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Kansas City and How It Grew, 1822-2011 by James R.
Shortridge (review)

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(Review)

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***Civilizing the Wilderness:
Culture and Nature in Pre-Confederation
Canada and Rupert's Land.***

By A. A. den Otter. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2012. xxxiv + 438 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 paper.

Civilizing the Wilderness is a study of civilizing as a process and perception of the natural world in Canada prior to 1867. In his introduction A. A. den Otter reminds the reader that civilization in pre-Confederation Canada was intrinsically tied to British ethics, customs, religion, and institutions. For the landscape, "civilized" meant a developed countryside complete with fields, fences, and irrigation, intersected by roads and rail; for people, "civilized" meant education, religion, and agriculture. The term "civilized" is significant for the Aboriginal population and the Canadian wilderness because they both fell outside its narrow scope. Furthermore, the duality between civilized and uncivilized was entrenched by a geographic component that tied wilderness to Rupert's Land and civilization to Britain, exacerbating a preexisting tension between wilderness and civilization.

From the mid-nineteenth century, the colonial goal was to establish British social and economic values for the forests and plains of Rupert's Land because they were considered wasted land and "inherently evil." Den Otter's work uses the tension between savagery and civilization as an overarching framework to explain how, and most importantly why, the civilizing project in Rupert's Land and pre-Confederation Canada was undertaken in the manner it was. Each chapter is a stand-alone essay that contributes to the argument that civilization is a complicated concept involving both people and the land. For example, Bishop David Anderson, the subject of chap-

ter 4, embodied the civilizing process for both the landscape and the Indigenous people of the Red River. First, Anderson saw civilizing as encompassing conversion and education: conversion to save souls and education to better prepare the Aboriginal population for European encroachment. For Anderson the landscape was similarly dichotomous. The Red River wilderness was hostile, alien, evil; however, tilling the soil could make it productive, familiar, and good. Anderson, therefore, used a message of civilization that was part religion and part agriculture. Other missionaries and settlers who traveled into Rupert's Land understood that agriculture and settlement were synonymous with civilization, and so the landscape was changed by cutting down forests and plowing up native grasses.

Historiographically, this book makes specific contributions to pre-Confederation Canadian history. Environmental, borderlands, and colonial historians, however, will find value here as well. Perhaps what is most appealing about this work is that its author examines civilizing through stories of individual settlers and missionaries who saw the land through their cultural lens. By structuring his book about the people involved in the process, he has given a human face to an abstract concept.

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Kansas City and How It Grew, 1822–2011.

By James R. Shortridge. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012. xiii + 248 pp. Photographs, maps, illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.

Award-winning geographer and historian James R. Shortridge is well qualified to write

about the history of Kansas City, which he eloquently does in *Kansas City and How It Grew*. Accompanied by dozens of beautifully crafted maps, Shortridge's work chronologically examines the city's history in the context of its "changing geography" and urban development. Using a conversational style, the author explains how politics and commercial interests have also influenced the city's progress. In doing so, however, he never loses sight of the story of Kansas City in relation to its rich "local landscape."

Starting out as a river town and trailhead, Kansas City's location has helped it remain a major urban center and transportation hub to this day. Situated in close proximity to Great Plains ranches and farms, the city has also been able to maintain a prosperous industrial complex and business environment that includes wholesale distribution, railroads, and grain milling. This diversity has kept Kansas City from the economic pitfalls of overspecialization seen in some other metropolitan areas.

Shifting demographics and social change have also molded the development of the city since the nineteenth century. Postwar changes in the late twentieth century were especially important in bringing about social diversity through suburbanization and urban growth. In addition, the political separation that has existed along the state line between Missouri and Kansas since the nineteenth century has led to a "major cultural divide" that lingers to this day. Although Shortridge focuses much of his attention on the portion of the city found in Missouri, the book does not neglect Kansas City, Kansas, and its environs.

This is an essential book for understanding the essence and complexity of Kansas City, and readers interested in a captivating look at the uniqueness of the place will find it reward-

ing. In particular, Shortridge pays attention to many of the key personalities who helped convert this early river town into a thriving city. With the book's emphasis on community and place, however, anyone looking for detailed accounts of certain sensational events, such as the Union Station Massacre of 1933, may be disappointed.

Although Shortridge seems to think of himself as more geographer than historian, *Kansas City and How It Grew, 1822–2011* is a solid contribution to the history of Kansas City and its economic and social ties to the Great Plains. It should appeal to scholars and general readers alike.

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Dakota Women's Work: Creativity, Culture, and Exile.

By Colette A. Hyman. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012. 240 pp. Photographs, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paper.

Before 1860, women's creative work was a manifestation of *wakan* (sacred power) in Dakota life, from ornamented tools to the quillwork on ceremonial *cepka* pouches that held a child's umbilical cord. Thus, Colette Hyman's declaration midway through her study that, for the period of Dakota internment following the war of 1862, "there is no fancy work remaining" elicits a powerful sense of loss. This void, while at the historical center of her study, only magnifies the determination that Dakota women exerted in reconstituting their work and culture in the following decades.