the harried reporter, spilling over the levee, another hundred-year flood.

The Mississippi we don't know, the river of Tom and Huck, is the wild river Lee Sandlin has brought to life. Primeval forests lined its banks, trees touched the clouds, prairie grasses grew so thick and high that river travelers who wandered into them even a dozen feet were disoriented, lost, and left behind; a river so pure that those who drank its water claimed it made their sweat sweet. Flocks of passenger pigeons, so immense they took days to pass, flew overhead. A verdant paradise, millions of years in the making, laid waste in one frantic century. *Wicked River* is the story of that century, a eulogy for an ecosystem now deceased, never to return. Past generations called it the wicked river, but what was done to it was criminal.

Who among us, while reading *Huckleberry Finn*, didn't long to join Jim and Huck on their river journey? The water remains, but the river they floated is gone, its bends straightened, channels dredged, currents tamed by locks, levees, and lakes. But such is Sandlin's gift that those who lament the river's death find themselves transported back to those days of the birch bark canoe, when the nighttime sky was so brilliantly lit by stars, and "the Milky Way was in full flood" (p. 10).

Sandlin not only makes readers mourn the passing of this flowing jewel, he fires their imaginations. He does it with impeccable research, powerful language and imagery, and always with the awareness that something precious, something sacred, has been lost.

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Gallatin
America's Swiss Founding Father
By Nicholas Dungan

(New York: New York University Press, 2010. Pp. xiv, 193. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $27.95.)

Albert Gallatin and his friends, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, were outstanding leaders in the young United States. Curiously, however, unlike the latter two, Gallatin has gradually faded from national consciousness and into relative obscurity. Now, in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of Gallatin's birth in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1761,

Nicholas Dungan has refocused attention on Gallatin in a book primarily sponsored by the American-Swiss Foundation and New York University – an institution that Gallatin, like Jefferson in Virginia, helped found.

Like Gallatin, Dungan is a banker and transatlantic personality who is at home in both the United States and Europe. The author has more than achieved his modest goal of rehabilitating Gallatin's reputation. His book comprises nine brief chapters, but the multifaceted story it tells in simple, concise, yet elegant prose, is comprehensive and authoritative. One gets the impression that Dungan understood not only Gallatin's innermost thoughts and actions but also those of all with whom he interacted. Such mastery of the complexities of Gallatin's activities makes the explanation of his banking policies and practices fascinating and rewarding reading. The same is true of Dungan's deep understanding of Gallatin's diplomacy, particularly during the negotiations at Ghent that marked the conclusion of the War of 1812 and gave to the United States its true independence from Europe.

The author sees Gallatin's life in three phases: his rise to maturity; his activities at the "pinnacle of power" (p. 6) from 1801, when he became Jefferson's, and later Madison's, secretary of the treasury, through his outstanding work as a diplomat; and, finally, his career as a "public intellectual" (p. 166) while based in New York City. It was during this third period that the seventy-year-old Gallatin helped found both New York University and the American Ethnographical Society and served as president both of the New-York Historical Society and John Jacob Astor's National Bank of New York.

A mere overview of Gallatin's life makes it appear an unbroken series of accomplishments, including membership in both houses of Congress, record-length service as secretary of the treasury, work as a negotiator of the Treaty of Ghent with John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay, and service as the American minister to both France and Great Britain. In actuality, Gallatin's life was beset with disappointments and numerous setbacks. Orphaned at nine and raised by a distant relative, he slipped away in 1780 to seek his fortune in America. His plan for a Swiss community, New Geneva, in western Pennsylvania, however, was a failure; his anticipated inheritance at age twenty-five consisted mainly of debt; his first wife died within months of their marriage; his election to the U. S. Senate was rejected on the basis of his foreign birth. Indeed, Gallatin, who never lost his French accent, was often considered to be a foreigner. When he presented his diplomatic credentials to a friendly King Louis XVIII in 1816, the king reputedly jested that, "Your French is very good, but I think my English is better than yours" (p.122).

The virtues of this book are many—informed by the author's thor-

ough knowledge of finance and the art of diplomacy, it offers valuable insights into these major aspects of Gallatin's life. Its only lapse is its relative neglect of Gallatin's major state paper, the 1808 "Report on Roads and Canals," in which he proposed a system for a national network of transportation routes, including routes to Indiana – a proposal that was eventually implemented. Overall, *Gallatin: America's Swiss Founding Father* deserves a place among the major interpretations of life in the early American republic and merits recognition as a model of the biographer's art.

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Mightier than the Sword
Uncle Tom's Cabin *and the Battle for America*
By David S. Reynolds

(New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011. Pp. xiii, 329. Illustrations, notes. $27.95.)

In *Mightier than the Sword*, David S. Reynolds argues for the unprecedented impact of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* upon American culture and democracy. Beginning with Lincoln's assertion that "Our government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion can change the government," Reynolds goes on to cite the president's alleged greeting of Stowe: "Is this the little woman who made this great war?" He claims that "no book in American history molded public opinion more powerfully than *Uncle Tom's Cabin,"* asserting that the novel was essential in making America a more egalitarian state (pp. x-xi). *Mightier than the* Sword proceeds to identify sources that influenced Stowe during the writing of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and to show how the novel, once published, redefined American culture.

Reynolds is a first-rate researcher, uncovering, for example, that a probable model for Uncle Tom was a freed slave named Tomas Magruder, whose Indianapolis home, two blocks from the home of Stowe's brother Henry Ward Beecher, was known prior to the publication of the novel as "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Magruder also had living with his family a man named Peter and his own child Moses (names subsequently given to Tom's children in Stowe's novel), and a daughter nicknamed "Topsy." Reynolds likewise finds probable models for the ice-hopping, baby-sav-