

## Book Reviews

By Dennis DeValeria and Jeanne Burke DeValeria, *Honus Wagner: A Biography*.

(University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh, 1998. Pp. 334, Paperback, \$16.95.)

When Honus Wagner retired from major league baseball after the 1917 season, he departed with a reputation as its finest player. One of the Hall of Fame's five original inductees (along with Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, Christy Mathewson, and Babe Ruth), Wagner left the game holding the major league records for most games played, at-bats, hits, runs, runs batted in, stolen bases, extra base hits, and total bases. For good measure, Wagner was also the National League's career leader for the most singles, doubles, triples and batting titles (an astounding eight). But Honus Wagner did more than personify athletic excellence. He embodied professional baseball during its turn-of-the-century consolidation, a time when the major leagues still were closer to the sandlots than they were to Madison Avenue.

Dennis DeValeria and Jeanne Burke DeValeria's *Honus Wagner: A Biography* captures the Pittsburgh Pirate shortstop's distinguished career. The son of German immigrants who came to a small town outside of Pittsburgh in 1868, Johannes Peter (Honus) Wagner was born in 1874. When he was twelve years old, Honus followed his father and three older brothers into the coal mines. Honus also worked for a while in a steel mill and helped in a brother's barber shop, but he found that a better living could be secured on the ballfield.

Honus and his brothers played sandlot ball for neighborhood, church, and company-backed clubs, occasionally pocketing a few dollars for their efforts. In 1894, Honus and his older brother, Al, made the still-not-so-great leap to professional baseball. The major leagues had not yet gained hegemony over professional baseball and Honus played for a handful of teams in leagues based in Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey before joining Louisville, a weak National League franchise. When the league jettisoned Louisville after the 1899 season, its owner, Barney Dreyfuss, acquired a piece of the Pittsburgh Pirates and brought Wagner and several of his best players with him. The club responded by winning three National League pennants in a row and Wagner emerged as one of the game's first stars. With baseball finally established in the city, both on the field and at the gate, Dreyfuss built Forbes Field, one of baseball's classic stadia, in 1909.

The DeValerias provide a season-by-season account of Wagner's career and the Pirates' emergence as a National League powerhouse. They leave little doubt why a generation of fans felt that the bow-legged Wagner was the best player in all of the game. They also convey a good sense of the workings of the

minor and major leagues at the turn-of-the-century. They guide the reader through the sport's terrain, capturing its rough play, obstreperous fans, failing franchises, and byzantine politics before the golden age of sport arrived after World War One.

The book's limitations are largely a reflection of Wagner himself. Though a non-pareil on the field, Honus is not an easy figure to write about. He was neither a Ruthian character with the Babe's gargantuan appetites nor a tortured soul like Ty Cobb, twisted by unresolved turmoil. Honus was simply a friendly, sometimes shy, ballplayer who became an icon for what he did as a player during a remarkable career. He hunted, drank, and lived most of his life in his childhood home. What you saw with Honus Wagner was what you got.

This book does a better job presenting Wagner than I thought possible. It's solidly researched and clearly written. The DeValerias provide more financial information about the Pirates and a better sketch of Dreyfuss than I've ever seen before. At times, the season-by-season account captures the drama of campaigns long over, but the chronological approach contributes to an almost mind-numbing rendition of statistics from game after game after game. Though it's one of the best books I've read about this period, I would like to know more about Wagner's sandlot career and what the minor league teams he played for in the 1890s meant to their towns and cities.

The DeValerias document how close Wagner remained to his roots. Honus did not divorce himself from the sandlots or Pittsburgh after reaching the Pirates. He remained a part of the community. After retiring from the major leagues, went back to the sandlots and kept playing ball. That Wagner returned so easily to his baseball roots not only tells us something about this remarkable ballplayer but about baseball when it still was cast in the image of the surrounding community.

Rob Ruck, *University of Pittsburgh*

**By Simon J. Bronner. *Following Tradition: Folklore in the Discourse of American Culture*.**

(Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1998. Pp. xv, 599.)

