

In Meat We Trust: An Unexpected History of Carnivore America

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Readers of this book who (like this reviewer) are historically inclined might especially admire McCool's solid historical treatments of particular rivers and the challenges facing them. Among the best of these are his treatments of dams and hydropower on the Snake River in Idaho, the Glen Canyon dam and its effects on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, recreation on Lake Powell and the lost magnificence of Glen Canyon, and the impact of levees, locks, and flood control structures on the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers. Those more interested in political science will profit from McCool's analysis of the powerful stakeholders who influence river management, including big agriculture, the barge industry, communities in the flood plain, and those who rely on hydropower and flood control. For those intrigued with nonprofit organizations, there is much here of interest and insight as well. It is one measure of McCool's book that it will appeal to different disciplines and types of readers. Even more, he has given us a river book that shows with stark clarity and force the great shift—generational, political, environmental—in Americans' thinking about rivers in the past few decades, a shift that has transformed and restored countless rivers across the country as well as many citizens who live near them.

In Meat We Trust: An Unexpected History of Carnivore America, by Maureen Ogle. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013. xiii, 368 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$28.00 hardcover, \$26.00 e-book.

Reviewer Wilson J. Warren is professor of history at Western Michigan University. He is the author of *Tied to the Great Packing Machine: The Midwest and Meatpacking* (2007) and *Struggling with "Iowa's Pride": Labor Relations, Unionism, and Politics in the Rural Midwest since 1877* (2000).

Food history is one of the fastest-growing fields of historical scholarship. Everyone eats, so the study of foodways is an ideal prism for understanding significant economic, social, and cultural changes. Food history has also made inroads into the popular history marketplace. Maureen Ogle's book on the history of meat in the United States is aimed at a broad readership and, as suggested by her subtitle, hopes to enliven and even startle Americans into new ways of thinking about our meat-eating proclivities. While interesting and well-researched in many respects, the book is also often misleading and overly polemical.

Two major assumptions about demand and production guide Ogle's perspectives on how the United States became one of the world's most carnivorous nations. Regarding demand, she believes that from the beginning Americans pursued a meat-centered diet. About pro-

duction, with which her book is primarily concerned, she argues that key individuals sparked the developments that paved the way for ready supplies of low-cost meat. She hopes that readers will understand how and why creative entrepreneurs bravely challenged the status quo to make possible the rise of low-cost meat in the twentieth century.

Very little of Ogle's book is devoted to why Americans demanded a meat-laden diet. She simply asserts that they did. She notes, for example, that in the 1700s, "Across Europe, a non-royal was lucky to see meat once or twice a week. A typical American adult male, in contrast, put away about two hundred pounds a year" (4). She glosses over the fact that pork was the primary meat consumed by Americans for much of the country's history. She is also about a century ahead of herself in saying that Americans lost interest in variety meats—meat by-products—after the Civil War. The complex array of cultural, economic, public health, and public policy factors that encouraged Americans' demand for meat is not addressed.

Regarding meat production, Ogle charts the steady drive toward lower-cost meat production through the lens of key entrepreneurs' innovations. Readers learn how Joe McCoy pioneered rail shipments of cattle from Abilene, Kansas, to eastern markets; how Gustavus "Gus" Swift blazed the path of the so-called dressed beef trade—shipping refrigerated carcasses instead of live cattle; how Jesse Jewell created the so-called broiler industry that made inexpensive poultry available to Americans; how Warren Monfort and his son Ken revolutionized the beef industry through feedlot production; how Andrew "Andy" Anderson and Don Tyson added to the Monforts' and Jewell's innovations; and how Mel Coleman capitalized on Americans' interest in natural and organic meats. Only in chapter 6, where Anderson and IBP's development are described, will readers learn much about Iowa's involvement in meat history. That is unfortunate given Iowa's central role in the nation's meat history. Ogle only deviates from an emphasis on key entrepreneurs in chapters 3 and 7. In the former, she scoffs at Upton Sinclair's impact on Americans' desire for meat, and in the latter she belittles Ralph Nader's efforts to expose potentially unhealthy aspects of meat production. While arguably a useful literary device, Ogle's personalizing of these complex trends often obscures the broader institutional contexts that facilitated low-cost meat production.

Ogle's book is at its best in explaining the complicated transformation of meat production during the mid-twentieth century. Her analysis of the rise of the broiler industry is especially insightful. She provides an excellent explanation of how chicken went from being a "rare treat" (100) before the twentieth century to being an American staple

after World War II. Her examination of the rise of the feedlot beef industry is also generally well done. However, her explanation of how the older packers, such as Swift and Armour, “were wedded to union workers who resisted innovations that eliminated jobs, whether plant layout, processes, or machinery” (165) and only tried to adapt by moving their plants out of Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s is woefully lacking. Her criticism of contemporary consumers’ meat concerns as “hopelessly utopian” (251) is unnecessarily contentious since she does not acknowledge the widespread environmental consciousness that has made Americans rightfully concerned about safe meat.

Unfortunately, Ogle’s quirky heroification of the rise of low-cost meat detracts from what is in many respects a well-researched book that draws upon a fine array of primary and secondary sources. A cautionary note to scholarly readers: while the book includes many content notes, the use of general page references instead of specific citations is frustrating and often left this reader wondering about her sources.

The Red Man’s Bones: George Catlin, Artist and Showman, by Benita Eisler. New York: W. W. Norton, 2013. vii, 468 pp. Illustrations, bibliographic references, notes, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Kate Elliott is assistant professor of art history at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. Her research considers the representation of Native Americans in western American art.

Benita Eisler’s new biography of George Catlin, *The Red Man’s Bones*, attempts to do what no other scholar has tried—to offer a full examination of the life, historical context, and problematic motivations of the nineteenth-century American painter and showman George Catlin. Catlin devoted himself to depicting American Indians at a critical point in our nation’s history. During the 1830s, as President Andrew Jackson’s Indian Removal Policy took effect, Catlin traveled past the frontier to document in ethnographic detail the appearance and lifeways of native people in America. In the end he amassed more than 600 portraits that were later exhibited up and down the eastern seaboard (and later Europe), with accompanying lectures by the artist. Catlin worked throughout his life to sell the collection to the federal government, but was unsuccessful. Finally, after his death in 1872, the original collection was given to the Smithsonian Institution. A portion of the extensive collection hangs today in the Smithsonian Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.

Catlin’s complex and often contradictory biography has made him a controversial figure in American art circles in recent decades, prompt-