

BOOK REVIEWS



Gods of War, Gods of Peace: How the Meeting of Native and Colonial Religions Shaped Early America

By Russell Bourne (New York: Harcourt Brace, 2002, pp. xv, 425, \$28.00).

Russell Bourne's purpose in *Gods of War, Gods of Peace* is to position faith at the center of the story of the encounters between Europeans and native peoples in northeastern North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Bourne sees colonization as a meeting of ideologies. He focuses on spiritual leaders, sachems, and ministers from both camps who crossed the borders into the other, seeing in the other race "elements of the divine" (p. 132). Bourne explores the careers of Squanto, Massasoit, Hobomock, Passaconaway, Samoset, John Eliot, Cotton Mather, and Jonathan Edwards. Native leaders prominent enough to be mentioned in the English records of the period often had a dual role in native society: political/administrative and spiritual leadership. The English colonists' inability to perceive the breadth of the powers, both secular and sacred, that these native leaders embodied, led to the most painful passages in the annals of the colonial period.

The thesis is controversial. For instance, Bourne states that the critical spiritual issue for the English colonists of the seventeenth century was to decide whether to respect the American landscape and native peoples or to fear them (p. 32). From a twenty-first century perspective, imbued with a heightened sense of native earth-based spirituality and growing knowledge about environmental degradation, this claim at first seems self-evident. However, English colonists would not have seen this as their major spiritual task; they might have put saving their souls first. Further, respecting and fearing are not mutually exclusive attitudes. Bourne contrasts this challenge with the task facing the native peoples:

the choice of mustering hostility against European domination or attempting to assimilate with colonial society. Here he is on firmer ground, as native leaders quickly saw the spiritual conflict they faced, and struggled with the range of possible responses, most of which gravely affected their ability to sustain their spiritual beliefs. Bourne's analysis foregrounds the enormity of the consequences of these early choices.

Neal Salisbury's seminal *Manitou and Providence* (1982) remains the best work about the meanings native people and Europeans ascribed to the tumult of colonization. Bourne describes himself as "an editor of historical books, but no historian" (*Red King's Rebellion*, p. xiii) who owes a scholarly debt to his mentor Salisbury. With Salisbury's assistance, Bourne decided to craft his histories as personal narratives, with information gathered as a visitor among the peoples. His drift is ever eastward, relying mainly on sources from English colonists. This book provides little information on the Dutch and French spiritual interactions with native peoples, apart from an account of the 1650 meeting between Père Gabriel Druillettes and John Eliot in Roxbury and a narrative of Jean de Brébeuf, an early Jesuit martyr in Iroquoia whom Bourne describes as a good example of "intercultural compassion" (p. 117).

Bourne's earlier work demonstrates an interest in the Northeast and the travellers on the land and water. *View from Front Street: Travels through New England's Historic Fishing Communities* (1989) is a travelogue filled with significant historical detail and graced by archival photos. However, it is a travelogue with a theme. The communities he chose, not coincidentally, have significant native, black, and Cape Verdean populations. The focus on intercultural cooperation and conflict was extended in *The Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England, 1675–1678* (1990). In this work, Bourne set out "in quest of the peculiar social harmony that was destroyed" by King Philip's War (p. xiv). The research for this work, he writes in the preface, also required considerable travel in New England: "the decision to become a rover among New England's affected communities . . . appealed to me greatly," (p. xiii). Indeed, Bourne was perhaps reenacting his own family's history. Bourne is related to Jonathan Bourne, a wealthy New Bedford whaling shipowner and textile entrepreneur (fl. 1840–1860). A lay reader in the Episcopal church, Bourne is also a descendant of Richard and son Shearjashub Bourne (fl. 1675), early Christian ministers to the Mashpee of Cape Cod. Bourne chose New York as the setting for *Floating West: The Erie and Other American Canals* (1992), an overview history of the vision and engineering that opened Iroquois country to commerce and

industry in the first half of the nineteenth century. He has also authored books on American riverine culture.

Taken as a whole, these works indicate an author in search of something important, not simply to him personally, but to all who are interested in how local populations emerged in New England. In the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, wharves, frontier settlements, churches, and markets were the meeting points for Dutch, English, Swedish, French, German, and Flemish newcomers, but also for Wampanoag, Mashpee, Abenaki, MicMac, Schaghticoke, Mohawk, Oneida, and other Iroquois indians. Bourne's work points to early "harmony" (uneasy and short-lived accommodation might be a better term) "destroyed" by King Philip's War. Here he has touched on the puzzle that many scholars have tackled, one that has generated an explosion of historical analyses in the past decade.