Simon Bronner has already published several books on American folklore, but *Following Tradition* is the most ambitious: an engaging intellectual and cultural history of the study of tradition, particularly folklore and folklife, in the United States from the Gilded Age to the present. Bronner examines several different streams of scholarly thought: nationalists' search for a single, unifying national tradition, pluralists' celebration of diverse ethnic and local traditions, and behavioralists' insistence that traditions primarily reflect individual identity and experience rather than group identity. He carefully unpacks the political implications of each approach, commenting that "the United

States, an upstart nation of myriad communities, was assuredly a place to reevaluate tradition, and view it from various social angles” (p. 1).

Bronner draws on more than three and a half decades of research and involvement in the academic folklorist community. He is personally acquainted with many of the scholars that he discusses, and enlivens the chapter on Richard Dorson with a personal sketch of his graduate school mentor. One only wishes that Bronner had highlighted his personal experiences more, for they would have formed a more accessible portal to the subject of folklore studies than the present opening chapters do. Bronner himself reflects, “Nothing focused my attention on American traditions like being away from them;” likewise, his argument that the United States’ unique history encouraged American folklorists to locate the roots of tradition in social connections, rather than in a specific place or lineage, becomes clear only in the conclusion, when he contrasts American attitudes towards tradition with Japanese attitudes that he observed while on sabbatical at Osaka University (p. 475). The epilogue would have made a superb introduction.

In the core chapters of *Following Tradition*, Bronner employs an episodic approach. He focuses on one major figure or intellectual debate at a time, blending theoretical discussion with chronological narrative. Chapter 5, where Bronner examines the life of Martha Warren Beckwith and her struggle to establish folklore studies within the academy, is an excellent delineation of how several early twentieth-century trends shaped the life of one folklore scholar. Chapter 6 focuses on the work of Alfred Shoemaker and highlights the central role that the Pennsylvania German community played in shaping the study of American folklife (as opposed to the study of folklore, which relies on textual sources). Chapter 7 examines conflict between academic and public folklorists, particularly in Pennsylvania, and later chapters consider museum exhibits, folklife festivals, and the evolution of folklore studies within the academy.

*Following Tradition’s* principal flaw is its denseness; the opening chapters, in which Bronner explains “the problem of tradition,” are particularly difficult to follow unless one is already thoroughly familiar with the issues discussed. Bronner illustrates his points with many allusions to recent American popular culture, including *Roots*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and the *Foxfire* series, but these helpful references do not entirely alleviate the problem. The work is packed with names, dates, and details, and it is often unclear which are truly important and which are not. The bibliography and bibliographic essay are similarly rich but dense. Were it structured more tightly, *Following Tradition* would be an excellent introductory work for graduate students in folklore studies, but its bulk and detail are likely to overwhelm even many academic readers.

In spite of its density, *Following Tradition* will be of interest not only to folklorists but also to those concerned about the current cultural wars in aca-

deme. It addresses many issues that scholars in other disciplines also struggle with, such as the political uses of scholarship, the manner in which new disciplines are defined and institutionalized, and power struggles between academic and public scholars. The history of American folklore studies is a topic that has grown almost too large for one book, and many of the flaws in this work result from Bronner's effort to treat so large a subject in such scrupulous detail. But though at times frustrating to navigate, *Following Tradition* is a powerful commentary not just on folklore studies but also on twentieth-century American intellectual life as a whole.

Darcy R. Fryer, *Yale University*

By Kieth McClellan. *The Sunday Game: At The Dawn of Professional Football*. (University of Akron Press, 1998. Pp. viii -503.)

George "Peggy" Parratt, Charles "Doc" Baker, Guy "Germany" Schulz, Howard "Cap" Edwards, Ralph "Fats" Waldsmith. If these names are familiar, then readers of Kieth McClellan's chronicle of the transition from independent semiprofessional football to the professional game will be interested from the outset. If the names are not familiar the reader should quickly make the connection between contemporary characters in professional football, both on and off the field, and those on whose shoulders the game was built. In both cases the work is of interest to readers of *Pennsylvania History* as close neighbors of the rich Ohio Valley with its lure and tradition of American football. Though McClellan explicitly states that his book is about the transition from independent, semiprofessional football to professional football, it is about more than that. This encyclopedic work is a veritable "old testament" account of player, team, city and owner development at the outset of the twentieth century. Perhaps as importantly, this work contributes to the growing evidence of the place of specific sports in American history, culture and society.

