

Book Reviews

Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900, by Carol Devens. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. xi, 185 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MARY ELLEN ROWE, CENTRAL MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

Carol Deven writes with a threefold purpose. First, she emphasizes the central role native women played in the history of Indian-white contact. She also examines the complexities of native responses to colonization. Finally, she argues that the "mechanisms of colonization," particularly the work of Christian missionaries, disrupted the interdependent "connectedness" of gender roles, creating antagonism between men and women. Her brief, densely written study includes a broad and somewhat disjointed range of people and situations: contacts of the native peoples of the lower Great Lakes with French Jesuits in the seventeenth century; early nineteenth-century Cree and northern Ojibwa with British Methodists in the Canadian interior; late nineteenth-century Ojibwa with American Presbyterians on the upper Great Lakes; and Ojibwa with American anthropologists in the 1930s. Devens insists that this broad scope allows her to identify patterns consistent across time and place, but it is disconcerting to find her analysis smoothly glossing over real and significant cultural differences among the various groups of Indians and whites alike.

Devens finds her recurring patterns, however. Confronted with Christian missionaries, a native group might uniformly reject them as a threat to traditional values and social structure. On the other hand, driven by the economic and political pressures of colonization, the people might accommodate themselves to the missionaries and their message as a survival strategy. Most commonly, however, a native community split in its response to the newcomers. In Devens's formulation, such splits formed primarily along gender lines. The men, increasingly redefining their economic and social status in terms of their participation in the fur trade, were drawn into extensive economic and diplomatic interaction with the colonizers. Christianity and European-style education offered them a wide range of advantages, practical and psychological, in this relationship. Women, by contrast,

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-

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