

BOOK REVIEWS

Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America. Edited by ROBERT BLAIR ST. GEORGE. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000. xii, 417p. Illustrations, notes, notes on contributors, index. Cloth, \$55.00; paper, \$19.95.)

In a comment that applies to much current scholarly literature, Michael Warner notes that "very few sentences about colonial America would be significantly altered if the word 'colonial' were simply replaced by the word 'early'" (p. 50). In *Possible Pasts*, however, Warner and the other contributors take coloniality as their main topic—that is, they are interested in how native peoples, Europeans, and Africans experienced change as a result of their ongoing involvement in NewWorld colonial projects. The book casts a wide net: its interdisciplinary group of authors (anthropologists, art historians, folklorists, historians, literary scholars, and religious studies scholars) present in-depth studies of settlements in the British mainland colonies, the Caribbean, Peru, and Mexico from earliest contact through the postrevolutionary period. Far from diffusing the collection's impact, its diversity is a principal asset. Sharing overlapping themes and theoretical approaches, these fine essays are interdependent, combining to analyze the process of "becoming colonial"—the experiences of individuals of multiple races within colonial systems of power. *Possible Pasts* is an important contribution to the field of colonial American studies and an example of new cultural studies at its best.

One of the book's main achievements is to make important contributions to our understanding of colonial identity writ large while also emphasizing the varieties of experience in the Americas. The authors show that the historical possibilities for self-fashioning were limited by the nature of colonialism, which pitted Europeans and their descendants as colonizers against native peoples and slaves. But recognizing those limitations, these writers also stress the agency of Europeans, native peoples, and slaves alike in constructing colonial societies and subjectivities. "While the experience and governing asymmetry of intercultural contact and exchange varied widely, 'Indians,' *indios*, *indigenes*, *mestizos*, *Creoles*, and *conquistadores* all inhabited new worlds, middle grounds of which they were all to some degree makers," St. George explains in the book's excellent introduction (p. 4). In the course of interacting, intermarrying, and observing one another, individuals from each group continually reworked their understandings of themselves.

In one standout essay that explores those possibilities and limitations for identity,

Irene Silverblatt examines the witchcraft trials of Spanish, mulata, and Creole women in seventeenth-century Peru. An important element of these women's crimes was that they combined elements of "Indian" and Incan magical lore with Catholic symbols and prayers. That lore imbued the witches' work with symbolic power because of the mystique Inca culture increasingly had for many Spanish colonials. By celebrating the influence of the Incas, Silverblatt shows, witchcraft posed a threat to the hegemony of Spanish power in the colony. Yet she is careful to denote the limits of that threat. While they questioned the power of state rulers, the witches also created a new stereotype of "Indianness" for their own use, thus supporting the process of creating *hybrid* colonial identities rather than "authentic" selves. Silverblatt's essay illustrates how this volume plumbs larger themes of colonial identities while still focusing on regional diversity.

Another important contribution is the book's attention to the communication and performance of identity among peoples of different races, statuses, and gender identities. Again, the essays avoid easy explanations of their subjects' "true" selves. For example, Sandra Gustafson explores the figure of Deborah Sampson Gannett, an ill-educated, rural woman who disguised herself as a man to fight in the Revolution, and who, in 1802 and 1803, sought public support for her veteran's pension application by giving a series of lectures about her experience. Unlike contemporaneous works that celebrated the heroism and battlefield experience of woman warriors, Gannett's lectures continually returned to the psychological motives that had led her to violate the gender roles of her time. Her explanations oscillated in a highly unstable manner between challenging gender and class conventions and submitting to them, particularly in repeated apologies directed to the female members of her audiences. Examining the meaning of those oscillations, Gustafson likens Gannett's lectures to a battlefield: she "presented her life story as the site of an ongoing battle over gender and class identities intimately tied to the nation." (p. 399). In short, Gustafson avoids the impulse to explain Gannett's "true" motives and shows, instead, shows how she *presented* herself in the staged environment of the lecture hall and within the cultural expectations of her time.

Hybridity, performance, subjectivity—clearly, this book is indebted to critical theory and, as such, will be daunting for readers unreceptive to that heady language and conceptual universe. But this is not an intimidating book. Theoretical essays by St. George, Peter Hulme, and Michael Warner frame the book and situate the case studies in literature on colonialism and postcoloniality—essays that, while too sophisticated for beginners, are elegantly written and intended for an interdisciplinary audience of readers from a variety of theoretical backgrounds. *Possible Pasts* would make a good selection for graduate courses that examine new directions in colonial American studies. Although this review has mentioned only a few of the book's essays, it is a brilliant collection throughout, carefully conceived and edited,

that should direct scholars of early America toward further conceptual research on the nature of colonialism and identity formation.

University of Texas, Austin

CAROLYN EASTMAN

The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire. By FRANCIS JENNINGS. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. xii, 340p. Notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$54.95; paper, 19.95.)

Francis Jennings passed away within weeks of the publication of *The Creation of America*, a work that gives his distinctively iconoclastic voice full vent. This sweeping overview of the character of the American Revolution offers "not so much a revisionist as a choice of existing but neglected interpretations" (p. 6) focused on two interrelated themes. First, far from being demigods of republican virtue, "the Revolutionaries were real people acting as politicians" (p. 4), and their self-interested behavior, not their high-flown republican rhetoric, tells the real story of the period. Second, those politicians aimed to break free of Britain not to escape an empire but to create one of their own—a "clone" designed to seize control of the continent from its native inhabitants and impose a racial order in which neither Indians nor enslaved African Americans would be considered legal persons. To accomplish their aims, the revolutionaries not only had to do battle with the British and with Native Americans but also with many homegrown loyalist enemies. "Blow away all the rhetoric," Jennings concludes, "and what is left is a minority determined to establish its own power by force, not only as against Britain, but also as against opponents in America" (pp. 315–16).

Pennsylvania's revolution is central to Jennings's tale. The commonwealth's supposedly democratic 1776 constitution, was, he emphasizes, anything but that. Established through "a coup d'etat" dominated by Scots-Irish Presbyterian militia associators (p. 181), never submitted to the populace for approval, and cloaking its antimajoritarian nature in a scheme for voting by counties rather than population, the 1776 regime relentlessly persecuted those who showed signs of disloyalty or who failed to conform to the Pennsylvania equivalent of the Test Act, particularly Quakers and German pietists. Drawing especially on the work of Anne M. Ousterhout, Jennings highlights the lack of due process in prosecutions by the Council of Safety and concludes that "it is simply ludicrous to call these shenanigans *democratic*" (p. 183). In light of what he terms "the Revolutionaries' conquest of Pennsylvania" (p. 172), only "devotion to the mythology of nationalist democracy causes some writers to say things flagrantly contradictory to demonstrable fact" (pp. 187–88).

Whether or not readers still really believe that the Revolution in Pennsylvania and throughout the thirteen colonies was in any such simple sense about democracy, it can nonetheless be a delight to watch Jennings skewer historical icons. George

Washington gets off fairly lightly; "his fame was well earned by keeping the war going with amateurs and funny money. Not many professionals could have matched that" (p. 267). "Baron' von Steuben . . . was a liar and a poseur of the first order," yet deserves grudging respect as "a first-class teacher. (Who ever said that 'those who can't, teach?')" (p. 240). Few others earn much credit at all. Thomas Jefferson "had much reason to be grateful to the Congress that saved him from his excess of rhetoric" in attempting to pin the slave trade on the British Crown, for "its inclusion would have made the Declaration [of Independence] the laughingstock of Europe" (p. 170). And, "however sphinxlike he might be in other respects," Jefferson's "behavior toward Indians was always clear and consistent. He wanted to get rid of them" (p. 252). George III, meanwhile, "was mean and harmful, and his subjects knew it" (p. 76). But perhaps no one earns more of Jennings's ire than John Adams, "strictly . . . a politician of the wheeler-dealer variety" whose "outpourings of self-praise inflate his image out of all proportion to reality" and whose "dedication to liberty cannot withstand examination" (p. 314). Presumably, Jennings did not have a chance to read David McCullough's wildly popular recent encomium, *John Adams* (2001), but McCullough's readers would profit from a dose of Jennings.

As would we all. The usual shortcomings as well as strengths of Jennings's work are all on display here: a preference for conspiratorial plots over bumbling happenstance; an unwillingness to entertain the possibility that culture, worldview, or ideals much matter; a curious lack of real agency for Native American protagonists; an almost complete absence of women from the story. Yet, from *The Invasion of America* (1975) to *The Creation of America*, the brutal, if over-emphasized, clarity of the light Jennings could shine on what scurried out from the historical rocks he turned over served a function that few more timid and polite historians could ever hope to match. Jennings—who despite his prickly published and academic-conference-floor persona was invariably courtly in his personal relationships—will be sorely missed. "Let us please avoid slop," he observed at one point in *The Creation* (p. 239). Those five words, as well as any, sum up the central message of his career.

