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STS.036 Technology and Nature in American History
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STS.036

Reading questions for Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis* (Ch. 3 "Pricing the Future: Grain")

- How was European-American agriculture in the Midwest different from Native American agriculture? (97-98)
- What kinds of natural advantages did the glaciers leave behind west of the Great Lakes? (98)
- How does Cronon describe the relationship between prairies, fields, and forests? (101)
- How did the grid affect land use and agricultural production starting in the 1810s? (102)
- How did farmers get their goods to market? (102-103)
- How did rural storekeepers wear two hats, according to Cronon? (104-105)
- What went wrong with John Burrows and his 2,500 bushels of potatoes? (105)
- Why were grain sacks "the key to the whole water-based transportation system"? (108)
- How did the railroad and the steam-powered grain elevator transform Chicago's grain market? (109-114)
- What were the economic and legal implications of getting rid of grain sacks? (112-113)
- What was so important about the Chicago Board of Trade's 1856 classification scheme for wheat in Chicago and its subsequent grading regulations? (116-119)
- How was a grain elevator like a bank? (120)
- How did the telegraph affect Chicago's grain market? (120-124)
- What were the historical circumstances that led to the emergence of Chicago's futures market? (120-124)
- What were the logic and consequences of the corner? (127-132)
- Why didn't the Chicago Board of Trade put an end to corners? (131-132)
- What were the implications of the Chicago Board of Trade's partitioning of the grain market? (132-134)
- What were some of the problems farmers and Chicago Board of Trade members had with grain elevators? (132-142)
- How was the grain market regulated and reformed under Illinois state law? (137-142)
- What does Cronon mean when he says that Chicago's grain market "redefined the *meaning* of grain . . ."? (145)
- How did grain traders "invent a world of second nature"? (146)