

BOOK REVIEWS

Keepers of Tradition: Art and Folk Heritage in Massachusetts. By Maggie Holtzberg. Massachusetts Cultural Council and the National Heritage Museum, Lexington, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008. 199 pp. illus., \$24.95 (Paperback).

The result of eight years in the making, *Keepers of Tradition: Art and Folk Heritage in Massachusetts* documents the field research conducted throughout the state by Massachusetts Cultural Council folklorists. Written by Maggie Holtzberg, folklorist and manager of the Folk Arts and Heritage Program at the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the catalogue is a lavishly illustrated and informative volume written to complement a 2008 exhibition at the National Heritage Museum, Lexington, Massachusetts.

As a folklorist, Holtzberg is not only interested in the material result of folk traditions but also in the cultural heritage behind the art – a combination that proves both enlightening and inseparable. It was the stories and the people invested in traditional arts that prompted her to become an active participant: experiencing the ceremonies, interviewing the artists, and witnessing the cultural diversity of Massachusetts. As a result, the catalogue reads like a personal narrative as one is guided on a regional tour of the state. She is on a detective quest: to bring to light cultural identities that are normally hidden from the public eye. Through rigorous investigations, Holtzberg unearths the surprising in the familiar. She reminds us that folk art and tradition can take many forms and are an integral part of who we are.

When writing about folk art, it is impossible to avoid a discussion of terminology as the meaning varies in its usage. For the purposes of the catalogue and exhibition, Holtzberg defines folk art as “artistic expression that is deeply rooted in shared ethnicity, religious belief, occupational tradition, or sense of place” (9). This is a broad definition of an already general term, a loose establishment of boundaries without delving into an argument of terminology. The purpose of this exhibition and catalogue is not to revisit those debates but rather to focus on the artists behind the objects – an aspect sometimes lost in the various definitions. It is this approach that sets *Keepers of Tradition* apart from other folk art exhibitions: this emphasis on the people and their heritage, instead of objects and their classification.

The catalogue is divided into what Holtzberg considers the traditional roles of folk art: celebratory, decorative, sacred, domestic, communicative, and occupational. The chapters are loosely divided into these categories: some focusing wholly on one aspect and others touching on multiple points. In this regard, the categories overlap with the chapters. This is seen in the example of the Saint Mary of Carmen Fiesta – a celebration of tradition, a “cultural pride on display,” but also an example of the decorative and the sacred. The broad definition of folk art within the structural format of the catalogue again reiterates Holtzberg’s point of the diverse encounters of folkloric tradition in daily life. In many instances, she clearly navigates the reader through a Brazilian carnival to an Irish button player and Ukrainian *pysanki* eggs. At times, this organization can seem perplexing, but the underlying thread between seemingly unrelated objects is the creators and artists.

And ultimately, that is the core of *Keepers of Tradition*. Inherent within the title is the precedence for the stories and lives of the artists over the objects. This is a distinctive approach from many books written about folk art. In addition, Holtzberg manages to challenge the preconceived notion of Massachusetts folk heritage as strictly Puritan by including traditions that have been uprooted through globalization and immigration. In considering traditions from other cultures, she presents an innovative and modern approach to studying regional heritage. Rather than reinforcing the public’s conception that folk art stopped after the 19th century, she proves that traditional arts and folklore are still active and present if only we know where to look.

Erin R. Corrales-Diaz is a curatorial fellow at Shelburne Museum (Shelburne, MA).

Defining Women’s Enterprise: Mount Holyoke Faculty and the Rise of American Science. By Miriam R. Levin. Lebanon, NH: University of New England, 2004. 224 pages. \$19.95 (paperback).

At the intersection of science and religion, as well as that of geography and gender, Miriam Levin argues that the western Massachusetts campus of Mount Holyoke College provided a nurturing environment for both the increased validity of higher education for women and the institutionalization of ever-sophisticated teaching methods of science in American colleges, both co-educational and single-sex. But this well researched and elegantly

written work is about more than a story of triumph. Focusing on Mount Holyoke's first century, from its founding in 1837 as a female seminary to its centennial year (which, somewhat paradoxically, saw the appointment of the college's first male president), Levin also paints a rather cautionary tale. Women faculty at Mount Holyoke, in their quest to establish the teaching of science to young women as vital, and themselves as the appropriate teachers, were forced to operate within the gender confines of their day. Thus, in some ways, they further solidified a gendered division of labor within the sciences.

From her introductory sentence, Levin sets the tone and defines the parameters of this book. "When Mary Lyon opened the gates of Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in 1837," writes Levin, "she hitched the fortunes of this evangelical New England institution to the rising star of science, in a young nation enamored of progress" (1). Known most generally as a pioneer in women's education, Mary Lyon was also a teacher of chemistry and botany. Her deeply rooted religious faith only enhanced her zeal to establish education – both as a pursuit as well as a profession – as respectable for single, white, Protestant women such as herself. She shrewdly made connections with local male industrialists, ministers, and academics, thereby ensuring financial and spiritual support for the fledgling seminary at the same time that she provided intellectual rigor, especially within the sciences.

