal agendas. Civic-minded but capital-poor St. Louisans hoped the bridge would make them rich and lure transcontinental rail traffic away from rival Chicago. Although his Keystone Bridge Company was the prime contractor for the St. Louis Bridge, Carnegie's main interest, as always, was in generating investment capital for himself and his Pennsylvania Railroad cronies. Foreign investors were out for a high profit and a quick return.

The St. Louis Bridge was a risky project for venture capitalists. No railroad bridge stood alone, but was only part of an integrated transportation infrastructure requiring a network of feeder rail lines, terminals, and binding commitments by rail companies to use the bridge once completed. The system would either work as a whole or not at all.

Eads and Carnegie admired each other's entrepreneurial verve, but their relationship was always tense. As profit-hungry as his associates, Eads also had a vision for his bridge as an engineering showpiece. Carnegie wanted a good bridge too, and not only because collapsing bridges were bad for business. He considered Eads obsessive and naive for demanding better quality control than "the custom of the trade," particularly when the product was still-experimental chrome alloy steel. Although the project soon became mired in cost overruns and construction delays, Carnegie continued to hype bridge bonds until 1871, when he and his close associates quietly bailed out. Jackson reveals that they "used their insider's knowledge of the impending call on subscribers to unload stock in advance" so that they would never have to "pay one dollar out of their own pockets for their investment" (p. 129). Jackson's greatest strength lies in his

ability to trace the money trail and to illuminate creative bookkeeping and astounding conflicts of interest that bear an uncanny resemblance to recent corporate capitalist shell games.

Bridge construction delays bought St. Louisans enough time to build connecting rail lines, terminals, and a necessary tunnel, but these projects took decades. If there is a hero to Jackson's story, it is William Taussig, the St. Louis financier left to see the project through after Eads moved on to other ventures. While Taussig was busy bribing local politicians for a tunnel right-of-way, the national railroad magnates were deciding it would be more personally profitable to bypass the bridge entirely. In the end, St. Louisans could not wrest the main transcontinental trade from Chicago, and the city instead built its late nineteenth-century prosperity on a command of southwestern markets.

When the financial collapse of 1873 caught up with overextended, triple-dealing railroad moguls, J. P. Morgan came to the rescue with a bond-holders' bail-out. Meanwhile, Taussig juggled contract deadlines and Henry Flad, Eads's long-suffering chief engineer, juggled steel tubes and massive girders to meet them. Completed three years late and millions of dollars over budget, the bridge opened in 1874 with an exuberant celebration—only to be picked up by Jay Gould at a bankruptcy sale four years later.

Meticulously researched and engagingly written, *Rails Across the Mississippi* is a case study in Gilded Age corporate capitalism, a game with a few winners and many losers. Jackson argues convincingly that the St. Louis Bridge failed its originally hopeful investors and its promise as transcontinental infrastructure. And yet the Eads Bridge has proven to be a long-term success, a stunning structure and a civic icon newly refurbished for metropolitan light rail. Too sturdy to fall down, too massive to remove, it transcended its failed functions to live on as a monument to the best and worst impulses of the Gilded Age.

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