and learned to cope with annoying disruptions. The immigrating Americans, however, determined that the swamps were a dangerous impediment, a potential unhealthy ecosystem that allowed malarial mosquitoes to breed as well as inhibited agricultural development.

By 1830, there were alterations in Chicago's waterways that made the Chicago River a serious exit from and entry to Lake Michigan, plus a channel to help negotiate around the perennial sand-silting that the weather produced at the end of the lake. The revamping of the lakefront became increasingly more complex. Before long, the railways competed for the movement of goods, growing the city into the commercial center. Most of the Indigenous people departed; however, a remnant remains even today. Although a functional waterway was built and is still used, ironically Chicago became a national transportation hub for both rail and air traffic. There was a steep cost, however. The cityscape greatly changed the intricate natural ecosystems in this primal region. Chicago now faces several environmental crises that can be traced back to its beginnings, which were built upon fluctuating wetlands and intertwined rivers.

John Nelson's *Muddy Ground,* a scholarly and uncommon maritime history, delves deeply into the development of the heartland of the United States. Although the author's prose is at times somewhat academic, this unusual and significant work is one that I recommend to scholars who are interested in the development of middle America.

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William D. Riddell. *On the Waves of Empire: U.S. Imperialism and Merchant Sailors, 1872–1924.* Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, www.uillinois.edu, 2023. 240 pp., notes, bibliography, index. US $110.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-252-04516-5. (E-book available.)

The period between 1872 and 1924 was filled with numerous innovations within the various industries of the United States, whose growth fueled the national expansion that would take the nation from Reconstruction to a fledging empire on the world stage. Crucial to these innovations, and this growth, were swarms of workers, both domestic and immigrant, who, as time progressed, would engage in resistance to and protest against their exploitation. While the growing field of labour history has done much to study those labourers toiling ashore and underground, less has been written about those whose work was done in the merchant marine. These merchant sailors, as William Riddell

contends, existed in a special world, separate from those of other labourers, where they held both more and fewer rights, and where their work necessarily bridged the gap between the foreign and domestic spheres.

Riddell begins his discussion of the place of merchant sailors within the expansion of American imperialism with the story of the "Arago Four," four sailors who deserted their ship in Washington in 1895 in protest of the dangerous and harsh working conditions. The ship's captain, not wishing to lose profitability, had them returned to the ship by local authorities, and, when the ship next docked in San Francisco, the offending sailors were arrested for desertion, launching what would eventually become a Supreme Court trial. The sailors' defense, which was financed by the International Seamen's Union (ISU), was predicated on the Maguire Act, which forbade imprisoning sailors who had deserted from vessels in the domestic trade. However, the prosecution countered that while the sailors had deserted during a domestic leg, the ship's eventual destination was a foreign port, meaning the ship was engaged in foreign trade and thus not subject to the Maguire Act. The eventual Supreme Court decision came down against the sailors, arguing that the Thirteenth Amendment was not applicable to maritime labour as their movement between domestic and foreign spheres rendered them an "exceptional" class of labourer who surrendered their liberty to their employers with few protections. For Riddell, this decision highlights the core of maritime labour in the expanding United States; maritime labourers were vulnerable and the decisions about what policies to support were guided by a desire to protect their interests at home and abroad.

A keystone of these concerns can be seen in reactions to the growing populations of non-white foreigners that were being encountered as the United States expanded its interests. Whereas all white workers feared the potential of being replaced, Riddell sees sailors as being particularly threatened in their day-to-day lives as they were actively venturing forth into the parts of the world where those populations were most readily encountered. Yet, far from causing the sailors to reject American imperialism, these experiences pushed merchant sailors to more fully support white settler colonialism as a means of restricting the mobility of these non-white labour pools. Similarly, as steam power de-skilled the sailing profession and encouraged more companies to believe that any person could be made into a sailor, the ISU and other maritime unions increasingly supported racial exclusionary laws for maritime labour. In this way they helped to ensure not only that the Constitution followed the flag into the Pacific, but the racialized systems of power imbalance and disenfranchisement as well. Such exclusionary actions, Riddell argues, would ultimately doom the maritime unions of this era. By the end of the First World War, these groups represented a major source of organizational power, but they

were no longer ethnically homogenous, and, with leadership locked into now-outdated ideas of the need to protect whiteness, it would not be long before membership began to fracture away to the rival IWW (Industrial Workers of the World).

Gathering a better understanding of marine labour and its roles within American imperial expansion is crucial for the formation of a fuller history of the United States and where it is today. This book, with its accessible language, will allow both general and specialist audiences to garner information of interest and importance to them, and, aspirationally, allow for the writing of better labour and imperial history moving forward. Astutely written and timely, this book will prove to be a must add for most any collection.

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Arthur G. Sharp. *The* Bear *and the* Northland*: Legendary Coast Guard Cutters in the Alaskan Ice.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishing Co., 2023, 213 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US $39.95, paperback: ISBN 978147692111.

The United States Revenue Service cutter *Bear* and its replacement in Alaskan waters, *Northland,* are legendary in Alaskan and Coast Guard history. *Bear* served from 1884-1927 and *Northland* served in various capacities from 1927-1946 (except for 1938-1939). Both ships served as the Alaskan "911," successfully completing diverse missions that included enormous humanitarian relief operations.

The two former sealer/whalers-turned-cutters belonged to the Coast Guard's predecessor, the United States Revenue Cutter Service (1894-1915) and before that, the United States Revenue-Marine (1790-1894). Founded originally as an armed maritime customs enforcement service, its ships and personnel performed diverse actions and undertook a multitude of responsibilities, especially on the Alaskan frontier. *Bear* and *Northland*'s varied voyages went beyond the Alaskan coast to include maritime patrols off the coasts of Hawaii and Greenland. Both cutters had remarkable histories and author Arthur G. Sharp provides an engaging and well-documented account of the efforts of *Bear* and *Northland.*

When *Bear* began service under the Department of Treasury, the Territory of Alaska was less than twenty years old as a US territory. It was vast, sparsely populated and contained all the challenges of law and order both ashore and afloat. Those who worked for the Revenue Cutter Service of the nineteenth century and sailed in its ships were comprised of skilled navigators