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Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail
(review)

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Usner, Thomas Ingersoll, Edward Baptist, Walter Johnson, and others to provide an equally revealing, if less uplifting, window into the early decades of the American experiment.

Rothman begins with Jefferson's utopian commercial-agrarianism and his earnest hope that diffusion might ameliorate and eventually end slavery in North America. Drawing upon the best that social, intellectual, economic, and political history has to offer, he then describes how international developments (British industrialization, the spread of cotton, heightened demand for sugar after St. Domingue's slave rebellion) and calculated decisions (largely guided by white America's "civilizing" impulse) inaugurated the displacement of Native Americans and the spread of African slavery. Adeptly moving between the local, national, and international stages, Rothman describes well-known events such as the Louisiana Purchase and Missouri Controversy, while bringing to light less studied local people and events, including the efforts of Quaker surveyor Isaac Briggs and a fascinating account of the 1811 German Coast insurrection ("the largest slave rebellion in the history of the United States," 74). In climactic fashion, Jackson's exploits against the Creeks and victory at New Orleans unexpectedly transformed a tenuously-controlled region into an "arena for the United States' greatest wartime triumphs." The war thus "reinforced the American's providential view" and the "rhetoric of freedom obliterated the reality of slavery" (160-161). By 1820 commerce and collaboration as well as "terror and violence" between ethnically-diverse peoples had transformed the Deep South, not into Jefferson's idyllic image, but into a generally-stable slave society and bulwark for proslavery national politics.

Rothman's broadly and deeply researched portrait challenges deeply held assumptions that population pressures inevitably drove expansion while a complacent federal government struggled to define it. At every point in his story, Rothman argues, "U.S. sovereignty shaped the Deep South." The federal government "absorbed the region through diplomacy and conquest, administered its territorial governments . . . encouraged economic development. . . . through nation-building measures that included the survey and sale of public lands, the improvement of the transportation infrastructure, . . . the imposition of a tariff on foreign sugar . . . [and] allow[ing] the transfer of slaves into the region" (218-219). In this sense, the book's title reflects both Rothman's desire to show how contingent choices and broad processes shaped Deep South society and his conviction that the extension of slavery there reveals much about the nation as a whole.

Many of the events and developments in this book are covered more exhaustively in other monographs. Yet, Rothman's gift lies in his ability to succinctly and cleverly contextualize and synthesize complicated events and processes. *Slave Country* is well-suited for upper-level undergraduates and graduate classes and promises to become the standard account of the settlement of the Old Southwest.

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YOUNG MEN AND THE SEA: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail. By Daniel Vickers with Vince Walsh. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2005.

As many historians have observed, the Atlantic maritime culture of the Age of Sail was unique in many ways. At the same time, for most New England mariners of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, seafaring was but one stage in a life arc that often encompassed rural farmwork, employment along seaport waterfronts, or incipient entrepreneurial efforts. One scholar who demonstrates a keen understanding of the multifaceted experience of these sailors is Daniel Vickers. In *Young Men and the Sea*, as in his previous work *Farmers and Fishermen*, Vickers presents the full spectrum of these

seafarers' lives. He examines their occupational histories before and after they sailed before the mast, traces the familial and social connections that influenced their maritime experiences, and notes the impact of age and race upon their lives. At once a history of disparate individuals and the communities they formed, this book presents a nuanced and dynamic vision of seafaring lives in motion.

Young Men and the Sea concentrates on the port city of Salem, Massachusetts. First settled by seafaring colonists in the 1620s, the small outpost on the North Shore endured several rocky decades before it began to prosper. The advent of the cod fishery, supplemented by coastal trading, soon led to the development of a complex and successful local economy that expanded into shipbuilding, mercantile activity, and a growing presence in transatlantic trade. By the end of the eighteenth century Salem boasted a prominent merchant fleet that employed hundreds of sailors, as well as growing numbers of shore workers who swelled Salem's population. As seafaring opportunities ebbed by 1850 with the fading of the Age of Sail, the city's workingmen turned to shore employment in the textile mills and other factories that came to dominate the industrializing community.

Maritime Salem is an ideal research subject due to its rich resources of personal and institutional records. Court records, account books, shipping documents and crew lists, church records, family papers, and sea-journals were all meticulously kept and preserved by the literate, historically-minded townsfolk. The surfeit of documentation allows Vickers to reconstruct minutiae including the ratio of carts to boats in town (3:2 in the years after 1645, 32) as well as desertion rates among sailors aboard Salem vessels (which rose from three percent to thirty-three percent between 1726 and 1850, 197). More significantly for the purpose of the book, the quantity and variety of available sources provides a wealth of detail attesting to the experiences and motivations of Salem's seafarers.

The book is organized into seven chapters by chronological period, with the eighteenth century comprising its central section. Only the final chapter titled "Mastery and the Maritime Law" does not quite fit the flow of the narrative, as its broader discussions of maritime discipline and labor relations fall outside the purview of Salem and its inhabitants. Nonetheless, it is as insightful and informative as the rest of the work.

In conclusion, *Young Men and the Sea* is a masterly work of particular interest to maritime and labor historians, as well as a more general readership.

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REGIONALISM AND REFORM: Art and Class Formation in Antebellum Cincinnati.
By Wendy Jean Katz. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. 2002.

Recent American art historical scholarship has positioned artists within complex social contexts from which they absorbed new ideas and to which they contributed new types of themes and meanings. Wendy Jean Katz's study of artistic and civic culture in antebellum Cincinnati stresses interactions between artists, patrons, and public; connections among art, commerce, and moral reform; and intersecting ideals of education, civic promotion, and economic expansion. Her goal is to complicate models of cultural and class expansion and show how artistic works created in the early nineteenth century in this thriving western city contributed both to local and national ideals of American identity.

New cultural opportunities and ideals emerged as varied civic associations supported both artistic production and moral reform. Katz reads the diversity of participants' class backgrounds as evidence for cultural goals that combined the interests of elites, the middle class, and workers into a harmonious and economically successful metropolis. Contemporary behavior manuals and etiquette books contributed to beliefs in the importance of