

lerites. Besides sharing the gospel, Cutler wanted to convert the Indians, use them to attack residents of Missouri, and reclaim the land the Saints had been driven away from in 1834 (53). Eventually, it was an Indian Mormon, Lewis Denna, who led the group to Otter Tail County.

This book has a scholarly basis, but it also meets the needs of a general audience interested in the social and cultural dynamics on the Iowa and Minnesota frontier. Young borrows extensively from Danny Jorgensen, a Cutlerite descendant and University of South Florida sociologist who published an article on the Cutlerites in this journal in 1999. She credits Jorgensen along with others who have also researched and published on the topic. This book should not be the last word about the Cutlerites. Those interested in early Iowa history, for example, will want to know more about the years the Cutlerites spent around Manti.

"Like the Indians they came to convert, the Cutlerites have departed, leaving only the faintest trace on the land of their passing" (201). The obscure Cutlerites deserved to be brought to our attention. Young traces the genesis and decline of a Mormon faction that happens to include her own family. She also provides a look into the beliefs and dwindling membership of the group today. Her book lays a solid foundation for further detailed, scholarly publications.

*Writing the Pioneer Woman*, by Janet Floyd. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002. ix, 228 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$32.50 cloth.

Reviewer Jane Simonsen is assistant professor of English and American studies at the University of Central Arkansas. Her research interests include the history of the American West and nineteenth-century women's literature and culture.

Janet Floyd's study of the "figure of the pioneer woman" is a necessary evolution in scholarship on emigrant women's writing. Floyd brings new perspectives from postcolonial studies and diaspora theory to bear on familiar western narratives such as those by Caroline Kirkland, Eliza Farnham, Mollie Dorsey Sanford, and Elinore Pruitt Stewart, arguing that these autobiographies are best read in the international contexts of migration, literary markets, and industrialization. Such contexts, she argues, undermine the question that preoccupied historians who revived the figure of the pioneer woman in the 1970s and 1980s: whether emigrant women's struggles to maintain their domesticity in western spaces were successful, or whether domestic work took on new meanings in the West. Instead, Floyd shows that prairie narratives by Anglo emigrants in both the United States and

Canada participated in larger conversations about individualism, industrialization, women's work, class mobility, and race. Ultimately, Floyd argues that the fluidity of identity in the transnational context of emigration made it difficult to maintain the boundaries between men and women, upper and lower classes, and Anglo and "other" that domestic and imperial discourse presumed.

Beginning with a chapter that traces the history of scholarship on the pioneer woman since the 1970s, Floyd engages scholars in new western history, postcolonial studies, and autobiography studies in re-evaluating descriptions of housework as emigrant narratives of individual enterprise, recipes as tenuous attempts to affirm social identity, and women's work in mining camps as responses to the "repetitive, untechnologized, informally organized open-ended endeavour" of mining (162). Even as she discusses the place the pioneer woman came to occupy in literary accounts of settlement as women writers responded to contemporary anxieties, Floyd suggests that historians have also been selective in their accounts of pioneer women's lives, and in so doing, have missed nuances of their narratives that suggest a more varied sense of identity among emigrant women.

Floyd aims to bring pioneer women out of the niche of western history to which earlier historians may have unwittingly consigned them. Floyd, however, is less readable than her predecessors, preferring theoretical language to the narrative style of some of the writers she challenges, such as John Mack Faragher and Annette Kolodny. Floyd's rigorous yet choppy dialogue with other scholars' work often comes at the expense of more in-depth engagement with the especially rich sources she has chosen. These include not only Caroline Kirkland's familiar *A New Home—Who'll Follow?* but also the little-known accounts of Canadian emigrant Anne Langton, diarist Carrie Williams, and letter-writer Sara Stebbins. Brief, close readings rather than sustained analysis sometimes force connections between text and the historical context of specific cultural anxieties. Floyd's assertion that Williams's rather typical diary of her daily work produces "a regionalized domestic space" (159), for example, comes in the context of other scholars' assessment of women's work in mining camps, but does not establish firm criteria for regional differences between diaries of women's work in California and those of prairie women. Chapter titles can be misleading, as some chapters contain only fleeting references to the autobiographers whose names appear in the titles. Chapter three, "Domesticity and Dirt: Eliza Farnham's *Life in Prairie Land* and Christiana Tillson's *Reminiscences of Early Life in Illinois*," discusses only one passage from Farnham's book; other chapters treat Farnham

more extensively. Much more satisfying is Floyd's treatment of non-written texts: her analyses of nineteenth-century paintings depicting pioneer women are nuanced and evocative. Paintings showing pioneer women as imperial mothers and as dough-covered kitchen workers support her argument that the pioneer woman was a popular, powerful, and changeable figure in the transnational imagination.

Floyd's most important contribution to scholarship on the writers of the prairie Midwest is her insistence that these writers tell us about more than the daily trials and tribulations of pioneer women in the limited confines of their homes or regions. Her analysis opens the door for more "regional" writers to be considered in national and international contexts, and as producers of new meanings for the seemingly mundane activities of women's housekeeping work. Comparing midwestern writers with their counterparts in Great Britain and Canada, Floyd emphasizes shared traits in writing about small towns and the experience of pioneering. Floyd shows that not only writers for international markets but also private diarists were aware that their work—both housework and writing-work—concealed truths about the realities of their lives even as it constituted their role in a much larger historical process of settlement.

*Ham, Eggs, and Corn Cake: A Nebraska Territory Diary*, by Erastus F. Beadle. Introduction by Ronald C. Naugle. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. xxiv, 130 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$12.95 paper.

Reviewer Ryan Roenfeld is a museum guide at the State Historical Society of Iowa's Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs. His primary interests relate to various developments in the Missouri River valley.

Of all the characters who headed West during the 1850s, among the most common—and most colorful—were the hordes of land speculators. Dreaming of riches and armed with a surveyor's plat, land agents founded many towns on the open prairies, confident that their town would become a metropolis. Such dreams motivated New Yorker Erastus Beadle, who set out for Nebraska Territory in early 1857. During the six months he spent in Omaha, he kept a diary describing his experiences as a promoter of the Saratoga Land Company and his failed attempts as a homesteader. In the end, he found neither fortune nor new life for his family. He returned east just as the Panic of 1857 brought down a Missouri River economy based on hope and "wild-cat" banks.

Nevertheless, Beadle went on to shape much of the American idea of the mythic West as part of the publishing house of Beadle & Adams, which over the succeeding decades released a series of dime novels

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