Though McClellan does not make any startling discoveries he does offer significant depth and credibility as to the origins of the professional game. His contention (p. 7) that Shelby and Akron were as important as Canton, the generally recognized birthplace of professional football, is supported by an overwhelming collection of evidence. Other major points argued by McClellan include his establishment of the "blue collar" (p. 18) nature of the early game; that the game was audience rather than entrepreneur driven (p. 18); and that the transition from independent to professional teams coincided with a transition in the player profile from amateur non-college educated to professional college educated (p. 365). In between, and contributing to making these major points, McClellan offers an exhaustive, well-cited account of twenty-four teams and approximately eleven hundred players from Fort Wayne to Hammond, from 1902 to 1917.

In McClellan's concluding chapters he extolls the virtues of football, referring to the halcyon days when amateur athletes were revered for exemplifying virtuous qualities, compared to the tarnished integrity of professionalism (p. 20). McClellan credits football with helping in the rural to urban demographic transition that so dominated the early twentieth-century American culture. His "defense" of the values associated with football, or sport, such as teamwork, assignments, pursuit of common goals and a lasting sense of self-worth reflects the philosophies and writings of early century play theorists, Luther H. Gullick Jr. and Thomas W. Higginson. They too argued that sport played a significant role in socialization and transition, though they may not have agreed with McClellan's Roosevelt-like extolling of the specific and extraordinary virtues of American football.

Kieth McClellan offers a well-documented, citation-laden piece of evidence contributing to the place of sport in society. At another, more nostalgic, level he offers an entertaining and colorful account of the development of a cultural pastime and obsession. This book will work well as a source and as a story.

Sean C. Madden, *California University of Pennsylvania*

**By Elizabeth J. Clapp. *Mothers of All Children: Women Reformers and the Rise of Juvenile Courts in Progressive Era America.***

(University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998. Pp. vii, cloth \$55.00, paper \$18.95).

Although it has been almost thirty years since the publication of *The Child Savers*, Anthony Platt's classic history of delinquency, it would seem that historians of America's juvenile court system still work within his shadow. Each successive generation of historians has found it necessary to address Platt's ideas about the class-motivated reformers who were more concerned with controlling children of the "lower classes" than in aiding them. In the 1970s there was Ellen Ryerson, in the 1980s David Rothman, and now with the publication of *Mothers of All Children*, Elizabeth Clapp, a historian from the University of Leicester, has entered into the debate over the true nature of this movement.

Clapp has produced a well-researched, eminently readable history of the juvenile court system in America, offering detailed case studies of both the individuals responsible for the movement and the specific legislation and institutions that shaped the nascent court system. Clapp is especially strong in her discussion of influential reformers, providing vivid descriptions of the lives, both personal and professional, of the leaders of the Chicago Woman's Club, members of the Hull House Community, and legendary Colorado Judge Ben Lindsey. Although her research is often geographically limited, focusing par-

ticularly on Illinois (a state that led the push for special courts for juvenile offenders) Clapp suggests that the patterns of development seen there were repeated elsewhere in the United States (including Pennsylvania which, as she notes, was the second state to adopt such a system).

While her case studies illustrate some new facts, it is her focus on gender analysis that Clapp believes will set her book apart from a number of existing works and allow her to challenge Platt on the importance of class identity as the motivation behind reform. She suggests that she aims not only “[to write] women back into the history of the juvenile court movement,” but also “to examine the interaction between gender consciousness and the shaping of social welfare reform” (p. 3) thus substituting gender for class as the crucial factor in reformers’ lives. She argues that rather than class-based biases about childhood and education, gender consciousness shaped child welfare policy in the early twentieth century.

To support her argument, Clapp summarizes several decades of scholarship focused on the connections between gender identity, reform and the creation of public roles for women. While little is new here, her introduction should be useful to readers not particularly familiar with recent historiographic trends in the study of women and reform. Clapp moves to gender analysis, first contrasting the “traditionalist maternalist” approach of the Chicago Women’s Club with the “professional maternalism” of Hull House workers in order to illustrate the variety of female views; and then contrasting “female” and “male” attitudes towards reform.