Only a short distance from the South Hadley-based seminary was the all male Amherst College. Early on, Lyon forged alliances with faculty there, including the preeminent American geologist Edward Hitchcock, a frequent lecturer at Mount Holyoke in its first two decades. Thus, the pattern was set: male faculty from Amherst College, along with others from area institutions such as Williams College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, came in as guest lecturers while female teachers lived and worked with Mount Holyoke students. Levin stresses, quite importantly, that while Lyon envisioned her seminary as a "castle of science," it was simultaneously an evangelical community dedicated to the dissemination of the Protestant faith, something Lyon and others argued women were especially well-suited for, their usefulness further enhanced by exposure to a rigorous science curriculum.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a more secular institution (and officially a college since 1887), Mount Holyoke continued to maintain its status as a leader in women's education, particularly in the sciences. During the 1890s, this was especially due to the innovative educator and zoologist Cornelia Clapp who, like Mary Lyon decades earlier, was adept at forging

connections with the still male-dominated scientific research and teaching community. Clapp was an early participant in the summer programs run by the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where she eventually served as an instructor and its first female trustee. Clapp and other Mount Holyoke faculty thus kept abreast of the increasingly specialized fields of scientific research and teaching while enhancing their own and their students' opportunities for graduate work and professions in the sciences. The trend continued during the years that Mary Woolley served as college president (1901-1937). According to Levin, by 1938 Mount Holyoke had the third largest number of women faculty teaching science and saw a significant portion of their yearly graduates going on to graduate work, preparing for careers in medicine as well as in scientific research for government and industry. A century after she opened the seminary's doors, Mary Lyon could be rightfully proud of her "castle of science."

But this is not to downplay the tensions that arose as women faced barriers when aspiring to any profession well into the twentieth century, and this, too, Levin acknowledges. Levin concludes by addressing the impact of several changes during the 1930s that undermined women science faculty's efforts to maintain their hard-won positions. Like their white, middle-class peers elsewhere, Mount Holyoke students were touched by the Great Depression: as professional jobs disappeared, marriage rates increased even for female college graduates, making single female faculty appear oddly out of synch, even threatening. Levin argues that the appointment of Roswell G. Ham as Mount Holyoke's first male president in 1937 is emblematic of this shift. Nonetheless, today Mount Holyoke College remains a leader in women's education in the sciences; this well-told history helps us understand why.

Kathleen Banks Nutter is a professor of history at Stony Brook University, NY.

The Athens of America: Boston 1825-1845. By Thomas O'Connor. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 2007. 240 pp. illus. \$22.95

The name Thomas O'Connor and the history of Boston are virtually synonymous in the minds of many readers. His first book on the Boston story, *Bibles, Brahmins and Bosses*, and his most recent are the bookends of an impressive body of scholarly work. It is appropriate, then, that *The*

Athens of America: Boston 1825-1845 is not only a culmination of this wide-ranging knowledge but is also one of the best, if not the best, works that Professor O'Connor has produced on the city and its history.

O'Connor points out that previous efforts to describe Boston during this period have focused on writers and philosophers, obscuring the role of the larger community in creating a new city. A leadership elite known as the "Boston Associates" championed this movement by using their personal talents and wealth to "promote the cultural, intellectual, and humanitarian interests of Boston to the point where it would be the envy of the nation" (p. xii). Like Athens, a group of statesmen, artists, thinkers, and wealthy patrons all contributed to the New Boston.

With industrialization came investment in banking, railroads, and other industries, and this new wealth was a driving force behind the Boston Associates. When Boston's national political figures, chiefly represented by John Quincy Adams, failed to stem the growth of Jacksonian populism, the Associates turned their attention toward improving "their" city, with the goal of making it the "City Upon a Hill" once again.

These improvements began by moving Boston from colonial town to new city through the reorganization of its government. Leaders such as Boston's first mayor, Josiah Quincy, and reformers among the Associates transformed marketplaces, prisons and punishment, health care, and aid to the poor, to name just a few topics that O'Connor chronicles. In describing these reforms, O'Connor's extraordinary gifts as a writer and historian become clear: the new role of women in dealing with the "female poor," the role of public drinking in inspiring not only stronger police and fire departments but also temperance movements, and the contributions of leading citizens like Dorothea Dix. All are told with lively energy.

In moving our attention to the community at large, O'Connor does not ignore the role of the city's leading writers and philosophers. As members of an intellectual movement he describes as the "Grecian Model," O'Connor gives proper perspective to their contributions. More recognizable intellectual leaders such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Margaret Fuller (to mention but a few) are described along with less well-known figures such as Jared Sparks and Amos Lawrence.

Of course, every transformation has its darker side, and O'Connor does not fail to include in his story of progress the anti-Catholic backlash that accompanied the changing demographics of the New Boston. The strong institutional resistance to the early Irish immigrants and the rise of

the Know-Nothing party as a political response to the influx of Catholic faithful are described in detail.

The closing chapters of *The Athens of America* are some of the best in the book, with O'Connor's account of the new generation of Bostonians inventing new social arrangements, as well as the rise of the women's rights movement, the abolition movement, and the career of William Lloyd Garrison. But it is O'Connor's descriptions of these events, including an account of Charles Sumner's fiery speech against war at the Tremont Temple that make this chapter and the next crackle with energy.

