Empresa extranjera y mercado interno: el ferrocarril central mexicano, 1880–1907. By SANDRA KUNTZ FICKER. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1995. Map. Tables. Graphs. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. 390 pp. Paper.

Built by the U.S. Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad beginning in 1880, the Mexican Central Railway eventually became the most extensive of Mexican railroads. Connecting with the Santa Fe at El Paso, Texas, its main line extended south to Mexico City. Significant branches served Tampico and Monterrey in the northeast, and Guadalajara and Colima in west-central Mexico. By 1907, its last year of independent operation, the Mexican Central's 5,500 kilometers of track totaled more than one-fourth of the Mexican railway network. It also carried nearly one-third of all freight and earned more than one-third of the income of all Mexican railroads combined. It had become Mexico's most important railroad.

As is often the case for powerful corporations with foreign connections, the Mexican Central's perception by the public was not always complimentary. Sandra Kuntz Ficker, who teaches at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana at Xochimilco, sets the record straight in this study.

Originally her doctoral dissertation, *Empresa extranjera y mercado interno* shows how the Mexican Central influenced and, in turn, was affected by both foreign and domestic commerce. Although it served two of the nation's busiest ports of entry, Ciudad Juárez and Tampico, and carried considerable export and import freight, Kuntz Ficker concludes that the internal Mexican market was more important to the railroad. Even its rate structure was designed to enhance internal mobility. From 1887 to 1902, income from local traffic was more than twice that earned from international traffic. Thus, contrary to the popular belief that the principal function of foreign-built railroads was to unite Mexico to foreign markets, if the Mexican Central was any example, their main contribution was to act as a powerful integrative factor in the internal market.

Using a straightforward, businesslike style, Kuntz Ficker presents her findings in three parts. The first offers a brief history of the development of the railroad. She notes that the railroad construction agreements negotiated by the government of Porfirio Díaz were far better for Mexico than those signed by the earlier Benito Juárez administration. The second part deals with the line's rate structure and the results of operation. The final segment shows how the Mexican Central related to the nation's internal market and provides analyses of types of freight carried, points of origin, and destinations.

The work is based on company and government records and a nicely balanced, albeit not exhaustive, selection of secondary sources. It contains numerous helpful tables and graphs. Although Kuntz Ficker mistakenly assumes Chicago to be the capital of Illinois (p. 62), her study is generally well edited and remarkably free of typographical and similar errors. A significant accomplishment that deserves atten-

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tion, *Empresa extranjera y mercado interno* will be of special interest to economic and transportation historians.

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A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class Formation in Northern Mexico. By WILLIAM E. FRENCH. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. Maps. Tables. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 262 pp. Cloth. $40.00.

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In this well-written and innovative book, William French rejects the "essentialism" of historians who have assumed that particular forms of class consciousness and action emerge inevitably from capitalist wage relations or dependent export production. He does not focus exclusively, or even primarily, on work structures and experience to explain the formation of class; nor does he look for or find anarchist and revolutionary workers, or crude victims and perpetrators of state and capitalist manipulation. Drawing on extensive archival research and informed by recent social and cultural histories of other countries, French situates Mexican class formation in terms of preindustrial traditions, popular values, political culture, and above all, relationships between social classes.

Starting in the 1890s, the copper industry in Chihuahua's Hidalgo District was transformed by external technological developments. This allowed for both renewed investment by U.S. companies and a transformation of work that reduced the control and number of skilled workers while incorporating large numbers of unskilled workers from largely rural backgrounds. A major concern of this book is the rural migrants' reluctant and partial adaptation to the rhythms of and dependence on wage labor, and to the "developmentalist" morals and manners of an urban and industrial society dominated by other groups.

The book's title suggests, first, an ideal of working-class behavior articulated and shared by foreign mine managers, Porfirian officials, and a nascent middle class in the towns and cities of Chihuahua. Mine managers resorted to the "proverbial carrot" of bonuses and benefits to bind recent migrants to place and work discipline, and the "proverbial stick" of close ties and financial contributions to political authorities and police to minimize theft, violence, and strikes. French's evidence challenges long-held assumptions that the company store was a way to extract a further surplus and tie workers through debt. But the key interaction examined is between middle-class townspeople and workers. The *sociedad culta* of Chihuahua, even those of different ideological stripes (*científicos*, opposition liberals, social Catholics), elaborated common ideals of virtuous middle-class behavior that set them apart from most mine workers, who were seen in opposing terms as vice-ridden and a danger to the community. While the *gente decente* were as much concerned with their own self-definition, as individuals and as a class, as with social control, the moral standards