

interests. Among the other evaluative criteria are the level of sensitivity to racial diversity, attention to twentieth-century themes, professionalism, and originality. Little attention is paid—not surprisingly, perhaps, given the chosen subjects and authors—to issues of gender: Limerick and Hine devote a few lines to the role of women, and Etulain reviews the recent work of western women's historians.

Particularly remarkable, despite its numerous authors and differing interpretations, is the cohesiveness of the book as a whole. Together the essays create a substantial argument for the pervasive influence of Turner on several generations of western historians. They share a biographical focus and tell similar tales of individuals whose ideas were shaped by their regional roots and their professional training. This shared interpretative approach is partially the result of their assigned task: Etulain asked the authors "to treat the life, professional career, and major works of their subject . . . [and] to evaluate that historian's impact on the field of western history."

Many of these regional roots were midwestern. Turner, Bolton, Malin, and Billington were all born in the region, while Paxson, Webb, and Smith spent significant portions of their professional lives in the region. A number of the essayists, such as West on Webb and Steiner on Turner, comment interestingly on the complex ways in which autobiography and region enmesh themselves in the historians' scholarly endeavors.

Overall, *Writing Western History* complements a number of recent publications, including the more inclusive *Historians of the American Frontier: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook* edited by John Wunder and published by Greenwood Press, on interpretations of western U.S. history. While every reader will rue the omission of one or another significant western historian—my list includes Angie Deboe, Francis Parkman, and Wallace Stegner—no one will argue against the inclusion of the chosen subjects. This outstanding collection is a welcome addition to the ongoing work of writing western history.

Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays, edited by Maris A. Vinovskis. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. xii, 201 pp. Graphs, tables, maps, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$10.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY DAVID L. FERCH, SIERRA COLLEGE

Maris Vinovskis has edited seven essays that investigate the social and demographic impact of the Civil War on northern society. Col-

lectively, the essays illustrate the contributions social historians can make through their use of quantitative analysis and community case study to enhancing our understanding of the war's profound and long-term role in shaping America's social experience. Moreover, the investigative methods and thoughtful generalizations offered in these essays should prove insightful to historians interested in more carefully exploring the war experiences of Iowa towns and townspeople.

The best of these essays includes Vinovskis's previously published study, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War?" which analyzes mortality rates of Union and Confederate soldiers and compares them with mortality rates from America's other wars. His conclusion that the Civil War was unparalleled in the carnage wrought on military-age white males should surprise few, but his forceful findings are meant to correct the tendency of historians to neglect these terrible statistics when discussing Gilded Age society. Vinovskis also offers a case study of Newburyport, Massachusetts, to test current assertions regarding the socioeconomic background of those who fought. Analyzing age, nativity, occupation, wealth, and education, he suggests that the typical northern soldier was youthful, native born, and lacked a high school education. Significantly, he finds no evidence to support the claim that poor, unskilled, or foreign-born northerners served in disproportionate numbers.

Vinovskis's conclusions are confirmed in Thomas Kemp's study of two New Hampshire towns. But Kemp furthers our understanding by comparing reaction to and recruitment for the war in communities with strikingly different political sentiments—one zealously Republican, the other moderately Democratic. Interestingly, Kemp finds that both towns had very similar reactions to the war despite their differing political affiliations. Both towns, for instance, experienced tremendous initial enthusiasm for the war largely because townspeople defined the war's purpose in peculiarly communal terms that stressed the war's challenge to personal honor and local liberty.

This "power" of the community to give local meaning to the national war experience is the subject of Reid Mitchell's "The Northern Soldier and His Community." Mitchell, author of *Civil War Soldiers* (1988), discusses how ties to the local community and the transmission of community values influenced the conduct of soldiers. Mitchell offers the persuasive argument that because of the local nature of military recruitment, Civil War-era soldiers never made a complete transformation from citizen to soldier.

