

were marginalized both by the economics of the fur trade and by the missionaries' rigidly patriarchal version of Christianity. Actively or passively, they rejected the missionaries and their message. While men increasingly accepted Westernization, women came to redefine their primary social role as the "conservators of traditional ways" (113). By the early twentieth century, this process had deeply divided communities, with men and women "entrenched in separate confrontations" with the new order (128).

This is a very short book with a broad and complex argument, including many groups of people over a span of some three hundred years. The evidence, culled almost entirely from missionaries' writings, is too sketchy to be fully convincing that gender was central in native responses to colonization, or that the antagonism between men and women observed by anthropologists in the 1930s was entirely the product of the colonization process. Still, Devens calls attention to significant and previously neglected aspects of the native responses to Christian missionaries, and emphasizes both the complexity of the initial response and its change over time. She makes an intriguing case for her assertion that the pressures of colonization created very different sets of problems for men and women, and that men and women consequently followed gender-specific strategies in dealing with the Europeans and their culture. If she does not fully persuade, she raises important questions that should be considered in any analysis of Indian-white relations. Although the action of her book occurs on the peripheries of the Midwest, the line of inquiry she suggests could be usefully employed to broaden our understanding of Indian-white relations throughout the region.

America's Utopian Experiments: Communal Havens from Long-Wave Crises, by Brian J. L. Berry. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1992. xvii, 273 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, charts, graphs, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY EDWARD K. SPANN, INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Brian J. L. Berry, a geographer with exceptionally broad interests, has written two books in one. One book is a conventional, somewhat textbookish history of American communal experiments from the eighteenth century to the present. By skimming an impressive range of historical studies, Berry gives us a useful overview embracing Shakers, Owenites, Fourierists, Transcendentalists, Icarians, Georgists, Socialists, New Deal planners, New Age advocates, and others. Of special interest to Iowa readers are two pages dealing with the found-

ing of the Amana colonies and a page relating to the Icarian community established in Corning County, Iowa, in the mid-nineteenth century. To support his text, Berry provides various maps locating the experiments and numerous listings of virtually every variety of experiment attempted; in three tables, for instance, he lists nearly one hundred communities initiated by the New Deal. Such material makes this book a valuable ready reference source.

On the negative side, Berry's treatment of utopian history is generally glib and sometimes slapdash. He lumps together, for instance, a variety of religious communities under the heading of Rappite communities, even though some had virtually no relationship with George Rapp's Harmony Society, and he lists the Hopedale Community as a Fourierist experiment, ignoring completely its deeper roots in Non-Resistance. More generally, he demonstrates this same superficial understanding in his discussions of such important movements as Owenism and Fourierism and also of Socialism, Marxian and otherwise. His treatment of the post-1960s movements is even shallower.

As he makes plain from the very beginning, Berry is interested less in history than in developing "a speculative essay that suggests relationships between economics, religion, and politics in the development of utopian communities" (xv). He wants to demonstrate the thesis that surges in utopian efforts and the millenarian excitement often associated with them have been triggered by long-term economic deflations. In some ways, this theory is self-evident in that utopian effort is generally born out of discontents with existing society, and such discontents are usually generated by periods of economic crisis. Various works, including my own *Brotherly Tomorrows* (1989), have discussed such a linkage.

What distinguishes Berry's thesis is its conversion of common-sense observation into what can be best described as a pseudoscientific law founded on the economic "long-waves" postulated by Nicolai D. Kondratiev in 1926. Two such waves have direct relevance: running from "trough to peak to trough" of prices, one extended from 1789 to 1814 to 1849 and the other from 1849 to 1865 to 1896. "Each domestic utopian surge," says Berry, "coincided with a deflationary episode" in these cycles (25). Thus, Robert Owen's disastrous experiment at New Harmony was timed not by the fact that New Harmony was made available for his purchase in 1824 but by a period of deflation that began in 1815. And so Fourierism and other utopian efforts in the 1840s grew out of the depression following the Panic of 1837, and late nineteenth-century efforts emerged from the long deflationary period after the Civil War. In the twentieth century, similar economic conditions produced two surges, in the 1930s and the 1960s.

This mechanical linkage between economic trend and utopian experiment saves Berry the trouble of having to explain the particular origins of individual efforts or even to delve into the motivations behind each general utopian episode. Everything results from "long waves," a kind of law of utopian development that enables him even to predict a new utopian surge for the 1990s. How valid is the implied claim to scientific reliability and precision? Not very. Although as expected, most utopian foundings occurred during periods of deflation, there are numerous exceptions. During a period of inflation in the early twentieth century, for instance, nine religious, eleven secular, and nine socialist communes were founded in defiance of Berry's law.

An even more formidable challenge is posed by the post-1960 explosion of communes so numerous that Berry does not try to provide a definitive listing of them. How can he explain this eruption during a period of apparent prosperity, one he admits was "not afflicted by the same kind of downwave psychology" of earlier times (215)? His answer is that government spending had replaced the cycle of deflation and inflation with one of permanent inflation broken by "a trough that was free of deflation" (236). Although this sophistry allows him to breeze through the 1960s with hardly a reference to counterculture, the Vietnam War, and other factors, one would have to believe in the medicinal value of snake oil to accept it.

America's Utopian Experiments, then, has some limited strengths, but its only claim to notice rests on a dubious thesis, a recasting of the obvious into the pretentious. Would I purchase this work for my library? Probably yes. Do I recommend it to the people of Iowa? Only with hesitation. Do I trust the claim on its back cover that it presents "a new tool both for interpreting America's utopian past and for predicting the consequences of our present and future economic situation?" Decidedly not.

The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism, by Allan Kulikoff. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992. xiv, 341 pp. Illustrations, tables, charts, graphs, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.50 cloth, \$17.50 paper.

REVIEWED BY SUSAN E. GRAY, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism is a collection of eight essays. Earlier versions of four of the essays were previously published; two others have subsequently appeared elsewhere. The collection thus represents a progress report on Kulikoff's thinking, based on prodigious reading and his own meticulous research, about the his-

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.