

cited *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *American History Illustrated*, *American Heritage*, *The Crisis*, and *Feminist Studies* appear.

Both volumes are definitely timely because they include current social history research while also being multicultural in nature. These items combine to form one of the great strengths of the volumes, that is, the inclusion of unusual and highly interesting documents often neglected in previous readings books designed for classroom instruction at either the pre-collegiate or collegiate level. For example, the late nineteenth century is not only covered by the usual examination of European immigrant documents, but also includes chapters on Asians, Native Americans, and women.

The choices of essays and documentary evidence that Binder and Reimers have provided for teachers and students alike will stimulate lively discussions in the classroom. In fact, the editors often present thought-provoking questions in their initial chapter overviews. One such example is the chapter "Morals and Manners in the 1920s" that includes an essay on the sexual revolution, followed by documents on "Petting and Necking in 1924," movies, and drinking. All of these materials undoubtedly will stimulate youthful readers, while providing them with good background in order to make comparisons with current issues facing society today.

Actually these volumes could serve well as the basic text for a United States history course, while the standard text of dates and events of political and military history could serve as the supplemental work. Using these volumes in such a way would aid students' understanding of the historical precedents of present American society and make the reading of history much more lively and thought provoking. Now when my colleagues approach me and inquire as to what readings and documents book I suggest using in the survey course, I'll say Binder and Reimers's *The Way We Lived*.

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Hilda Satt Polacheck. *I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991. Pp. xx, 248. Paper, \$12.95.

A ten year old Polish Jewish girl, Hilda Satt, moved with her family to Chicago. Her diary is the most complete chronicle yet uncovered of a "Hull House girl," and represents a clear window through which we can observe immigrant life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hilda arrived in Chicago in time for the 1893 World's Fair, where her mother refused to let Hilda eat a banana she bought because it looked like a sickly yellowed sausage. After a preface by a Chicago social historian and introduction by Hilda's relative who rediscovered the diary, the chapters are divided into five parts: the years in Poland, the voyage to America, the Hull-House Years 1895-1912, Life in Milwaukee, and return for "final" years in Chicago. An afterword, a time line, and a list of Hilda's writings (including work commissioned by Hull House and by the Federal Writers Project) provide helpful appendices.

Through Hilda's eyes, we learn about Hull House and the settlement movement, women's suffrage, and the peace movement. Hilda idolized Jane Addams and ended her diary with Addams's death—Hilda's last 32 years perhaps seemed an anticlimax after her brush with history had ended. Addams spotted Hilda's writing talent immediately and made arrangements for her to attend a semester at the University of Chicago. She took special writing courses, which helped her transcend her spotty schooling. When she told her mother she was going to attend the University, her Mother asked, "But how can you?" Hilda explained she was to be given a scholarship to pay for the tuition, she was to be listed as an unclassified non-degree seeking student, and she was to be given a loan to be paid back later for the amount she would

have earned had she continued to work that semester in her factory job. The experience proved a turning point for Hilda. She was determined not to go back to the factory; Addams found her a job as hostess at Hull House. The hostess job was normally a volunteer position filled by socialites, but in the summer most upper-class families left on vacation and Addams needed help. Hilda loved her new job and then asked Addams to let her teach English for immigrant girls and women. She soon became a full-time teacher.

In Hilda's autobiography she devotes a section to Jane Addams as a person. Hilda argues that Addams's *Twenty Years at Hull House* reveals little about Addams the person. Most of the sources on Hull House were written by the same sort of upper-class Yankees as Addams herself—that is, by the volunteers rather than the clients. Hilda's diary provides a fresh ethnic viewpoint, though it is totally uncritical, and never mentions any faults in Addams or Hull House that sharp-eyed Hilda might have noticed. The book is likely to provoke students to broaden their perspective on settlement houses, taking more the viewpoint of the reformees than the reformers. Teachers focusing on the Progressive era or the settlement house movement can mine the 78 pages of materials starting with "I Discover Hull-House" and ending with a discussion of Jane Addams. For teachers wishing to read excerpts to students about another young student's trip to the New World or initial impressions and experiences in America, the first third of Hilda's diary is excellent material.

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June Sochen. *Mae West: She Who Laughs, Lasts*. Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., Pp. vii, 153. Paper, \$9.95.

June Sochen's *Mae West: She Who Laughs, Lasts*, a concise and well-written biography, explores Mae West's career within the context of early twentieth-century entertainment, women performers, and popular attitudes toward female sexuality. Sochen relied extensively on newspaper clippings, show business periodicals, censorship cases, and West's autobiography, *Goodness Had Nothing to Do with It* (1959). Given Sochen's focus and the nature of her sources, it is hardly surprising that the private Mae West rarely emerges in this study. More information on West's off-stage life is necessary for readers to assess the appropriateness of Sochen's frequent conflation of the public persona and private person. Although she occasionally refers to differences between the two, Sochen does not adequately explore the woman behind the image. However, as an engaging account of an extraordinary career that spanned five decades and encompassed vaudeville, Broadway, Hollywood, night clubs, and even radio and television, *Mae West: She Who Laughs, Lasts* provides illuminating information on several facets of American popular culture.

Sochen is especially effective in dealing with the ways in which Mae West pushed the boundaries of acceptable sexual behavior for women. "In prudish America," Sochen writes, "she kidded her audience, the censors, and all others who believed in the double sexual standard, in woman's passivity, and in their own moral seriousness." West created a persona that kept moralists on edge and maximized media exposure and ticket sales. Her vaudeville and stage image in the 1910s and 1920s as "a sexually active woman who saw no difference between her needs and preferences and those of men" defied conventional assumptions and intrigued audiences. By the time West arrived in Hollywood in 1932, she had written and starred in several of her own plays, most notably *Sex*, for which she was arrested and jailed; *Drag*, a sympathetic portrayal of homosexuality; and *Diamond Lil*, which received popular and critical