University of Pennsylvania

DANIEL K. RICHTER

A People's History of the American Revolution: How Common People Shaped the Fight for American Independence. By RAY RAPHAEL. (New York: New Press, 2001. vii, 386p. Notes, index. \$25.95.)

Not so long ago, in the mid-1980s, historians endlessly discussed among themselves the desperate need for synthesis—broad new interpretive accounts of the American past that would pull together the rich but often local and particular social

histories that were the glory of historical work in the late 1960s, the 1970s, and early 1980s. Herbert G. Gutman in particular called repeatedly and urgently for such works, to unify and disseminate to a broader public the many discoveries of "history from below"—about workers, women, Native and African Americans, those traditionally excluded from the dominant narrative of American history based on the narrow, elitist assumptions of Cold War liberalism.

For the era of the American Revolution, Ray Raphael has answered the call, in a belated but spirited way. Pulling together the work of scholars such as Edward Countryman, Sylvia R. Frey, Linda K. Kerber, Jesse Lemisch, Gary B. Nash, Mary Beth Norton, Benjamin Quarles, Peter H. Wood, Alfred F. Young, and a great many others, and drawing upon a broad array of published primary sources, Raphael has written a vivid and insightful narrative history of the revolutionary era. He does an especially good job with what has been called "social biography," using the life stories of commoners to reveal the main themes of his book. Block quotations from first-person accounts give new life and voice to people such as the Revolutionary War private Joseph Plumb Martin, the parson's wife Temperance Smith, or the African American preacher David George, whose words in turn give immediacy and new meaning to our understanding of the American Revolution.

Raphael explains the central purpose of his "people's history" thusly: "By uncovering the stories of farmers, artisans, and laborers, we discern how plain folk helped create a revolution strong enough to evict the British Empire from the thirteen colonies. And by digging deeper still, we learn how people with no political standing—women, Native Americans, African Americans—altered the shape of a war conceived by others" (p. 9). After carefully reconstructing the histories of all these groups, he concludes: "The story of our nation's founding, told so often from the perspective of the 'founding fathers,' will never ring true unless it can take some account of the Massachusetts farmers who closed the courts, the poor men and boys who fought the battles, the women who followed the troops, the loyalists who viewed themselves as rebels, the pacifists who refused to sign oaths of allegiance, the Native Americans who struggled for their own independence, the southern slaves who fled to the British, the northern slaves who negotiated their freedom by joining the Continental Army" (p. 306). Raphael's account rings true: these people made the American Revolution.

Although specialists will not find this book to be original in its materials or interpretations, teachers of both surveys and upper-level courses in early American history will find it to be a most useful text, a well-wrought summary of much of the most important research of the last generation of scholars. A necessary corrective to Gordon Wood's top-down synthesis of the same era, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (1993), and a healthy antidote to the recent resurgence in American politics and culture of a reactionary worship of the Founding Fathers, *A Peoples' History of the American Revolution* deserves a broad readership, inside the

academy and out. The "whitewashed mythology" (p. 5) of the nation's founding will not do, and now we have a new synthesis to prove it.

University of Pittsburgh

MARCUS REDIKER

The Papers of James Madison. Secretary of State Series. Volume 5: 16 May–31 October 1803. Edited by DAVID B. MATTERN, J. C. A. STAGG, ELLEN J. BARBER, and ANNE MANDEVILLE COLONY. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000. xxxv, 643p. Chronology, notes, index. \$67.50.)

The Papers of James Madison. Presidential Series. Volume 4: 5 November 1811–9 July 1812, with a Supplement 5 March 1809–19 October 1811. Edited by J. C. A. STAGG, ELLEN J. BARBER, ANNE MANDEVILLE COLONY, JEANNE KERR CROSS, MARTHA J. KING, SUSAN HOLBROOK PERDUE, and JEWELL L. SPANGLER. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000. xli, 675p. Chronology, notes, index. \$65.00.)

James Madison has become a hot topic of late. Lance Banning's *Sacred Fire of Liberty* (1995), Stuart Leibiger's *Founding Friendship* (2000), and Garrett Ward Sheldon's *The Political Philosophy of James Madison* (2001) have all tackled the founder's life, work, thought, and personal relationships. Through Madison, these prize-winning books have provided key insights into the founding and early national periods. The value of *The Papers of James Madison* series to these authors and their accomplishments cannot be overstated. These two most recent volumes of *The Papers of James Madison* measure up fully to the standards of the earlier volumes and will continue to provide present and future scholars with invaluable assistance. These series are a must for any university research library that seeks to service the political and ideological study of the early national period.

Volume 5 of *The Secretary of State Series* (May–October, 1803) finds the secretary dealing with a host of complex and crucially important matters of state. Great Britain and France opened a new war, Britain commenced the impressment of American seamen, Napoleon offered Louisiana for sale, the Spanish resisted that transfer, and the war with Tripoli raged on in the Mediterranean. Perhaps the most intriguing topic in this volume is Madison's role as a negotiator for the release of impressed American sailors from the British navy. Letters informing Madison of various impressments pepper the volume, as well as scores of letters back and forth between him and the British chargé d'affaires, Edward Thornton. Upon learning of the seizure of the American ship *Charles Carter* by the British ship *Boston* just outside of Norfolk, Virginia, and the impressment of two American citizens, Madison exploded in a reply to Thomas Newton, Jr.: "To impress our seamen on

the high seas, or indeed any persons from under our flag, not enemies in a military character, is agst. our natl. rights and has been acknowledged to be wrong by Lord St. Vincents. To impress them under the circumstances of the present case is abominable. How can ships of war expect to enjoy the hospitality of our ports if they make it subservient to the cruising agst. our commerce & seamen? It is sincerely our desire & our interest to live in friendship and free intercourse with G. B. but it is not less her interest & duty to respect our rights" (pp. 280–81). The same day, Madison wrote to Thornton and could not contain his exasperation. "You will pardon me, Sir," wrote Madison, "for making use of this occasion to touch on a subject . . . I mean the conversion of the ports of the United States into stations from whence Ships of War may furnish themselves with the means of keeping up cruisers against our commerce on our own coasts, and with information for rendering these cruises successful. Such an illicit communication and waters is the more to be apprehended in proportion as it may with our ports, be easily covered under pretexts that are specious. Not doubting your ready concurrence in proper steps for preventing in every case, practices of so evil a tendency, I beg leave to remind you of a circular letter from this Department dated April 16, 1795 . . ." (p. 283). In his reply a week later, Thornton announced that the one remaining impressed American would be returned, but at the same time defended the *Boston's* action in time of war, and scolded Madison and the Americans for their ingratitude, since the British were assisting the Americans at that time in their war with the North African corsairs. These very issues would not leave Madison undisturbed after 1803 and would later contribute to his crusade for a declaration of war against Great Britain in his first term as president.

Volume 4 of *The Presidential Series* (November 1811–July 1812) opens with Madison's third annual message to Congress, through which he began to prepare the nation for war with Great Britain, and ends just after Congress's declaration of war. The months that fell in between comprised the most frustrating and unnerving time of his presidency, perhaps of his entire political life. In the House of Representatives, Madison enjoyed a substantial majority of Republicans who favored his course, accepting the French retraction of the Berlin and Milan Decrees while making military and defensive preparations for war with Britain. But the Senate proved to be a more difficult matter. There a Federalist minority combined with discontented Republicans (many from New York) to stall the projected preparations. In the meantime, it looked as if the New York Republicans were prepared to nominate George or DeWitt Clinton over Madison for the presidency in 1812. Only quick action by Madison's supporters, excluding the Clinton backers from a Washington caucus, assured him the nod, though at the cost of both national and party consensus while heading into a war. On June 1, he wrote a letter to Congress that while not specifically calling for a declaration of war did lay out a list of grievances against Great Britain designed to lead Congress to that conclusion. He

began by condemning British impressment of American sailors. The "War Hawks" in the House debated, drafted, and passed a declaration of war in less than three days by a comfortable margin, but the Senate dragged its feet for more than two weeks before the discontented Republicans broke from the Federalists and provided a slim 19-13 margin of victory for the declaration.

University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown

PAUL DOUGLAS NEWMAN

Elizabeth Murray: A Woman's Pursuit of Independence in Eighteenth-Century America. By PATRICIA CLEARY. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000. xii, 279p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.00.)

In this biography Patricia Cleary lays out the life history of Elizabeth Murray (1726-1785) as completely as it is now possible to do. Born in Scotland, Murray crossed the Atlantic for the first time as an orphaned teenager in the charge of an older brother who sought his fortune in the American South. In 1749 she determined to settle in Boston and support herself as a shopkeeper. After the death of the second of her three husbands, Murray became a wealthy widow at a relatively young age. Having no children of her own, she mentored a number of young women, including her nieces, and encouraged them to follow her example and pursue a career in commerce. In conjunction with her own and others' need for English goods, as well as a desire to revisit her homeland, Murray made two trips back to Britain, the first in the early 1750s and the next almost twenty years later.

