

The letters, illustrating Clark's notoriously creative spelling and grammatical shortcomings, include mundane family events involving his wife, son, house, illness, social events, and the hardships of travel. Perhaps more important are historically significant descriptions of the Lewis and Clark expedition, Indian affairs, frontier military activities, the Burr Conspiracy, the death of Meriwether Lewis, and Clark's relationship with his African American slave, York. Six expedition and two post-expedition letters replicate descriptions contained in the journals; others fill in gaps when no official records were kept. Despite York's significant contributions, Clark refused his request to hire out as a means of gaining freedom. Clark was determined that if York attempted to run away he would be sent to New Orleans and sold to "Some Severe master until he thinks better of Such Conduct."

Although historians still debate Meriwether Lewis's final days in October 1809, several letters clearly demonstrate that Clark accepted his partner's death as suicide, not murder. Despite deep feelings of grief, Clark left no doubt that his friend was capable of suicide. This compilation of letters is a valuable addition to the growing body of Lewis and Clark sources and an early contribution to the upcoming bicentennial.

Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes, by Susan Sleeper-Smith. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001. xv, 234 pp. Illustrations, maps, graphs, notes, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Métis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737-1832, by Lucy Eldersveld Murphy. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000. xviii, 233 pp. Illustrations, maps, graphs, notes, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

Reviewer Stephen Warren is visiting assistant professor of history at Augustana College. He is working on a book about the Shawnees and their neighbors.

Susan Sleeper-Smith's *Indian Women and French Men* and Lucy Eldersveld Murphy's *A Gathering of Rivers* offer new insights into the encounter between Indians, Europeans, and Americans in the Midwest. Sleeper-Smith focuses on the Illinois, Miami, and Potawatomi tribes of Illinois, Indiana, and southern Michigan while Murphy concentrates on the Sauk, Meskwaki, and Winnebago tribes of Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Both authors emphasize each tribe's persistence strategies. Far from degraded peoples robbed of hope and bereft of thoughtful responses to the invasion of their lands, midwestern tribes crafted ef-

fective survival strategies over time. Moreover, both Sleeper-Smith and Murphy emphasize the role played by Indian women. In their view, American settlers' racism rather than Indians' failure to adapt to changing circumstances caused removal from the Midwest and the segregation of Indians from whites through the creation of reservations in Wisconsin and Michigan. As new pioneers flooded the Midwest, American Indians were pushed aside by land-hungry whites, with support from government officials.

These general similarities mask important differences between the two books. Sleeper-Smith employs a biographical approach in her study of Indian women and their role in the fur trade. From Marie Rouensa, an early to mid-eighteenth-century Illinois woman, to Marie Bailly, a mid-nineteenth-century Odawa woman, Sleeper-Smith explores the intimate details of the fur trade through the compelling stories of both Indian and métis women. Rouensa seized new opportunities created by the arrival of Catholic missionaries. She converted to Catholicism, married a French fur trader, and avoided the harsh realities of arranged marriage between Indian men and women at the time. Ongoing warfare with the Iroquois and rampant disease throughout the Illinois country devastated Rouensa's people. Unequal sex ratios in which women often outnumbered men four to one furthered the abusive dependency of Indian women on Indian men. Catholicism offered a spiritual and marital refuge from this harsh world. Rouensa and other women like her led the way in conversion and worked as catechizers, instructors, and interpreters. Moreover, they became the matriarchs of new Catholic kin networks, fueled in part by godparenthood and the alliances derived from it. Thus Catholicism helped women redefine their economic and cultural relationship to Indian men as well as the relationship between their tribes and the French with whom they traded. In short, women acted as power brokers and alliance builders in areas colonized by the French.

The Illinois, Miami, and Potawatomi tribes preferred trading with and living among the French in part because the French lacked the population density to divest Indians of their land and dominate them culturally. Similarly, French Catholicism allowed for a significant degree of religious syncretism. Unlike English and, later, American settlers, the French consciously created a middle ground, and marriages with Indian women became the primary means through which the French survived. Indian women adopted French plows and other European agricultural techniques, and their efforts sustained French traders and Indian hunters. The arrival of American settlers in north-western Indiana and southern Michigan significantly undermined this

shared world between the Algonquian tribes and their French trading partners. However, Potawatomis and Miamis made the transition from the beaver trade to the black raccoon trade in order to survive. Moreover, those tribes continued farming and worked diligently to retain legal title to their lands. Such strategies allowed the tribes to hang on to their lands after the passage of the Indian Removal Act. Thereafter, they survived by removing outward signs of their Indian identities, such as modes of dress and speech. According to Sleeper-Smith, they "hid in plain view."