Bourne's methods, however, have limited his depth. Relying on his travels provides his work with the interpretive framework developed by nineteenth-century antiquarians, whose voluminous, painstaking, and invaluable research forms the backbone of many local historical societies' collections. It is clear that some information would not be available to historians today if these collectors had not accumulated stories, reported place names, and recorded landmarks 150 years ago. However, recent work has expanded on these sources, developing new paradigms for the interaction they described. Questions of identity, nationality, ethnicity, and gender have opened new avenues of interpretation, and led to startling conclusions about the nature of life in the "new" world. Discussions of leadership, power, diplomacy, currency, trade, and religious views have moved beyond the view of the God-fearing Europeans versus the ready-to-be-converted 'heathens'.

Jill Lepore, in *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (1998), heralds a new framework for conceptualizing the effect of war on later histories. James D. Drake's *King Philip's War* (1999) proposes that this conflict was actually a civil war between a newly unified people, a terrible breach in a unique society. Jean M. O'Brien's *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1670–1790* (1997), Richard White's *The Middle Ground* (1994), Patricia Seed's *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World* (1995), Olive Patricia Dickason's *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (1984), and Daniel K. Richter's *The Ordeal of the Longhouse* (1992) as well as his "Iroquois versus Iroquois: Jesuit missions and Christianity in village politics, 1642–1686," *Ethnohistory* (1985), and Colin Calloway's *New Worlds for All* (1997) and *After King Philip's War* (1997) all analyze in

exhaustive detail the nuances of exchange, spiritual understandings, power relationships, negotiation, and compromise inherent in native-European relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Bourne's thesis about the paucity of scholarly work on religious encounters, however, stands. There are few works of interpretation that address religious views of natives and Europeans as their primary theme. In fact, most histories of this period are works of political, social, military, or economic history. The ideological struggles, the internal questions of faith, may be less fully revealed in the sources than the military and commercial conflicts, yet they are there. This readable book will serve to whet the appetite for more comprehensive and incisive histories of this turbulent time.

LINDA B. GRAY

Linda B. Gray teaches at Community College of Vermont and Norwich University.

Massacre at Fort William Henry

By David R. Starbuck (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2002, pp. xiii, 131, paper, \$16.95).

Writing after four years of excavating (1997–2001) at Fort William Henry, archaeologist David R. Starbuck promises his readers a new interpretation of the French and Indian siege and subsequent massacre of the British garrison in August 1757. The author has assembled in one compact volume an eclectic mix of historiographical analysis, firsthand narrative, technical reports of archaeological data, film criticism, and a rich array of photographs. This is a useful introduction to the many ways in which Fort William Henry has occupied Americans' historical attention since the eighteenth century. The tension between "history" and "memory" of the notorious massacre that exists throughout the book represents its most compelling aspect.

The author leaves no stone unturned in his effort to present the reader with as much information as possible regarding the history of Fort William Henry before and after 1757. We learn that the post-massacre destruction and burning of the fort by the French and Indians in 1757 created a "sealed time capsule" (p. 36), ideal for future archaeological work. Although the area was frequented by visitors and had a hotel as early as 1854, nearly two centuries passed before professional archaeo-

logical investigation occurred at the site, beginning with the efforts of Stanley Gifford in the 1950s. According to Starbuck, however, Gifford's activities were rushed, and considered subordinate to the goal of constructing a replica fort to attract tourist dollars.

Starbuck's recent investigation tested the accuracy of the reconstructed fort, and applied up-to-date archaeological analysis to undisturbed areas of the site. The majority of Starbuck's new findings consisted of "everyday" materials (nails, brick fragments, ceramics, butchered animal bones, buttons, glass, and exploded ammunition fragments); his exploratory digging yielded no traces of new massacre victims. He does, however, include an extended discussion of recent forensic anthropological analysis on the remains of five massacre victims that had been unearthed in the 1950s (pp. 59–68). Detailing the significant evidence of mutilation on these skeletons, Starbuck seeks to revise what he identifies as a problem in recent scholarly analysis of the 1757 massacre at Fort William Henry: the notion that the killing of occupants of the fort (both soldiers and civilians) by the Native American allies of New France after the formal terms of surrender constituted acceptable behavior. "The 'need' of Native warriors who had joined Montcalm's army to obtain booty," Starbuck contends, "cannot in some sense make them less accountable for their own behavior" (p. 112). Yet in attempting to assign blame for what was undeniably a tragic event, Starbuck's interpretation comes across as more of an echo of nineteenth-century condemnations of the "savage" Indians and their "perfidious" French allies by James Fenimore Cooper and Francis Parkman than as a convincing or culturally sensitive analysis of existing or new evidence.