Moreover, the continued reinforcement of local values through correspondence, furloughs, and civilian visits sustained a truly civilian army with a sense of patriotism defined more often by the local context of "hearth and home" than by nationalism.

Matthew Gallman, author of a fine book-length study of war-time Philadelphia, *Mastering Wartime* (1990), reworks material on that city's Great Central Fair of 1864, a massive charitable fundraiser for the U.S. Sanitary Commission. His effort well illustrates both the nature and the depth of nonmilitary volunteerism. Gallman challenges the thesis that the Civil War was a catalyst for the emergence of highly centralized, depersonalized philanthropy in America. Instead, Gallman finds Civil War philanthropy as experienced in the Great Fair to be decentralized, chaotic, haphazard, and contentious—a fundamentally grass-roots affair that engaged huge numbers of locals across class lines in a traditional display of community benevolence.

Also with a revisionist bent is Robin Eichman's intriguing assessment of the war's role in transforming urban politics in Chicago. Eichman argues that the coming of war politicized a previously nonpartisan municipal government and gave rise to "machine politics" by greatly increasing the municipality's ability to tax and spend. Yet Chicago's politicians placed self-imposed limits on their new power to redistribute wealth downward to their constituents and consequently retarded the growth of machine patronage. Instead, Chicago politicians used their new taxing power to redistribute wealth upward by increasing property taxes in order to better support the demands of the city's booming meatpacking industry. Hence, the war's legacy in Chicago was to stimulate the formation of partisan urban politics tied to the needs of big business.

The final essays deal with the postwar lives of veterans and widows of veterans. Stuart McConnell explores membership rosters of three posts of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the powerful veterans fraternal and lobbying organization. Although his study affirms that the leadership of GAR posts drew heavily on local business elites, McConnell finds that membership actually mirrored the occupational and ethnic composition of the post's community. Thus, the GAR appears to have been less exclusionary than many Gilded Age fraternal organizations and may have acted as an important source of community harmony in an era of increasing class-based conflict. Amy Holmes, on the other hand, looks at the influence of military pensions on the lives of Union widows in two Michigan and Massachusetts counties. Her essay argues the

importance of these pensions in shaping the quality of life for aging widows during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Pensioned widows had more freedom in choosing not to work and in selecting living arrangements than pensionless widows.

In America the Men Milk the Cows: Factors of Gender, Ethnicity, and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian-American Women, by L. DeAne Lagerquist. Chicago Studies in the History of Religion. Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1991. xvi, 255 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JANE M. PEDERSON, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE

Few immigrant groups more diligently recount their history than Norwegian-Americans. However, women's history is conspicuously underdeveloped in this field. L. DeAne Lagerquist has helped to fill a large gap by tracing the interconnectedness of gender, religion, and ethnicity as Norwegian-American women created American or modern identities. Relying on personal, literary, and institutional sources, she focuses exclusively on women who strongly identified with the Norwegian-American Lutheran church in the upper Midwest between 1850 and the early twentieth century. She concludes that the church mediated the move from traditional Norway to modern America, shaping identities and easing the transition to the American environment.

Lagerquist provides a tight overview of the distinct social, religious, and political background of Norway, which produced a pietistic peasantry progressively losing their land and a cultured *conditioneret*, a class-conscious professional and intellectual elite, with bureaucratic origins. Next she explores the diverse social, economic, and demographic factors that pushed women and men to leave, the difficulties of making the trip, the early challenges of settlement and institution building, and the well-known class, personality, and doctrinal conflicts that surfaced among the Norwegian-American Lutherans.

In a chapter on "Home and Family," Lagerquist notes change and continuity for women in America in gender identities, work arrangements, and material culture. Class structured women's lives and identities in Norway, on the trip across, and after they arrived. Peasant women prepared trunks of food for the trip and fed their families, while women of the *conditioneret* dined in staterooms on meals prepared by the ship's chef. Peasant women worked to recre-

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