By the time of her second voyage much had changed in the relationship of the colonies and England, and these changes were intimately connected to issues and practices of trade. Like many colonists, Murray was ambivalent about the Revolution. In addition to her understanding of the interdependencies created by commercial exchanges, her extended family included both patriots and loyalists. Made vulnerable to public attack for her ambiguous political opinions, as well as by the fact that a woman's political views were by definition problematic, Murray lost both property and family during the course of the war.

When she died in 1785 Murray left a legacy that reflected her personality, her struggles to create meaningful relationships with other women, and her determination to establish and then preserve a measure of independence. She willed most of her property away from her husband and the husbands of her legatees. She left the most substantial sums to female family members she had encouraged to emigrate to America and to follow her in keeping shop. Although those experiences had not born fruit for the younger women as they had for Murray, she nonetheless unapologetically desired for them her own "spirit of Independence."

In a "Note on Writing Biography," Cleary acknowledges that extant source

materials for documenting the lives of individual early American women are rare. Nonetheless, she argues that biographies can inform our understanding of history in unique ways by "engag[ing] readers with a compelling narrative while testing established historical assumptions and offering new interpretations" (p. 228). Whether Elizabeth Murray warrants a biography is another question. Without a doubt Murray's story is interesting and emblematic of a range of themes important to understanding the eighteenth century generally and women's lives in particular. The laws of coverture chafed, particularly at women of means; familial connections were central to both personal and professional successes; and the politics of transatlantic trade were woven deep into the social fabric of the eighteenth century. Cleary contends that it is both the ordinary and the extraordinary in Murray's life that is significant; "she is at once a representative and a unique woman" (p. 5). This approach works best when Cleary is on her own turf: examining the experiences and significance of women shopkeepers, a subject on which she has published before. Cleary compellingly demonstrates the complexities that these women navigated in the credit market, expanding and changing consumer tastes, and gender conventions.

But the paucity of sources on Murray's life, which are relatively rich for a woman of the eighteenth century, is still somewhat constraining. Cleary might have made more of Murray's letters had she treated them independently. Except for what can be discerned from excerpts, we cannot tell, for example, what role writing played in her life or what kind of a writer she was. Murray's letters seem to be part convention and part striking departure from convention. More than that, though, the chronological imperative of the biographical form prevents Cleary from fully pursuing the themes that she sets out and requires her to lay out a good bit of narrative background at the expense of analysis.

Still, this is a very good "prose portrait" (p. 7) that can inform specialists and students alike. The publisher should look to a quick paperback release as this biography will certainly find a wide readership in undergraduate classes.

American University

KARIN WULF

Neither Separate nor Equal: Congress in the 1790s. Edited by KENNETH R. BOWLING and DONALD R. KENNON. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 2000. xi, 344p. Illustrations, notes, notes on contributors, index. \$44.95.)

Early national political life was messy. In the absence of fully developed political parties, political conflict centered around individuals and the fledgling institutions of the new government. In the words of Joanne B. Freeman, a contributor to this

volume, politics in this context "was like a war without uniforms" (p. 276). Members of the congressional, executive, and judicial branches faced the challenge of trying to figure out the rules without the benefit of precedents. Some of what we now take for granted in the political system (like separation of powers) was not a prominent feature of that first decade. By examining from a variety of perspectives the actions and thoughts of congressmen and the relations between Congress and the other branches, this volume better illuminates the still murky waters of politics in the early republic.

These essays are the products of the 1996 and 1997 conferences of the United States Capitol Historical Society. The theme expressed in the title is borne out explicitly by several authors, especially Wythe Holt in his essay on the relations between the judiciary and the other branches of government. Holt argues that separation of powers was a myth, not even an ideal of the founders, but rather something enshrined by later generations. William Casto amplifies that argument in his exploration of the role of the Supreme Court in the foreign policy debates of the 1790s. He finds that the court acted almost as an appendage of the executive branch, providing advice or refraining from doing so at its request.

The same theme emerges from several other essays, although less explicitly. In an important examination of the relationship between the Treasury Department and the Congress, Joanne B. Freeman shows how Alexander Hamilton negotiated with Congress behind the scenes through certain key personal allies. Critics called Hamilton's technique "corruption" but Hamilton believed it was essential to effective governance. He saw nothing wrong with a member of the executive branch directing events in the legislative branch through surrogates, to achieve what, for him, constituted the best results. For Hamilton, the ends justified the means and he was unconcerned with the artificial niceties of separation of powers.

Kenneth Bowling's introductory essay makes it clear that when the federal government moved to Philadelphia from New York in 1790, the republican court—the political and social culture which surrounded the government—moved with it. The social and political events at the new capital built upon traditions already established in New York. Mary Giunta's essay on Congressman William Branch Giles is particularly interesting, as is William diGiacomantonio's on congressional wife Sarah Thatcher. Giunta shows that Giles's greatest contribution to Congress was in leading the opposition to various Washington administration proposals. His speeches, resolutions, and leadership provided a key outlet for the viewpoints of Madison and Jefferson as they battled with Hamilton. DiGiacomantonio follows the correspondence between Sarah Thatcher and her husband, Massachusetts congressman George Thatcher, easily the most extensive between a couple in the First Congress. It reveals the ways in which congressional wives aided their husbands' political and social careers. This essay adds an additional note to the recent work of Catherine Allgor and Susan Branson on women and politics.

Essays by Jack D. Warren, Jr., and John Ferling focus on the role of the first two presidents and Congress. Warren argues that Washington effectively directed Congress on occasion and showed that republican liberty could coexist with an energetic executive. Washington worked with James Madison and other members of Congress from the outset and, while publicly disclaiming any interference in congressional matters, he could be quite assertive in dealing with Congress to advance an agenda. In contrast, Ferling finds John Adams somewhat less effective, in part because, while he acted shrewdly and astutely in setting policy during the Quasi-War crisis, he often worked alone and failed sometimes even to notify, let alone consult with, members of Congress. While his actions were honorable and defensible, his conduct with Congress left him isolated and diminished his political effectiveness.

While most of the essays individually make important and compelling points, the collection lacks a strong, coherent, and overarching interpretive essay against which to see the whole. The editors provide only capsule summaries of each essay, not, as they might have, a synthetic essay of their own which could better link the separate chapters. Such a synthesis is all the more necessary since the essays within came from two different conferences, each with its own theme. Instead, the task of drawing out the connections between the chapters is left to the careful reader. This reservation aside, historians will find this an interesting and valuable collection.

Oakland University

TODD ESTES

Eloquence is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America. By SANDRA M. GUSTAFSON. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. xxv, 287p. Illustrations, appendix, notes, index. Cloth, \$39.95; paper, \$17.95.)

In the beginning was the word, and the word was spoken. Then came writing. And then came debate. For millennia, thinkers have wrestled with the relationship between speech and script. From the 1960s through the 1980s, linguist Walter J. Ong and the anthropologist Jack Goody had set the terms of this debate, arguing that the shift from speaking to writing was both linear and progressive. Speech, they said, was primitive, even "savage"; writing was evolved and "civilized." Historically, orality receded as literacy rose and ultimately triumphed. Print followed, higher-order thinking blossomed; in the end was the monograph, and it was good.

Sandra Gustafson's *Eloquence is Power* is among the large number of recent works that muddy the straight and narrow path that Goody and Ong mapped. Following in the wake of important books by Brian Stock, Stephen Greenblatt, Edward Gray, David Hall, Frank Lambert, Jill Lepore, David Waldstreicher,

Michael Warner, and others, Gustafson's study exposes the crippling limits of the speech-to-print model. By assessing the linguistic careers of a large number of characters both familiar (Jonathan Edwards, Patrick Henry, and George Washington) and obscure (African American missionary John Marrant, Onondaga sachem Canassatego, and cross-dressing Revolutionary War veteran Deborah Sampson Gannett), Gustafson demonstrates that the historic relationship between speech and writing is as complex as it is important. For as she explains, what she terms "the performance semiotic of speech and text" lies at the very heart of colonial and early national experiences.

In fact, her study reveals, the notion of a heroic shift from orality to literacy is itself an artifact of colonialism. For it was amidst the dizzying fluidity of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Americas that "Euro-Americans made the analogy between verbal forms and social structures into a primary mode of understanding cultural relationships" (p. xv). Gender order, racial order, social order: all were thought to be reflected in—and created by—linguistic order. As European elites struggled for mastery of "New World" lands and peoples (not to mention their own emigrant subjects), "textual possession" was imagined as a crucial weapon in the struggle against "savage orality" (p. 12 and *passim*).

However hard fought, this battle for "textual possession" was never won. Early America was, as Gustafson demonstrates, always multivocal and often downright cacophonous. Literate or not, subalterns spoke, sometimes drowning out the colonial narratives that would silence them. Particularly in the book's successful middle chapters, Gustafson teases out the many ways in which women, Indians, and African Americans talked back.

