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Review of *The Border between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line* By Jeremy Neely

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The Border between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line. By Jeremy Neely. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007. xvi +305 pp. Maps, notes, tables, appendix, bibliography, index. \$39.95.

The Border between Them traces the troubled relationship across the Kansas-Missouri state line during the nineteenth century. Jeremy Neely successfully recreates the world of ordinary settlers, such as western Missouri farmer John Dryden, who didn't care whether Kansas became slave or free but suffered political violence nonetheless. In order to make the settlers' story intelligible, however, Neely often has to describe larger political events, making for much summary familiar to students of the Civil War era.

Missourians pioneered a slave frontier. They expected Kansas to be part of this dynamic economy, but free soil migrants resisted. Neely emphasizes some elements of Bleeding Kansas's familiar story that are often passed over. For

example, because Native claims had not been extinguished, settlers squatted on Native lands, disputed title, and often came to blows. These conflicts then became part of the territory's political turmoil. In discussing the Civil War itself, Neely deftly acknowledges that many Missouri guerrillas, such as Coleman Younger, came from good families but does not turn this into a defense of their every action. His discussion of the guerrilla war along the border is nuanced and balanced.

During the 1850s and 1860s, Missourians and Kansans had driven each other out of their homes, burned and looted each other's towns, and killed one another. After the war, hostile feelings naturally lingered. Neely contends, nonetheless, that during the postwar period, the similarities between the two sides of the border came to rival the differences. Postwar immigration, including black settlement in Kansas, made the two states more similar demographically. Both sides of the border relied on Corn Belt agriculture and the family farm. Railroad developers and economic boosters sought to link the border towns physically. Neely finds that antirailroad sentiment was not rooted in Reconstruction political loyalties so much as in animus against taxes and corruption. The agrarian movements of the 1890s, however, were unable to translate these cross-border similarities into a movement that would realign borderers' old political ties.

Neely finds both reconciliation and bitterness in the border at the turn of the twentieth century. Indeed, one can argue whether there is more similarity or difference in Neely's accounts. Both Missouri and Kansas defeated black and woman suffrage in the late 1860s. But Kansas had a vigorous debate over these issues while it seems that Missourians rejected them out of hand. Despite this quibble, this is a fine book based on meticulous research that all scholars of the border region will want to read.

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