The failure of Boston's leaders to provide national political leadership led the "Boston Associates" to the hope that other Americans would emulate their "betters" by following the example of the "City Upon a Hill." O'Connor concludes that this goal was never reached, and that the achievements of the Athens of America resulted in a deeper cultural divide between the North and the South – a divide which he argues contributed to the start of the Civil War. This discussion is somewhat truncated, and it leaves one wishing to hear even more about this intriguing connection. Given that our current politics are frequently dominated by discussion of "culture wars" and the differences between "red" and "blue" states, O'Connor's conclusion is a timely one and provides perspective on what it is to be a truly divided nation.

The Athens of America is a remarkable synthesis of information. There is no better guide to this complex story than the nation's premier historian on Boston. It is a book that belongs on the shelf of anyone interested in Massachusetts history, and a shining example of scholarship which will both inform and engage any reader.

David Smailes is a professor of political science at Westfield State College.

The Other Black Bostonians: West Indians in Boston, 1900-1950. By Violet Showers Johnson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006. 181 pages. \$24.95 (hardcover).

For much of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries emigration to Europe, North America, and other parts of the Caribbean basin has been an integral part of the history of Black West Indians. The men and women who chose to seek their fortunes abroad hoped to break free from the economic stagnation, depressed wages, and limited opportunities for social mobility

present within their home communities. In the first half of the twentieth century, Boston became a popular destination for the men and women of this Afro-Caribbean Diaspora. By 1950 Black West Indians and their direct descendents represented some 12% of Boston's Black population (approximately 5,000 people). Although Boston ranked third among urban areas in the United States as a destination, very few scholars have explored this immigrant community when considered opposite its counterparts in New York and Miami. In *The Other Black Bostonians*, Violet Showers Johnson offers an interesting and valuable account that helps to fill this void in the historical literature.

Johnson observes that West Indians typically found employment offering higher wages in Boston than had been available on their home islands, namely Barbados, Jamaica, and Montserrat; but skin color severely restricted opportunities and ensured that financial success came at a steep price. For many members of this immigrant community, economic betterment went hand-in-hand with downward social mobility. Men and women formerly employed in skilled and semi-skilled jobs turned to the few opportunities available to Black men and women – most frequently taking positions as janitors, stevedores (dock workers), day laborers, and domestics.

One of the most notable points about *The Other Black Bostonians* is the author's treatment of understandings of social and economic position as the product of community and individual perceptions. Despite diminished social mobility by Boston standards, the income that Black West Indian immigrants produced allowed many to send much-needed remittances to the Caribbean and to visit their home islands. These endeavors, important as symbols of success within the West Indian communities in Boston and in the islands themselves, were often described in the community's publications. Of equal import were the gains made by the children of West Indian immigrants, many of whom used high school and college educations as vehicles for achieving the upward social mobility denied to their parents.

Although the dominant culture lumped Black West Indians together with native-born African Americans, members of the immigrant community actively worked to retain their unique traditions. Many newcomers elected to settle with or near other recent immigrants, particularly in the city's 9th and 12th wards. The author does well to show that maintenance of cultural artifacts like Anglican/Episcopal religion, cricket clubs, and island accents served to reinforce community members' British heritage and to demarcate them from native-born Blacks. In 1915 seven immigrants from the West

Indies and two Jamaicans founded the *Boston Chronicle*, a weekly publication that served both as a mouthpiece and unifying force for the community. So successful was the publication among the city's wider Black population, in fact, that by the 1930 its readership represented a serious threat to the *Boston Guardian*, started by William Monroe Trotter.

The Other Black Bostonians adds a new perspective to both the scholarly understanding of the Afro-Caribbean Diaspora in the United States and of Boston's Black community. The observant reader will notice a small number of editorial errors, including spelling mistakes and bibliographic entries out of order, but these do little to detract from the quality of the work as a whole. Generally well-written and enjoyable, Johnson's tidy little volume should be of interest to many readers.

Charles H. Williams is a graduate student in history at Emory University.

The Paddy Camps: The Irish of Lowell, 1821-1861. By Brian C. Mitchell. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006. 272 pages. \$25.00 (paperback).

The University of Illinois Press is to be commended for re-issuing Brian C. Mitchell's book *The Paddy Camps: The Irish of Lowell, 1821-61*. This fine work, originally published in 1988, has stood the test of time. In his 2006 preface, Mitchell (president of Bucknell University) asserts the continued relevance of the book: "Nineteenth-century Lowell is a lesson for those who seek to understand twenty-first-century Houston, Detroit, Denver, or Miami" (xvi). Whatever the merits of this argument, students interested in Lowell, the Irish, American industrialization, immigration and assimilation will all find this volume a rewarding read or re-read.

The Paddy Camps tells how the Irish of Lowell, Massachusetts transformed both the city and themselves during the first half of the nineteenth century. Established as the first planned industrial city and purported industrial utopia, Lowell has long drawn the attention of scholars interested in American urban and economic growth. In addition, especially since Thomas Dublin's 1979 book, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860*, the city has attracted scholars of women in the workplace and those focused on community studies. Mitchell goes beyond Dublin's work by examining the immigrant Irish in Lowell before the Civil War and focusing on "cultural

transmission, internal community dynamics, and the outside environment" (5).