Even while acknowledging the fictional status of Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Starbuck makes it the point of intellectual departure for his study, justifying his decision on Cooper's literary merits. Asserting that Cooper's version of the massacre at Fort William Henry (complete with invented characters and inflated estimates of casualties) "will always be best remembered" (p. 16), the author raises important questions about the distinction between remembering and historicizing the event. Why should we be satisfied with a sensationalized memory of the massacre, as opposed to critical historical analysis of it? Starbuck is aware of historian Ian Steele's recent study (*Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the "Massacre"* [1990]), and even points out Steele's "exceptionally low" (p. 13) estimate of 185 people killed and approximately 200 taken prisoner after the surrender of Fort William Henry. But instead of challenging Steele's research (indeed, none of the archaeological evidence presented in the book, new or old, directly contravenes the body count Steele compiled), the author seems to adopt

Cooper's literary device of "unleashing a torrent of venom on the Indians" (p. 31).

Rather than attempting to understand the objectives underlying the fateful actions undertaken by the Native American allies of Montcalm on 9–10 August 1757 at Fort William Henry (which would not necessarily imply an endorsement of their actions), Starbuck prefers to highlight grisly archaeological evidence that demonstrates the Indians' savagery. In doing so, he presents a one-sided story of brutality in the Seven Years' War, and also works to preserve the mythical memory of the massacre at Fort William Henry as an event "every bit as dramatic and inspirational as was the fall of the Alamo nearly a century later or the destruction of Pearl Harbor almost two centuries later" (pp. 1–2). At one level, Starbuck's point is well taken: Americans' memory of the "massacre" at Fort William Henry certainly contributed to future justifications for the conquest of Native American peoples, much as the Alamo and Pearl Harbor did for the Mexicans and Japanese. It remains open to question, however, what purposes the perpetuation of this sort of memory might serve as we enter the twenty-first century.

JON W. PARMENTER

Jon W. Parmenter is an assistant professor of history at St. Lawrence University.

Steamboat Connections: Montreal to Upper Canada, 1816–1848

By Frank Mackey (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000, pp. xix, 383, \$44.95 Canadian).

As the title indicates, *Steamboat Connections* traces the development of steamboat service between Montreal and the region to the west known as "Upper Canada" (now the Province of Ontario). This river corridor is one of the vital waterways of the Western Hemisphere; in the early nineteenth century it was the only practical route for people, goods, and information to travel from the lower St. Lawrence River and the outside world to the interior of Canada. Steam technology had the same impact here as it did elsewhere on the continent, speeding the pace of transportation, shrinking distances and costs, and changing perceptions of time and space. It is this early and dynamic era in North America's "transportation revolution" that Frank Mackey examines under his close-up lens.

The book is a chronological account of steam's introduction to the waterways between Montreal, Ottawa, and Lake Ontario, of its technological and commercial successes and failures, and of its cooperative ventures and bitter rivalries. Steamboats provide the focal point of the narrative, but the book discusses other transportation systems that linked Upper and Lower Canada. These included stagecoaches and the Rideau Canal, which after 1832 provided an alternative to the St. Lawrence as a water passage between Montreal and Lake Ontario.

Perhaps most importantly, Mackey tells the story of the people whose lives intertwined with the creation and operation of the transportation lines. As Mackey explains in the preface, the word "connections" in the title was intentionally chosen: "it refers, of course, to the connections between different boats along a watercourse, but also to the connections between a succession of boats over time, between steamers and stages, between villages and cities served by the boats, between the owners and the makers of boats, between these people and the communities and times they lived in and the businesses and institutions they helped to establish, between the Canadas and the northeastern United States" (p. ix).

Mackey's narrative is of interest to Vermont readers not only for its account of transportation history in a nearby region, but also for the many connections to the state of Vermont. Several of the early steam entrepreneurs in Canada were emigres from the Champlain Valley, inventors, engineers, ship captains, and investors who, in the wake of the War of 1812, saw opportunities awaiting them just across the border. And, as the book makes abundantly clear, the development of steam along the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers was but one part of an overall pattern of growth in the transportation infrastructure of northeastern North America, a pattern in which Lake Champlain played a key role. The lake's mariners never faced the rapids and powerful currents that plagued their Canadian counterparts, but the travails of the St. Lawrence-Ottawa River steamboat promoters otherwise parallel those experienced on Champlain's waters.