By the late eighteenth century, speaking truth to textual power would become, as Gustafson points out, a national ideology. "Eventually," she notes, "the American colonies would use their own savage eloquence to speak back to the imperial center as oratory became the defining republican genre of the Revolution" (p. 117). The rise of print did not displace oratory but rather fueled and was fueled by the colonial reader's thirst for plain speech. Yet the "rhetorics of fraternity" that rang out in Congress and on the printed page in the 1790s remained more exclusive than they sounded. The public speech of women and nonwhites remained contested, if not fully contained.

One of Gustafson's real achievements is her ability to hear familiar sources in a way that gives voice to the voiceless. It is ironic, then, that she often puts words into her subjects' mouths. Few of the people she writes about would recognize themselves in her portraits. Would Samson Occom and John Marrant agree, for example, that their missions were "[s]eeking to create more ethnically inclusive alternatives to the dominant culture" (p. 103)? If not, can we impute such thoughts to them? If Gustafson's eighteenth-century characters sometimes think in curiously modern terms, at other points she castigates them for failing to do so. Thus the

missionary David Brainerd gets a rhetorical slap on the wrist for failing to make a clear "statement of his faith's blindness to other cultures" (p. 83). Pity the fool that lives in his own place and time.

Indeed, at many points Gustafson's inventive readings seem too clever by half. John Marrant's Cherokee auditors, she ventures, were "[f]ascinated, perhaps, by the similarity between the book's black marks and its owner's black skin, which could suggest a privileged access to text" (p. 105). Depends, I suppose, on what the meanings of "perhaps" and "could" are. Gustafson finds in Sarah Edwards's claim that divine grace entered her heart "like a stream or pencil of sweet light," an "image of self-division with a writing implement [that] suggests male proscription of her oral expression" (pp. 70, 71). But Edwards's pencil isn't our pencil; the contemporary meaning of a beam of radiation or light converging on a single point is both more transparent and more persuasive. The past, as the saying goes, is a foreign country—with its own language, at that.

Such rhetorical overreaching would not matter as much if *Eloquence Is Power* were not a book about language as ideology. But Gustafson's core message is that words, and battles over words, count. One can only assume, then, that she has thought very carefully about her own use of language. If eloquence is power, what's a reader to make of a sentence such as: "Edwards' remarks . . . recall Jacques Derrida's claim in *Of Grammatology* . . . that a writing construed as absence and analogically related to the signified's deferral in the metaphor disrupts the metaphysical hierarchies identified with speech and physical presence" (p. 58 n. 32)? Words, it would seem, still construct hierarchies, today as in the eighteenth century.

Brandeis University

JANE KAMENSKY

"I Married Me a Wife": Male Attitudes toward Women in the American Museum, 1787-1792. By ARTHUR SCHERR. (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 1999. v, 185p. Notes. \$60.00)

In his analysis of Mathew Carey's *American Museum*, Arthur Scherr examines the degree to which Carey championed a "protofeminist" attitude toward American womanhood in his magazine. Scherr employs a detailed analysis of the essays, poems, and fiction concerned with women's roles in the *American Museum* in support of his thesis that Carey's publication had a more progressive attitude toward women's marital roles and their standing within the household economy than did its competitors, the *Columbian Magazine* and the *Massachusetts Magazine*.

Scherr asserts that his study contributes to an understanding of what male attitudes concerning women's "normative status" were in these crucial years of the

new republic. In contrast to the emphasis other historians have placed on the topic of women's roles as depicted in the magazines of the late eighteenth century, Scherr finds that the majority of essays printed in the first years of the *American Museum* focused on marital relations, household responsibilities, female autonomy, and women's sexual identity rather than on education and "Republican motherhood." Scherr profiles at length the Reverend John Witherspoon's "Letters on Marriage" (originally printed in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* in 1775 and 1776). Witherspoon argued that women were the intellectual equals of men (only their lack of education deprived women of greater influence and autonomy), and that wives should be equal partners, possessing both independent minds and personalities. Based on Witherspoon's writings and others like his, Scherr concludes that in Carey's magazine "the male attitude to the 'fair sex' was relatively healthy and open-minded, not condescending or unduly harsh" (p. 72).

These are Scherr's general findings. He acknowledges, though, that this progressive outlook was somewhat muted after 1788, when the majority of Carey's selections became more conservative in tone. This attitude was clearly expressed in two series of essays, "The Visitant," printed in 1789, and John Bennet's "Letters to a Young Lady" printed in the *American Museum* in 1791 and 1792. In contrast to Witherspoon, Bennet and the anonymous "Visitant" believed that women were notable for their piety, taste, and delicacy, not their intellect. Wives could not be equal partners with their husbands. It was a woman's purpose to please men, not to compete with them.

Scherr credits this shift in tone to long-term social and economic developments in American society, yet he does not consider a major short-term development closer at hand. This demarcation between favorable and pejorative essays is a rather sharp one, occurring, perhaps not coincidentally, just as the French Revolution became a pervasive influence on American politics and society. The revolution polarized the emerging political parties and made women's participation in popular political culture a matter of sometimes heated debate.

Nor does Scherr take into account the transatlantic nature of print culture in the late eighteenth century. Though he employs British author John Bennet at length to demonstrate the conservative nature of male thinking about women in this era, Scherr neglects to consider the British periodicals available to American readers, and especially the London *Lady's Magazine* (1770-1811), which enjoyed a longer life, as well as a much wider readership, than the Philadelphia periodical of the same name. Nor does Scherr sufficiently place the *American Museum* within its proper context in terms of American print culture of the day. He chose the magazine because of its readership and longevity. But in an age in which the average life-span of a periodical was only a few years, less long-lived magazines, such as Boston's *The Gentlemen and Ladies Town and Country Magazine* (1789-1790) should not be dismissed out of hand. Despite the absence of a consideration of the political and

social context of the *American Museum*, Scherr's book is still a useful resource for the public discussion of women's roles in the early republic.

University of Texas at Dallas

SUSAN BRANSON

John Jacob Astor: America's First Multimillionaire. By AXEL MADSEN (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2001, vi, 312p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00.)

This revelatory biography confirms the opinion of John Jacob Astor's great-great-granddaughter-in-law, Brooke Astor, that "his story makes for marvelous reading." Astor was a poor, European-born immigrant who came to America in 1784, lived almost eight-five years, and died with a fortune representing one fifteenth of all the personal wealth in the United States,

Reading Axel Madsen's life of Astor, one encounters an America that is a land of incalculable opportunity for an ambitious, astute, and acquisitive individual of even the most modest birth and obscure background. One sees how an extraordinary entrepreneur can expand his influence to revolutionize his country's business practices and commercial structure. And one learns how one such person broadened his personal mercantilism to a degree that it enabled him to associate with national leaders, including three presidents of the United States.

Madsen interweaves the history of American big business with events in Astor's personal life. Astor's stature was such that his character traits affected the economy of the budding nation from the end of the American Revolution to the mid-nineteenth century.

Born in Germany, John Jacob Astor learned his father's butcher trade, moved to London to work in a brother's flute-making business, and then, at age twenty, sailed for America in 1783. He briefly became a baker's street hawker, but soon found a job as a fur dealer's assistant, while selling musical instruments on the side.

From childhood, Astor evinced a keen mind. Practical, hard working, and better educated than most poor youths of his day, the young immigrant lived frugally, saved money, and invested it in both flutes and skins. In little more than a year he had enough pelts in storage to recross the Atlantic and sell his consignment at a profit in London. While in London he arranged to become the American agent for two British piano companies and returned to New York with a new supply of his brother's flutes to sell.

Within ten years he had married his landlady's daughter, Sarah Cox Todd, who was related to the prominent Brevoorts of New York, a family with important maritime connections. Sarah would bear eight children, but from the start she was also her husband's business partner, ever seeking with him greater opportunities for

extra dollars. Devout Sarah took her husband to church, where he would be seen incidentally by respectable bankers and lawyers.

The author shows how Astor built his fur-trade fortune. Soon after his marriage, Astor moved beyond buying skins from men in New York harbor. He left Sarah and went tramping through the upstate wilderness, where he was able to outsmart most of the trappers and Indians. Mohawks and Senecas liked music and liquor so he gave them both. For some time he himself did the hard physical work of hauling the skins to Albany and packing them for the trip down the Hudson River to New York for reshipment to London. After fifteen years in America Astor was worth more than one hundred thousand dollars.

The successful merchant soon expanded his business to the Pacific Coast, where a trading community bearing his name became embroiled with the British Northwest Company in the struggle to control Columbia River area commerce. The early 1800s found Astor's enterprises caught up in English-French conflict, their mutual economic blockades, British boardings of American ships and impressments of American sailors, and President Jefferson's retaliatory embargo on all U.S. overseas trade, which led to the War of 1812.

Along the way the manipulative merchant made useful contacts with influential people. One of these was Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin who served in the cabinets of both Jefferson and James Madison. Astor showed no feeling for or loyalty to the cause of community or country. He outwitted Jefferson, circumvented the U.S. trade embargo, and survived the war without losing a single ship. Meanwhile, tea doubled in price and Astor gained enormous profits.