The original "paddy camps" housed Irish laborers engaged in construction, not those employed in the mills. Over time these seasonal camps became neighborhood communities with their own class structure, institutions, and churches. Lowell's distinctive early employment pattern of Yankee farm girls gave way to the hiring of immigrants in the mills, and the Irish became symbols of the decline in industrial relations in the antebellum period. By 1850 their numbers and problems made the Irish in Lowell a threat to be reckoned with. The Irish, though now the primary source of workers after the departure of the Yankee mill girls, "were visible signs of deteriorating standards affecting employment, housing, education, and health" and inevitably were seen as the source of "crime and trouble" (99). However, it was the Boston capitalist owners, in their pursuit of profit, who were blamed for the Irish overwhelming the city.

The immense emigration of the Great Famine transformed Ireland, and Irish immigrants now transformed Lowell. The utopian dream of the planned industrial enterprise faded and a gritty city emerged. The Irish themselves were remade by the Lowell experience and constructed a new identity based on ethnicity, class, and religion. Mitchell pays attention to complex economic, social, political, and religious forces and offers a fine account of how a people and a city were altered beyond recognition.

Within the "paddy camps" (which were permanent by 1830), the Irish recreated something of their ancestral experience while becoming Americans in their work experiences (33). Mitchell's account of factions among the early Irish settlers of Lowell is of particular interest. He notes how factions were rooted in the Irish experience and were useful social institutions that provided order and continuity as well as stability among Irish immigrants (23). Mitchell also presents a coherent account of how issues and movements such as temperance (anti-alcohol crusaders) and the campaign to repeal the union with Britain stimulated the growth of Irish national perspectives and hastened the decline of regional and factional identities. In addition, he notes, with the Irish increasingly known for drunkenness, the temperance movement offered the immigrant community a way to "prove themselves worthy of America" (69).

The story of shifting educational goals in Lowell is also of great import in this work. Early educational efforts had focused on assimilation but then turned to training mill workers: "Lowell's elected Yankee officials still believed in the link between learning, patriotism, and good citizenship, but increasingly they also aimed to keep immigrants in line" (116). This was

the era of the anti-foreigner “Know-Nothing” movement. Their nativist attacks were crucial to forming the identity of the Irish in Lowell.

The Paddy Camps pays much attention (perhaps too much) to the role played in the defense of the new immigrant community by the brothers O’Brien, a pair of Irish Catholic clerics, who arrived during the Famine years of the 1840s. The strong leadership of these priest-brothers provided not only spiritual solace but “an astonishing variety of religious, social, educational, fraternal, and cultural associations”(151). The O’Briens were crucial in forming a community and identity that over time became “less foreign and more American, Catholic, and working class” but that also, Mitchell asserts, served the Irish of Lowell well (155). Similarly, this book serves well all those interested in the Irish immigrant community and the evolution of a most significant American city.

Lawrence W. Kennedy is a professor of history at the University of Scranton, PA.

Southeast Asian Refugees and Immigrants in the Mill City: Changing Families, Communities, Institutions – Thirty Years Afterward. Edited by Tuyet-Lan Pho, Jeffrey N. Gerson, and Sylvia R. Cowan. Burlington: University of Vermont Press, 2007. 250 pages. \$50.00 (hardcover).

This collection of essays attempts to create a mosaic portraying the impact of Southeast Asian refugees on the old industrial city of Lowell, Massachusetts since the 1980s. Today Lowell is a city of about 100,000. Over the last half century it has seen tens of thousands of residents leave for better opportunity elsewhere. An influx of 20,000 refugees compensated for those lost, but their migration was accompanied by unique problems the city had not dealt with before, despite its earlier history as a destination for immigrants from Europe and Canada. By 2000 Lowell was home to the second largest Cambodian-American population in the U.S. and one of the larger Laotian populations.

The contributors include Tuyet-Lan Pho and Hai B. Pho, Laotian refugees in the 1960s who became not only emeriti at the university but prominent advocates in the community, state, and nation for Southeast Asians. Other contributors are social scientists who are more detached from the experience. Accordingly, the essays differ in approach and level, with some dealing with the refugees as a group of Southeast Asians, others with one ethnic or religious group, and some taking a more individual tack.

The collection deals with successive waves, illustrating differences over time as well as among nationalities and ethnicities. The result is a mixture whose lack of continuity is more than compensated for by its ability to create the illusion of a complete story. Some gaps are inevitable. Thus, the volume is a mosaic rather than a portrait.

The first section includes the introduction, a discussion of Lowell politics and the refugees in the final quarter of the twentieth century, and a theoretical article on secondary migration. The second part contains eight chapters, the bulk of the work. It includes a theoretical chapter on social capital as well as two chapters on education and Southeast Asian immigrants. It also has topical chapters including studies of Buddhists of two different types, an insider's view of how the Khmer (originally from Cambodia) have adjusted to Massachusetts, an exploration of the Lao community (from Laos), and an exploration of the transformation from host to home community. The single chapter in the third section provides an overview that ties the previous studies into a neat bundle. It also suggests areas in need of further research.

