

Knight of Philadelphia: The Life and Times of Albert Monroe Greenfield. By SERENA SHANKEN SKWERSKY. (Philadelphia: Kopel Publishing, 2012. 250 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$15.)

The Outsider: Albert M. Greenfield and the Fall of the Protestant Establishment. By DAN ROTTENBERG. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014. 361 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.)

These two recent publications offer valuable insight into the career and contributions of Albert Monroe Greenfield, a remarkable Philadelphia businessman, developer, and politico. Born in imperial Russia in 1887, Greenfield was brought to America in 1892 by Jewish émigré parents who soon settled in Philadelphia. By 1905, he entered into a real estate partnership and over the next decade accrued both wealth and reputation acting as broker for numerous high-profile transactions. In tracing these early years, Rottenberg delineates important themes for Greenfield's later career: he "refused to be pigeonholed by his Jewishness," made a virtue of self-reinvention, seized opportunities "that seemed . . . to abound wherever a young man of limitless energy might turn," and exhibited characteristic foresight by recognizing the future of motion pictures and the ties of that fledgling industry to real estate (31, 22, 28, 34). Greenfield's confidence and power grew in the 1920s, and he soon advanced from broker to developer—seeking to help Philadelphia remake its anachronistically underdeveloped Center City. In the process, he became realtor to Dennis Cardinal Dougherty and forged lifelong ties to the Catholic hierarchy, became an important voice within the state Republican machine, and helped J. David Stern purchase the *Philadelphia Record* and transform it into a widely read organ of liberal Democratic reformism.

By the late 1920s, Greenfield was a board member and leading depositor of the Bankers Trust, which swiftly became one of Philadelphia's largest banks. After the stock market crash of October 1929, Bankers Trust was unable to secure a lifeline from the Philadelphia Clearing House Association—portrayed by Rottenberg as not only the organized banking power of Philadelphia but also the financial arm of the city's Protestant establishment. The bank's failure was a cataclysm affecting one-fifth of Philadelphia households, and both authors interrogate the reasons why the Clearing House Association reneged on an earlier offer to save Bankers Trust. Rottenberg deftly negotiates the intricacies of this important moment—why did the establishment back away from an apparent deal? What were the motivations of E. T. Stotesbury, the Drexel & Co. partner who "alone commanded the combination of resources, experience, and esteem capable of credibly questioning a decision that had seemed preordained" (126)? What was the balance of philosophical objections, stylistic differences, and raw anti-Semitism? Rottenberg's answers are appropriately complex—a mix of personal and stylistic objections to Greenfield's methods and cultural concerns with the outsider populations Greenfield seemed

to represent. Skwersky takes a similarly multifaceted view of matters—"a triple whammy of culture clash, mistrust, and possibly anti-Semitism," she concludes (93).

While Greenfield's banking career thus met an unceremonious end, he was not finished as a major player in Philadelphia's development or American economic and political life. Greenfield still had his investment house, Bankers Securities; during the early 1930s, his firm established control over the debt-ridden City Stores Company, and by the end of the decade Greenfield had returned the chain to profitability and started acquiring other retailers. Indeed, notes Rottenberg, the Depression was flush with such opportunities: "As properties . . . teetered on the brink of bankruptcy, Greenfield repeatedly appeared to snap them up for Bankers Securities at bargain prices and then pump new blood into them. . . . In this way Greenfield gained control of Philadelphia's Ben Franklin and Bellevue-Statford hotels, the Steel Pier in Atlantic City, and any number of downtown Philadelphia office and loft buildings" (163–64).

By the post–World War II period, Greenfield commanded a sprawling empire, but he had not yet succeeded in transforming Philadelphia from what Rottenberg dubs a "national embarrassment" marked by a decaying Center City (235). In 1956 Mayor Richardson Dilworth granted Greenfield power to pursue his envisioned renaissance by making him chairman of the planning commission. Here Greenfield followed what Rottenberg calls "a unique surgical approach to urban renewal" that eschewed the meat-ax tactics of many contemporaries and ultimately yielded a "subsequent reinvention of downtown Philadelphia" (243, 248). Indeed, agrees Skwersky, nearly all of Greenfield's twenty-year predictions for impressive hotels, offices, and infrastructure, came to pass—"indicative of a truly remarkable vision" (188).

Politically, Greenfield was an early pragmatist and long-run liberal. When he entered public life, Philadelphia was a Republican city run by the Vare machine, so Greenfield made himself useful to the Vares through the late 1920s. Credited with helping secure Pennsylvania Republican support for Herbert Hoover's nomination in 1928, Greenfield slowly evolved into a liberal Democrat during Franklin Roosevelt's first term, and in 1936 he helped bring that party's national convention to Philadelphia. He later cultivated a strong enough relationship with Harry Truman to have his son Albert Jr. plucked off of a Marine transport ship in the middle of the Pacific Ocean by executive order and spared from service in Korea. He was an early supporter of Lyndon Johnson, whom Skwersky reveals "felt the personal loss of Albert's loyalty and the national loss of his leadership" upon Greenfield's death in 1967 (5).

Both books have clear merits. Rottenberg's well-researched narrative gracefully traces Greenfield's story through the theme of his "outsider" status. The author appreciates the subtleties of what this would have meant to his subject, who seems to have aspired to "mainline" acceptance but without sacrificing his Jewish heritage wholesale, all while vehemently rejecting the "rags-to-riches" label. This is

also very much a story of a rising social and economic actor being confronted repeatedly by old-stock snobbery in a city dominated by a lineage-obsessed Protestant establishment—whether it meant his children being rejected by the Germantown Friends School or his own humbling at the hands of the Clearing House Association (55). Ultimately, however, Greenfield won: he would “help transform Philadelphia . . . from an exclusive oligarchy based largely on bloodlines into an inclusive meritocracy. . . in the face of this upheaval, the WASP establishment . . . relinquish[ed] its leadership role in almost every facet of American life” (267).

Skwersky's work is less analytical and more of a straight biographical exploration. Skwersky draws rich anecdotes from the Greenfield manuscripts at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to create an intimate portrait of her subject as “a democratic knight . . . not dressed in armor nor with lance in hand . . . but seated round a table, considering all men his peers, showing respect to all, serving equally his president, senator, governor, mayor, and John Doe” (2). While less inclined to interpretation, Skwersky still contextualizes her story in broader trends to demonstrate Greenfield's many contributions—ranging from United States recognition of the state of Israel to the making (both physically and culturally) of modern Philadelphia. The book is arranged thematically rather than chronologically, with many chapters spanning from the 1910s to the 1960s. This is sometimes challenging, although this approach allows a more intimate conception of Greenfield's family life on its own terms (chapter seven). The author provides a generous collection of photographs, which greatly enhance the book.

Both works will be of interest to readers of this journal and to students of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania history. Those interested in better understanding Greenfield's extraordinary contributions should purchase and read both books. Rottenberg's work, with its thoughtful, nuanced analysis and readable, lively prose, should command a broader audience still, and could be a useful monograph for collegiate courses on ethnic relations, urban politics, or the intersection of class, culture, and business.

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Church and Estate: Religion and Wealth in Industrial-Era Philadelphia. By THOMAS F. RZEZNIK. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$72.95.)

Thomas Rzeznik's *Church and Estate* provides readers with an overview of the dynamic relationship between the economic elite and their religious communities in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Across seven chapters of crisp narrative, the author describes the rise and fall of upper-class influence on the