African Americans occupied in the late 1820s. Easton and Walker, the subjects of chapter 1, worked extensively to better the lives of northern blacks. Walker's famous *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1830) identified the rampant racism embedded in American society and challenged whites to rethink the caste system that had placed all blacks at the bottom of society. Walker's a ppeal becomes the starting point for Archer's narrative arc, illustrating the change in black access to equal rights over time.

The strength of Archer's book is its explanation of the different approaches that New England blacks and their white allies utilized to advance education, remedy injustice, and pursue racial uplift. Blacks organized against racial injustice by deciding on the need "to improve themselves so as to reduce white prejudice as well as for their own well-being" (p. 47). This racial uplift strategy made education critical for African Americans, especially in fighting against the American Colonization Society and racial stereotypes about their inherent inferiority. Likewise, race riots in the 1830s that targeted black communities foretold the distrust between the races, especially as the increased interaction in northern cities led to mixed-race marriages and, therefore, fears of further intermingling of the races. Archer shines in his in-depth work on the characteristics and pervasiveness of mixed marriages in the antebellum period, highlighting an understudied subject.

By the 1840s and 1850s, Archer argues, whites had "become more sympathetic to African Americans having equal rights" and, by that period, blacks had secured equal access in public accommodations and in many educational settings (p. 130). This shift is troublesome, however, as it limits the nuance that occurred in the white New England imagination. Archer is careful to indicate that "New Englanders were no more inherently virtuous than any other people," but he could do more to unpack the reasoning behind their embrace of equal rights (p. 131). A comparison with their place in the nation, especially as the Civil War approached, would be useful.

Nonetheless, Archer presents an accessible history that should be required reading for those interested in African American or antebellum history.

James J. Gigantino II
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas

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"The Touch of Civilization": Comparing American and Russian Internal Colonization. By Steven Sabol. (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2017. xii, 298 pp. $65.00.).

While in China several years ago I got into a delicate discussion with a Chinese colleague about a forbidden topic: Tibet. "Why are Americans so fixated on Tibet?" my friend wondered. After all, the Chinese were modernizing a backward place and lifting a benighted population out of poverty—just as Americans had done with native peoples in the nineteenth century. I was taken aback by the response, and the conversation moved in another direction before I gathered myself to reply. Beyond illustrating my conversational ineptitude, this vignette reminds us of the sometimes-surprising outcome of putting two national histories side by side.

The comparison Steven Sabol offers of nineteenth-century Russian expansion and the settling of the American West is filled with similarly interesting juxtapositions and intriguing parallels. To carry out his project in *"The Touch of Civilization,"* Sabol looks specifically at Russian expansion into the region inhabited by Kazakhs and at American interactions with the Sioux.

The task here is daunting, and Sabol tackles it in six chapters. First, he compares the two indigenous societies. Then he looks at contact and expansion into the Kazakh and Sioux regions before the nineteenth century, which set the stage for a period of more aggressive expansion, conquest, and native resistance in both areas. In chapter 4 Sabol examines American and Russian perceptions of indigenous peoples, and in the final two chapters he looks at how those attitudes shaped policies and how those policies, in turn, shaped Kazakh and Sioux lives.

Sabol attends to cultural differences. For example, alcohol played little role in Russian-Kazakh interactions, but it was poisonously central to white-native relations in the United States. He also looks at similarities—some striking. Both Russians and Americans forced nomadic people to become farmers, for example, and settlement in both indigenous regions began in earnest at almost exactly the same moment.

Comparative history is not easy. Most of us have difficulty mastering the historiography of one field, let alone two. Sabol comes to this project as a Russianist; therefore, for this book he undertook a crash course in the relevant American history. He notes that while Russianists—and Russians—have been perfectly comfortable talking about nineteenth-century Russia as "imperial" and as an "empire," Americans have been more reluctant to use that language to describe how the West was won. By putting western history next to Russian history and by developing the idea of "internal colonization," Sabol argues that both nations constitute "quintessential empires that mirrored one another in theory and practice" (pp. 3, 6).

Readers of the *Journal of American History* might quibble that American historians have long recognized the imperialist nature of westward expansion. That strikes me as a small complaint. Sabol believes that comparative history is pointless unless the comparison "illuminate[s] that which might not be evident when examined in isolation" (p. 17). He has delivered on that implicit promise, writing an illuminating book.

Steven Conn
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio

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Archives of Dispossession: Recovering the Testimonios of Mexican American Herederas, 1848—1960. By Karen R. Roybal. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017. xvi, 169 pp. Cloth, $85.00. Paper, $27.95.)

Karen R. Roybal's *Archives of Dispossession* is not the first book to chronicle contestations over land and property after the Mexican-American War. However, her volume combines historical and literary study to argue that a feminist lens is required to properly recover women's presence in inheritance struggles. Mexican American women who owned property in California, New Mexico, and Texas during Spanish or Mexican rule had, like men, the power to keep it after marriages ended and to pass it down to their children. This power of possession changed under a U.S. legal system designed to work against "conquered" Mexican Americans. *Herederas* often had to rely on male relatives to defend their land in court; meanwhile, Anglo-American men actively pursued these women to marry them and acquire their property. This double form of colonial extraction, Roybal argues, "work[ed] in the service of regulating race *and* gender" in the borderlands (p. 30, emphasis in original).

Though women's voices are sparingly represented in archived land cases, Roybal illuminates in her first chapter important depositions held in the U.S. Surveyor General's Office. The case of María Cleofas Bóne de López, a woman who filed a land claim to push out an Anglo neighbor squatter after her parents separated illustrates the leniency with which U.S. courts treated white men while forcing Spanish Mexicans to perform incredible amounts of legal labor. Over the next three chapters—which exemplify what the author sees as a major change over time from land-based property struggles to conflicts over cultural dispossession—Roybal focuses on *heredera* literary production. She discusses two novels written by the Californiana María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, four writings of the Tejana Jovita González, and a 1954 memoir by the New Mexican writer Fabiola Cabeza de Baca. These works, through their plots and narrators, openly critiqued Manifest Destiny, the U.S. legal system, race relations, intermarriage, and gendered inequalities.

Roybal explicates well these women's writings, but I would have welcomed more information about the contemporary impact and audience of these texts. Additionally, readers need from the start a clearer sense of the book's scope and structure—Roybal does not fully explain the value she sees in "bringing these very different women from dissimilar times into conversation" until near the end (p. 132).