The story of Lowell's adjustment to and incorporation of these immigrants into its fabric may not be directly applicable to the cities of the West and South that are experiencing large immigrant influxes. It should be encouraging to their leaders because it sends a strong message that immigrants are not necessarily a burden or something to be spurned or feared. Even those seemingly least compatible can fit into the community and add to it as well.

This work is among the first to assess the experience of late twentieth-century Southeast Asian immigration. It approaches the topic from a variety of disciplines, in a variety of styles. Some chapters are theoretical with only loose ties to the Lowell theme, while others are specific to the city. Some deal with Asian Americans; others deal with Khmer, Lao, or specific ethnicities within the catchall "Asian American" category. Each chapter, however, adds a unique perspective to our overall understanding of the impact of the city on the immigrants and the immigrants on the city. The collection is well done and deserves a wide audience, lay and scholarly alike.

John Barnhill is a retired civil servant and independent scholar who writes history in Houston, Texas.

The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City. By Cathy Stanton. University of Massachusetts Press, 2006. 320 pp. illus. \$24.95

Cathy Stanton is a trained anthropologist whose quasi-sociological analysis of Lowell National Historical Park has made her a rising star in the field of public history. These incongruities make up all that is wondrous and frustrating about *The Lowell Experiment*. Numerous scholars have criticized historical interpretation at Lowell, but Stanton comes closest to explaining why it falls short. Stanton's study isn't about Lowell's history: rather, it explores the administrators, politicians, park rangers, local developers, city residents, and visitors who design, interpret, and view exhibits.

If the past is poorly served at Lowell, one reason is that public history is a "cultural performance" that must please various audiences. The National Park Service (NPS) confronts daily the tension between history and heritage – between those who interpret history and those who would own it. Lowell's is a contested past as refracted through the lenses of scholars, visitors, residents, and civic leaders. Stanton incisively dissects one of the city's mill and canal tours, as well as an interpretive walk through "the Acre," a poor section of Lowell to which past and present immigrants have gravitated. Given the park's five-pronged mission of presenting waterpower, technology, labor, capital, and life in an industrial city, exclusions inevitably occur. Stanton charges that Lowell does industry well, but "city" badly. Recreating an industrial past in a post-industrial setting further muddies interpretive waters. Modern-day Cambodian residents, for instance, are forced into a teleological (and perhaps outmoded) narrative of immigrant struggle as prelude to future success. The NPS, Stanton asserts, fails to consult with residents, or challenge visitors to consider social class and "ethnic otherness." (94)

Why isn't it done better? Ideology is another culprit. Because the park is an experiment of "historic preservation as economic development," business boosters try to mute social historians' tales of slavery and organized labor, lest modern capitalists be tarred with the repression of their progenitors (97). It's not certain if the park has revitalized Lowell; however, it is clear that the past has been interpreted to serve political agendas.

But Stanton also turns her guns on Lowell's cultural workers and visitors. Most are middle class, white, and of European heritage. Few National Park Service guides live in Lowell, feel connected to the community, or

are invested in what happens there. Visitors arrive expecting “rituals of reconnection” that link family stories to an imagined past of adversity overcome (170). Such beliefs necessitate “erasures” and “good vibes” (176).

Stanton’s final chapter, “Feasting on Lowell,” uses an ethnic food festival as metaphor. Given potential political brouhahas, most public history events in Lowell are “polite, predictable, safe,” and bland (186). Lowell is thus an icon of “forced traditionalism,” one lacking controversy, substantive dialogue, or serious engagement with the past (215).

Stanton gets the problems right but often blames the wrong parties. It’s true that NPS staff is generally middle class and disconnected from Lowell, but she personalizes that which is inherent in bureaucracies. As sociologists remind us, professional employment is the very bedrock of middle-class status. The NPS is no better or worse than analog occupations such as law, government, medicine, or academia. (How many *professors* are connected to the towns in which they teach and research?) And why should anyone expect NPS personnel to be social workers or activists? It *has* had several of the latter (activists), most of whom were ushered out of town by the political forces Stanton touches upon but whose power she does not appreciate fully.

The unindicted co-conspirator is Lowell’s lifeline: tourism. Public historians don’t have the academic’s luxury of pursuing the past in a vacuum. The latter should stop expecting public museums (or films) to tell the whole story. Who would visit Lowell as it really was? Who would fund it? It is public history’s job to pique interest, and private history’s to set straight the historical record. The real problem at Lowell is that the National Park Service tries to do too much, not too little. There are two ways out of the dilemma, though neither is desirable: stop interpreting so much of the past or ignore the present. Lowell could concentrate on a single aspect – and let us not forget that the canal and trolley tours are by far the park’s most popular – or freeze an historical moment in amber as is done at Plimouth Plantation.

Stanton’s book is highly recommended for budding public historians to see the challenges of interpreting the past. But it’s time to cut the National Park Service some slack. Take the national park from Lowell and what do you have – Lawrence or Holyoke, two cities that would welcome the NPS if it replicated past capitalist patterns and moved its base of operations.

