

*Building for the Centuries* by John Keiser. These works rightfully belong in any serious library of Illinois history.

The product of a well-grounded scholar of Illinois history who also writes gracefully, this book should interest a general audience and be an obvious choice for college courses in Illinois history. Iowans curious about their peculiar neighbor to the east will find it lively and informative reading.

*Confronting Race: Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1815-1915*, by Glenda Riley. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004. ix, 326 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

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Glenda Riley's *Women and Indians on the Frontier*, first published in 1984, was one of a path-breaking group of books published in the 1980s that helped create the field of western women's studies. It was significant in making relationships between women and Native Americans central, suggesting that contact between cultures was critical to understanding white women's western experiences. In *Confronting Race*, Riley has undertaken the admirable task of updating that book to incorporate myriad new works that look at western settlement as an imperialist endeavor. Riley's revisions stress the subtle and blatant ways that imperialism influenced how white women saw themselves and their mission in the West, even as contact with Indians brought them into sometimes intimate relations with these native "others."

Riley begins by surveying ideologies that shaped white men's and women's attitudes towards Indians, including both American and, usefully, European ideas. She summarizes the domestic ideology that constructed white women as civilizers as well as emerging feminist ideals that imagined a wider realm for women in the West. Drawing on dime novels, popular literature, and art, she iterates the various images of Indians—as savages, as drudges, as natural nobility—that whites projected onto them. By including whites' economic, moral, and social belief systems, Riley illuminates the context in which Indian-white relations took place. The middle chapters draw on letters and diaries to reconstruct how women and men who settled the West really saw their Indian neighbors. The imperialist mentality had a significant effect on whites' beliefs, leading women, for example, to see themselves as "potential victims" and Indians as "savage and rapacious"—in part to justify their own roles as civilizers. Yet Riley finds

that white women were gradually able to recognize Indians' humanity and to sympathize with them. Women's roles in sustaining home and family brought them into closer contact with Indians than did men's work, as women interacted with Indians through exchange of household goods, via home visits, and as employers of household domestics. In a final chapter, Riley compares white women's interactions with Indians to their attitudes towards Mormons and Panamanians, and finds less sympathy toward these groups.

Riley's work is marked by the same copious research and meticulous attention to detail that made her earlier work so important. At times, however, her revisions sit uneasily with earlier findings. Although the first chapters situate interaction between these groups within a larger historical context, the middle chapters do not fully integrate historical change into her evaluation of women's evolving attitudes. By bringing together sources from various geographic locales and time periods as well as drawing on writings by women in diverse social positions (overland travelers, missionaries, military wives), Riley loses some of the context in which imperial power operated. She attributes much change in perception to growing familiarity, but white women's interactions were also shaped by new Indian policy, increasing military and missionary presence, and women's own roles as professionals in reform fields. While the comparison with Mormons and Panamanians highlights differences, it is too brief to address the complexity of these relationships—in which, for example, Mormon women could be regarded as non-white by other white women and become, like Indians, targets for sympathy and reform.

But because Riley stresses that sympathetic interactions with Indians did not erase colonialist mentality, *Confronting Race* is a fine introduction to western women's lives, to the ways gender shaped inter-ethnic relationships on the frontier, and to the many ways imperialism operated to shape the western experience. Her close attention to daily life is a great strength of her work, and readers will find these details a fascinating way to open up frontier women's experience. The personal writings provide a valuable corrective to frontier myth, and suggest the complexity and variety that characterized western settlement. The work is eminently accessible to undergraduates as well as readers outside the academy, who will learn much from the details through which women and men came to know and form impressions about Indians: their homes, their clothing, their interactions with children. Riley's own past work on Iowa women suggests that Iowa manuscripts may hold possibilities for further scrutiny by looking at these, too, as part of the larger dialogue about imperialism, women's mission, and Native American responses to those endeavors.