

prevailed in the 1960s, the Actons identify only a handful of the many laws that have revolutionized the legal environment in Iowa.

The economic and social transformations wrought by the industrial revolution certainly challenged a legal system rooted in agriculture, yet urban-based developments in the law are not prominently represented in *To Go Free*. In fairness, the Actons consciously chose not to write an interpretive social history like Lawrence Friedman's pathbreaking *History of American Law* (1973). They modestly claim that they are "manifestly *not* attempting to write a 'history' at all, but rather, to give an *impression* of history" (vii). Thus, they make no attempt to wrestle with such questions as the impact of Anglo-American law on the state's frontier history, or, conversely, the frontier's impact on the evolution of American law. And although the name Acton is on the book's cover, readers should not expect to find a discussion of whether the power conferred on Iowa's judges tended to corrupt them.

By resurrecting and compiling legal material from the nineteenth century and synthesizing information for their essays, the Actons have done their share of work. With this backdrop now in place, it is high time to undertake an extensive oral history project into the changing practice of law in the twentieth century. Lawrence Friedman defines legal history as a social process, and to a certain extent the Actons see American law as a mirror of society. What is absent from *To Go Free* is an explicit acknowledgment that the process of resolving legal disputes constitutes a distinct culture unto itself, a culture that shapes history and that, in turn, is remolded by modernization.

From the Other Side: Women, Gender, and Immigrant Life in the U.S., 1820-1990, by Donna Gabaccia. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. xvii, 256 pp. Tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY APRIL SCHULTZ, ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Donna Gabaccia's *From the Other Side: Women, Gender, and Immigrant Life in the U.S., 1820-1990* has been long awaited by those who desire a fuller understanding of immigration to the United States. As Gabaccia points out, the immigrant has for the most part been presumed male or, in the best of circumstances, a marginal woman. Women, of course, have always been a part of the immigrant story and at times have even outnumbered men. In this sweeping synthesis, Gabaccia puts women at center stage. The book is fascinating reading for anyone interested in immigration history. But it will prove particularly

useful in the classroom, especially when used in conjunction with ethnic memoirs and autobiographies, which give voice to many of the general patterns described in this book.

Gabaccia begins with a section titled "Coming to the United States." There she outlines the responses of women from various cultures to the demands of a global capitalist economy and centralizing governments. As Gabaccia argues, people's responses to the "fairly uniform changes" wrought by capitalism and centralization "varied considerably with culture and gender" (11). According to Gabaccia, women's experiences on "the other side" (that is, at the margins of global capitalism from which most immigrants came) fell into two broad patterns: subsistence agriculture (Chinese, Italian, Scandinavian) and the spread of female wage-earning (Irish, Russian Jewish, Japanese). The economic, cultural, and political experiences that accompanied these patterns influenced women's coping strategies as migrants and as women who confronted U.S. assumptions about gender.

Reasons for immigration varied from culture to culture and place to place. In many ways, women had more in common culturally and demographically with men in their groups than with other migrating women. However, according to Gabaccia, because women of all origins were "accustomed" to a sexual division of labor and because they all faced U.S. immigration laws that "increasingly institutionalized American assumptions about proper gender relations," immigrant women migrated and lived their new lives "according to patterns that were in some respects unique" (27). Gabaccia traces four patterns of migration among women: refugees for whom marriage, family reunification, or a search for wages all intertwined with political threats in the home country; those who migrated with husbands, planning to settle permanently; those who remained behind while husbands followed a pattern of migration, return, and migration; and women who emigrated alone in order to earn wages. Within each of these patterns, gender-defined immigration laws affected the ratio of male to female immigrants.

In the first part of the book, Gabaccia establishes these important general patterns of global migration and the unique experiences of women; in the second part she deals with women's responses to immigrant life. In well-documented chapters on labor, family, and community-building, Gabaccia compares nineteenth- and twentieth-century women immigrants to native-born and African-American women. She argues, for example, that although the experiences of today's wage-earning women "seem dictated more by their gender in a sex-segregated job market," race, ethnicity, and nationality did in the past have an important impact on women's work (46). Even so, in paid

and unpaid labor, immigrant women always had much in common with such women of all races and ethnicities. Ethnic and racial differences were most pronounced in family ties and collective action.

The last—and most compelling—section of Gabaccia's book focuses on changes in class and culture in the twentieth century, their impact on the adaptation of middle-class immigrants to U.S. life, and the ways in which both preservation and innovation have defined that adaptation. Gabaccia demonstrates that middle-class immigrant women have been both conservers of ethnic identity and cultural innovators. Such a pattern, Gabaccia argues, has also characterized the experience of immigrant women's descendants, who, with their mothers and grandmothers, transformed American domesticity into their own ethnic versions of it. (Such a gendered transformation, which Gabaccia describes as "ethnicization," was of course mediated by race).

Gabaccia concludes with a fascinating paradox. Immigrant women's lives have had more in common with the lives of other American women than immigrant men have had in common with other American men. Yet these same women have shown "greater female than male identification with ethnicity" (127). Gabaccia demonstrates significantly that gender created unique male and female versions of general immigrant and ethnic experiences. To her credit, Gabaccia is also sensitive to the ways in which race, religion, and class have shaped different experiences within these gendered parameters.

A Folk Divided: Homeland Swedes and Swedish Americans, 1840–1940, by H. Arnold Barton. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994. vii, 403 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PETER KIVISTO, AUGUSTANA COLLEGE

Emigrants leave their place of birth for complex reasons, accompanied by an array of psychological orientations toward their homeland, ranging from outright rejection to a powerful longing to return. At the same time, those who remain—including government officials, religious and cultural elites, and ordinary people—often harbor significantly varied opinions about emigrants, extending from the highly critical to the genuinely sympathetic.

Although immigration historians have frequently observed the reactions of those in the homeland to emigrants, none have focused on this topic with the singular attention H. Arnold Barton has in his richly documented study of relations between Swedes and Swedish-Americans over the course of a century. Using a variety of primary sources—including letters, travel accounts, newspaper reports, and

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