Robert E. Weir teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England. By Margaret Ellen Newell. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1998. 329 pp. illus. \$39.95 (hardcover)

On the tenth anniversary of Margaret Ellen Newell's path-breaking book, her work still stands as an exemplary piece of economic history. Using strong, compelling writing, Newell crafts a highly readable book about the development of the economic life and character of New England. Throughout, Newell successfully addresses interesting questions. Why is culture an important aspect of economic history? What aspects or attributes of culture are important to understanding economic history? Newell argues that social relations and institutions made up important aspects of economic development in New England.

The book is amply sourced and illustrated. The citations are clear, many referring to key works in the field, both contemporary and historical. Newell, an associate professor of history at Ohio State University, was trained at Brown and the University of Virginia. Her sources reveal deep research into what can be a somewhat arcane and dull aspect of history.

One of the many strengths of Newell's book is that she does not shy away from offering a challenging interpretation of economic history. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of Newell's work is the thesis that economic thought changed in dramatic ways in New England before the American Revolution. Further, she argues that these economic changes had an impact on the course of the Revolution itself.

Newell's description and analysis of banks and use of paper currency is thorough, though slightly esoteric. In these sections Newell concentrates on specific points about currency and land banks in Massachusetts. Most of my quibbles with this particular material are simply questions I wish Newell had addressed more directly. For example, a more detailed explanation of how other historians discussed paper currency would have provided a clearer picture of the controversy over the use of that type of money.

While Newell writes about the whole of New England, her sources allow for an examination into specific colonies within the region as well. The economic story of Massachusetts, particularly Boston, is often told through the eyes of the residents of these communities. In addition, Newell draws comparisons between Massachusetts and other colonies, specifically on issues of public loans in Rhode Island versus those of the Massachusetts Bay colony or land banks within it (214-216).

Newell's work is generally well written with sections that make economic history come alive. Unlike an earlier history written by John Martin, (see *Profits in the Wilderness: Entrepreneurship and the Founding of New England Towns in the Seventeenth Century*, 1991), Newell believes that there are strong connections between economics and "religious, political, and social battles" (317). Martin downplays the role of religion in economic interests while Newell clearly argues that religious leaders sometimes played a major part in the success of entrepreneurship. In the end, Newell persuasively argues that economic successes and failures were affected by the New Englanders' differences of opinion regarding how close a relationship they wished to maintain with England.

Nicholas Aieta is a professor of history at Westfield State College.

The Exchange Artist: A Tale of High-Flying Speculation and America's First Banking Collapse. By Jane Kamensky. New York: Viking Press, 2008. 442 pp. \$17.00 (paperback).

Jane Kamensky has brought to life not only the story of speculator Andrew Dexter, Jr. (1779-1837) but also the larger American story of our early experiments with free-market capitalism. Following the American Revolution, Kamensky points out that ascent – to "be up and doing" – was the battle cry for the new nation, a "gospel [that] seeped into every sphere of life in the early republic," an "aspiration" for more and better than had been – for progress. Into this era of progress stepped Andrew Dexter, Jr.

At the age of nineteen, Dexter made his way from Providence, Rhode Island, to the nerve center of New England – Boston – first to study law with his uncle and, second, to make his fortune. Andrew Dexter's aspirations centered around one particular goal. He dreamed of building a "temple of finance" befitting a town destined to rise in tandem with the new nation. By 1806, Dexter had gained some connections, cash, and a little land. He envisioned a single space where all the "negotiations of commerce" could be conveniently transacted: a central space for merchants to trade both goods and paper complete with private booths, offices, post office, library, and "Coffee Room," as well as a hotel to provide food and lodging for both business and leisure travelers. Dexter's ideal monument to unfettered capitalism would be christened the *Exchange Coffee House*. Rising seven stories tall, its founder believed it would "elevate all of Boston," the

money trades included, thereby benefiting both personal fortunes and the Commonwealth.

Kamensky notes that as a supervising trustee on the board of Boston's Exchange Office in 1805, Dexter didn't just "keep" bills from various banks in circulation, but "put" bills into circulation as well. Combining the "exchange man's faith in motion [with] the gambler's belief in long shots," his philosophy was that banknotes were to "go out into the world," maintain their value, and not come back to the home bank. When the chance came to buy shares in a newly chartered bank, Dexter resigned his seat on the Exchange Office board and bought a controlling interest – using Exchange Office "paper." Once bought, Dexter then persuaded the new Berkshire Bank to invest in the "Changery," and to accept *his* Berkshire Bank shares as collateral for a loan – "signed and . . . wrapped, the Berkshire notes became the first bricks in his pyramid." Thus began Andrew Dexter's precipitous climb and ultimate fall in the world of speculative finance.

To get his project off the ground, and to keep it going once started, Dexter gained a controlling interest in other banks, some as far away as Michigan Territory. Already in debt for land purchases for the *Exchange*, Dexter soon found himself increasingly overextended before his monumental project could reach completion. In a frantic effort to avoid failure, he first offered shares in the *Exchange*, then ventured further into bank note speculation – hoping to keep them as far from their origination points as possible. Finally, as misfortune increased, he took over the *Farmer's Exchange Bank* in Rhode Island, from which he could receive signed notes of varying denominations (literally creating money from nothing) to continue financing the *Coffee House*.

