

tragic and significant event of the nation's commemoration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial from 2010 to 2015.

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*Historic Real Estate: Market Morality and the Politics of Preservation in the Early United States* by Whitney Martinko. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. x + 291 pp.; illustrations, notes, bibliography, index; clothbound \$39.95.

*Historic Real Estate: Market Morality and the Politics of Preservation in the Early United States* is a key addition to the growing historiography of historic preservation. Although the book has a decidedly scholarly approach and appeals to the academic community, it has a fundamentally practical application in shifting the way in which the public understands the political and economic creation of US cities. Whereas many preservationists point to the 1853 founding of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association (MVLA) and the resultant conversion of George Washington's home into a house museum as the discipline's origin point, Martinko demonstrates that concern for the historic built environment predates the MVLA and asserts that preservation was a driving force in shaping American cities immediately after independence. Using an impressive variety of visual, textual, and linguistic sources, she reframes common understandings of early American preservation around concepts of virtue and economic morality in the public and private sectors, contending that preservation is a central part of the history of urbanism and capitalism in the United States. In doing so, Martinko joins a small but growing number of preservation scholars whose research challenges long-held beliefs about preservation's early predilection for aestheticism and nation-building. Specifically, Martinko maintains that the field's origins also lay in a desire to shape civic and economic morality across present and future generations. This "moralizing historical consciousness" (6) was expressed in the permanence of the historic built environment.

Accepting that architecture was a medium for citizens to demonstrate civic virtue and a commitment to the public good, the decisions that the populace made about what to keep and what to toss were demonstrative of efforts to create a newly republican economy that included a deeper historic consciousness than one that started with the revolution. By integrating Native American earthen mounds into their city plans, the Ohio Company was civilizing wilderness, creating a national image based on civility and social progress because they built upon old buildings from previous civilizations. Within this new society, eighteenth and nineteenth century preservationists saw capitalists and their markets as part of an uncivil, backward culture driven by demolition and a consequent lack of concern for permanence or the future of society. In

contrast, an appreciation for the historic built environment—even a pre-revolutionary one—showed a regard for a moral and socially developed present and future. This played out in the real estate market where decisions were made about who owned particular historic sites, and who had authority over those sites. When historic buildings were placed in the private market they became subjected to implicit judgments of morality embedded within citizens’ preservation decisions rather than defined by governmental authority. Within the country’s emerging capitalist structures, owners’ choices were litigated in the public sphere.

While at times conceptually and narratively dense, the book convincingly navigates these complex themes through three different spaces: corporate properties, commercial sites, and domestic spaces. Martinko especially scrutinizes early preservation-based moral capitalism through her detailed examination of the Ohio Company. By incorporating Native American earthworks into their city plans, Martinko posits that the company demonstrated that they cared about and were guided by public welfare. In this way, the Ohio Company and other private corporations acted as *de facto* governments. However, in a kind of early American social impact investing, by buying into the vision of preservation as social good and acting as “private investors who acted in the interest of all U.S. citizens” (31), the company was still able to turn a profit. Martinko later turns to private spaces declared “sacred”—special places that were not to be treated like ordinary real estate and should thus be set apart from market and change. In these instances, historic buildings and architecture were tools to be leveraged in partisan debates about governance, power, and civic and economic morality. They were also used by business owners as marketing tools to entice customers and capitalize on the sense of scarcity many were feeling in a rapidly urbanizing economy and changing society, thereby “defining antiquarian viewing as a way to pursue market profit by contributing to the public good” (75). Within this context, civic virtue and moral consumption went hand in hand as preservationists elevated some historic sites as sacred in order to condemn “the rage to be rich and the business transactions it inspired” (111).

Interestingly, embedded within Martinko’s analysis is an implicit contention that preservation and urbanism, or urban improvement, worked in tandem rather than in opposition to shape American cities. Though she does not emphasize this point, her assessment is a welcome challenge to prevailing and contemporary perceptions of preservation and historic buildings—and normative presentations of preservation history—that emphasize that preservation has its origins in opposition to urban development, or that the field is primarily reactive. Further, her presentation of preservation as an arbiter of proactive civility and morality brings the discipline’s humanistic attributes to the fore. In her conclusion, Martinko jumps a few centuries ahead and emphasizes the need for greater present-day connection across the humanist-architect divide. As we go through an era of tumultuous change, Martinko’s calls for connection—for communication and recognition of each other

across space and time—provide a much needed push to incorporate a more humanistic, unifying, and integrative approach to society’s treatment of the historic built environment.

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*Mastering the Inland Seas: How Lighthouses, Navigational Aids, and Harbors*

*Transformed the Great Lakes and America* by Theodore J. Karamanski. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020. 384 pp.; illustrations; clothbound \$36.95.

Standing among the skyscrapers of downtown Chicago, it is hard to imagine that just a few hundred feet away from the concrete jungle of America’s self-proclaimed Second City lies a vast “wilderness” of ninety-thousand square miles. Historian Theodore J. Karamanski has not uncovered some unknown forest or mountain range in northern Illinois; rather, his interesting new book *Mastering the Inland Seas* asks its readers to imagine the Great Lakes as a “watery wilderness.” *Mastering the Inland Seas* is the story of how technological innovations and key administrators colonized the Great Lakes for the purpose of commerce, communication, and recreation.

Although Karamanski does offer a brief discussion of Indigenous navigation on the Great Lakes, and occasionally discusses developments north of the border in Canada, his book largely focuses on state formation and political economy in the nineteenth and twentieth-century United States. *Mastering the Inland Seas* broadens our understanding of American empire by explaining how the construction of lighthouses, navigational aids, and harbors was part of state formation in the “Old Northwest,” alongside more familiar forms of infrastructure and expressions of state power, like military garrisons, Indigenous removals, and land surveying. The transformation of the Great Lakes from a “dangerous frontier” to an American (and Canadian) “heartland,” is not just a story of state expansion: it is also about how state power promoted the economic development of the Great Lakes as part of the growth of a “national market and a dynamic capitalist economy” (7).

*Mastering the Inland Seas* weaves the story of maritime improvement through a fairly conventional political narrative of nineteenth-century US history. The Great Lakes would eventually play a central role in the commercial development of the United States, but sectional tensions over whether or not the US government should promote internal improvements hampered maritime projects in the region in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Great Lakes states became a stronghold of the pro-improvement Whig Party in the 1830s and the Republican Party in the 1850s because both these parties supported an energetic national government. Karamanski reminds us that political conflict over internal improvements was second only to the fight over the expansion of slavery in the sectional tensions that eventually led to civil war in 1861. The Great Lakes states proved their