

Book Reviews

The letters reveal much about Mother Jones. Particularly interesting are those written while she was imprisoned in West Virginia and Colorado, those that offer insights into organizing methods and problems, and those that illuminate the conflict within the labor movement itself. Mother Jones considered many paid union officials to be self-serving, undedicated, and generally ineffective. She had only contempt for John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, writing, "There is nothing to that fellow but an empty piece of slime" (179). In contrast, she showed matronly affection for Terence V. Powderly, Grand Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, and John H. Walker, a national organizer from Illinois and later president of the Illinois Federation of Labor.

The Correspondence of Mother Jones brings together in one place letters scattered throughout collections in several states. It complements *Mother Jones Speaks: Collected Speeches and Writings*, edited by Philip S. Foner (1983), which contains speeches, testimony, articles, interviews, and 112 letters written by Mother Jones. Readers interested in biographies of Mother Jones may want to turn first to *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*, edited by Mary Field Parton (1925), and *Mother Jones, the Miners' Angel*, by Dale Fetherling (1974).

UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ALLAN KENT POWELL

Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era, by D'Ann Campbell. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984. xiv, 304 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$20.00 cloth.

From Working Girl to Working Mother: The Female Labor Force in the United States, 1820-1980, by Lynn Y. Weiner. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985. xii, 187 pp. Tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$17.95 cloth.

The tensions caused for American women by the divergence between their idealized and actual roles in society form a theme explored in both D'Ann Campbell's *Women at War with America* and Lynn Weiner's *From Working Girl to Working Mother*. Both of these interesting, well-researched monographs survey important, broad subjects, aspects of which other historians have explored in detail. Campbell's work is a comprehensive examination of women's experiences during World War II. Weiner provides a general summary of the history of working women in the United States from the early nineteenth century through 1980. Both provide a welcome synthesis of evidence and interpretations of subjects crucial to an understanding of the history of women in

America. Both offer challenges to prevailing wisdom and the ideas of other scholars. Both ask intriguing questions. Only Campbell provides a clear and fully supported thesis around which to organize her extensive research.

Campbell's thesis is that the Second World War did not constitute a watershed in the history of American women's participation in the labor force. Neither society in general, nor women in particular, were ready for a major transformation of values. Both thought woman's true place remained the home as wife and mother. In fact, other scholars, Campbell argues, have paid far too little attention to women's own perceptions. They have been too quick to see in women's wartime activities the inchoate beginnings of the feminist revolution of the 1960s and after. Of course, Campbell agrees that millions of women workers made significant contributions to the war effort, but while genuinely patriotic, they were doubly at war "with" America. They cooperated with the drive to achieve the best possible use of the nation's labor force, technology, and industrial capacity. At the same time, they clung to deeply held values sometimes in conflict with this effort. For instance, despite corporate and government encouragement, most women refused to participate in experiments with public day care. Employed or not, they saw care of their children as a primary responsibility, to be delegated when absolutely necessary to friends and relatives, not strangers.

Campbell provides a full review of women's experiences in a relatively brief book; she examines the histories of Wacs, Waves, Spars, military nurses, and civilian war workers. Like Susan Hartmann, Karen Anderson, Nancy Gabin, and other historians who have examined these groups in more detail, she has found hostility within union and military hierarchies to the entrance of women into their ranks. Only reluctantly did they accept women even as temporary replacements, to be blocked from promotions or management positions. Only war nurses made striking gains, achieved *de facto* command over men, and seized control of their own profession. Campbell's signal contribution, however, is not the retelling of these stories. Rather, it is her emphasis on a heretofore neglected history, that of wartime military wives and housewives, and her integration of their history with that of paid female workers. To understand American women in the 1940s, Campbell argues, the analysis must concentrate not on the formerly male roles a minority of women occupied, but on the family roles most women accepted as central. Moreover, previous scholarly emphasis on absolute increases in numbers or average percentages of women working has confused the real characteristics of women war workers: fractionality and discontinuity. Women, especially wives and mothers,

moved in and out of the war labor force on a month-to-month basis, as they felt called to place primary emphasis on their home duties.