The preparation of this book was clearly a labor of love on the part of the author, and a testament to his considerable skills as a scholar. Mackey reviewed scores of primary document collections left by the steamboat builders and promoters, as well as a wide range of contemporary newspapers. He struck an especially rich vein of material in the notary records at the Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal, for these not only identified the individuals involved in steamboat partnerships, but also yielded detailed contracts for the construction of steam engines and steamship hulls. The book's thorough documentation is evident in

its ratio of 130 pages of notes and 20 pages of bibliography for the 205 pages of text. An extensive index is included. Illustrations abound in the form of maps, steamboat sketches and prints, handbills, and portraits of individuals. *Steamboat Connections* will remain the standard source on its subject, and offers a model to be emulated by other scholars writing transportation history.

KEVIN J. CRISMAN

Kevin J. Crisman is an associate professor in the Nautical Archaeology Graduate program at Texas A&M University. He has studied the shipwrecks of Lake Champlain for over two decades.

*Army Life in Virginia: The Civil War
Letters of George G. Benedict*

Edited by Eric Ward (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2002, pp. x, 246, \$26.95).

It has become customary in reviews of recently published compilations of Civil War letters or diaries to begin by asking what unique contribution yet another addition to the already formidable library of such collections the latest book makes to our overall understanding of the war. In the relatively limited field of Vermont's Civil War historiography, the figure of George Grenville Benedict (1826–1907) looms too large to permit that question much relevance here. In 1878, Benedict was appointed state historian for the special purpose of compiling a history of Vermont's participation in the Civil War. The publication of the second volume of the two-volume *Vermont in the Civil War: A History of the Part Taken by the Vermont Soldiers and Sailors in the War for the Union, 1861–1865* (Burlington, Vt.: The Free Press Association, 1886, 1888) ten years later represented the fulfillment of Benedict's important charge (Eric Ward's bibliography erroneously gives the dates as 1883 and 1886). George Benedict's history remains unsurpassed in both the overall compass of its subject and in its meticulously researched, scholarly detail. All subsequent histories touching upon Vermont's participation in the Civil War stand in debt to Benedict and historians ignore his work at the peril of their own.

In August 1862, George Benedict enlisted as a private in Company C, 12th Regiment Vermont Volunteer Infantry, rose to the rank of 2nd lieutenant several months later, and was subsequently appointed

aide-de-camp on the staff of General George Stannard, commander of the 2nd Vermont Brigade. His position as a junior editor of the *Burlington Free Press* well fitted him for the position of observant and articulate army correspondent. During the period September 26, 1862, to July 14, 1863, Benedict wrote approximately thirty letters to the *Free Press*. In 1895, at the urging of comrades, Benedict republished those letters in a collection entitled *Army Life in Virginia: Letters from the Twelfth Vermont Regiment and Personal Experiences of Volunteer Service in the War for the Union, 1862–63* (Burlington, Vt.: Free Press Association, 1895; recently reprinted and available from Vermont Civil War Enterprises, 93 Leo Lane, Newport, VT 05855. (802)766-4747; vtcwe@hotmail.com). Now, nearly 100 years later, Eric Ward has compiled and republished Benedict's letters.

It would be difficult to review Ward's book without making frequent reference to Benedict's own published compilation. Mr. Ward has done us a great service by publishing Benedict's letters unedited. That Benedict liberally edited and revised his own letters is immediately apparent when comparing the two books. The historian of 1895 had become much more politic than the soldier of 1862–1863 had been and, therefore, one must turn to Ward's book to rediscover many of the small, personal details that go far to restore the heartbeat to history.

In the 1895 version of his letters, Benedict chose to omit or to sanitize many of his original observations, and youthful high spirits have been considerably tempered by more judicious wording. Lacking from Benedict's later compilation is much of his personal opinion on recent promotions within the regiment, on the unit's daily routine, and on other small but interesting details of life as a volunteer soldier. Possibly generalized to appeal to a broader veteran public, Benedict also removed from his book details of a purely local nature, such as news of visitors from Burlington or particular kindnesses rendered by those at home to their Chittenden County friends in service. Gone, too, is the laudatory narrative of Company C's soldierly qualities, as well as other unflattering commentary that might reflect negatively on his fellow soldiers (many of whom were still alive in 1895). Original misstatements or rumors current at the time of the war, which we now understand to have been erroneous, were excised by Benedict the historian in preparing his letters for publication. He decisively trimmed adjectives and adverbs, and, although Benedict's wry good-humor comes through clearly in both books, all in all, the 1895 collection lacks much of the freshness and charm that readers have come to expect and appreciate in more recent compilations of soldiers' writings. As most of us will not have easy access to the original letters as they appeared over many months in the

Free Press, it is fortunate that we may now turn to Eric Ward's book to regain the sense of immediacy lost in Benedict's revised edition of his own letters.

