

political and economic solutions such as woman suffrage, pacifism, socialism, and communism (which, in the 1930s, seemed to offer the kind of society of which the Christian ideal spoke) and the solution of mental healing, which she eventually concluded was unscientific and hence "of no use whatsoever in solving human problems" (152).

The real question, of course, is whether Mary Collson was a weak, and perhaps even an ill, person who sought to escape from reality, or an enormously sensitive and caring person whose health and dedication to humanity gave way to a society not yet ready for, or threatened by, such a woman. Also, why did the Jane Addamses, the Lillian Walds, the Florence Kelleys, and others like them remain active in the world while Mary Collson, trained as a rationalist, spent so much of her life as a mystic? Unfortunately, *A Woman's Ministry* does not answer these important questions. Yet, having said that, the book still is worth reading. While it does not establish the significance of Mary Collson in the world of late nineteenth and twentieth century social reform or mind healing, it does reveal a good deal about both. In addition, in this reviewer's opinion, there is no better brief account of the early history of the Church of Christian Science, especially of its structure and internal operation.

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Dust Bowl Diary, by Ann Marie Low. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. xii, 188 pp. \$17.95 cloth, \$7.95 paper.

Dust Bowl Diary is a first-hand account of Ann Marie Low's experiences growing up on a stock farm in North Dakota during the lean years between 1927 and 1937. The book tells, as the author says, two stories. One story is "an account of the effect of the drouth, depression and government programs" upon Low's family and neighbors, and the other story is that of growing up female in the rural grasslands of the Midwest. Low reveals both stories through diary entries made over the ten year period, and through complementary narrative based on her recollections.

The author begins her account in 1927, her sophomore year in high school and the last of the profitable years on her parents' 640-acre stock farm in the "Stony Brook" country near Kensal, North Dakota. Hard times began in 1928 when a hailstorm devastated the family's crops, the local bank failed, and low market prices set in. In 1929 drouth began and the stock market failed. By 1934 dust obscured fenceposts and sifted into every corner of the house. Low complained that "life in what the newspapers call 'the Dust Bowl' is

becoming a gritty nightmare" (98). Nevertheless, Low's family, unshackled by heavy mortgages, was able to hang on to its land when others could not. Ironically, it was not natural disasters, but a government recovery program which finally cost the family its farm. A Civilian Conservation Corps program required the purchase of farms in the Stony Brook country. With the realization that the government might condemn their land if they did not sell, Low's parents sold out. They received final payment in 1938, the same year rainfall returned to North Dakota.

The author's account of the dust bowl years is from the perspective of a young woman with a deep appreciation for the land. "When I left the barn tonight after the chores were done," she wrote in 1929, "the sunset was flashing opal over the rim of the hills and a full moon drifting up to the east. It was so beautiful I couldn't stay still, so I saddled up and rode out to look over the Stony Brook country and listen to the coyotes"(26). Even the constant litany of chores—both indoors and outdoors—and the unending battle to make enough money to live each year did not diminish her commitment to the land. When the author's brother decided against being a farmer, leaving no male to follow in her father and grandfather's place on the land, Low wrote, "I'm old enough to remember the good years. Bud isn't. All he can remember are things like . . . the heat, the cold, the work, the drouth. . . I can see Dad's point of view. There is a future here. But what can a woman do? Who will listen to her?"(68).

Ann Marie Low's coming of age on a North Dakota farm during the Depression meant not only the acceptance of adult tasks and adult sacrifices but also of limited options for her future. Like many rural, single women Low became a school teacher. In 1937 when family circumstances forced her to give up her job and return to the Stony Brook farm, she found the country too changed to be home, and her financial dependence on her parents seemed frustrating. She decided to marry. Years later, recalling this decision, she wrote, "When I married, it seemed the only future. . . "(182).

Low's is a timely book. Ann Marie Low provides information concerning the lives of Midwest farm women in the early twentieth century, at the same time as scholars are examining change over time in farm women's roles. *Dust Bowl Diary* suggests continuity in those roles through the early decades of the twentieth century. Like her nineteenth-century sisters Ann Marie Low milked, washed, and cleaned with rudimentary technology. Also like her sisters, she worked in the fields assuming traditionally male tasks. Nevertheless, it is not clear from Low's writing how typical she was of her generation. In part because of their poor health, neither Low's mother nor her sister

seemed to lead as active an outdoor life as the author. It is clear, however, that like farm women in other decades Low felt restricted by the economic opportunities available to her. Marriage was an acceptable, though not always preferred, solution. *Dust Bowl Diary* is also timely in its account of one family's struggle to retain its land, a situation relevant to present-day farmers seeking to preserve family farms. Then, as now, the government's proper role in the affairs of agriculture was controversial.

Ann Marie Low's diary is a sensitive, well-written account of farm life during the Depression in North Dakota. It is a rich resource for scholars studying this region and era, and for those examining farm women's lives. Men and women who remember the dust bowl, as well as those too young to do so, will enjoy reading this informative and entertaining book.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE

SARA BROOKS SUNDBERG

Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915, by Glenda Riley. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984. xvi, 336 pp. Notes, illustrations, note on sources, index. \$24.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

Glenda Riley needs little introduction to *Annals of Iowa* readers. A professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa, she has taught in the areas of women's, public, and Iowa history. She has played an important role in encouraging research on women and the frontier. *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915* is her second major book. The first, *Frontierswomen: The Iowa Experience*, (1981) concluded with a discussion of Iowa women's varying attitudes toward Indians. Surely not all frontier women, she observed, were completely negative in their perceptions.

Riley's new study thus begins where her last ended. She argues that while white women on the frontier may have initially shared images and preconceptions of Indians, their frontier experiences often permitted them to revise their first impressions, as they may also have discovered new roles for themselves. In six main chapters, Riley traces American and European influences upon frontierswomen's ideas; rumors and alarms on the trail and in early settlements; contact and cultural clash with Indians; development of relations with Indians; and attitudes of women toward Indians and other groups on the frontier, including the Mormons.

Riley has published four articles on these topics. There are other discussions in print as well, including Sandra L. Myres' chapter on women's views of Indians in her recent book *Westering Women and*

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