The unpatriotic Astor partially redeemed himself by lending the national treasury money to help finance the unpopular conflict. However, as the years and pages pass, he appears increasingly Machiavellian in character, venal, predatory, and stingy. By 1816, Astor began trading opium to China because it increased profits in his commerce with that country. Later he invested profits from these two earlier ventures in Manhattan real estate, creating his third fortune.

While generous to his children, Astor received low marks from the public. Newspaper editor Horace Greeley thought the tycoon selfish, grasping, and ruthless. Social reformer Horace Mann damned him for giving so little back to society.

The book sparkles with fresh language and well-turned phrases (e.g., "The scratching of diplomatic goose quills in Ghent" to describe the signing of the treaty which ended the War of 1812). Although a family tree would have strengthened the final chapter about heirs, *America's First Multimillionaire* is one of the best of this past years' biographies.

Eastern College

JOHN A. BAIRD, JR.

The Philadelphia Navy Yard: From the Birth of the U.S. Navy to the Nuclear Age.

By JEFFERY M. DORWART with JEAN K. WOLF. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. vii, 271p. Illustrations, notes, index. \$45.)

Only a few navy yards, bureaus, and other administrative and fleet support units have received the attention they merit. Those studies which do exist are often official histories produced in-house or by local historians and are largely limited to describing the acquisition of land and construction of facilities, as well as providing lists of yard commanders, ships constructed at the facility, and numbers of workers employed. Many are heavily illustrated, but few are analytical.

Jeffery Dorwart and Jean Wolf have gone beyond such work. They open by tracing warship construction on the Delaware River prior to the establishment of the Philadelphia Navy Yard, including vessels for the Pennsylvania state navy and Continental navy during the American Revolution, a cutter for the Revenue-Cutter Service in 1792, and the frigate *United States* for the U.S. Navy from 1794 to 1797, then describe the establishment of a navy yard at the foot of Federal Street in the Southwark section of Philadelphia in 1801. In 1875 the yard moved to a new nine-hundred-acre site on League Island in South Philadelphia because it needed more room for the forges, workshops, and dry docks required to construct iron and steel vessels.

Building on the model entry on the yard Dorwart contributed to Paolo Coletta's *United States Navy and Marine Corps Bases, Domestic* (1985), this study describes the ship construction, repair, overhaul, conversion, and even dismantling conducted in the yard over the years. At its peak during World War II the yard employed forty-five thousand civilian workers, but after the war the number declined to about eight thousand.

In addition to working on naval vessels, the Philadelphia yard manufactured various types of equipment for ships, including boilers, catapults, propellers, and life jackets. The yard, or property administered by its commander, was also the home of the forerunner of the Naval Academy, the headquarters of the Marine Corps, a seamen's retirement home and hospital, the Naval Aircraft Factory, and the Naval Air Material Center, but these institutions receive only passing mention by the authors who clearly focus on ship work.

During its entire history the Philadelphia Navy Yard vied with yards at Norfolk and in New England for work and was regularly in danger of being closed. The authors are particularly adept at detailing the political machinations of area political leaders in getting projects assigned to the facility, their last great coup being the sending of aircraft carriers to the yard for extensive rebuilding under the Ship Life Extension Program during the 1980s and 90s. By the end of the twentieth century the inability of the yard to accommodate work on nuclear powered aircraft carriers, a loss in influence by members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation—

particularly after the death of Senator H. J. Heinz in an airplane accident—and the reduction in defense spending brought about by the end of the Cold War finally led to closing of the yard in 1996.

Though not as broad in coverage as Richard E. Winslow III's *"Do Your Job!" An Illustrated Bicentennial History of the Portsmouth [New Hampshire] Naval Shipyard, 1800–2000* (2000), this is a solid study. Dorwart and Wolf have thoroughly researched the history of the Philadelphia Navy Yard and by including numerous illustrations make this a valuable book for specialist and general reader alike. Both the Portsmouth and Philadelphia Navy Yards fell victim to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), as have dozens of other military installations across the country. Together these studies by Dorwart, Wolf, and Winslow set a new standard for base histories. Other recently closed navy yards at Boston, Brooklyn, and Charleston, South Carolina, and numerous army and air force bases deserve similar studies by equally proficient historians.

Texas A&M University

JAMES C. BRADFORD

A House Dividing: Economic Development in Pennsylvania and Virginia Before the Civil War. By JOHN MAJEWSKI. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. xviii, 214p. Maps, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95.)

For more than a decade, the theoretical construct of the "market revolution" has guided much of the scholarship on economic change in the early republic. According to the prevailing interpretation, an eighteenth-century subsistence-based economy steeped in communal bonds yielded in the nineteenth century to an individualistic, market-oriented economy. In recent years, however, the basic premises of this construct have come under sharp attack. Historians of colonial America object that the colonial economy was not dominated by subsistence farmers and artisans devoid of entrepreneurial zeal. Market-oriented farms and workshops were indeed part of the colonial story. Historians of both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries dispute claims that colonial Americans lacked individualism, or that the citizens of the early republic lost a sense of community. This revisionism has deepened our understanding of the colonial economy, the idea of "self" in the eighteenth century, and the persistence of community in the early republic. Yet, the revisions have also created a nagging interpretive problem. Without relying on the sharp divide between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided under the model of the "market revolution," how does one approach the study of social and economic change in the early republic?

In his erudite study of economic development in Virginia and Pennsylvania before the Civil War, John Majewski uses a comparative framework to outflank this

debate over the market revolution. At the center of his work is an analysis of market development in Albemarle County, Virginia, and Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. In both places, farmers practiced mixed agriculture, faced similar geographic obstacles, and had relatively limited access to marketing centers and transportation. Majewski thus isolates slavery as the only significant economic difference between the two counties, establishing a basis for comparison. Building on corporate records and shareholder lists cross-referenced to census data and tax records, the study persuasively demonstrates that between 1800 and 1830, hundreds of small investors in Pennsylvania and Virginia, most of them local, invested heavily in what Majewski calls "developmental corporations" (p. 13). Local control of commercial development allowed these communities to shape a new civic ethos based on market-oriented institutions; although older, more traditional institutions like the church lost their centralizing influence, the citizens of Albemarle and Cumberland counties maintained a sense of community.

After 1830, the house begins to divide. The study itself turns from a consideration of the two counties to a broader analysis of the two states. In Pennsylvania, east coast financiers encroached on the affairs of backcountry people, particularly by developing a tightly centralized rail system anchored at Philadelphia. Rural Pennsylvanians protested the extension of the railroad, but their motives were not anti-capitalist. Rather, farmers objected to the loss of local control to eastern monopolists. Nevertheless, Pennsylvania's interconnected rail system encouraged industrialization and economic development in the state.

In Virginia, local control over transportation and market development persisted because Virginians failed to develop a significant urban center. This stunted the development of an interconnected regional rail system and encouraged Virginians to shun manufacturing projects in favor of increasingly heavy investments in plantations and enslaved labor.

To maintain an economic focus over a wider period, namely 1800–1860 rather than 1840–1860, Majewski purposefully ignored how economic change affected family life and religious experience. Yet his study opens up questions in an even wider chronological framework. In colonial Virginia, urbanization was frustrated by the presence of wide, navigable rivers. Countless town acts failed to produce any major cities. In Pennsylvania, the Penn family left a legacy of centralized control over the founding of new towns that aided urbanization throughout the state. If the presence of a commercial center was at the root of the economic differences between Virginia and Pennsylvania, then perhaps the origins of regionalism, and thus the Civil War itself, predate the Revolution.

Bucknell University

RICHARD S. CHEW

The Jewish Confederates. By ROBERT N. ROSEN. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000. xxiii, 517p. Illustrations, notes, glossary, bibliographic note, bibliography, index. \$39.95)

Since Bertram Korn's classic study on American Jewry and the Civil War appeared a half century ago, numerous archival materials have become available and a generation of historical research has deepened our understanding of the causes and consequences of the Civil War. Surprisingly, new research on American Jewry during the Civil War has been buried in specialized historical journals and to date no new synthesis has appeared to replace Korn's book. Robert Rosen's study on the Jews of the Confederacy answers part of this need by bringing a generation of scholarship together into one volume and providing an encyclopedic compendium of information for scholars, students, and history buffs.

Rosen's narrative moves easily from a general discussion of the number of Jews in the south prior to the Civil War to specific information on individual Jews, their communities, and the war's impact on their lives. In addition, Rosen paints detailed portraits of individuals such as Judah P. Benjamin, who served as a cabinet minister in the Confederate government, and David Yulee, a senator from Florida. Civil War enthusiasts will find in addition to detailed portraits of select individuals, a great deal of material on the Jewish soldiers and civilians who served the Confederacy in a variety of capacities. Indeed, Rosen demonstrates that southern Jews fought in every theater of the war, and worked in a multitude of civilian jobs. His examination of the interaction between home front and war front, where, for example, parents would sometimes travel to nurse their wounded children, is a welcome change from studies which fail to take account of the human cost of war beyond the battlefield.

