

regional, scholars of early Philadelphia will welcome her contributions to the political, cultural, and scientific histories of the city; and those with an interest in the national will benefit from her discussion of print culture and the role of literature in spreading these ideologies of vision far beyond the confines of Philadelphia. Finally, with Bellion's focus on the public arena and the intersection of art and vision, *Citizen Spectator* is a welcome addition to the scholarship on early national politics and culture.

AMY HUDSON HENDERSON

Independent Scholar

Philip D. Zimmerman. *Harmony in Wood: Furniture of the Harmony Society* (Ambridge, PA: Published by The Friends of Old Economy Village and distributed by University Press of New England, 2010). Pp. x, 214. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$65.00.

In this beautifully illustrated and impeccably researched study, Philip Zimmerman breaks exciting new ground in his exploration of Harmonist furniture. Followers of nineteenth-century German mystic and visionary George Rapp, Harmonists have not received the same scholarly attention for their furniture as their utopian contemporaries the Shakers and Zoarites. Like those communities, the Harmonists developed a distinctive style over the first half of the nineteenth century that blended locally available resources, communal needs, and traditional ethnic forms and construction practices. The result is a body of work that is stylistically innovative, fundamentally functional, and often aesthetically pleasing.

Initially founded at Harmonie, about thirty-five miles north of Pittsburgh, in 1804, the Harmonists moved to New Harmony, Indiana, in 1814 and back to Economy, Pennsylvania, in 1824. In time, the community grew to more than eight hundred members and developed a remarkable manufacturing industry. Following Rapp's lead, the community practiced the communal ownership of land and advocated (but did not require) celibacy as they awaited the Second Coming. Zimmerman provides a succinct overview of the community's history, but more attention to the influence of the community's religious beliefs on the productions of the Harmonists would have been helpful. The community closed in 1905, and a little over a decade later the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission purchased six acres of

the site, which is preserved today as Old Economy Village. Not until 1937 would most of the furnishings be sold to the state by John Duss, last trustee of the community, a complicated story that Zimmerman explains in a chapter on the provenance of the collection.

Much documentation for the community as a whole has survived, but little concerns the daily lives of Harmonist artisans. In the absence of written records by or about cabinetmakers, joiners, and turners, Zimmerman has turned to their body of work. He draws primarily from the collections of Old Economy Village and private collections that descended in the families of women and men who left the community as a result of a major schism in 1832. Based on an exhaustive four-year study, Zimmerman discerned distinctive styles, techniques, and practices that help him identify pieces made within the community. These include how the use of materials like tulip poplar or white pine can help date pieces to specific communities; how interior architectural elements like raised panels and turned balustrades reappear in household furniture; which specific types of decoration, like ball-and-cone turnings on chair legs, Harmonist craftsmen preferred; and how certain Germanic construction and design practices persisted through time. *Harmony in Wood* is a masterful example of what material culture can tell us in the absence of the written record.

Those familiar with the forms common to early nineteenth-century rural households will recognize much here. Chairs, blanket chests, tables, and clocks share many similarities with popular furniture forms and styles, although often reflecting distinctive stylistic choices and construction techniques. But Zimmerman also includes several fascinating pieces illustrative of the adaptation, innovation, and imagination of Harmonist artisans. A wardrobe made from a blanket chest illustrates the willingness of Harmonists to recycle old furniture to new purposes. Rather than rebuild the piece, an artisan simply added a set of drawers and cupboard on top of the chest and made the original lid the top, without ever removing the original hinges. An eccentric mahogany-veneered dish cupboard with ornate feet, undulating sides, and a distinct arrangement of doors has no obvious counterpart in American or Germanic design. Instead, it tantalizingly suggests the imagination of an unknown craftsman. Finally, a shadowbox with a delicate carved and painted image of Harmonie, an embodiment of spiritual wisdom found in Harmonist hymns, nestled in a broken pediment reminds us of the religious dimension of Harmonist work. Little evidence suggests what might have hung inside the shadow box or hints at its ultimate significance to its user. This, alas, is

the situation for many pieces in the book. Harmonists rarely signed their work or explained the rationale behind their creations.

Harmony in Wood is the first of a proposed series of scholarly catalogues focused on groups of objects made by Harmonist artisans. If this volume is any indication of the quality of future titles in the series, then historians of decorative arts as well as scholars of history and religion are exceedingly fortunate.

KYLE ROBERTS

Loyola University Chicago

Alan C. Braddock. *Thomas Eakins and the Cultures of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). Pp. x, 291. Illustrations, notes bibliography, index. Cloth, \$49.95.

The central concern of Alan Braddock's *Thomas Eakins and the Cultures of Modernity* is how "human difference, diffusion, and artistic nationalism" are present in the oeuvre of Thomas Eakins (2). Braddock argues that Eakins was working as an artist before modern anthropological theories of "culture" emerged, yet it is very much this nascent anthropological understanding of culture that is at the heart of this book and, Braddock argues, at the heart of Eakins's painting practice.

In his introduction, Braddock asks how Eakins may have conceived of culture, particularly in evolutionary terms and as the term applied to nineteenth-century American understandings of race. Braddock begins his discussion of Eakins with the image that is reproduced on the publication's cover, *The Dancing Lesson* (originally *The Negroes*), 1878. The author challenges the assumption of previous Eakins scholarship that the work is a sympathetic depiction of race, not by arguing that it is racist caricature but by suggesting that it is a visual iteration of Eakins's interest in American folk-life figures and an American "type." In making race and culture central concerns of his study of Eakins, Braddock moves away from the nationalistic, biographical, or psychosexual scholarship on Eakins that has defined the field since the work of Eakins's biographer Lloyd Goodrich. While the author wishes to complicate earlier modernist-nationalist scholarship, he is particularly critical of what he calls "whimsical forms of psychological interpretation" (40). With his focus on culture and anthropology, Braddock's work is more