While her work is both interesting and laudable, Clapp runs into some difficulties suggesting gender identity may not be as persuasive a shaping force in juvenile reform as we would think. For example she finds it difficult to draw clear distinctions between male and female reformers’ views of juvenile delinquency and its solutions. In searching for male voices in her chapter on “the masculine influence” she focuses almost exclusively on Judge Ben Lindsey, a man who did indeed have very different views on juvenile justice from those of female reformers. Yet his ideas were not the norm for males in the juvenile court movement either. In the end, Clapp is forced to admit it was not so much that male reformers differed in their attitudes towards juvenile justice, but rather men were simply not as prominently involved in this particular reform movement.

The discussion of the functioning of gender within the court system itself is remarkably scant. In just two paragraphs (pp. 203-4) Clapp presents intriguing arguments about the connections between policies towards female delinquency and middle-class concerns about female sexuality that have been made so convincingly by other historians such as Mary Odem. Had this theme been expanded in greater detail it seems Clapp’s finding might have been altered, since this type of gender analysis would have reestablished the connection between juvenile reform and class based social control.

By constructing her work as a challenge to Platt, Clapp has resorted to the use of a false dichotomy of gender vs. class. Gender issues do indeed seem to have been important in shaping policy, yet Clapp seems unable to disprove the notion that these women and their male counterparts were also highly motivated by class interests. If Clapp had set aside Platt and the debate over social control and class, she might have written a more compelling work recognizing the crucial connections between class and gender in juvenile courts.

Laura Tuennenman-Kaplan, *California University of Pennsylvania*

**By George M. Thomas. *Revivalism and Cultural Change: Nation Building, and the Market in the Nineteenth-Century United States.***

(Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989, 1997. Pp. 238.

\$41.95 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)

American religious historians are almost universally familiar with the studies on nineteenth-century revivalism by Whitney Cross, William McLoughlin, and Timothy Smith. Thomas's audience will be further enlightened about the "fires of revivalism," and, at the same time, receive a different perspective on the subject.

Thomas, a sociologist, uses revivalism and the rise of the Republican Party to test a potential solution to the problem of the gap between "general theories and insights into religion and society" and "rich interpretive descriptions of religions and religious movements and of how symbol systems are interwoven with everyday life." According to Thomas, when these two levels are merged, simplistic interpretations result. His solution is to interpret "social movements, and especially religious ones, in terms of their theory of reality or their ontology" (p. ix). The present study has two purposes: to move toward a general theory of "sociocultural change with respect to religious and political movements that is based on historical comparisons;" (p. 1) and to use this framework to come to a better understanding of American revivalism during the nineteenth century.

Thomas's model demonstrates how sociocultural change allows and encourages the rise of social movements. The concept of "isomorphism," "the similarity of structure through different levels and across institutional spheres," (p. 18) plays a key role in this model. Revivalism was compatible with the tremendous changes occurring in the political and economic spheres of nineteenth-century America, and thus became incorporated into people's lives. In other words, revivalism "made sense" given the other societal changes taking place during this era.

Three propositions are tested during the course of this study. First, outbreaks of and support for revivals occurred in those places where everyday life was dominated by entrepreneurship. Second, these areas supported both Re-

publicanism and Prohibitionism. Third, revivalism, Republicanism and Prohibitionism also appeared together. In chapter 5, Thomas tests his hypotheses through quantitative analysis. The first and third hypothesis are supported by this analysis; the second receives qualified support, but the result is mixed.

*Revivalism and Cultural Change* is an interesting and provocative look at the revivals of the nineteenth century and their relationship to the political and economic spheres of society. As a religious historian who places great value in the narrative process, however, I found myself wishing for some of the *story* along with the theory. Perhaps that is a subject for another work, as Thomas himself suggests. "Detailed analyses of sermons, liturgies, religious practice, newspapers, diaries, political speeches, party platforms, and the like would be able to shed further light on the linkages between political-economic-based cultural myths and metaphors and the content of these two systems." (pp. 101-102) Despite this criticism, Thomas's work is an important first step in providing scholars with a new way of looking at revivalism.

