

of Latin American social and cultural history. The collection's major weakness lies precisely in its desire to cover so much. It is overly ambitious in the time periods, disciplines, and methodologies it attempts to integrate. As a result, the book lacks structural coherence, leaping dizzily between historical analysis and contemporary commentary, and anecdotal journalism and artistic criticism. The reader is left to speculate if this diversity is a deliberate feature of the work or a compromise made in order to get enough essays together for publication.

In the end, *Minor Omissions* is not the comparative historical study its title seems to suggest. While the essays provide a fascinating series of richly detailed snapshots, few speak to childhood in Latin America *per se*. Whether this was, in fact, the author's intention is unclear. Editor Hecht should be praised for moving such an important topic further to the center of attention, but this work indicates that there still is a clear need for further scholarship on the place children occupy in Latin American history and society.

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William H. Bartsch. *December 8, 1941: MacArthur's Pearl Harbor*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press. 2003. Notes, Index. Pp. 557. \$40.00 hardcover.

In this meticulously researched volume amateur historian William Bartsch explores the events leading up to and the actual destruction of the United States' Far East Air Force in the Philippine Islands on December 8, 1941. Bartsch pulls together an impressive array of American and Japanese primary and secondary sources to argue that the Japanese success in destroying the American air forces in the Philippines in a single day was a greater strategic disaster than the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Bartsch divides this lengthy tome into three chronological parts, beginning in 1940. In each part he gives an almost day to day description of the salient events. To lend a sense of how each side made its decisions and the thinking of the actors involved, Bartsch

juxtaposes the American War Department and its air forces in the Philippines with the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters and its naval and air forces in Formosa, which carried out the attack. The author accomplishes this task by interspersing the personal experiences of the constituents within the framework of narrative analysis.

In so doing, Bartsch traces the original hesitancy of Washington to reinforce the Far East Air Force with the limited amount modern bombers, fighters and radar equipment possessed by the United States. America's war production was to be earmarked for a defeat Germany first approach should the U.S. become engulfed in World War II, as most military and political leaders believed would happen. As war became eminent, however, influential strategists, such as Hoyt Vandenberg for one, convinced his political and military superiors that a strong air force in the Philippines would deter any aggressive moves into the south Pacific by the Japanese. Similarly, he shows that Japanese leaders understood the dangers of a strong U.S. air defense to their plans to capture the mineral and petroleum rich areas. Unlike earlier histories, and Hollywood movies such as "Tora, Tora, Tora," that exonerates Emperor Hirohito, Bartsch provides strong evidence that Japan's national leader was intimately involved from the beginning in the decisions to bomb Pearl Harbor and attack the Philippines.

Bartsch makes a convincing argument, with documentary support, that by December 8, 1941 the U.S. Far East Air Force had the capability of not only defending the Philippines but of carrying out offensive actions against the Japanese staging areas and airfields in Formosa. He concludes that had MacArthur approved General Louis Brereton's request to attack the Formosa targets in the morning of December 8, the disaster in the Philippines could have been avoided. Indeed, Bartsch blames MacArthur for the destruction of the American air forces and subsequent loss of the Philippines. Especially galling to the author was MacArthur's later attempt to exonerate himself from the debacle. Moreover, he claims that MacArthur's later success in the war and his appointment as Supreme Commander of occupied Japan made it politically impossible to hold the general accountable for his Philippine Pearl Harbor.

Rarely does an amateur historian produce viable analysis

of history. William Bartsch joins a minority of those who succeed. While an epilogue detailing the fate of the men, especially the pilots, not killed on December 8 would have added flavor to the volume, the lack of one does not take away from the value of the body of the work. Bartsch may well have provided what could become a standard source from which professional historians can benefit.

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Arnold J. Bauer. *Goods, Power, History: Latin America's Material Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2001. Pp. xx, 245, \$53.00 hardcover, \$19.00 paperback.

On one level *Goods, Power, History: Latin America's Material Culture* is about the history of consumption of products in the Americas from pre-Columbian to modern times. The author, Arnold J. Bauer, professor of history at the University of California, Davis, states as much: "The present book emphasizes the core items of material life—food, clothing, shelter, and the organization of public space—in both their rudimentary and elaborate manifestations" (pp. xv-xvi). On a much more sophisticated and integrative level, this book is a *tour de force* or compendium of Dr. Bauer's distinguished body of work concerning the asymmetrical relationship between people, things and power in Latin America.

Goods, Power, History is presented in seven chapters. The introduction (first chapter) deftly defines the critical elements of material culture and discusses the "why" of product acquisition. This includes an exposition of material life, material regimes, material (and civilizing) goods, material abundance, material value and symbolism, and the function of material things. Professor Bauer rightly notes a structural imbalance of trade favoring colonial, neo-colonial, and neo-liberal powers where "[i]n the realm of material culture... the people of Latin America have been presented... with a more abundant and a far wider range of goods from abroad, particularly manufactures, than those present in their own territories" (p. 8). This overall discussion is necessary not only as a means to set the stage for the text that follows but also as a way to "fill in the gap" for those readers without