

Tucker begins with the Indian cultivation of corn, squash, and other crops. He then explains how the earliest colonists brought with them a tradition of gardening in raised garden beds and how they mixed folklore and astrology to establish planting times and fertilizing procedures. Successive chapters cover typical New England gardens, Thomas Jefferson's pursuit of agricultural science, the relationship between gardening enthusiasts and nineteenth-century reform movements, the rise of seed companies and the use of chemical fertilizers and insecticides later in the century, the growth of gardening in the suburbs, Victory gardening during both world wars, and finally the emergence of the organic gardening movement in the late twentieth century.

To cover such a broad swath of American history in twelve short chapters, Tucker relies heavily on prescriptive literature—how-to-garden books written by reformers, such as Philip Miller's *The Gardeners Dictionary* (1754), Bernard McMahon's *The American Gardener's Calendar* (1806), and Jerome Rodale's *Pay Dirt* (1945). Tucker also has a fondness for quoting famous American writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Charles Dudley Warner about their gardening ideals. These literary sources and prescriptive literature may or may not have reflected common gardening practices at the time.

Despite his fondness for literary sources and his occasional tendency to idealize horticulture (he even argues that a driving force for suburbanization in America has been the desire to have a garden), Tucker has provided a useful, well-written account of vegetable gardening in America. Readers will particularly enjoy his coverage of the rise of chemical farming and the opposition to it mounted by the organic gardening movement in the twentieth century. In short, Tucker has written a sprightly introduction to the important but neglected history of vegetable gardening that will establish the starting point for all future studies in this field.

Home on the Range: A Culinary History of the American West, by Cathy Luchetti. New York: Villard Books, 1993. xxxiii, 238 pp. Illustrations, bibliography. \$25.00 paper.

REVIEWED BY SARAH F. MCMAHON, BOWDOIN COLLEGE

The front cover of *Home on the Range: A Culinary History of the American West* offers a second subtitle: "Frontier Recipes and Memories from the Pioneers of the Early West (1800–1915)." Throughout the text, numerous photographs superbly illustrate an intriguing variety of western cooks and cooking situations, and selections from pioneer accounts describe an impressive array of frontier culinary experiences.

In combination, the photographs, the pioneer accounts, and the eclectic recipes that accompany the accounts capture the rich potential of a culinary history of the pioneer West. Yet in many ways the book remains an introduction rather than a realization of such a history.

The book is broadly organized according to frontier process. Within that structure, it presents cultural and regional variations. It begins with the journey ("Cooking by the Mile"), proceeds through "Gold Rush Cooking" and "Cooking on the Range," and culminates with "Settling In," "Cooking with Faith," and "Melting Pot: Ethnic Diversity on the Frontier." Each chapter opens with an overview, intended to provide a context for reading the selections from the collection of pioneer diaries and memoirs that Luchetti has discovered. Recipes taken from a range of sources complement the text and the accounts. Some of her sources are more appropriate than others. For example, how many urban westerners were reading Fannie Farmer's *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*?

The premise of the book is that the West typified the American "melting pot": the foodways of the various ethnic and cultural groups that settled the West combined to create a culinary pluralism. At the same time, in spite of their different culinary traditions, most western pioneers were subjected to a dietary monotony born of limited supplies and varieties of foods. Luchetti argues that their responses were almost uniformly shaped by economic considerations and the need to substitute ingredients and prepare food creatively. Throughout the book, Luchetti attempts to tie together the diverse experiences of men and women—across time, space, and circumstance—through their similar culinary "struggles" (31).

The introduction and the overviews that open each chapter present a range of themes, topics, and culinary morsels that place food squarely in the larger social context of the frontier. Yet much of Luchetti's text begs for a more fully developed argument that would give the discussion an overall coherence. As she presents various themes, Luchetti draws from primary sources that move widely back and forth between eras and geographical regions. Consequently, the discussion focuses on similarities across time and space rather than on comparisons and contrasts. Luchetti collected numerous pioneer memoirs, but she tends to present the evidence at face value and to generalize broadly and somewhat uncritically from a few accounts. Finally, although the thematic structure occasionally seems to be determined by the evidence she has found (for example, in the section on "Military Cuisine"), at other times the topical organization seems forced. For example, the chapter on "Cooking by Faith" is a hodgepodge of accounts only loosely connected by their references to religion.

Thus, while Luchetti offers an introduction to some of the themes in the culinary history of the West, she had both the evidence and the supporting scholarly research to do more. Foodways and culinary history have become serious fields of research, yet Luchetti tends to sweep through topics without the benefit of the secondary literature (much of which she includes in the bibliography but not in the listings of sources for each chapter). Both food histories and more general social histories of the West and the frontier could have offered a clearer focus for her discussions, highlighted the variations and comparisons across time and space, and supported the fine collection of photographs, memoirs, and recipes that she presents.

North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation, by Terry G. Jordan. *Histories of the American Frontier*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993. xi, 439 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, charts, notes, annotated bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY JAMES W. WHITAKER, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

In this monumental interdisciplinary study, geographer Terry Jordan continues earlier revisionist work on the cattle-ranching frontier, which, for many, was the quintessential American frontier development. As a cultural geographer, Jordan searches for additional evidence—such as material culture artifacts and language usage—beyond the written and archival sources of historians. His work stresses the myriad elements that involve diffusion, dilution, adaptation, and persistence of cultural traits as people, plants, and animals interact with their environment through time and space. He concludes from this complex array of evidence that the traditional view of the roots of the American Great Plains frontier cattle-ranching business is oversimplified.

The book is very readable in developing the argument and illustrating the complexity of cultural traits and their movements. He begins with the basics of cattle raising in terms of animal husbandry, culture, ecology, economics, and language. In the next three chapters he examines the three root regions of cattle raising on the eastern edge of the Atlantic Ocean (in order of importance: Spain, the British Isles, and sub-Saharan west Africa), and describes how the activity was transferred and adapted as people moved first to the West Indies and then to the North American diffusion points: Carolina, Florida, and Mexico. In each move, some traits persisted, some were modified, and some were abandoned, but they can be clearly traced.

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