It is interesting to compare the original version (in Ward's book) with the edited version (as published by Benedict in 1895) of the letters Benedict wrote on July 4 and July 14, 1863, relaying news of the battle of Gettysburg and its aftermath. The wounded left to languish on the Gettysburg battlefield following the fighting on July 2 grow from hundreds (original letter in Ward, p. 192) to thousands (Benedict's 1895 version, p. 169); the tremendous musketry fire heard on the morning of July 3 lasts six hours in the 1895 compilation (p. 174) and seven hours in the original letter (Ward, p. 194); the stunning artillery barrage that signaled the prelude to Pickett's Charge begins at one o'clock in the 1895 version (p. 175) and at two o'clock in the original letter (Ward, p. 194); it took the Confederate line in front of the 2nd Vermont Brigade less than three minutes to break in Benedict's 1863 letter (Ward, p. 195) and less than five minutes in his 1895 version (p. 178); and Benedict writes of touring the battlefield on Sunday (July 5) noting that burial parties had been at work 10 or 12 hours (Ward, p. 211) while in the 1895 compilation, burial details had been at work for 24 hours (p. 190). These details rather graphically illustrate the transformation of soldier to historian, providing a fascinating window into how military history often gets written.

However, the book is not without problems. A liberal sprinkling of small typographical errors as well as a few more significant errors detract from the book's value as a reference. The famous St. Albans raid occurred on October 19, not November 18, 1864, as Ward writes on page 225. Norwich University's Alonzo Jackman did not serve as adjutant general of Vermont during the first year of the Civil War (p. 17); that position belonged to H. Henry Baxter until October of 1861, when the office passed to Peter T. Washburn.

At times, some of Ward's assertions seem prone to generalization. Bounties were certainly not a standardized \$50 in Vermont as one is led to believe on page 2, but were considerably more varied, creating a host of problems for Adjutant General Washburn, in many cases forcing smaller, poorer towns into direct competition for recruits with larger, richer ones. On page 48 Ward claims that Civil War infantry officers employed horses only on review or for other non-combatant transportation purposes, thereby ignoring a large body of historical narrative and first-person accounts of horses being shot out from under infantry officers while in action. Benedict's own letter of July 4, 1863 refers to Colonel Francis Randall's horse being shot from under him at Gettysburg (p. 192). It is also difficult to agree with Ward's assertion that most officers'

mounts were gifts (p. 48). Many field officers who had the means arranged to have family horses forwarded to them from home.

At times a complex event or series of events is oversimplified in Ward's commentary. On page 43, he dismisses the results of J. E. B. Stuart's raid on Chambersburg in October 1862 stating that the Confederate troopers "merely burned" a confiscated ordnance train when, according to Stephen W. Sears on page 328 of *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1983), Stuart captured hundreds of horses and destroyed \$250,000 worth of government property. Ward claims the dismissal of General Burnside from command of the Army of the Potomac on January 25, 1863 was "caused" by the "Mud March" of January 1863 (p. 130). The poor timing coupled with an unfortunate spell of rainy weather that contributed to the disastrous move were perhaps key factors in the general's reassignment, but political infighting among the army's top command and a general loss of confidence in him were weighty, if not the deciding factors in Burnside's removal. It is also difficult to agree with Ward that, to soldiers, "death by disease was unexpected" (pp. 42, 62). It took very little time in active service for most recruits to witness (and indeed experience) for themselves the devastating impact that thousands of men living together in close, unsanitary conditions had on the health of the troops.

Ward makes very good use of primary source material such as the regimental descriptive book of the 12th Vermont, pension and Medal of Honor files, and related newspaper accounts. The descriptive book, in particular, supplies very interesting personal details that humanize the unit's individual members. Most of the illustrations are well chosen, with the exception of the map of Washington's defenses on p. 75, which is reproduced at too small a scale to be readable without magnification. Ward also makes judicious use of other manuscript letter collections in Vermont repositories, notably the University of Vermont's collections of letters from two other Company C soldiers, Richard J. Irwin and George I. Hagar. These well-chosen collections supplement and support Benedict's own narrative of events, as does Ward's own extensive commentary.

All in all, Eric Ward has done an admirable job of compiling the "hasty and unstudied sketches" of George Grenville Benedict (p. 213). Read in conjunction with Benedict's 1895 edition of his own letters, we are given interesting insight into the Civil War service of a young volunteer soldier and his evolution into Vermont's premier military historian.

KELLY NOLIN

Kelly Nolin is military archivist for the Vermont Military Records Project.

*The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas
in America*

By Louis Menand (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001,
pp. xii, 546, \$27.00; paper, \$15.00).