In *A Gathering of Rivers*, Lucy Eldersveld Murphy examines the crucial role played by Indian women in the lead mining region of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, from the Mississippi River to Green Bay. Like Sleeper-Smith, she refuses to accept the view that Indian women were little more than domestic helpmates for French fur traders. Rather, whether they were in the diggings or in one of several Creole trading towns, Indian women helped shape the economies and the cultural practices of the upper Midwest from 1737 to 1832.

Murphy studies a one-hundred-year period of dramatic change and relative peace. After 1737, the French ended their long genocidal war against the Meskwaki people. A new era began that came to a close in 1832 with the Black Hawk War. Murphy divides this century of relative peace into three sections focusing on the economic relationship between Indians and colonizers. In the first section, titled "The Fur Trade and the Creation of Accommodation," Murphy shows that the Meskwaki, Sauk, and Winnebago tribes enjoyed a significant amount of cultural autonomy and economic independence from the French. In fact, Creole communities such as Prairie du Chien and Green Bay were founded by French traders and their Indian wives, thus reinforcing the independence of both Creole and Indian villages.

In the second section of her book, "Lead Mining—Adaptation and Conflict," she examines the transition from Francophone to Anglophone settlement toward the close of the eighteenth century. Indian peoples adjusted to the end of the fur trade by increasing lead mining, a 4,000-year-old pursuit that allowed the tribes to produce yet another important commodity for world markets. Prominent traders such as George Davenport and Julien Dubuque assisted the tribes by accepting lead in place of furs. Indian women, children, and the elderly typically worked in the diggings, while Indian men smelted the lead and guarded the mining camps. Midwestern tribes retained the traditional gender roles common to their patrilineal societies and avoided some of the drastic cultural changes advocated by American missionaries.

In her final section, "Adaptation and Removal," Murphy explains why the toleration and cooperation so common among the French lost ground to removal and segregation in the nineteenth century. For one, lead mining was a low-cost venture for young men willing to work hard. Consequently, American miners used force, bribery, and various forms of deceit to remove Indian people from mines owned and operated by Indian tribes. The U.S. government assisted American miners by insisting on the validity of the Sac and Fox Treaty of 1804, which ceded all of the tribes' land east of the Mississippi River. Consequently, Sauk and Meskwaki miners lacked legal title to their lands in Illinois. Conflict over the mines and the legality of the 1804 treaty led to the Black Hawk War and the removal of the Sauk and Meskwaki peoples from Illinois and eastern Iowa.

Both *Indian Women and French Men* and *A Gathering of Rivers* revise long-held assumptions about Indian women in the Great Lakes region. More importantly, both authors devote much-needed attention to the histories of midwestern tribes *after* the War of 1812. Their efforts suggest that American settlers were primarily responsible for Indian removal. Indian tribes across the Midwest adapted and accommodated, but they were often forcibly removed from their lands because they controlled important sectors of the economy. These books suggest that historians and teachers alike should no longer ignore Indian women or the idea that Native Americans stubbornly resist change.

Lucy Eldersveld Murphy won the Benjamin F. Shambaugh Award for *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Métis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737–1832*. With this award, the State Historical Society of Iowa recognizes the most significant book(s) on Iowa history published each year.—Ed.

Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America, by Steven Stoll. New York: Hill & Wang, 2002. xiii, 287 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth.

Reviewer Jon Lauck is assistant professor of history at South Dakota State University. He is the author of *American Agriculture and the Problem of Monopoly: The Political Economy of Grain Belt Farming, 1953–1980* (2000).

Environmental historians often trace the origins of American environmental consciousness to the writings of George Perkins Marsh in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Only then, many believe, did proper land stewardship and the consequences of reckless tillage creep into public debate about the American agricultural empire. Steven Stoll

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