When local merchants realized that the banknotes were worthless and all banks under his control insolvent, Dexter's house of paper crumbled. Forced to flee Boston, he avoided prosecution by escaping to Canada. Those who had trusted in his payments for their labor were left behind in jail. Dexter had violated the "golden rules" of honesty – rules, Kamensky points out, deemed more important among "merchants" of that time than any other men. Whether by divine judgment, as some claimed, or simply the misfortunes of chance, Andrew Dexter's financial dream-turned-nightmare burned to the ground in 1818, nine years after his departure. One thing is certain. Kamensky notes that this banking collapse of 1809 had ripples so strong that Congress allowed the charter on Hamilton's prized Bank of the United States (established at the beginning of our national republic) to lapse in 1811.

Kamensky's informative and excellent narrative follow Andrew Dexter from his early days in Boston through his flight to Canada and back to the United States, where he seized on an opportunity to purchase land in Alabama. Dexter began his speculation all over again. Partly due to his risky investments and partly due to other economic factors, the banking collapse of the 1830s brought disaster for this "financial-pioneer-turned-confidence-man." While he gained some degree of honor as one of the founders of Montgomery, Andrew Dexter, Jr. nonetheless died in poverty.

The Exchange Artist is not just an economic history but a social history of a people caught up in the economics of their time. While drawing no direct parallels with today, nevertheless in Kamensky's account one can see the seeds of a speculative capitalism that leaves its mark today with such debacles as *Enron* and such high-flying gains found in the new gold – the "black gold" of light, sweet crude oil.

Serena L. Newman teaches at Bay Path College, Springfield, MA.

Romance, Remedies, and Revolution: The Journal of Dr. Elihu Ashley of Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1773-1775. Edited by Amelia F. Miller and A.R. Riggs. Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press; Deerfield, Mass. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 2007. 451 pp. \$39.95

The formal establishment of Massachusetts Bay colony in 1629 relied on the growth of settlements founded along the coast, in and around the towns of Plymouth, Salem, and Boston. Over the next 150 years, the massive population explosion that occurred in Puritan New England resulted in the continued push of colonists further and further into the interior, extending the colonial frontier far into western Massachusetts. Settlers, on what had been the lands of the Pocumtuck tribe, established new towns such as Deerfield. By the time hostilities erupted between American patriots and the British at Lexington and Concord in 1775, many Massachusetts citizens still considered Deerfield to be a settlement located on the far reaches of the isolated western frontier. In *Romance, Remedies, and Revolution: The Journal of Dr. Elihu Ashley of Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1773-1775*, Amelia F. Miller and A.R. Riggs have helped to collate, edit, and publish for the very first time a collection of journal entries and personal letters written by one of Deerfield's most colorful residents. Dr. Elihu Ashley, a twenty-three year old medical apprentice, began to write what would become the bulk of *Romance, Remedies, and Revolution* in March 1773.

Over a two and a half year period, with a ten-month gap beginning in July 1773, Ashley meticulously recorded numerous observations about the lives of many of Deerfield's residents, including reflective commentary on his own personal experiences.

Romance, Remedies, and Revolution owes its existence to a happy accident. In 1958, Amelia Miller held a position as a research assistant at the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA) at Memorial Hall in Deerfield. While conducting unrelated research on early architectural restoration in the settlement, Miller discovered a typed manuscript entitled "The Journal of Elihu Ashley, 1773-1775." Miller noted that "the manuscript, yellow with age but very legible, had gathered dust for many years after local historian George Sheldon acquired it for his personal library" (xi). The journal's passage through the Ashley family began when the book was inherited by Elihu Ashley's wife, Dorothy Williams Ashley, and then by his son and grandson. It eventually came into the hands of a private collector in the mid-nineteenth century, who later sold it to Sheldon in the 1880s.

In their editing of the Ashley journal, along with a selection of corresponding papers from other collections, Miller and Riggs have completed an astounding feat: the collation of an intriguing array of primary source documents that will be of interest to anyone specializing in colonial and revolutionary era political, social, or medical issues. Social historians who have a keen interest in gender and sexuality during the colonial and Revolutionary eras will be delighted with Ashley's candor regarding the courtship of his wife Dorothy and the many illicit affairs embarked upon during the tenure of his marriage. The lasting vestiges of Puritan thought regarding a woman's place in a patriarchal society and the consequences of sexually charged, amorous behavior in such an environment is also traced in the social history of Deerfield as recorded in Ashley's diary.

The manner in which Miller and Riggs have assembled complementary primary source materials has resulted in a final product that general readers will find intriguing to read and accessible to understand. The editors have compiled over fifty pages of personal correspondence between Ashley and the various personages mentioned in his journal. Most of this correspondence is derived from the Ashley Papers, as held by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association collections. In addition, the editors have included numerous explanatory appendices to the journal, including a collection of over 750 biographical sketches which help readers more easily identify the various individuals to whom Ashley refers. An extremely thorough biographical essay of Elihu Ashley, written by Riggs,

serves as the collection's introduction. Riggs' essay helps place Ashley's life and experiences within the broader context of Massachusetts' and the frontier of New England's history during the American Revolution. Several appendices are included in the collection which offer further elucidation on the journal's origin and the editorial methodology employed in the creation of *Romance, Remedies, and Revolution*. The extensive index will also serve as an excellent starting point for both historians and amateur genealogists wishing to identify sources on personages named in the Ashley journal.