In this illuminating book, which should be required reading for all American history students, Louis Menand discusses with engaging clarity the immensely complicated subject of changing intellectual assumptions in the post Civil War era. He succeeds principally because he tells his story through a wide and lively cast of characters, ranging from Hetty Robinson Green, the “Witch of Wall Street,” to the renowned Harvard scientist, Louis Agassiz. Menand focuses primarily on the lives of four influential Northerners—Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., William James, Charles Peirce, and John Dewey—whom he credits with bringing late-nineteenth-century American thought into the modern world. The story itself traces the development of pragmatism, a set of ideas that met the needs of the postwar nation’s fractured society.

“Certitude leads to violence”(p. 61) sums up the conclusion Holmes reached after being wounded in three separate Civil War battles. What was needed, he felt—as did others who had lived through the war—was a *modus operandi* that made it harder for people to be driven to violence by their beliefs. As it developed, pragmatism came to view ideas and beliefs as instruments for coping with the modern world, not as “finished cosmologies”(p. 372). William James saw pragmatism as enabling people “to make good choices among philosophical options”(p. 75).

The book’s title refers to a short-lived philosophical society formed in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1872, with a membership that included James, Holmes, and Peirce. In the years before the emergence of the modern university, such private societies were the principal locales where intellectual work was accomplished in the United States. Menand demonstrates that pragmatism took shape precisely out of the discussions of such groups, evolving as the members of the Metaphysical Club and other similar societies shared and criticized each other’s philosophical ideas.

For Vermont readers the chief interest of this book will lie both in its account of the Vermont transcendentalists—a handful of University of Vermont professors whose educational philosophy would have a profound influence on the young John Dewey—and for its discussion of Dewey’s part in the growth of pragmatism.

This story begins in Burlington in the early 1830s with James Marsh, the founder of Vermont transcendentalism and president of the University of Vermont from 1830 to 1833. A professor of philosophy and an evangelical Christian, Marsh had published an edition of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* (1829) that proved to be a seminal text for American transcendentalists and helped launch the romantic movement in this country. There was, however, little connection between Marsh and the Emersonian transcendentalists, for Marsh was at bottom a conservative who believed in a logically sound philosophical system and in preserving institutions, rather than subjecting them to radical criticism.

Marsh's progressivism lay in his effort to reform the struggling University of Vermont on the principles of what Menand calls "educational organicism," or the unity of all knowledge. This meant integrating the curriculum so that, in the words of a university publication, all that was taught formed "but one ample course, the several parts of which may be acquired in any number and to any extent that the purposes of the individual may require" (p. 248). By the time Marsh stepped down as president in 1833, the University of Vermont was being lauded as one of the most respected institutions of higher education in New England.

John Dewey came to this university in the early 1870s, where his mentor was Henry Torrey, a professor of philosophy, and the last of the Vermont transcendentalists. Dewey imbibed Marsh's organicism through Torrey, and this remained one of the important strands of thought that we have come to identify with Dewey's pragmatism. Thanks in part to the success of his Laboratory School in Chicago, founded in 1896, his philosophy came to have a far-reaching influence on American education, and helped to change the way children are taught. As Menand tells us, the school allowed Dewey to test the validity of his theory of the unity of knowledge, his hypothesis that "thinking and acting are just two names for a single process—the process of making our way as best we can in a universe shot through with contingency" (p. 360). Ideas and beliefs were for Dewey, as they were for Holmes, simply tools for coping.

This book, which won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 2002, is not only highly rewarding for its own sake, but particularly of interest to readers of this review because of the formative influence of Vermont thinkers.

DEBORAH P. CLIFFORD

Deborah P. Clifford, historian and biographer, is the author of The Passion of Abby Hemenway: Memory, Spirit, and the Making of History, published by the Vermont Historical Society in 2001.

Women and the Republican Party, 1854–1924

By Melanie Susan Gustafson (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001, pp. ix, 288, \$34.95).

In her 1994 memoir, former Vermont Governor Madeleine Kunin articulated the problem of the “female politician.” She is “unexpected,” Kunin noted; the presence of a woman in a man’s role is the cause of speculation, for she is “like a man and yet not like a man” (p. 4). For Kunin, the knowledge that Consuelo Northrup Bailey had held the second highest office in the state helped legitimate her own pathway to female political leadership. In an effort to redefine the woman politician, Melanie Gustafson, associate professor of history at the University of Vermont, has documented women’s participation in party politics, not after but before the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteed woman suffrage. Hoping to spur a reassessment of the amendment, Gustafson places the suffrage movement in the context of Republican Party politics. If the GOP was the great hope of African-Americans in the nineteenth century, it was also the great disappointment for many leaders in the woman’s movement.

