

*Quest for Utopia: The Icarians of Adams County*, by Paul S. Gauthier. Corning, Iowa: Gauthier Publishing Co., 1992. iv, 157 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography. \$19.75 paper.

REVIEWED BY H. ROGER GRANT, UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

One of America's most enduring communal groups, the Icarians, followers of the famous nineteenth-century French politician and social critic, Étienne Cabet, has attracted considerable attention by scholars, journalists, and other writers. This is understandable. For more than fifty years these communitarians made several attempts to establish a perfect society, first in Texas, later in Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa, and finally in California. Their goal was simple: they hoped to create a society free of human suffering. Since many Icarians had personally experienced the ravages of early industrialism, they believed that the solution to individuals' problems in a changing world was not to revolt or reform but to withdraw completely from society and build a new or parallel one.

*Quest for Utopia: The Icarians of Adams County* offers little interpretative material, yet it does provide interesting information about the Iowa phase of Icarianism. These utopians initially arrived on the mostly empty prairies of southwestern Iowa in 1852 and remained there, although later split by factionalism, until the 1890s. What is especially useful in this volume is the author's description of what happened to the group after this secular experiment finally collapsed and how local residents have viewed this movement.

Paul S. Gauthier, the author of this inexpensively printed paperback work, is a veteran Corning, Iowa, journalist. Much of this material appeared initially as a series of feature articles in the *Adams County Free Press*, and this book reflects his journalistic endeavors. Surely a highlight of Gauthier's efforts is the large number of illustrations. Also of note is the extensive bibliography of published materials.

*The Diary of Caroline Seabury, 1854-1863*, edited by Suzanne L. Bunkers. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. xi, 148 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth, \$10.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY ROSEMARY F. CARROLL, COE COLLEGE

*The Diary of Caroline Seabury, 1854-1863* is an interesting and informative account by an articulate northern woman of her life in Columbus, Mississippi, both in the antebellum years and through part of the Civil War. Caroline Seabury, a New Englander by birth,

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.