

The book is based on exhaustive research in printed primary and secondary sources. The endnotes serve only to identify the sources of quotations. Royster refers readers interested in a bibliography or in tracing his research to his dissertation. An appendix contains an interesting discussion on historians' interpretations of revolutionary soldiers' motivation.

Although the book is basically well-written, it is not easy reading due to the complexity of the material and argument. The early chapters are particularly difficult because of the introduction of some themes that are not fully discussed until later. The careful reader is, however, well-rewarded, for Royster synthesizes information never brought together as an understandable whole.

It is likely that most professors who would use this work as core reading in a course are already familiar with it. This paperback edition will make it more available for classroom use, but it is appropriate primarily for advanced courses on the American Revolution, American military history, or American civic culture.

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**Lynn A. Bonfield and Mary C. Morrison. *Roxana's Children: The Biography of a Nineteenth Century Vermont Family*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995. Pp. xviii, 267. Cloth, \$50.00; ISBN 0-87023-972-4. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-87023-981-3.**

Social histories are now commonplace in the discipline, but a new direction has emerged--family history. *Roxana's Children* tells the story of Roxana Brown Walbridge Watts, who lived during the early to mid-nineteenth century on a Vermont farm and who raised eleven children and one grandchild, half of whom stayed at home, while the others moved as far west as California. Even for traditional historians, *Roxana's Children* should be appealing since they, her offspring, toiled in the textile mills at Lowell, Massachusetts, took part in the great westward push across the continent, fought in the Civil War, and even panned for gold in California. Their vocations were also as varied: farmer, soldier, lawyer, minister, teacher, carriage maker, artist, and, perhaps most importantly, husband or wife.

Roxana's children, by all accounts, were common, even ordinary folk living in extraordinary times. The nearly 300 letters and 30 journals and diaries that have survived are replete with both local as well as sectional and national concerns. They provide glimpses of life in Peacham, a typical New England town, examine gender roles and responsibilities, wrestle with the pull of family versus the lure of a "manifest destiny," suffer through the horrors of an uncivil war, and describe the discomforts but opportunities of western life. There are, of course, gaps of information in the surviving letters; some of the children have only a scant handful of memoirs. But the authors, Lynn Bonfield, an archivist, and Mary Morrison, the great-granddaughter of Roxana, skillfully weave

available statistics such as tax lists, birth and death records into a social fabric that is rich and enjoyable to read.

Several of Roxana's children certainly led interesting lives. Clarissa (Clara) Walbridge Rogers, for example, was a school teacher in Peacham, but went west, unmarried, lived in San Francisco, and survived the famed 1906 earthquake. Julian Walbridge Rix, the artist, is recognized today as one of the finest late nineteenth-century landscape artists. For Civil War buffs, Dustan Walbridge, the carriage maker turned soldier, recounts life as an enlisted man until he was mortally wounded at Cold Harbor in 1864. And last, but certainly not least, Lyman Watts, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Middlebury and Congregational minister, struggled with the increasing worldliness of his flock in the midst of spiritual depravity.

*Roxana's Children* is truly a multi-disciplinary work. It would be extremely useful for a variety of classroom topics such as life in America's early factories, particularly from a woman's point of view, the influence, or lack thereof, of religion in nineteenth-century America, the growth of the nation through the eyes of an artist, and the living and dying inevitable in war. It would be appropriate as a supplemental text in a number of college courses, but I can also envision it being assigned reading for those high school teachers who demand and expect the best from their students who are studying nineteenth-century America. Sadly, Peacham today is more of a tourists' curiosity off the beaten path, with a Bed and Breakfast. What may be even more sad is that no descendants of Roxana Watts live there. Yet her family does indeed live on in this splendid work.

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**Ronald G. Walters.** *American Reformers, 1815-1860.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1997. Revised edition. Pp. xix, 249. Paper, \$12.00; ISBN 0-8090-1588-9.

After an absence of nearly two decades, *American Reformers* has reappeared in a gently upgraded and refined format. Although the book purports to cover the time span 1815 to 1860, its major emphasis is roughly 1820 to 1850. Fortunately, the temptation of undertaking sociological and biographical analysis of key individuals who figured in the numerous reform movements is largely avoided. Instead, the primary focus is on the ideas, concepts, and practices embodied within the vast array of episodes and activities that were directed toward change in antebellum America.

Professor Walters draws sharp distinctions when labeling leaders or organizations as either radical or reformist. A radical, he contends, was one who wished "to change the structure of society," while a reformer was a person who desired to "improve" or refine the existing system or scheme of things. With uneven degrees of success, a wide vista of subjects is addressed, from significant forces (antislavery, religious crusades, and prohibition) to a host of lesser fads, causes, and pursuits. To say the least, many of the latter are often fascinating and unique oddities that include developments such as