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The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan: People, Law, and Politics, by David Gardner Chardavoyne, Wayne State University Press, 2012

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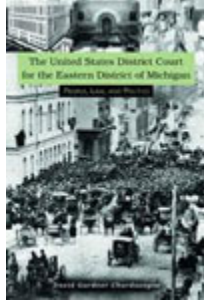
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The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan: People, Law, and Politics

by David Gardner Chardavoyne, Wayne State University Press, 2012

Reviewed by George Geib

America's federal district and circuit courts have been actively working to record their history. David Chardavoyne adds an excellent volume to that output with this study. The court had jurisdiction for all of Michigan until separated east and west in 1863. The author strives to develop topics that allow the court to be placed in its larger state and national contexts. Biographies of judges and other court personnel are the basis for a look at the people of the court. The complexities of the court's relation to other intermediate federal courts are particularly well handled. Selected cases allow us to see the workings of federal law in admiralty, bankruptcy, civil rights, wartime emergency, and other matters of public and private concern. The procedures and motives of judicial appointments are placed within the changing state and national scenes, and the longer term consequences of those appointments are discussed. District court histories normally strive to identify particular economic and social features of the district, and to evaluate the ways the court has responded to these features. Chardavoyne does this with special attention to automotive manufacture, immigration patterns, and social unrest. His treatments of ethnicity and its role in the civil rights years are particularly interesting.

- George Geib is Professor of History at Butler University.