Of particular interest is Rosen's research into the story of Jewish Confederates after the war. That Judah P. Benjamin left the United States in 1865, never to return, is relatively well known. Less well known is the story of many southern rabbis, who preached pro-secessionist messages prior to the war, and wrote prayers for Confederate soldiers during the war, and remained devoted to the south after 1865. Interestingly, some of these rabbis traveled north to assume new pulpits after 1865. While some Jewish communities were destroyed as a result of the war, many others survived the turmoil or were rebuilt during Reconstruction.

Rosen's sympathy for his subjects is clearly articulated throughout the book. Although not an apologist for slavery, Rosen did once proclaim himself a "confederate apologist." The book periodically takes on the feel of a lawyer's brief. Indeed, one wonders how many times it is necessary to point out that the "Jews fought for their country."

Well-written and organized, the book is, however, not very analytical. This is most clearly noticed in his analysis of anti-Semitism. Although Rosen does not ignore southern anti-Semitism, and tries very hard not to downplay it, he sometimes

attempts to explain it away. His statement that there were more anti-Semitic incidents in the North than the South is inadequate as a point of comparison to gauge the impact of anti-Semitism on southern Jewry. Since there were more Jews in the North than in the South, it is not surprising that there would be more anti-Semitic incidents. Although having mined numerous archival and secondary sources on the Civil War, Rosen does not appear to have taken advantage of the latest research on American anti-Semitism. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, as scholars such as Jonathan Sarna demonstrate, American anti-Semitism was characterized by ambivalence, often despising "Jews" as a group yet liking individual Jews because they exhibited "Christian" attributes. These attitudes did not necessarily lead to violence or even threats of violence. Rosen hints at such ambivalence when he describes how many Southerners resented Jews as war profiteers and yet admired them for their ability to get supplies to the Confederate army. General Grant's infamous General Orders No. 11, which required the expulsion of Jews from the Department of the Tennessee but was never enforced, can easily be juxtaposed to the order expelling Jews from Thomasville, Georgia. Whereas Grant's order is sometimes depicted as one of the most anti-Semitic acts in U.S. history, the ordered expulsion from Thomasville is less heinous, Rosen argues, because "nothing much happened. . . . No Jew was harmed or even personally insulted" (p. 269). As if an order of expulsion was not an insult in itself.

Despite this, Rosen's book is a well-written narrative, with many quality illustrations, and will likely be the standard reference work on the subject for years.

*Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the
American Jewish Archives*

FREDERIC KROME

A Great Civil War: A Military and Political History, 1861-1865. By RUSSELL F. WEIGLEY. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2000) xxviii, 612p. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.)

A Great Civil War provides an able and balanced survey of its subject, but the competition in such works is stiff. The benchmark, of course, is James M. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. The standard of a previous generation, James G. Randall and David H. Donald's *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, has recently been updated by Donald, Jean H. Baker, and Michael F. Holt. William L. Barney's *Battleground for the Union: The Era of the Civil War and Reconstruction, 1848-1877* offers briefer coverage. And there are others.

The historical profession has thus raised the bar pretty high for surveys of the Civil War period, and the essential question for a reviewer of this substantial work

is: Does Weigley's book measure up? In part, any reader's answer depends on the coverage desired. *A Great Civil War*, unlike the other books mentioned above, deals only with the war years. With the extra space available to him, Weigley could have offered either a synthesis of the new schools of interpretation of the period or a new interpretation of his own to make the war more understandable than it was, say, at the centennial thirty-six years ago. But he does neither.

A Great Civil War plows old and familiar ground. Focusing exclusively on the war years need not mean focusing only on military history, but by the author's own admission, *A Great Civil War* is "a largely military history of the Civil War." It also includes a considerable amount of political narrative. To emphasize war and high politics suggests a conservative approach historiographically, and the outlook of the book is conservative even within its chosen areas of focus.

Thus a footnote on the first page of the book explains the author's decision to exclude the "larger medical history of the war," and indeed the United States Sanitary Commission gets no mention that I could find in the subsequent 450 pages. *A Great Civil War* maintains an almost studied silence on the New Military History. Fewer than four pages of the book are devoted to the question of the motivations of common soldiers, and once that brief discussion is behind him, Weigley does not again cite Gerald Linderman, McPherson's *For Cause and Comrades*, or Reid Mitchell. And other works that deal with the war from the point of view of the common soldier, except for the old standards by Bell I. Wiley, go unmentioned.

In sum, the reader is offered an old-fashioned history of military operations—from the point of view of headquarters rather than the common soldier—and a narrative of political history from the perspective, mostly, of office-holding elites. These narratives of war and politics are of high quality. The military campaigns of the Civil War are covered with specificity and detail. Commanders in engagements, their maneuvers, and their armies' numbers and losses are meticulously described for all the important campaigns and some of minor importance. Weigley is careful with the facts. That is always good and, in a textbook, essential. But at this late point in Civil War scholarship, could not more be offered?

The overall interpretation of the military history is dated and unconvincing. Weigley argues that the Civil War was "pivotal" in the history of warfare and became at its conclusion "the harbinger of the mass slaughter in the World Wars of the twentieth century and also of our own century's increasingly callous disregard, at least until its final years, of the historic war-convention principle of non-combatant immunity" (p. xvi). Weigley qualifies this view some, but such a scheme of interpretation was present a generation ago at the centennial of the Civil War, as was the tendency to treat the war mainly as the history of military operations with high politics as a background. A generation after the centennial we should be exposed to different interpretations in a work of synthesis.

As for the military campaigns that provide its central concern, *A Great Civil War* offers as its contribution the idea that there exists an important conception of military action beyond strategy and tactics. To these traditional components of military operations, Weigley argues that we need also the idea of "operations, which in modern conceptualization means the use of military resources not only for the overall winning of the war but for the achievement of the objectives of a campaign, with the campaign perceived as an endeavor beyond the particular battle, and especially though not necessarily entailing the use of several autonomous, independently maneuvering formations" (p. xx). The application of such a concept to the analysis of the war does not appear, however, to alter markedly our judgments of the abilities of the commanders. George B. McClellan is treated with language verging on ridicule in this book, Ulysses S. Grant emerges with relatively high marks, and Robert E. Lee only slightly lower as has been the case for years.

A Great Civil War does not use the extra room available from its exclusive focus on the war years to enrich our understanding of the war with social or intellectual history—a pity at this late date and a decision which will, unfortunately, limit the usefulness of this well-researched and careful book. To omit treatment of the United States Sanitary Commission, to return to my original example, leaves out more than a crucial part of the medical history of the war. It leaves out the women like Mary Livermore who volunteered as organizers and nurses for the commission. It leaves out the great sanitary fairs that women created to raise money for medical supplies and which themselves were remarkable cultural phenomena.

Moreover, two damaging editorial decisions were made in preparing the book. The first was to allow the author to encumber the text with finicky details about military rank, leading to such indigestible writing as this about the Battle of Chattanooga (p. 287): "Brigadier-General, U.S.V., John E. Smith's Second Division, Seventeenth Corps, en route from Vicksburg to Helena, Arkansas, was dispatched instead to Memphis. Sherman brought the First Division (under Peter J. Osterhaus, since June 9, 1862 brigadier-general, U.S.V., largely because of Pea Ridge), the Second Division (Brigadier-General Morgan L. Smith, U.S.V.), and the Fourth Division (Brigadier-General Hugh Ewing, U.S.V.) of his Fifteenth Corps back from the Big Black River to Vicksburg to embark northward on the Mississippi." The other mistaken decision was to burden the footnotes with unnecessary information. In the citations from *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, for example, Weigley supplies the name of the institution or private collector who owned the document cited in this standard printed edition of Lincoln's works, a practice I have never seen before and never want to see again. In many instances, of course, the ownership has changed and in every instance it is extraneous to a textbook on the Civil War to know who has title to a document readily available in print.

A Great Civil War provides a valuable reference for looking up the battles and

leaders of the Civil War, but it will not displace the existing works of high repute on this mature subject in American history.

Pennsylvania State University

MARK E. NEELY, JR.

A Place Called Appomattox. By WILLIAM MARVEL. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. x, 400p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

Like many landmarks of the Civil War, Appomattox exists as a place both familiar and slightly misunderstood. Most people would recognize it as the site of the surrender of the army under Robert E. Lee to Ulysses S. Grant, a proceeding which has offered a comfortable tale of respect and quick reconciliation between former enemies. William Marvel challenges the popular impressions about the surrender, while providing a more complicated portrait of the beginning, end, and aftermath of the conflict through the eyes of one Southern community.

Popular conceptions of the war provide the foil against which Marvel constructs the story of this small town in Virginia's southern Piedmont. In the introduction, he indicates that he will challenge Lost Cause history that portrays the Confederate South sacrificing all to preserve an innocent, idyllic way of life. Similarly, he seeks to overturn notions that Appomattox served as the place where the Southern army graciously cast down its weapons and both sides easily became brothers once again. He suggests that the idyllic past was a little more problematic; that sacrifice during the war fell more on the lower classes than the "gentry"; and that surrender took place on different occasions, each featuring less conciliation than many might believe.