In *Women and the Republican Party*, Gustafson not only succeeds admirably in her goal of reevaluating the Nineteenth Amendment, but she also resurrects a cadre of female actors who until now have been buried in the backrooms of Republican parlors and convention halls. Despite the fact of their disfranchisement, middle-class white and black women were hardly absent from party politics in the nineteenth century. In fact, their activities as organizers, speakers, and fundraisers suggest that the federal amendment represented a benchmark rather than a finish line or a new beginning in women’s politics.

Whether to adhere to their reform agendas or capitulate to party goals proved a key source of tension for political women. Early in the nineteenth century, the association of private virtues with womanhood meant that women’s presence at party events would testify to the loyalty of their husbands and the lofty principles of party members. But as Gustafson shows, during and after the Civil War, when women became active as speakers and organizers hoping to influence party goals, their efforts to pursue principle clashed repeatedly with partisanship. Abolitionist Anna Dickinson of Pennsylvania, for example, became the party’s most popular stump speaker during the war years, but President Lincoln’s moderation on Reconstruction and the party’s failure to adequately pay her, drove her to the sidelines.

Throughout her analysis, Gustafson interweaves lively stories of women like Dickinson who viewed the Republican Party as a pathway to political participation with those who spurned partisanship, pursuing suffrage and reform goals through women's voluntary organizations instead. In the process, she sheds new light on the long history of women's reform efforts. We learn, for example, of the frustrations of well-known figures Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Jane Addams, and Frances Willard, all of whom engaged with the Republican Party to varying degrees and then abandoned it either for nonpartisanship or third-party campaigns. For African-American women, who often viewed race as the dominant issue, party loyalty vied with race and gender priorities to dilute their influence. Lawyer and temperance advocate Judith Ellen Foster, who organized the first women's association within Republican ranks in 1888, attempted to balance partisanship with her efforts to seek direct political power for women. The Woman's National Republican Association institutionalized Foster's belief "that women needed to rely on each other in politics," but the establishment of separate political clubs also relegated women to subordinate positions within the party (p. 88). Women reformers such as Jane Addams, who sought an alternative pathway to power in Progressive Party politics, faced equally difficult challenges, as they continued to represent "symbols of political virtue" while having to compromise with the party's exclusionary racial strategies (p. 115).

By uncovering the debate among women activists over partisan activities, Gustafson not only provides a new look at woman suffrage and party politics, but also reveals the long-term consequences of women's disfranchisement. After 1920, their strategies to gain political power would continue to divide their political efforts and limit their partisan experience. The organization and strength of the nonpartisan League of Women Voters indicated that gender remained important in political organizing because women lacked party influence. Caught between separatism and compromise, women remained unequal to men in political power.

Like all good histories, *Women and the Republican Party* raises as many questions as it answers. Most readers will want to know how women fared in the Democratic and Populist Parties, a question partially addressed in *We Have Come to Stay: American Women and Political Parties, 1880–1960*, a recent collection of essays Gustafson helped edit. For readers interested in Vermont history, the volume offers tantalizing tidbits about Clarina Howard Nichols as a Republican speaker in 1856 and Progressive Party organizing in Stowe during the 1912 campaign. Did local women become as active in Vermont's Republican Party

as their counterparts did nationally? The answers to these and other questions about women in politics will surely be enriched by Gustafson's lead in connecting the politics of party and the politics of gender.

MARILYN S. BLACKWELL

Marilyn S. Blackwell, Ph.D., teaches history at Community College of Vermont and has written articles on nineteenth-century Vermont and women's history.

*A History of the Town of Orwell, Vermont:
Past and Present, 3rd edition*

Edited by David H. Bain (Orwell, Vt.: Orwell Historical Society, 2001, pp. 252, paper, \$15.00).

*Talk of the Town: 1925. Highlights from Vermont's
Popular Column in the Barre Daily Times*

Compiled and edited by Patricia W. Belding (Barre, Vt.: Potash Brook Publishing, 2001, pp. 144, paper, \$13.00).

*A History of the Richmond, Vermont
Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
1801–2001. Two Hundred Years of Trials and
Triumphs Serving the Lord.*

By Harriet Wheatley Riggs (Richmond, Vt.: Richmond United Church of Christ, 2001, pp. 64, paper, \$10.00).

Local history is primarily written for a local audience. It is most meaningful to individuals who have an intimate familiarity with the names and places mentioned. Yet local history can also be a gold mine of information for the general historian who is exploring a topic that involves a particular community or specific details from several communities. This review covers three works of local history: One is a conventional town history, while the other two are more focused in either topic or time.