Campbell concludes that the war placed heavy burdens on women, who met them frequently with heroism and ingenuity, but it did not mark a drastic break with traditional working patterns or sex roles. Lynn Weiner's survey of the history of working women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries follows Campbell's lead. She, too, refuses to identify the Second World War as the watershed event in the history of American working women. She argues that the expansion of the female labor force occurred in two separate phases. During the first phase, from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War, the "working girl," single and self-supporting, became a visible part of the work force. During the second phase, from the 1920s to the present, the "working mother" became both a reality and a focus for social concern. In fact, *From Working Girl to Working Mother* concentrates on that social concern. It is primarily a history of an evolving public debate over working women and of the policies that ensued. Weiner does an admirable job of synthesizing the questions raised by that debate and of discussing the wide range of attempted solutions to the women-worker problem: from working women's associations and protective labor legislation to mother's pensions and day care. She is far less successful in her attempt to explain the forces that transformed the female labor force and led, especially after 1940, to vast increases in work force participation by wives and mothers. As a result, her analysis of the public debate over working women becomes muddled, her conclusions poorly justified.

After 1940 married women became the most important group of new workers in the United States. Weiner notes the demographic changes other analysts have cited as responsible for significantly increased paid work rates among these women. In the past four decades, the female population has aged, become more urban, and much better educated. Nonetheless, Weiner argues that a change in social values, not changed demographics, explains the transformation of the late twentieth century labor force. Work outside the home, she argues, came to be seen as equal in value to work within the home. Weiner never convincingly demonstrates this thesis. In fact, she concludes that "because social responses to twentieth century working mothers remain mired in nineteenth century concepts of domesticity and dependence, American society has not yet implemented policies necessary for the full and equitable integration of women into the economic structure" (141). Could it be that contemporary women themselves remain ambiguous, as did their World War II sisters, about paid work and the conflicts inherent between such work and care of their families?

One area that Weiner fails to explore fully is the possibility that the restructuring of the American economy after the war and the growth of service and white-collar work have pulled women into the work force well ahead of any true large-scale change in either women's perceptions of their most valued roles or society's willingness to enact policies that see paid work for both men and women as within exactly the same range of normal experience.

Both Campbell and Weiner have written valuable books. Both rely on a wide range of primary and secondary sources. In fact, both rely heavily on one common source: federal government statistics and publications, especially those generated by the U.S. Women's Bureau and the Bureau of the Census. But Campbell more effectively uses her evidence and has produced a better study, one likely to become a standard source for students of women's experience during World War II. A synthesis of the history of working women over two centuries of American history, is, of course, a more complicated assignment. But Weiner's study deserves challenge.

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The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America, by John A. Jakle. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985. xiv, 382 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

Tourism, John A. Jakle maintains, is not a frivolous topic. It is the means whereby modern people assess themselves and their world. Accessible mostly to the elite at the beginning of the century, tourism has become a nearly universal experience, transforming the landscape of the United States and Canada, and in the process transforming people's lives. If tourism has lost much of its sense of adventure, it has become such a common coin that it cannot be ignored.

Jakle, a professor of geography at the University of Illinois, makes a convincing argument that tourism is "an activity necessary to people's sense of identity in a complicated and potentially confusing modern world." In travel people see the world first hand and see it in a context of pleasure, "a mix that renders touristic insights trustworthy" (22). Away from their daily routines, tourists make contact with an increasingly complex society, and in some sense make peace with it and themselves. It matters not that the attractions they see may have been contrived. Packaging condenses the essence of a locale for tourists so that they may consume it more readily. While some find an element of adventure in trying to get behind the packaging, most are content with what has been so conveniently provided.

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