While building an artful narrative that glides from prewar through postbellum periods, the author enters into no historiographical debates. Readers will wander through chapters impressed with the rich detail about the town and its people, but scholars will question how the story meshes with other studies. Some readers likely will cheer this decision to avoid entangling the narrative with scholarly interpretations; however, the book will leave most specialists with a sense of ambivalence: an appreciation for the research and the reclamation of life from the local perspective, balanced by a wish that the author had announced more explicitly how the findings support, modify, or overturn current impressions of the Confederate South.

Marvel adopts a chronological approach to tell his story. In the antebellum chapters, he casts Appomattox as a "typical" southern community that relied on staple-crop agriculture produced largely by slave labor. He claims that slavery featured feudal relations, which ignores decades of debate that has left this characterization behind. He correctly notes that the area was rebounding

economically with an increasing reliance on slaves but also a keen interest in railroad development. He suggests that residents remained interested more in local than national issues, until John Brown's raid startled the region into greater concern. When the war comes, Marvel's narrative inserts readers into the life of the community, reinforcing how home front and battle front influenced each other. He opens new ground by showing the impact of the war on mortality. Soldiers returning home sometimes brought back diseases that could spark epidemics, and the postbellum shortage of men complicated the work of piecing together lives after the surrender.

The most revisionist portion of the book comes with the surrender—or should we say surrenders. Largely because of the accounts of John B. Gordon and Joshua Chamberlain, Americans have retained the image of gracious foes acknowledging each other and quickly burying their differences. Many of the Confederates, it turns out, stacked arms on April 10 and 11, but had to be ordered to march on April 12 between lines of the Union army. Union commanders demanded the ritual as a means of underscoring Southern defeat. Union general John Gibbon probably had overall command of the proceedings, not Chamberlain. And it is doubtful that Chamberlain had his men offer a salute to the Confederates who marched. This is an engaging treatment that offers an important new version of the ceremony.

Overall, though, the story could have used more analytical perspective—issues are raised in a snapshot fashion, intriguing views into the past appearing without full development or conclusions. For instance, readers will learn of African American interest in fighting, shirking by prosperous planters in the county, the shift from tobacco to corn production, and Confederate deserters. These are all important issues, yet the author offers little guidance as to whether in these matters Appomattox was representative of Virginia, much less the region.

The book, however, does reveal the possibilities of local history to enhance our understanding of broader trends. It also is deeply researched and compelling in its narration. While it contains more description than analysis, the study does change impressions of the surrender and suggests areas for further research.

Pennsylvania State University

WILLIAM BLAIR

The Philadelphia Fels, 1880–1920: A Social Portrait. By EVELYN BODEK ROSEN. (Cranbury, N.J.: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000. 231p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$28.)

During the nineteenth and early twentieth century a closely-knit Anglo-American aristocracy ran Philadelphia's cultural institutions and many of its economic ones as well. Waves of immigrants from Europe helped create a new elite

that paralleled the older dominant aristocracy. The Kellys, for example, rose from lower-class Irish roots and became one of the most powerful and glamorous families in Philadelphia. The Fels family, led by Lazarus and Susannah, arrived from Bavaria in 1848.

Evelyn Bodek Rosen, a professor at Philadelphia Community College, has written an interesting account of this German-Jewish dynasty. Lazarus came briefly to Philadelphia with his wife before moving to the South as a peddler, the occupation of a number of German-Jewish immigrants. Opening a store in North Carolina, Lazarus Fels was a moderate success until the Civil War. After the war, he moved back to Philadelphia where, along with his son Joseph, he established the company that made Fels Naptha Soap, which would become the most popular soap product in the United States. After devoting several chapters to the early career of Lazarus and Susannah and to a discussion of the Jewish community in Philadelphia before the arrival of the Eastern European Jews in the 1880s, the author divides the rest of her book into chapters devoted to each of the couple's children and their spouses.

Although Professor Rosen does a little analysis of the Fels Naptha Company, especially in its infancy, she is less interested in business history than what the Fels' children did with their fortune. She connects the Fels to the accomplishments of other German Jews, to Philadelphia, and to the major movements of the era such as women's suffrage, Progressivism, and efforts to help immigrants to acculturate to life in America.

The Fels siblings and their spouses were involved in many of the reform movements at the turn of the century. Barbara (1843-1928) and Rosena (1862-1843), neither of whom married, helped found the Young Women's Union, which engaged in efforts to Americanize Jewish immigrants. Through the Union's kindergarten, the women endeavored to teach the children English. Samuel Fels (1860-1950) devoted himself to institution building in Philadelphia, helping to create the Committee of Seventy, the Bureau of Municipal Research, the Fels Institute of Local and State Government at the University of Pennsylvania, and the Fels Planetarium at the Franklin Institute. Fels gave away over forty million dollars to charities, including agricultural projects in Palestine. Maurice Fels, who was the operating head of the business, became very interested in vocational education and set up agricultural settlements to bring Jewish immigrants out of the city into South Jersey.

Unquestionably, the most well-known of the family was Joseph and his wife Mary. Joseph Fels (1853-1914), the subject of an earlier biography by Arthur Dudden, *Joseph Fels and the Single Tax Movement* (1971), was the quintessential reformer of his era. The actual founder of the Fels Naptha Company, Joseph was an irresistible salesman who turned an ordinary soap into the dominant product of the age. After starting the company, Joseph came under the influence of Henry

George and the single tax movement, which believed that a tax on land would provide the panacea for the inequalities that existed in the United States. Fels spent millions of dollars of his own money promoting the reform both in the United States and England, where he lived for most of his last years. Fels also had strong ties to the Zionist movement, joining the writer Israel Zangwill in trying to find a homeland for the Jews of Europe threatened by anti-Semitism. Mary (1863–1953) was active in the women's suffrage movement and world peace, traveling with Henry Ford's peace ship which attempted to end the First World War.

In her account of the Fels family, Professor Rosen has written a valuable study that will be of interest to anyone who wants to understand the development of Philadelphia in the early twentieth century. It complements other work on the city, such as John Lukacs's *Philadelphia: Patricians and Philistines, 1900–1950* (1980), which portrays the Anglo-American aristocracy. By her insightful analysis, Professor Rosen has made an important contribution to the study of the Jewish community in Philadelphia.

There are a few criticisms of the book. Her study might have been stronger if it contained more work on the operation of the Fels's business. She does give some indication of the rivalry between Maurice and Joseph Fels over control of the company, but she does not go into much detail about its success, the types of profits made, its management after the death of Joseph, or the amount of wealth accumulated by the brothers and sisters. It would also be helpful if the book contained a genealogical chart. But these omissions do not detract from her accomplishments and her contribution to Philadelphia history.

Temple University

HERBERT B. ERSHKOWITZ

From Fireplace to Cookstove: Technology and the Domestic Ideal in America. By PRISCILLA J. BREWER. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000. xix, 338p. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$ 29.95.)

Priscilla Brewer's *From Fireplace to Cookstove* is an entertaining look at the history of a fundamental domestic technology. While later chapters briefly follow cooking technology into the gas and electric era, and the entire work considers the related phenomenon of heating stoves, the book's primary focus is on the rise of the cookstove and the concomitant decline of the open hearth. Brewer argues that the stove "has always been about more than cooking," and she proposes to elucidate the stove's cultural meaning as well as more concrete aspects of its use and adoption.

The overall thesis of the book is that attitudes to the stove "have changed dramatically over time." Early users embraced it as a highly desirable alternative to the inefficient and backbreaking fireplace, but once the cookstove was the norm,

critics began to blame it for a perceived deterioration of family life. The stove was also a locus of struggle along gender and class lines. By the time gas and electric ranges replaced the wood- or coal-burning cookstove (the early twentieth century in most places), the cookstove functioned mainly as an "embodiment of tradition," (except for brief episodes of popularity during periods of high fuel prices or "Y2K" anxieties). No matter what the time period, the sheer difficulty of operating an old cookstove has been a constant theme.

The major contribution of this book is in its careful documentation. While historians like Ruth Schwartz Cowan, Dolores Hayden, and Susan Strasser have considered the broad outlines of change, Brewer hones in on the actual process of adoption. Besides paying close attention to trade literature and to patent materials for evidence on sales and practical improvements that made stoves attractive to householders, she traces the adoption of the cookstove through concrete evidence including probate inventories. This research permits good estimates of how many households had stoves at different points in time. A wide range of published sources, including fiction, prescriptive literature, and memoirs, permits a richly detailed description of cultural attitudes. Pictorial material, including cartoons, stereographs, and advertisements, is abundant and well used. Much of this primary material is entertaining to look at, particularly as it reflects Americans' keen and often humorous sense of the possibilities of the new technology.

