

excessively on the left-right fight. Instead, he uses the interviews to show how Iowa labor shaped state and local politics throughout the postwar period. Immediately after the war Iowa labor mobilized against efforts to pass a right-to-work law. In the 1950s Iowa labor unions became the base of an increasingly aggressive Democratic Party. These oral accounts should encourage renewed attention to the link between labor and liberal politics in postwar America.

Despite the richness of *Solidarity and Survival*, there are important omissions. In particular, the book does not reflect how the IFL project documents the experience of Iowa's skilled workers and their unions. The appendix lists interviews with forty-six members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, yet not a single one appears in the text. This gap reflects Stromquist's decision to concentrate on Iowa's industrial workers, rather than make the book a sampler, without coherent focus, of all the interviews. Despite this probably unavoidable limitation, *Solidarity and Survival* provides a solid introduction to the IFL project, and should stimulate more research on Iowa's working-class people.

Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963, by Katherine Jellison. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993. xxii, 217 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$13.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY MARY NETH, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY AND THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

One of the most understudied groups in women's history is farm women. This is beginning to change, and Katherine Jellison's *Entitled to Power* will be an important book in the correction of this imbalance. Examining the Midwest over a fifty-year period of the twentieth century, Jellison argues that farm women had their own vision of their labor, and they selected technology not just to ease some of this labor, but also to complement their place as economic contributors to their family farms. While government, the farm press, and advertisers often assumed that farm women would use new technology to remove themselves from farm production and restrict their work to that of "homemaker," farm women rejected this model of womanhood. Over this period, farm women successfully maintained their role as productive contributors to family farms, even though technology, the changing agricultural economy, and their own choices had altered the content of that work. What did not change, according to Jellison, was women's place within the patriarchal farm family. Women continued

to work in support of men's activities, while men continued to control the primary resources of farm families.

Jellison traces both the role of government, the farm press, and advertisers in promoting technology to alter rural life and the demands and desires farm women expressed for technological change. One of the major strengths of the book is its scope. Jellison examines the continuity and change in government policy and social ideology from 1913 to 1963. This story organizes the book, with chapters developing chronologically through the Country Life Movement of the Progressive Era, the expansion of the Extension Service and the push for consumption in the more conservative 1920s, the diverse and often contradictory agricultural programs of the New Deal, the promotion of women's labor in the fields to meet the emergency of World War II, and the domestic ideal of homemaker and consumer of the postwar era.

This narrative parallels themes of urban women's history. Jellison's book complements the existing literature while expanding and modifying it to include treatment of the way the dominant ideology and trends of the period applied to farm women in the Midwest. Throughout the period, altering the work of farm women was crucial to policies that promoted farm modernization. Most often, promoters envisioned farm women's labor becoming more like that of urban women, more focused on household work and more removed from any type of labor in the field or income-producing work in the garden or henhouse. Jellison does note exceptions to this rule, such as Progressive Era reformers whose goals of uplift made them somewhat more responsive to the demands of farm women, some advertisers who recognized that addressing the productive role of women was crucial to selling their products, and government's need to replace labor shortages during World War II.

In counterpoint to these changes in ideology and policy, Jellison examines the actual adoption of technology by farm people and the ways farm women viewed this technology. Too often historians have assumed that the availability of technology meant that most farm people, especially in the more prosperous Midwest, owned that technology. Jellison makes a major contribution by carefully documenting how, until after World War II, farm incomes restricted the purchase of much of the technology that promoters proclaimed essential decades earlier. She uses quantitative materials, letters to government agencies and the farm press, surveys of rural conditions, photographs, and oral histories to document the choices farm people made and farm women's priorities. For example, Jellison points out that farm women preferred the sociability gained from communications technology, such as auto-

mobiles and telephones, to domestic technology that would "tie them to their farmhouse kitchens (65)."

Jellison also analyzes the conflict within farm families over how income should be spent. Farm women's choices were restricted because farm men usually made these decisions and often did not value the household labor of farm women. Consequently, technology for the farm took priority over that for the home. Jellison notes that farm women often agreed with this decision as a strategy for improving family income. Because farm women often served as a supplemental labor force in the field or cooked for hired help, their labor also could be eased by the purchase of a tractor or other field technology. In her overall thesis, however, Jellison emphasizes the patriarchal control by farm men and argues that farm women may have resisted changes in their productive role but acquiesced to and rarely challenged male control of the farm.

In this case, Jellison's analysis could benefit from closer attention to the "class" or economic interests of farm women. By posing a dichotomy between farm women's interests as women and their interests as members of struggling farm families, Jellison creates contradictions between what some farm women experienced simultaneously — being poor and being women. Strategies for achieving "gender parity" within family-based agriculture probably depended on the prosperity of a farm or the general economic conditions of a time period. A more careful analysis of when farm men's, women's, and children's interests merged and when they diverged would have more subtly historicized Jellison's portrait of rural patriarchy.

Jellison is extremely creative in her use of source materials. Her analysis of advertising and photographs is especially strong, and the inclusion of many illustrations makes the presentation of these ideas vivid. For example, Farm Security Administration photographs effectively depict the uneven diffusion of technology. A particularly strong chapter compares the very different roles of technology in Shelby County, Iowa, and Haskell County, Kansas, in 1940. While Iowa women adopted technology that maintained their role as producers within the farm economy in the garden, field, and henhouse, Kansas women used the automobile to run errands and shop, to take a more active role in public organizations, and to take off-farm wage jobs. As this chapter indicates, there was a great deal of diversity in the rural Midwest, and although Jellison includes data on midwesterners of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, her analysis of these differences is rarely as well integrated into her overall thesis as it is in this chapter.

What Jellison has accomplished with this book is to provide a broad survey of farm women's labor, government agricultural policy, social ideology about farm women's role, and the adoption and adaptation of technology and its impact on agriculture and the work of farm women in the Midwest. She has defined the major changes of the time period and has begun to define significant similarities and differences in the lives of farm and urban women. Her book, which is both sophisticated and accessible, is a significant contribution for this new field.

Farming the Home Place: A Japanese American Community in California, 1919-1982, by Valerie J. Matsumoto. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993. ix, 262 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY MARK FRIEDBERGER, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Farming the Home Place is far more wide ranging than its title implies. The author has stretched the concept of community beyond the small Japanese-American farming area in California's Central Valley which provides its base. Essentially, the book is about how a marginal ethnic group merged into the mainstream of American society despite the extreme stress of internment during World War II.

Matsumoto charts the struggles of the early years of the Cortez Colony, where pioneer farm families battled racism and legal barriers to set up small vegetable and fruit operations in a harsh environment. She shows how foreign-born farmers registered land in the names of their native-born children to avoid discriminatory land ownership regulations; how good business sense led the colony to found the Cortez Growers Association, which was connected to the efficient marketing structures that were part of California's agribusiness make-up in the first half of the century; how the Cortez growers arranged for their farms to be cared for by an Anglo business agent while they were interned; and how, despite vicious vigilantism after their release, they reweave the web of community in Cortez and embarked on a modernization program that included the mechanization of their farms and a shift to orchard crops such as almonds.

Japanese Americans went into agriculture in the early twentieth century because opportunities were blocked in urban occupations. They saw farming as a means to achieve success and respectability. At the same time, California's agriculture saw a variety of other ethnic groups, not ordinarily associated with agriculture in other regions of the country, move into farming for the same reasons. The Portuguese in dairying, Punjabis in cotton, and Croatians in grapes all became

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.