

Bruce C. Daniels. *Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. xiv, 271. Paper, \$14.95; ISBN 0-312-16124-7.

Puritans at Play will be welcome by those looking for a supplementary reading to break down the stereotypical view of the gloomy, repressed Puritans and help students see them as real people. In *Puritans at Play* Bruce Daniels of the University of Winnipeg develops a neglected aspect of colonial New England society—how people spent their leisure time and what they did for fun. The first section of the book poses the question directly—"Did Puritans Like Fun?" Daniels's answer is a well developed and finely nuanced yes. He begins by reviewing the literature of "modern" Puritan studies with the seminal works that began the reevaluation of Puritanism and Puritan life, Samuel Eliot Morison's *Builders of the Bay Colony* (1930) and Perry Miller's *The New England Mind in the Seventeenth Century* (1939). The limited degree to which the more balanced image of the Puritans Morison and Miller presented has replaced the joyless, prudish Puritans of earlier scholars and Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* in the popular imagination is testimony to the powerful appeal the image has.

Daniels draws heavily on scholarship on New England communities and families since the emergence of the new social history in the late 1960s and the rich recent literature on Puritanism. He also goes back to the diaries and sermons of both prominent and obscure Puritans of the seventeenth century—before the jeremiad preachers of the eighteenth century. He also displays familiarity with recent intellectual histories of Puritanism, especially the increasing awareness among scholars of the diversity of thought within Puritanism about nearly all issues of their day. The first chapter serves as an excellent introduction to the scholarly literature on Puritan society and thought without requiring a high degree of familiarity with that literature.

The following chapters take a thematic approach that is both appropriate and effectively executed to cover a full range of leisure activities from reading to sex and courtship, alcohol and taverns, and gender, age, and class. The Puritans who emerge from Daniels's book are flesh and blood people, enjoying this life while concerned about the next.

The final chapter attempts to sum up the place leisure played in Puritan lives and to assess the extent to which Puritan ideas have affected the way American society has looked at leisure and pleasure up until today. Rather than stern and dour opponents of pleasure, Daniels's Puritans sought balance in their pursuit of pleasure and their leisure pursuits. For the Puritan everything in a person's life should be focused on the larger goal of humanity—eternal salvation. "Leisure and recreation activities had to take place within the framework of the moral community; they had to be interwoven with Scripture, workplace, village, meeting-house, home, family, and all the other parts of godly life that collectively constitute the only acceptable ritual in New England."

There is a great deal in this book about the daily lives of Puritans. They emerge as people trying to balance a demanding view of the world and of man's relationship to God with the human impulses to love, provide for children, relax, and enjoy the many good things life offers.

The book will serve well as an introduction to Puritanism in a survey course or an upper-level colonial history course. It is engagingly written and informed by an impressive command of both the literature and sources on colonial New England and Puritanism.

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Don Nardo. *The Bill of Rights*. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 1998. Pp. 128. Paper, \$12.95; ISBN 1-56510-740-3.

Opposing viewpoints readers are among the most established of all forms of supplementary reading in the history classroom. By presenting history in the form of discourse, and demonstrating the steps in the process through which we move in constructing an interpretation of the past, a good interpretive reader can help students appreciate historical method. This type of assignment often facilitates student participation, from one-on-one discussions to teams in mock legislatures, conventions, and courts. With a bit of guidance from a good moderator, it's a proven path to student involvement.

The Bill of Rights is part of a larger series of digests being produced by Greenhaven Press. Style and length suggest a target audience of high school and community college readers, although the author is careful not to speak down to the audience. Nardo first devotes some fifteen pages to summarizing the ideas and events that surrounded James Madison as he led the fight to amend the Constitution between 1788 and 1791. Then Nardo moves through six point/counterpoint debates, each about ten pages in length, where he separately summarizes the pro and con arguments on the need for a written Bill of Rights, the limitation on free speech, the censorship of the press, the inclusiveness of due process, the death penalty as cruel and unusual punishment, and the restriction of civil liberties in wartime. Each section thus contains two briefing sheets, each with short documentary quotations, that a student could present with little editing in class discourse. A thirteen-page appendix provides the text of the Bill of Rights and excerpts from ten other documents, four of which were considered by Madison in preparing his proposed amendments and five of which relate to twentieth-century legal cases. Both the text and the more modern documents lean strongly toward debates on civil rights and liberties in wartime and other emergency situations. A short chronology, a list of study questions, and two brief bibliographies complete the supporting materials.