know that things were changing around them and adjusted their own lives to what was rapidly appearing to be a new reality. Real-life heroines not only fed the fugitives, but frequently risked their lives by serving as pilots guiding them along their route. Unionists of all stripes lent a hand when these former prisoners appeared in the community. Perhaps the most concerning participants in this drama were the dogs that did the lion's share of searching for the escaped prisoners.

There is much to like about this book and very little worthy of complaint. Foote's work speaks to a new direction in the bottom-up approach to Civil War military history. It empowers groups that, up to this point, have either been ignored or seen their roles easily questioned. By highlighting the work of these participants, she is able to show the serious disfunction that drove the Confederacy to the point of unalterable collapse, as well as the powerless nature of those men whose job it was to keep it functioning.

If there is a weakness to *The Yankee Plague*, it can be found in the few points where readers would like to see better secondary research. In passages on Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief William Holland Thomas, Foote relies on Vernon Crow rather than Stanly Godbold and Mattie Russell's superior biography. There is talk about George Kirk of North Carolina, but no reference to Phillip Shaw Paludan's *Victims* (1981). But with those shortcomings noted, her primary source research is excellent and her interpretive skill remarkable.

Most authors and presses would like you to believe everything they write on the dustjacket, but few books actually live up to that billing. Lorien Foote's *The Yankee Plague* is the rare title that delivers new information and challenges readers to reconsider what they are confident they already know.

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doi: 10.2979/indimagahist.113.2.08

Village Atheists: How America's Unbelievers Made Their Way in a Godly Nation

By Leigh Eric Schmidt

(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016. Pp. xix, 337. Illustrations, notes, index. $35.00.)

The notion of the United States as a "godly nation" does not designate an uncontested fact, but comes from the majoritarian culture of Protestant

Evangelicals who have never ceased making the claim since the earliest years of the nation. The idea is contentious, and the task of scholars of unbelief in American history has been to make this point in voluble terms. Leigh Eric Schmidt's book admirably charts an important period of this history, from the Civil War to the first decades of the twentieth century. During this time the public discourse of unbelief was loudly shaped by a series of colorful personalities whose careers Schmidt deftly limns in four very readable and entertaining chapters: Samuel Putnam, Watson Heston, Charles Reynolds, and Elmina Drake Slenker.

Theirs are not names that many will remember today, but each of these subjects enjoyed public notoriety in their day. Putnam referred to himself as "the Secular Pilgrim" and, as Schmidt shows, cleverly re-scripted the nation's commanding Protestant narrative as the wandering Christian of John Bunyan's iconic tale. Heston was a hugely prolific cartoonist who endowed American atheists with a fascinating iconography from the front pages of *Truth Seeker*. Emulating revivalist preachers, Reynolds took his show around the country in a tent, which he called his "good cotton cathedral." And Slenker issued essays on health reform and sexuality as well as novels about young women who came to embrace unbelief and championed women's rights, all the while maintaining happy homes.

The resulting account makes clear how much atheists relied on the ambitious and masterful use of media and rhetoric to make their case and achieve an expansive presence in American life. Newspaper and magazine articles, books, novels, cartoons, illustrated lectures, and the spectacle of the roving tent preachers of infidelity brought the personalities into daily life, in village, town, and city. But one of the most lively and far-reaching venues was the courtroom. Atheists led the charge to rejoin the likes of Anthony Comstock in challenging the prevailing ethos of Christian morality and its hold on the national imagination. Rather than avoid legal entanglement, Schmidt shows how atheists—in media, person, and litigation—unrelentingly engaged the broader culture in debate, if not more often in provocative language, and occasionally in scandal.

The strident tone certainly expressed atheists' deep opposition to Christianity's privileged status in American public culture, but it was also a strategic choice. They knew their arguments were unlikely to persuade large numbers of people, but their court cases hauled into public light such important issues as equal protection under the law, the role of religious tests in determining the competence of witnesses to provide testimony, and the tendentious nature of definitions of blasphemy, obscenity, indecency, and public disturbance. Moreover, the public expression of unbelief helped denaturalize the half-conscious notion that the nation was indeed Christian by nature.

Framing his book with the trope of the village atheist, Schmidt argues

that during the second half of the nineteenth century the nation saw a rising urban culture that relegated the rustic personality of every hamlet's bad mouth to national memory and folklore. Schmidt highlights the turn to legal battles, mass mediation, and public campaign. Yet the pugnacity and loneliness of the figures at the heart of his story, scorned by the multitude, join the village atheist of the early republic to the public figures of the late nineteenth century, and, as Schmidt notes in an epilogue, to people such as the sixteen-year-old student who challenged religious display in her public high school in 2011. Unbelief does not inherit an easy path in American society, but it has forged a significant one.

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doi: 10.2979/indimagahist.113.2.09

Winold Reiss and the Cincinnati Union Terminal: Fanfare for the Common Man

By Gretchen Garner

(Athens: Ohio University Press, 2016. Pp. vii, 149. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $49.95.)

This is the first book about the remarkable glass tesserae murals (1933) by German American artist Winold Reiss (1886-1953) for the Cincinnati Union Terminal—home since 1990 to the Cincinnati Museum Center. Commissioned in 1931, Reiss designed two large silhouette murals (22' x 105') for the grand Art Deco train station's rotunda. (The Ravenna Mosaic Company produced figures and main features; the rest was colored plaster as a cost-saving measure.) The south composition depicts the development of the U.S., from early Indian days to the late industrial era, against a backdrop of transportation history. The north mural presents images of Ohio River shipping and agriculture, as well as modern industry. Reiss designed two additional murals featuring seven Cincinnati businessmen and builders, as well as fourteen murals of workers in local firms (20' x 20') which now reside in Cincinnati's convention center.

Garner's easy-to-read outline of Reiss's work and career builds on previous scholarship, such as Frances Crotty's University of Cincinnati M.A. thesis (1972), an entire issue of *Queen City Heritage* (1993) devoted to Reiss, and Jeffrey Stewart's examination of Reiss's portraits (1990) and his online artist's chronology (2014).

The slim hardback's greatest strength is its sixty-eight color and nine black-and-white reproductions.