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*A Little More Freedom: African Americans Enter the Urban  
Midwest, 1860-1930* (review)

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A lively and informative preface describes the acquisition, processing, and distribution of the massive steel industry collection. A clearly written and instructive overview of the steelmaking process, past and present, follows. Three separate chapters then offer concise and straightforward business histories of each of the three firms—all of which became part of LTV—followed by photographs. The photos in the Corrigan, McKinney Steel chapter are of the building of the plant in 1914 and 1915. There is scant human activity in these monumental construction photographs, although in most at least one figure or automobile emphasizes the scale of the buildings. The photos of the Otis Steel mill are not the famous ones taken by photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White. Shot by staff photographers for Otis Steel's in-house magazine, these photos nevertheless are important because they show workers as well as work processes in the 1930s. Interior shots of the mill include workers whose inadequate safety gear heightens the manifest danger of steel jobs. Work crew photos provide employees' names that call attention to diverse ethnic backgrounds. Two photographs on facing pages speak to racial segregation in the steel industry: on the left the blooming mill crew is all white; all the blooming mill slab yard workers on the right are black.

The Republic Steel chapter has stunning photos of blast furnace casts, Bessemer converter blasts, open hearth and electric furnace tappings, basic oxygen furnace charges, teeming, running ingots, and cold-rolled, coiled, and polished steel. Taken from the 1930s through the 1960s, these pictures document change over time. Open hearth furnaces and hot strip mills in the 1930s exposed workers to all kinds of dangers. But basic oxygen furnaces and other technological advances by the 1960s placed workers in control rooms where they observed rather than physically controlled the process.

*Steel Remembered* is neither labor history nor business history. The photographs that Christopher Dawson has selected, however, inform them. And this absorbing book should encourage scholars to use the LTV Steel Collection to write them.

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*A Little More Freedom: African Americans Enter the Urban Midwest, 1860–1930.* By Jackson S. Blocker. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008. xviii, 330 pp. Cloth \$49.95, ISBN 978-0-8142-1067-3.)

*A Little More Freedom* is a provocative and engaging examination of African American migration to lower urban midwestern communities in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois between the Civil War and the Great Depression. This compelling social, cultural, and political analysis traces the movement of a race of people struggling for complete citizenship in America. The narrative chal-

lenges conventional scholarship, as Blocker shows that African Americans' decision to migrate was not haphazard but systematic and involved careful thinking about where the best opportunities existed. Blocker's approach establishes a comparative framework in which he, unlike most scholars of black migration, uses methodologies that place small-town and metropolitan communities in conversation to move the dialogue beyond push-and-pull analyses to understand how migration contributed to a new formulation of African American agency and identity. Throughout this well-written volume, the author offers a number of insights about migration and poses arguments that define the "age of the village" for African Americans and the impact of their nonmetropolitan experience on their metropolitan eras.

Divided into eight chapters, *A Little More Freedom* is organized into three sections emphasizing broad themes that focus on waves of migration and migrant patterns of social and economic mobility. Within this context, Blocker compares and contrasts the inter- and intrastate community life that migrants endured in the South and Midwest to deconstruct the mythology of the "North" as the Promised Land, home of the free. As the author shows, blacks, despite various forms of intimidation, transported ideas and experiences between spaces and recreated old experiences in new environments, thereby making it possible for them to develop stronger identities within larger places. These were communities where African American had to work out life among themselves as class differences created conflict, then later between themselves and European Americans as racial struggles often led to their intrastate migration. It is Blocker's complex analysis of the impact of internal black migration on race and class struggles in the lower urban Midwest that provides a different understanding of the evolution of African American radical race consciousness.

While Blocker uses oral histories and a case study methodology established within a regional framework to "lay to rest any doubts that African Americans did have their own age of the village," readers nevertheless might question to what extent African Americans were agents of change in the intervening intra- and interstages of migration and the degree to which this agency encouraged a form of black nationalism that threatened white power and created a sense of black empowerment—especially since many migrants were poor and without political power, education, or property. Yet this is a work readers will value for its broad framework and critical approaches in analyzing and interpreting certain aspects of the migratory experiences of blacks over place, space, and time. The strength of the book is its contribution to our understanding of migration as a local phenomenon that encouraged larger regional and national developments.

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