

That such racial integration and civility existed during the height of segregation, disfranchisement, and lynching makes the Buxton story one of national and international significance. People with different histories and identities did live in unusual harmony. The reasons include a corporation whose policies "at least paralleled welfare capitalism" (112); two extraordinary top executives, John and Ben Buxton (father and son); a progressive labor union, the UMW; and a colorful cast of thousands who demonstrated that given good wages, equal opportunity, and the freedom to control their own religious, economic, social, and political institutions, people were capable of creating the just, vibrant, fulfilling, and sustaining community that was and is the elusive American Dream. This reprint will extend that dream and point to possibilities of expanding it through new research into John and Ben Buxton, the records of the Chicago & North Western railroad, social class, the white population of Buxton, and the culture of the state, because it seems more than coincidence that this "Kind of Heaven" happened in Iowa.

From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart: A Cultural History of Domestic Advice, by Sarah A. Leavitt. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. xiii, 250 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

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Martha Stewart's recent conviction may draw readers to Sarah Leavitt's *From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart*, but those looking for the dish on Stewart should look elsewhere. Instead, readers will find that Beecher and Stewart function as bookends in a history of domestic advice manuals. That history examines American women's enduring fascination with the dream of an ideal home. Leavitt demonstrates not only that the worlds within the pages of home manuals and magazines were the "stuff of fantasy," but also that domestic fantasies provide insight into American women's changing anxieties, innovations, and aspirations from the 1850s to the end of the twentieth century (5).

In extolling the moral virtues of durable carpets, denigrating draperies for harboring disease, and offering tips on the use of boxes as furniture in immigrant homes, advice-givers were recommending nothing less than the transformation of American society. Leavitt proposes that women's fascination with such manuals is driven in part by homemakers' desires to participate in conversations about an ideal

America by imagining perfection at home. The floor plans, furniture designs, and domestic parables that advisers spun out constituted an ongoing dialogue between manuals and American women about gender roles, health and sanitation, morality, and civic identity. Advisers insisted that even by changing the subtle appointments of their living rooms, women could influence the health and character of their offspring; manuals also reassured women that their consumer decisions *did* make a difference.

Leavitt begins with such familiar print manuals as Beecher's *American Woman's Home* (1869) and ends with Stewart's lucrative media empire, but in between she brings a whole new pantheon of domestic advisers to light. She organizes her chapters by themes that emerge from her rich archival and material sources. Advice about arranging kitchens, bathrooms, and rumpus rooms reflected and influenced technological advancement, the Americanization movement, modernist aesthetics, anti-modernist nostalgia, and trends in family organization. Early domestic manuals emphasized the moral character of functional carpets and durable furniture, while modernists of the twentieth century waged an incessant battle against frivolous excesses of décor, most notably the ubiquitous Victorian "bric-a-brac." Leavitt has uncovered evidence of the ways advisers' imperatives found their way into education—for example, in a sketch of household plumbing produced by a home economics student and in a "course card" of domestic tasks to be mastered by immigrant girls in New York City. Color wheels demonstrate advisers' growing concerns with psychology in the 'teens; practice design grids for the family-friendly "open-floor" plan of the 1950s reveal new emphases on flexibility and choice for family members; photographs of test kitchens show a new bond between domestic science and industry.

Women consumed these manuals without always following the advice of the various "domiologists." Leavitt acknowledges that her sources say more about an increasingly professional group of advisers' desire for reform than about the ways American women actually used and decorated their homes. Yet while many women may not have chosen to or been able to follow such advice, the fantasy itself nonetheless held appeal for women who found in the advisers' directives a way to understand their roles in promoting their families' health and character development. The ongoing popularity of these manuals and the fact that many domiologists spread their advice through public exhibitions and company trade catalogs suggest that rank-and-file women's lives were shaped—and perhaps empowered—by these domestic developments.

In the end, Leavitt downplays the charge, derived from her own thesis, that domestic mavens such as Stewart are propagating an unattainable ideal. Instead, she argues that Stewart and her predecessors are "connected with the most important cultural dialogues of their day" (205). Leavitt might have stressed even more what seems to be her most potent historical intervention. Her evidence shows that we ought not to limit our reading of domestic products and designs as reflections only of women's desires, for upon both real and imagined homes are inscribed the fantasies and anxieties of a changing American society. This argument should open the home to historical analysis of topics beyond those traditionally regarded as belonging only to women's history. Given nineteenth-century adviser Eunice Beecher's exhortation that "the household . . . is an inexhaustible theme," Iowa historians might turn with a new eye to the nineteenth-century farmhouse, the midwestern ranch home, or to domestic science programs at their own universities (7). These places might prove to be more than separate spheres or women's fantasy worlds, and be regarded instead as testing grounds for nationalist nostalgia, pop psychology theory, technological innovation . . . or even economic empires.

Un-American Womanhood: Antiradicalism, Antifeminism, and the First Red Scare, by Kim E. Nielsen. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001. x, 219 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, appendix, index. \$54.95 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

Reviewer Catherine McNicol Stock is professor of history at Connecticut College. She is the author of *Rural Radicals: Righteous Radicals in the American Grain* (1996) and *Main Street in Crisis: The Great Depression and the Old Middle Class on the Northern Plains* (1992).

One of the most auspicious developments in the "new political history" is the incorporation of analyses from women's and gender studies into the study of civic society. Likewise, one of the most intriguing developments in women's and gender history is the renewed interest in the public lives of women, including conservative women. Kim Nielsen's refreshingly slim yet intellectually solid volume demonstrates that these new approaches are beginning to generate excellent results.

The disappearance of women's radicalism from the American political stage just after the heady success of the suffrage movement is a historical mystery that until now has had no concrete explanation. According to Nielsen, anticommunist and antifeminist groups coalesced in the immediate postwar years to attack all manner of women's organizations, even those that did not consider themselves feminist, and

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