The first two chapters of the book discuss the open-hearth era. Using well-chosen materials, Brewer shows how inefficient open-hearth cooking was; she also notes that cooking technology differed little between wealthy and poor households. The third chapter documents experiments with "closed" stoves in the early nineteenth century.

The next chapters form the core of the book. They explore the increase in stove production and consumption by midcentury, as casting technology improved and as it became feasible to use anthracite coal as a fuel. By midcentury, probate records from New England show that over half the recorded inventories contained stoves, mostly still woodburners. After the Civil War, a veritable explosion in stove production and improvement occurred; a shift in the motive for purchasing a cookstove also took place, as concerns with fuel efficiency gave way to concerns about laborsaving for women. Class differences became more apparent, both in the distribution of cookstoves and in the people who actually used them. The cookstove was a hot and intrusive implement; by the late nineteenth century, users and domestic advisors were trying to isolate it both visually and physically by "hiding" it in a closet or by creating separate eating and cooking spaces in the home. As the cookstove became commonplace, nostalgia for the old open hearth increased—usually uninformed by firsthand experience. With the arrival of cleaner, cooler, easier to use gas and electric ranges in the twentieth century, the cookstove gradually disappeared, to revive only weakly and sporadically.

With this rich subject and evidence base, it is something of a disappointment that the historiographical interpretation is rather limited. The author does not fully exploit the opportunity to engage important debates on the intersection between domestic technology, gender, and ideology, not to mention foodways. The geographical focus on the Northeast is perhaps necessary to make the project manageable, but also makes the reader wonder how applicable the conclusions may be to other regions of the country. (The only manuscript collections consulted were primarily from repositories in New England and New York. It is not clear how extensively collections at important repositories such as the Hagley Library were used.) While class and rural-urban differences are mentioned, they are not fully explored. And the last few chapters seem to fit awkwardly with the book's central portions.

Despite these shortcomings, *From Fireplace to Cookstove* will be a useful resource for historians of domestic technology and architecture. It will also help museum professionals, especially those who interpret the past in historic house museums.

Pennsylvania State University

SALLY MCMURRY

College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy. By John Sayle Watterson. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. xiv, 456p. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliographical essay. \$34.95.)

From its beginnings, big time college football has enjoyed an uneasy relationship with the colleges and universities that field the teams. Charges that the competition does not fit with the educational mission of the institution, that student athletes often are not serious students, and that athletic departments and alumni boosters exert too strong an influence on the university are familiar today. As John Sayle Watterson demonstrates in his book *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy*, these accusations are nothing new.

Watterson's thoroughly-researched study traces the development of the game, the challenges it faced from critics, and the defenses used by its supporters. Harvard's president Charles Eliot was one of the game's first vocal critics. As early as 1894, he believed that athletics, and football especially, endangered the physical safety and intellectual development of college students and that the win-at-all-costs philosophy that surrounded football gave an unhealthy taint of commercialism to athletics. As Watterson demonstrates in his detailed narrative, these criticisms would arise again and again as reform-minded college presidents, investigative journalists, accrediting groups, and disgruntled former players attempted to draw attention to the excesses of the game.

The first major crisis for college football came in 1905. Theodore Roosevelt, who believed that football helped to counter the "trend toward leisure and luxury [that] had sapped the spirit of a once sturdy frontier people" (p. 65), feared that the game had become too violent and called representatives from the Big Three football powers—Harvard, Princeton, and Yale—to the White House to discuss the issue. The three agreed to adhere more closely to the letter and the spirit of football's rules. As with later attempts at reform, the agreement mollified critics and business as usual continued.

Rule modifications after the 1909 season that ended mass play (the practice of teammates pushing or pulling the ball carrier to help gain a few more yards) and liberalized the use of the forward pass helped to make the game safer. The number of fatalities in college football dropped considerably, but other controversies remained. The practice of subsidizing athletes with direct cash payments from boosters, jobs with limited responsibilities, and meals at the training table made many critics complain of the increasing professionalization of the game. Coaches who earned more than professors or even college presidents seemed to be clear evidence of the disproportionate influence of football on many American campuses. Many administrators, however, were happy to look the other way. A successful football program was often a quick way to raise the profile of a university.

One solution offered for reform in the 1950s was the de-emphasis of the game. While other schools had enacted similar reforms as early as the 1930s, the movement of the eight Ivy League schools to place strict limits on the activities of their football teams was the most visible. Harvard, Yale, and Princeton had been perennial football powers, and the University of Pennsylvania still played a strong schedule. The Ivy presidents saw, however, that the financial and institutional costs of a big time football program had become prohibitive. De-emphasizing football allowed them to take the moral high ground.

Most institutions, though, did not feel they had that option. As the potential of money from television contracts and from postseason bowl games grew, many universities and their boosters saw football as a way to subsidize other athletic programs and the games as places to entertain potential donors. To build a successful program, many administrations were willing to bend the rules to the breaking point, or at least to look the other way while the athletic department did it. By the 1980s, the big "football factory" schools were frequently under investigation by the NCAA for rules violations in their quest for football success and the money that came with it. Watterson details the most serious scandal, one that led to the death penalty for Southern Methodist University's football program and that reached as far as the Texas governor's office.

In an epilogue entitled "The Great God Football," Watterson argues that the tensions between football and the university that Eliot decried over a century ago have worsened. He believes that the simplest solution would be to separate the

academic from the athletic by franchising big time college football. A winning team could still bring glory to the college that sponsored it, but there would be no pretense that the team was made up of "scholar-athletes." Thus, "football would no longer be the dry rot eating at the foundation of the academic edifices" (p. 397). While this solution would probably prove unworkable, Watterson's research shows how deeply entrenched the football machine has always been in many of America's universities, and how difficult even the simplest of reforms can be. This book is an important contribution to sports history, and to a better understanding of the place of organized athletics in American culture.

University of Pennsylvania

TIMOTHY WOOD

The American Philosophical Society Library Library Resident Research Fellowships, 2002 - 2003

The American Philosophical Society Library is accepting applications for short-term residential fellowships for conducting research in its collections. The Society's Library, located near Independence Hall in Philadelphia, is a leading international center for research in the history of American science and technology and its European roots, as well as early American history and culture. The Library houses over 7 million manuscripts, 250,000 volumes and bound periodicals, and thousands of maps and prints. Outstanding historical collections and subject areas include the papers of Benjamin Franklin; the American Revolution; 18th and 19th-century natural history; western scientific expeditions and travel including the journals of Lewis and Clark; polar exploration; the papers of Charles Willson Peale, including family and descendants; American Indian languages; anthropology including the papers of Franz Boas; the papers of Charles Darwin and his forerunners, colleagues, critics, and successors; history of genetics, eugenics, and evolution; history of biochemistry, physiology, and biophysics; 20th-century medical research; and history of physics. (The Library does not hold materials on philosophy in the modern sense.)

The fellowships are intended to encourage research in the Library's collections by scholars who reside beyond a 75-mile radius of Philadelphia. The fellowships are open to both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals who are holders of the Ph.D. or the equivalent, Ph.D. candidates who have passed their preliminary exams, and independent scholars. Applicants in any relevant field of scholarship may apply. The stipend is \$2,000 per month, and the term of the fellowship is a minimum of one month and a maximum of three, taken between June 1, 2002 and May 31, 2003. Fellows are expected to be in residence for four consecutive weeks during the period of their award. Funding for the fellowship comes from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Grundy Foundation, the Isaac Comly Martindale Fund, and the Philips Fund.

There is no special application form and this notice provides all the essential information needed to apply. Applicants should submit the following: (1) cover sheet stating a) name, b) title of project, c) expected period of residence, d) institutional affiliation, e) mailing address, f) telephone numbers, and e-mail if available, and g) social security number; (2) a letter (not to exceed three single-spaced pages) which briefly describes the project and how it relates to existing scholarship, states the specific relevance of the American Philosophical Society's collections to the project, and indicates expected results of the research (such as publications); (3) a c.v. or résumé; and (4) one letter of reference (doctoral candidates must use their dissertation advisor). Published guides to the Society's collections are available in most research libraries, and a list of these guides is available on request. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the Library staff by mail or phone regarding the collections.

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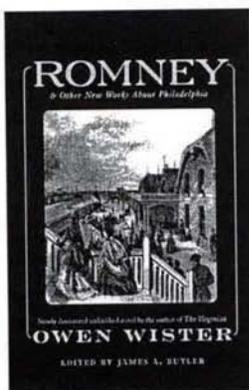
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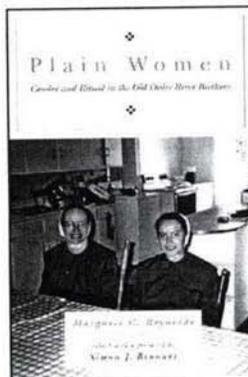
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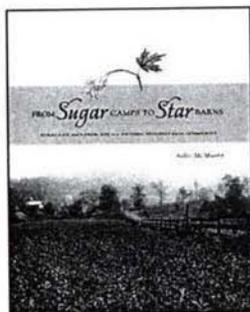
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