

agricultural history, possesses the expertise to condense the material needed to cover the vast time period involved, while at the same time making it both scholarly and readable. The narrative, which is chronological, is divided into nine chapters as follows: 1. The Native America Experience; 2. The Colonial Years; 3. The New Nation; 4. Antebellum America; 5. The Gilded Age; 6. The Age of Prosperity; 7. Troubled Times; 8. Days of Uncertainty; 9. Epilogue.

Within each chapter relevant topics of significance are discussed. They include: land policy, political developments, rural life, regional differences, technological advances, and farm policy. Other subjects covered include agrarianism, slavery, the role of women in farm life, veterinary medicine, farm organizations, and agricultural movements. The human factor in history is enhanced by the inclusion of short biographical sketches of such varied personages as John Deere, Mary Elizabeth Lease, George Washington Carver, and Henry A. Wallace. Each chapter is followed by a list of "Suggested Readings." Excellent use is also made of photographs, illustrations, charts, and maps. An "Appendix" includes three statistical tables: agricultural price index, farm characteristics (1900-1990), and farm income (1910-1990).

While taking due note of the "risk taking, entrepreneurial spirit, and courage" of the farmers who helped build a great nation, the author nevertheless contends that "the history of American agriculture is also a story of daring fraud, insatiable greed, ruthless speculation, vicious racism, malicious corporate power, callous government policy, and incredible violence." Thus in this work farmers at times are characterized as heroes; at others they are castigated as villains.

The very nature of this type of work dictates brevity, but some omissions are regrettable. Little, if anything, is mentioned on tariffs vs. free trade and its effect on agriculture. Harry S. Truman's signing of the Agriculture Act of 1948 with flexible price supports and then his political use of the farm issue to win the 1948 election by championing high, rigid supports (embodied in the Agriculture Act of 1949) is not clearly explained. Nor is the Brannan Plan covered. More recognition of the role of Ezra Taft Benson (he is not even mentioned in the text) should have been given for his role in the Eisenhower administration. Benson's policies tried to depoliticize the use of federal subsidies, increase USDA consumer research, enlarge exports, and help U.S. agriculture to adjust to the realities of the world market. Yet he was vilified politically for his reform efforts. Agricultural policy of World War I is covered, but no mention is made of Herbert Hoover and the Food Administration. One last negative comment—the index is not complete.

American Agriculture is certainly usable as a textbook for beginning students in agricultural history or as a reference tool for either college or high school libraries. It might also be helpful as a supplementary text for courses in farm economics or rural sociology. This book is well organized, contains a vast storehouse of information, and is written in an easily understood narrative style. After reading it, one will be amazed at the rapid transition agriculture has undergone since colonial times. We were once a nation of farmers. Now the figure is 1.8 percent of the population. The author correctly concludes: "In retrospect, then, the history of American agriculture has been the story of nearly constant change, for better or worse."

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Barbara Melosh, ed. *Gender and American History Since 1890*. London & New York: Routledge, 1993. Pp. xii, 308. Cloth, \$49.95, ISBN 0-415-07675-7. Paper, \$15.95, ISBN 0-415-07676-5.

In *Gender and American History Since 1890*, the authors provide an intriguing and unique examination into the multi-dimensional role of gender as an influence on contemporary American history. Barbara Melosh, the text's editor, has assembled a collection of essays that discuss varied gender influences that have affected the course of U.S. history. In the table of contents, the editor has organized eleven articles into three component themes. The themes are: Part I: Sexuality and Gender, Part II: Work

and Consumption in Visual Representations, Part III: Gender as Political Language. Each of these parts contains approximately four essays which explore the role of human sexuality as a factor of social influence in American history.

In "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression," author Christina Simmons discusses how Victorian influences gave rise to functional changes in the roles of both men and women in the 1890s. Simmons states that "the Victorian myth of repression both reflected and helped perpetuate anxiety about women dominating men or eluding their control." And it was this repression which ultimately delayed women's suffrage at the national level, even though many European nations, including Great Britain, had granted women's suffrage much earlier.

Also in Part I, Joanne Meyerowitz in "Sexual Geography and Gender Economy, the furnished room districts of Chicago, 1890-1930," analyzes the attitudes and the depiction of these attitudes of early working class women in Chicago. The author suggests that "these women were not merely victims of city life and predatory men, but also active historical subjects who made their own choices about sexuality." Given the time, some sociologists had described women as "pioneering and independent, they played down the negative constraints of low wages, sexual harassment, and economic dependence, and thus (social) reformers were superfluous, even meddling."

Later in Part III, Linda Gordon in "Family Violence, Feminism, and Social Control," examines the issue of family violence from the perspective of gender. Indeed, her research inevitably supports the conclusion that men, much more so than women, inflict violence in the home, whether the victims are children, wives or both. Gordon further states ". . . women are always implicated (in child abuse) because even when men are the culprits, women are usually the primary caretaker who have been, by definition, unable to protect the children." The Gordon treatise provides vivid insight into the most complicated and perplexing issue Americans are facing as we enter the 21st century, domestic violence.

Melosh's text promises to provide much needed enrichment on the subject of gender issues as it relates to the social history of our nation. Many contemporary American historians and social scientists will welcome this text as a useful resource in examining the role that gender has played in influencing historical interpretations.

This book will be useful in college courses of recent or 20th century American history, social issues of American society, and courses focusing on issues of women's or gender studies. It would also be applicable and appropriate for advanced placement courses in high school American history or American civilization.

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Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, eds. *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. Pp. xv, 430. Cloth, \$55.00; paper, \$19.95.

This collection of essays belongs in every academic library but unfortunately has limited application for the classroom. In the excellent introduction, the editors define evangelicalism as a variation of Protestantism that places religious authority in the Bible, emphasizes conversion as the central religious experience, pursues an aggressive but individualistic approach to missions and social action, and stresses the Crucifixion as the key event in the Bible. Evangelicalism's historic roots were in the revivals of the eighteenth century, particularly the American Great Awakening and the development of Methodism in the British Isles. As indicated in the subtitle, the essays focus on the British Isles and North America, though two fascinating essays suggest what a broader scope might have included. One discusses developments in Australia and another takes note of evangelical missions in Africa. But the collection disappoints in not discussing the vibrant evangelicalism within African-American churches or in Latin