Margaret M. McGuinness, *Cabrini College*

By Samuel P. Hays. *Explorations in Environmental History: Essays by Samuel P. Hays*.

(Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998. Pp. 584. \$50.00 cloth, \$22.95 paper.)

Samuel Hays, professor emeritus of history at the University of Pittsburgh, has been writing about public and private choices associated with urbanization, the management of natural resources, and uses of the environment for almost a half century. This collection of twenty essays, most previously published over the last two decades as journal articles and book chapters, captures Hays's unique analysis of the "environmental impulse" that has influenced public policy in the United States since the mid-1950s.

The volume starts with a semi-autobiographical introduction that reflects on Hays's distinct approach to environmental history, emphasizing the politics and value choices that shape public policies affecting use of the shared environment. In contrast, most others who write under the rubric of environmental history focus more on the changing ecological relationship between human societies and the ecosystems with which they interact. From this perspective, this collection is less an exploration of environmental history than an analysis of the post-1950s social impulse that placed environmental concerns on the policy agenda. It is also an analysis of the reaction to that impulse.

Hays organizes the volumes in four sections. The first, appropriately titled "The Big Issues," lays out the terrain. Starting with an essay written in 1979, Hays identifies the "limits-to-growth" issue as basic to the environmental impulse: increasing human pressure on a finite physical environment is at odds

with the increasing value that American people place on environmental quality. In the next two essays, he examines the value choices inherent in all public policies, administrative actions, and scientific inquiry. Hays then speculates on the future of environmental regulations. Here, he cuts through the soundbite mentality of those who speak in policy jargon and places current debates—such as those involving efforts to make environmental regulations less dependent on “command and control,” more responsive to “market forces,” and more justifiable in terms of “cost-benefit” analysis—in context with larger historical patterns.

In the next two series essays, Hays examines in more detail the politics and value choices associated with two specific topics—forest debates and the politics of clean air. Hays then moves back to broader ground with his concluding series of essays. Here, he frames the environmental impulse as being consistent with the massive social and economic changes that have taken place since World War II. He argues that as more people gained access to education, material wealth, and leisure in the years after World War II, they sought to improve their quality of life. The environmental impulse, Hays argues, is consistent with the political objectives of this expanding middle class.

Anyone seeking to understand the paradoxes, rhetorical subtleties, and substantive issues that lie behind the impulse animating United States environmental policy will find this collection invaluable. Many—though not all—of the themes covered in this volume can also be found in *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985*, which Hays co-authored with his wife Barbara in 1987. But this new volume offers advantages the previous work does not. Each essay stands alone, unconstrained by the need to be as synthetic and sequential as the integrated volume. The result is that the reader participates in Hays’s exploration of these topics far more than is possible with the other, more encyclopedic format.

Hugh S. Gorman, *Michigan Technological University*

By Edward K. Spann. *Designing Modern America: The Regional Planning Association of America and its Members.*

(Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1996. Pp. 247, \$45.)

In the 1990s the warm, brick attached buildings, and picturesque, gracefully curvilinear pathways of Pittsburgh’s Chatham Village (designed by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright) bore mute testimony to their visionary origins. And, yet, as Edward Spann’s fascinating prosopography of Wright, Stein, Mumford, and the other principals of the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) reveals, these architects, planners and urban philosophers were just that—deeply visionary.

In *Designing Modern America* Spann revisits that loosely-knit cohort of progressive-minded architect-philosophers who in 1923 coalesced briefly into the RPAA. Like preceding scholars of the New York-based organizations, [Roy Lubove, *Community Planning in the 1920s: The Contributions of the Regional Planning Association of America* (Pittsburgh, 1963), Carl Sussman, ed. *Planning the Fourth Migration: The Neglected Vision of the Regional Planning Association of America* (MIT, 1976), and Daniel Schaffer *Garden Cities for America: The Radburn Experience* (Temple, 1982)], Spann traces the origins of the RPAA to Charles Whitaker, the editor of the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, and to the creative intellectual energies of architect Clarence Stein, and the fecund philosopher-urban visionary, Lewis Mumford.

