Settlers as Conquerors: Free Land Policy in Antebellum America by Julius Wilm (review)

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Journal of Southern History, Volume 86, Number 1, February 2020, pp. 149-150 (Review)

Published by The Southern Historical Association
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/soh.2020.0033*

Moreover, while Browning can be excused for not explicitly discussing the Impossible Trinity or Trilemma, IS-LM, AD-AS, Heckscher-Ohlin, or other pertinent economic models, his narrative does not appear to be informed by them, which means the authoritative tone that the text often takes on complex issues of economic causation is unwarranted. In fact, Browning botches descriptions of several fundamental financial concepts, including the nature of money and the payments system in the early republic (confusing barter and book credit on pages 130–31 and page 222, for instance) and bank accounting (confusing, for example, liabilities with assets on page 164 and page 238). A close look at historian Sharon Ann Murphy's *Other People's Money: How Banking Worked in the Early American Republic* (Baltimore, 2017) might have helped Browning master such basics.

While Browning's account, the first book-length study of the downturn since Clyde A. Haulman's *Virginia and the Panic of 1819: The First Great Depression and the Commonwealth* (London, 2008), may satisfy generalists seeking an engaging, mildly revisionist read, it leaves much to be desired as economic or financial history. Even as social history it remains far from comprehensive, missing, for example, Mordecai Manuel Noah's important *Essays of Howard, on Domestic Economy* (New York, 1820). Ergo, a book about the socioeconomic causes and consequences of the Panic of 1819 remains on the bucket list of this intellectual progeny of Charles Sellers and Richard J. Ellis.

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Settlers as Conquerors: Free Land Policy in Antebellum America. By Julius Wilm. Transatlantische Historische Studien. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2018. Pp. 284. $69.00, ISBN 978-3-515-12131-6.)

In this impressively researched study, historian Julius Wilm traces the development of free land policy in the United States from the late eighteenth century through the 1862 Homestead Act. As Wilm notes, while land has become a trendy topic among U.S. historians, his is the first book to delve comprehensively into free land legislation since the works of Paul W. Gates and Roy M. Robbins a half century ago. Wilm provides a much-needed update to these studies by investigating free land policy through a settler colonial framework, and in doing so he integrates Native peoples and settler-Native conflicts into the story. Indians sit at the core of Wilm's main argument: Congress was willing to provide free land to white settlers only "when proposals were geared to create, enforce, and expand a racist order across the North American continent" (p. 19). However, this legislation rarely acted as congressmen and settlers hoped, demonstrating what Wilm terms the "contradictions of settler imperialism" (p. 251).

The book is divided into three chapters, all of which are subdivided into helpfully organized short sections and written in clear, workmanlike prose. The first chapter examines six failed attempts to pass free land legislation between 1798 and 1829. This chapter is particularly useful, for none of these policies have been comprehensively studied before—though perhaps with good reason, as they all were voted down by overwhelming congressional opposition. The bulk of the book then examines three policies in detail: the failed 1838 Arkansas "Belt Bill," the 1842 Armed Occupation Act in Florida, and the 1850 Donation

Land Claim Act in Oregon. In the cases of Florida and Oregon, policy makers believed that free land would facilitate white settlement and, in turn, that settlement would cheaply and effectively secure these regions from Indians and (in Oregon) Great Britain. In Arkansas, settlers tried to make a similar case, but few in Congress believed the recently removed Natives in U.S. Indian Territory were a threat, and it was left to the Arkansas state legislature to grant free land—none of which, it turned out, was near Indian Territory. Yet neither the Florida nor the Oregon bill worked as intended. In Florida, due to malaria and difficult legal hurdles, only a third of claimants remained on their land by 1848, too few to make much headway against the few remaining Seminoles. Oregon witnessed the opposite problem: the thousands of successful claimants quickly initiated a series of brutal conflicts with Indians, forcing the United States to spend money to defend its citizens. Cheap settlement turned out to be quite expensive. The final chapter of the book details how the Republican Party transformed free land policy in the 1850s by downplaying the conquest of Indians and instead emphasizing improvement of the land itself, which culminated in the 1862 Homestead Act.

The essential strength of the book lies in the author's impressive research and data-driven evidence. Not only has Wilm mined federal and state archives, local historical societies, and countless newspapers, but he has also included twenty-three tables and two appendixes. Indeed, if this book has a flaw, it is that the wealth of data makes it a victim of its own success, just like the Oregon Donation Land Claim Act that it describes so well. The book is intended to demonstrate the contradictions in settler colonialism, but it does much more than that, and it is not served by being bounded by a theory-driven framework. Wilm's evidence points to new revelations about gender, geopolitics, and especially class during the early republic, yet the author leaves most of these findings unaddressed or underanalyzed. It will be left to other historians to pick up where Wilm has left off. When they do so, they must acknowledge him for this fine piece of scholarship.

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Andrew Jackson: A Rhetorical Portrayal of Presidential Leadership. By Amos Kiewe. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2019. Pp. xii, 300. $39.95, ISBN 978-1-62190-447-2.)

As the former Boylston Professor of Rhetoric at Harvard University, John Quincy Adams spent the weeks after his presidency drawing parallels between Andrew Jackson's election and the demise of eloquence in the late Roman Republic. In *Andrew Jackson: A Rhetorical Portrayal of Presidential Leadership*, Amos Kiewe again applies a rhetorician's eye to Jackson's political discourse—this time with two centuries of hindsight. Closely reading texts by Jackson, his aides, and his surrogates, Kiewe traces the evolution of the seventh president's discourse from his campaigns through his two terms in the Oval Office. In turn, Kiewe demonstrates how Jackson reconciled principles and pragmatism in pursuit of an expanded persuasive role for the presidency.

Intervening in ongoing debates among political scientists and rhetorical scholars about the origins of the "rhetorical president," Kiewe chronicles