Perhaps the only critique of Miller and Riggs' outstanding work is that no mention is made of the significant role a number of people in the Ashley journal also played in Shay's Rebellion between August 1786 and May 1787. While the nature of Shay's Rebellion is beyond the chronological scope of the Ashley journal, the root cause of the revolt can be traced to the period of Ashley's diary in the 1770s. This exciting happenstance makes one wonder if an additional appendix referencing the link between Ashley, his social circle, and Shay's Rebellion might have been a final addition to an outstanding publication.

Deborah L. Bauer is a graduate student in the departments of history and interdisciplinary studies at the University of Central Florida.

Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia. By Sterling F. Delano. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004. 428 pp. \$29.95 (hardcover).

The history of Brook Farm (1841-1847), one of the more memorable utopian communities to emerge in the 1840s, is of enduring interest to scholars. As Sterling F. Delano notes, of all the authors who have commented on the history of this Transcendentalist community, all tended to emphasize the idyllic. None dealt with the "dark side of utopia," or what the author calls its "persistent struggle, even from the earliest days of the community's existence, to prevent it from going under" (xi). As the title of his book implies, Delano focuses on the often overlooked aspects of communal life to provide an account that is both revisionist and highly readable.

In the first three chapters, Delano sketches the beginnings of Brook Farm. George Ripley's resignation from Boston's Purchase Street Church and his attendance at the Groton Convention with his friend and fellow

Transcendentalist, Theodore Parker, are significant signposts. It is at the Groton Convention, in the summer of 1840, where Ripley decides he must give voice to his social conscience by forging a community apart from the “pressure of our competitive institutions” (34).

In the spring of 1841, George Ripley and his wife, Sophia, settled into a vacant dairy farm in West Roxbury, nine miles outside Boston. Charters were drafted as new members of the Brook Farm family gradually arrived to give shape to the Ripleys' experiment. As George Ripley puts it in a letter to his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson, this would be a radically egalitarian community whose residents could enjoy education, culture, and “industry without drudgery” (61). Brook Farm's “Articles of Agreement” make clear that, while fundamentally a cooperative enterprise, residents could still possess private property while contributing a maximum of 10 hours of labor a day in exchange for board, medical care, education, and other benefits. Unlike other antebellum New England communities, work assignments at Brook Farm were gender-neutral and equitably rewarded.

During the early years, much of the Farm's income came from its excellent boarding school. Pupils included Robert Gould Shaw, who would later lead the 54th (black) Massachusetts Infantry in the Civil War, and Orestes Brownson, Jr., son of the *Boston Quarterly Review* editor and leading Transcendentalist thinker. Over time, the quality of the school declined as more pressing problems with Brook Farm's finances arose.

Chapters four and five outline the retrenchment program put into place to deal with a growing financial crisis. Income from the community's chief industries – the manufacture of pewterware and sashes – could not cover expenses. By the spring of 1843, now \$12,000 in debt, the leader of Brook Farm had to take out a third mortgage on the property. Money problems continued to plague the Farm through the rest of 1843 and into 1844 – a year that marks Brook Farm's shift from a secular to a sectarian institution. As it reorganized itself to be more in line with Charles Fourier's theory of human relations, the community benefited greatly from an expanded membership. Delano convincingly shows that Ripley joined forces with the French thinker's American followers, the Associationists, out of “financial necessity rather than zealous enthusiasm for Fourierist ideology” (145).

The influx of dozens of tradesmen and craftspeople was a boon to the administration and finance of a community that had been accustomed to contracting numerous jobs to skilled laborers in the outside world. On the other hand, many of the original Brook Farm residents took issue with the change in lifestyle accompanying the reorganization, which they termed the “second dispensation” of life in the community (166). Fourierist buzz

words now abounded – “groups,” “series,” and “Passions” – while workers carefully logged the amount of time they spent toiling in order to maintain an efficient “Phalanx.”

Chapter ten deals with the twin crises Brook Farm suffered in 1845. That year, an outbreak of smallpox kept the infected under quarantine for weeks, unnerving residents and neighbors alike. Months later, a fire totally destroyed the “Phalanstery” that would have served as the Brook Farm dormitory. Both crises led to a drop in school enrollment as worried parents sent their children elsewhere. “The financial impact of these two events,” Delano argues in the epilogue, “cannot be overstated” (319). Not surprisingly, both incidents figure prominently in the author's closing discussion on why Brook Farm failed.

Throughout, Delano's conversational tone stays true to his intent to write for a general audience. Too often, however, he slips into an unfortunate habit of providing overly long lists of superfluous data. The chapter on “The Second Dispensation,” for example, would read more smoothly without an entire page listing the number of hours worked by each member of the community between 1844 and 1845. Nevertheless, Delano is an engaging writer who offers an instructive study that is sure to surprise many readers already familiar with New England Transcendentalism.

Seth Kershner is an M.S. candidate at Simmons College, Graduate School of Library and Information Science.