A History of the Town of Orwell, Vermont: Past and Present is the most conventional and substantial of the books under review. It is the latest revision of a town history written in 1963. It is significant that the local historical society recognizes the importance of keeping the town's history current rather than simply resting on the laurels of having published one.

This volume contains all the topics ones would expect to find in a local history: early settlers, religious and educational institutions, agriculture, business, transportation, community organizations, veterans, notable people, and interesting stories. The history of Orwell is significant to a larger audience because the town is the location of one of Vermont's most important historic sites, Mount Independence. And this book does a good job of covering "the Mount," both its historic significance during the Revolution and its gradual development into an important Vermont Historic Site.

Some local histories err by identifying a place by either a historic or current owner, leaving the reader of the future to figure out the location after the property has changed hands. Orwell avoids this problem by using, in many cases, the names of both historic and current owners, and a number keyed to a map. One potential weakness to this excellent system is that, when I received the review copy, the map was loose. Currently it has adhered itself inside the front cover. Loose maps have a way of becoming lost, so that in the future, this volume may be missing this very useful finding aid.

Other commendable features of the Orwell history are the inclusion of sixty-two historic photographs and an index. An interesting and helpful feature is the practice of putting names in bold the first time they appear. Unfortunately, the editor applied this system only in the chapters on "Early Settlers" and "Doctors of the Town."

One suggestion for improvement would be to relocate some of the lists found in the body of the work, such as town clerks or Grand Lists, to the end in the form of appendices. I also found it strange that the population trends chart on page 12 contains no data between 1800 and 1880. This information could easily have been obtained from the U. S. Census records. On the whole, *A History of the Town of Orwell* will serve its residents and historians well.

Talk of the Town: 1925 makes no claim to being a comprehensive town history. It is not arranged topically and provides no analysis, as none of these were the intent of the compiler. Yet this reviewer was enchanted by the insights into the daily life of Barre reflected in excerpts from the "Talk of the Town" column of *The Barre Daily Times*. Patricia Belding provides the reader with an almost daily glimpse of the social life of a Vermont community from January 2, 1925 to December 30, 1925. Why 1925? As Belding recounts: "What I *did* find was a fascinating account of Barre in the Middle of the Roaring Twenties, when Prohibition was at its height and rum raids were in the news daily." (2)

In addition to selecting excerpts for inclusion, Belding provides the reader with international, national, and statewide context at the beginning of each month. These provide no analysis, but merely list natural

and manmade disasters, and political and social events that inform the reader what else was happening at the time outside of Barre.

Talk of the Town: 1925 provides a full gamut of events: a cross burning by the KKK, the birthday party for four-year-old Geraldine Bixby, sledding accidents, and school plays. As an educator, I can see this book being an excellent primary source document in the classroom for students who select a research topic such as crime, social class, recreation, spousal abuse. Residents of Barre and any individual wishing to get a sense of what life was like in urban Vermont in the 1920s will find *Talk of the Town: 1925* an interesting read.

A History of the Richmond, Vermont Congregational Church focuses on just one institution within one community, the history of the Richmond United Church of Christ. While I do not expect this book to become a best seller, I feel that each church in Vermont owes itself and posterity an attempt to accomplish what the Richmond church has. Written to commemorate the bicentennial of the church's founding, the book does an excellent job of reconstructing its past. After a dozen years without a meetinghouse, the Congregationalists joined with the Methodists, Baptists, Universalists, and other Christians of Richmond to build the Old Round Church. In 1849, the Congregationalists left the union meetinghouse and built their own church. In 1901 this was replaced by the current building.

In addition to tracing the history of the construction, repairs, and modifications to these structures, this work does an excellent job of documenting the thirty-five ministers who have served this congregation. Especially appealing is the documentation of the social life and benevolent activities of the church since 1940: the women's fellowship, sixty years of chicken pie suppers, men's breakfasts, refugee sponsorship, ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve services, and social activism. This narrative also demonstrates how institutional histories often reflect the times. It notes that in 1973 the first female deacon served communion, and in the 1980s the wife of the minister studied theology and was ordained in 1984, becoming the first female to serve as minister to the Richmond congregation.

This interesting little book provides insight into two hundred years of trials and triumphs of one denomination in one town in the Winooski Valley. It is a model that should be emulated by those churches in the state that do not have a published history.

ALLEN RICE YALE, JR.

Allen Yale is associate professor of history at Lyndon State College in Lyndon, Vermont, and author of While the Sun Shines: Making Hay in Vermont 1789–1990, published by the Vermont Historical Society.