However, Spann's approach to the RPAA differs dramatically from earlier histories. This book profiles the lives and personalities of the key members and probes the roots and content of their often radical ideas. It says little about the organization of the RPAA, nor does it—like Schaffer—unfold the story of Radburn, Sunnyside or Chatham Village. Instead, Spann reconstructs the venerable organization biographically. He unveils the beginnings of the RPAA by portraying Charles Whitaker, the progressive editor of the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, whose ideas, like future RPAA members Benton MacKaye, Frederick Ackerman, and Stuart Chase, reflected to varying degrees a commitment to Henry George's views on the "land question." Mumford's life enables Spann to illuminate the RPAA's utopianism, MacKaye's reveals regionalism, and Chase's and Henry Bruere's inform the organization's technocratic faith in "big [electric] power" to transform society.

Imbued with Thorstein Veblen's critique of capitalism and Henry George's link of land monopoly to social chaos, the RPAA fashioned what some have described as a perhaps radical or at least visionary alternative to "privatism." Their vision posited a socially and economically restructured, decentralized, less urban world where cooperative community was restored and humane, not "paleotechnic" industrial values prevailed. The RPAA's bucolic veneer hardly disguised its progressive devotion to technological, engineered solutions. The RPAA's faith in technical expertise and the role of government as an agent of positive social change comported with a progressivism strengthened by the World War I government-directed housing ventures, those modern, community-centered developments built under the United States Housing Corporation and the United States Shipping Board, which had involved several future RPAA members, including Stein, Wright and Kohn.

The RPAA's emphasis on urban decentralization embraced a new regionalism, what Mumford called the "fourth migration." MacKaye's and Mumford's regionalism, argues Spann, envisioned the reconstruction of human-scale communities where folk value were conserved. But Mumford and MacKaye pre-

mised this urban-rural harmony, this human renewal through Appalachian immersion, upon a profound technocratic faith that enlightened experts/technicians could produce beneficent new communities motivated by human need, not profit. They coupled this belief with an equally optimistic Georgian notion that only through publicly-owned land could surfeit wealth be socialized and the Kingdom come.

Spann dates the apogee of the RPAA's intellectual vitality in 1925, but he concedes that the Great Depression and the New Deal greatly heightened member expectations for the imminence of the New World. Kohn, Ackerman, Bauer, Stein, Fred Bigger, and Benton MacKaye all found work in New Deal vineyards. Sadly, contends Spann, New Deal preoccupations, Whitaker's worsening illness (he died in 1937), and Mumford's extramarital dalliance in the 1930s, diffused and sapped the energy of the RPAA, and the organization languished after 1933.

The prosopographical approach employed by Spann affords fresh insight into the lives and ideals of a group of seminal contributors to urban planning and urban theory. The book is especially revealing about the importance of the ideas of Henry George, Thorstein Veblen, and technocratic thought in shaping the thinking of RPAA members. Spann's arguments that the RPAA represented a loose network of like-minded friends who met from time to time in either New York City or at a rural retreat in Netcong, New Jersey, reinforces Lubove. However, Spann's argument about the extent of cross-fertilization of ideas remains still undocumented. Indeed, with the exception of the 1925 "Regional Planning" edition of *Survey Magazine*, which embodied the core of RPAA thinking about regionalism, it is hard to identify a coherent, singular RPAA ideology. That some kind of shared vision emerged, that Kohn's disillusionment with the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration, for example, was shared by fellow members of the RPAA such as Pittsburgh planner Frederick Bigger, while enticing, remains more speculative than real. At bottom, we are left with a rich and enjoyable prosopography, a profile of the genius of intellectually compatible friends who gathered for folk dancing at the Hudson Guild farm, and whose sizable legacy included the Appalachian Trail, Radburn, New Jersey, and Chatham Village in Pittsburgh.

Alas, Spann was primarily interested here in the ideas rather than the organization. The bibliography of members' writings supplemented by a very thin set of endnotes attests to that approach. Nevertheless, this is an interesting, valuable, and illuminating book, that makes an important contribution toward better understanding a body of individuals who profoundly influenced twentieth-century thought about the nature of American life and the destiny of American cities in particular.

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