

conservatism of Milton Friedman's school of modern economics. Jacoby carries on a running dialogue with Friedmanism, usually to point out its flaws and limits. He is at his best in demonstrating the tensions and contradictions that inhered in the competing doctrines of contract and collective rights. He observes, for instance, that the libertarianism of contract left workers vulnerable to abuse and exploitation on the job, which had the unintended effect of undermining the independence they prized so deeply. Similarly, the collective rights regime of the New Deal sometimes compromised the "rights" of the individual worker and more often wound up circumscribing such rights themselves through legal decisions and rules laid down by bureaucratic agencies that were part of larger and more encompassing liberal order. Though designed to protect worker rights and interests on the job, such agencies effectively substituted government regulation for union initiative, strengthening the state but weakening unions, as Samuel Gompers had feared. Just as this state apparatus abandoned labor, it would also disappoint civil rights activists who looked to government to integrate not only schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces but also the unions the New Deal regime did so much to foster.

Historians committed to a class analysis are not likely to be persuaded by this book. It deserves close attention, however, if not for the new paradigm it offers, then surely for its sharp and consistent sense of irony.

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American Metropolis: A History of New York City. By George J. Lankevich. (New York: New York University Press, 1998. x, 273 pp. Cloth, \$55.00, ISBN 0-8147-5148-2. Paper, \$18.95, ISBN 0-8147-5149-0.)

Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898. By Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. xxiv, 1,383 pp. \$49.95, ISBN 0-19-511634-8.)

Big or small, fat or lean—which is better? The answer in regard to these two books of distinctly different lengths is that it depends on the intended purpose of each. By this mea-

surement, both are splendid works of history that expand our understanding and appreciation of New York City.

George J. Lankevich's *American Metropolis* is well qualified to serve as the basic book in a course on the history of New York. Lankevich, a now retired professor of history from Bronx Community College, has turned numerous secondary sources into a tightly written study of the city from the first discovery to the year 1997. He wisely avoids trying to force the complexities of New York's development into some predetermined mold, observing in his preface that "if this history has any overarching theme, it is simply that the interaction of politics, economics, and changing circumstances has given the city a resilience and power beyond its statistics." He gives special attention to the long succession of Dutch governors and English-speaking mayors from Peter Minuit to Rudolph Giuliani, but he also includes such major influences as Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton, William M. Tweed, William Randolph Hearst, and Charles Francis Murphy; Murphy probably was the best of numerous Tammany political bosses. While Lankevich has his heroes, most notably Fiorello La Guardia, he is evenhanded in his treatment of the leadership.

Politics and government are the essential links here, but *American Metropolis* also provides at least some general understanding of most other important facets of New York history, including the city's rise to commercial and financial dominance, its physical development, its ethnic character, and its racial problems. The author deserves special praise for providing us with an amazingly clear understanding of its complex financial problems, especially the disastrous ones of the 1970s. Not everything deserves applause—the treatment of the Civil War era is notably superficial and incomplete, but over all George J. Lankevich has succeeded in crafting a concise, clear, and meaningful guidebook covering New York's long past.

Gotham is four times as long as Lankevich's more comprehensive work, raising the question as to whether bigness is a virtue. In this case, the answer is emphatically yes. Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, history professors at Brooklyn and John Jay colleges in New York, provide us with a truly classic work, concisely and beautifully written. They have trans-

formed twenty years of prodigious research in secondary sources into a historical narrative of the city likely never to be surpassed. Their field is immense in its breadth, embracing every aspect of New York life imaginable. Without exaggeration, *Gotham* is a narrative equivalent and more of the recent *Encyclopedia of New York City*, a smoothly flowing succession of meaningful vignettes relating not only to Manhattan but to Brooklyn and the other areas that were consolidated into greater New York in 1898.

There is virtually nothing and nobody that is not given some attention in this book. Name it and one will find it, whether it be art, baseball, Chinese laundries (2,000 in Manhattan at a time when the census reported only 2,048 Chinese on the island!), disease, depravity, drama, engraving, furniture, Indian tribes, labor unions, literature, opera, piracy, politics, prostitution, publishing, religion, sanitation, smuggling, stock market speculation, steamboats, Tammany Hall, technology, the underworld, vagrancy, water supply, workers, the Yiddish theater, and much more. Anyone of any prominence receives some attention along with more obscure individuals such as Thomas Burke and Timothy Grady, two Irish ferrymen who affirmed the democracy of their times by refusing to move their ferry at the whim of a city official.

Burrows and Wallace demonstrate a great talent for synthesizing multitudes of facts into numerous insightful pictures of New York on the move. They show much sensitivity in their discussion of such matters of present-day concern as ethnicity, gender, and race; their discussions of New York's black, German, Irish, and Jewish populations are outstanding. And their treatment of the nuances of social class in the city is the finest that I have ever encountered. Visually, their well-chosen maps and illustrations further help us understand the past. This book belongs on every reference shelf for its wealth of information and insights.

This is not a perfect work. The authors at one point say that Gov. Horatio Seymour was defeated for reelection a few months after the draft riots of 1863 when this actually occurred more than a year later; and they say regarding railroads that "total U.S. trackage spun from 2,665 miles in 1878 to a staggering 11,560

by 1882," figures so wildly inexact that they should have been readily noticed. More substantially, given the tremendous variety of things that are introduced here in rapid succession, one wonders whether the average reader will be left with any greater understanding of the city as a whole than if he stood on a busy street corner. Some attention to analysis and theory might have highlighted those essential features that have given Gotham its special character.

This, however, is asking for a work different from that which Burrows and Wallace intended to write. They end their introduction to their book with the words "now, on with the show" and then produce a fascinating show of many acts. Whatever its limitations, *Gotham* is a "great read" that will retain the interest of intelligent readers for many nights, leading them on from one meaningful historical episode to another. There is a sequel to this book planned that will carry the story of New York forward to the present. It will be eagerly awaited by the reading public.

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Numbers from Nowhere: The American Indian Contact Population Debate. By David Henige. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. xii, 532 pp. \$47.95, ISBN 0-8061-3044-X.)

This book contains twenty-one chapters or, more accurately, essays, not all of them integrated with each other. David Henige devotes most of them to criticizing, ostensibly on methodological grounds, scholars he labels "High Counters." They include the historians Woodrow Borah, N. David Cook, Francisco Guerra, and Linda Newson, the ethnohistorians Henry F. Dobyns and Kathleen Deagan, the archaeographers Sarah K. Campbell, Ann Ramenofsky, Jerald T. Milanich, and Marvin Smith, the anthropologists Pierre Clastres and David Stannard, the geographer Carl O. Sauer, and the late physiologist Sherburne F. Cook.

The book's tone is negative. Henige's criticism is frequently phrased as castigation and denigration. It characterizes the procedures of the targeted scholars with accusatory verbs in-