

Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900, by Ruth Bordin. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981. pp. xviii, 211. Photographs, appendixes, index. \$17.50.

Since colonial days Americans have demonstrated a fondness for alcohol. Nineteenth-century industrialization, urbanization, and immigration served to emphasize that inclination. New urban working class neighborhoods, suddenly swollen with Irish, Polish, Greek, Italian, Russian, and other immigrants for whom the consumption of alcohol was a longstanding cultural characteristic, became highly visible centers of alcohol abuse to some native white Americans. Temperance organizations, like the Anti-Saloon League, Prohibition Party, and Sons and Daughters of Temperance, arose to crusade against alcohol. Undoubtedly the best known and most important of these groups is the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

Ruth Bordin, researcher at the Bentley Historical Library of the University of Michigan, examines the role of women in the temperance movement through a study of the WCTU. She argues that, in the post-Civil War nineteenth century, "women used the WCTU as a base for their participation in reformist causes, as a sophisticated avenue for political action, as a support for demanding the ballot, and as a vehicle for supporting a wide range of charitable activities" (p. xvi). Thus, Bordin places the WCTU in a far larger role than the often stereotyped Carry Nation ax-wielders.

To a great extent, the success of the WCTU can be largely attributed to its first two presidents, Annie Wittenmyer and Frances E. Willard, who controlled the organization during its first quarter century. In age, temperament, and philosophy, Wittenmyer and Willard were very different women. Wittenmyer, the older of the two, was the editor of a Methodist newspaper and founder of the Methodist Home Missionary Society. Her primary commitment was to gospel temperance. She believed that the WCTU's program should be aimed at personal reform of the alcoholic and of the entire liquor industry through "moral suasion." Far more conservative than Willard, she refused to support the suffrage campaign for fear that it would destroy the family.

Bordin suggests that for Willard temperance was merely a means to an end. Her primary objective was women's rights. Younger, better educated, more radical, and charismatic enough to become a national heroine, Willard was destined to clash with Wittenmyer. Although their disagreements were largely tactical, they increased in frequency until Willard defeated Wittenmyer at the WCTU's sixth annual con-

vention in 1879. Bordin insists, however, that the election did not symbolize a fundamental change from a temperance praying society to an activist organization but rather stresses the continuity between the Wittenmyer and Willard years. She argues that they served together as national officers for five years prior to Willard's election and that the seeds of future activism germinated during that period. Under any circumstance, it was under Willard's leadership that the WCTU grew into what Bordin calls the "major vehicle through which women developed a changing role for themselves in American society."

The Union was the first mass movement of women in American history. Its membership included women of all classes, races, religions, and nationalities. It provided for a generation of American women the opportunity to develop the experience, confidence, and know-how that facilitated the larger efforts they would undertake in the new century. American women learned how to "get things done" in a manner that would benefit them and society as a whole. Ruth Bordin has provided an important addition to the shelves of those interested in women's history, the history of political action groups, reform movements, and related topics. Iowans will be particularly interested in the important role played by Annie Wittenmyer in the temperance and women's movements.

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American Indian Environments: Ecological Issues in Native American History, edited by Christopher Vecsey and Robert W. Venables. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980. pp. xxv, 208. Photographs, map, table, index. \$9.95 paper, \$18.00 cloth.

Anthologies of Native American history have become endemic of late. This writer has reviewed three of them in as many months. Yet, if one were to choose just one collection to read this year that was both historically enlightening and directly relevant to contemporary issues, that one should be *American Indian Environments*.

The ten essays in this volume (seven of which were presented at a 1979 symposium sponsored by Hobart and William Smith Colleges and three from a history forum held that same year at Duquesne University) explore the relationship of Native Americans to their environments, their perception of the natural world, their dependence on it, and their historic struggle with other cultural groups over its possession and use. "Environments" in this context is taken to mean the non-human surroundings which might elsewhere be described as

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