

waterwheels turned, it is clearly the machinery itself that interests him most.

This is not a book for whiling away the hours on a warm summer's day. It requires close application. Sometimes lacking in tight organization, occasionally repetitive, it spares the reader no tedious detail. And while some technological descriptions are marvelously clear, others quickly leave the neophyte engineer far behind. The book is worth the attention it requires, however, for like Hunter's earlier work, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers* (1949), it is destined to become a classic. The first of three projected volumes on industrial power in America, *Waterpower in the Century of the Steam Engine* is profusely illustrated with photographs and diagrams. There is no bibliography, but documentation is more than ample. The second volume of the series, on steam power, is promised in the near future. Together the two books will constitute a definitive history of industrial power in nineteenth-century America.

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*At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present.* By Carl N. Degler. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. Pp. xiv, 527. Tables, notes, index. \$19.95.)

Carl N. Degler's *At Odds* is a valuable survey of recent research in American women's and family history from the late eighteenth century to the present. In synthesizing two often distinct fields, he demonstrates the persistent tension between women's search for autonomy and their family roles. For general readers and historians unfamiliar with these rapidly growing fields, Degler provides a richly detailed and provocative overview of the literature. Specialists, too, will find *At Odds* an exceptionally important study for its discussion and analysis of the numerous controversies that have emerged as historians increase their knowledge of the female experience in America. Degler's inclusion of many interesting, but as yet unpublished, studies is also laudable; the absence of citations for some other discussions, however, is unfortunate.

Degler has not attempted to cover all periods or topics at equal length—a decision that reflects both the state of the two fields and his own expertise. The treatment of the lives of middle-class women in the nineteenth century has a multi-dimensional quality and includes discussions of women's roles as wives and mothers, childrearing methods, sisterhood, declin-

ing fertility, and sexuality. Degler deals with women and the family in the twentieth century in a much more cursory manner. Although he dismisses this disparity by noting that "Most readers, after all, know from first-hand experience something of the nature of the twentieth century family" (p. ix), the social history of women and the family in this period is in a rudimentary stage and is in many respects far less complete than knowledge for the previous century.

Degler agrees with those historians who have challenged the notion that the colonial era constituted a "golden age" in which American women enjoyed a better position in the family and society than their sisters in the nineteenth century. In his interesting analysis of female sexuality, Degler argues that women's lives actually improved in the later century, especially in regard to their autonomy within the family. Although some prescriptive literature and some medical men viewed female sexuality as "undeveloped and perhaps even absent," Degler does not believe that "during the 19th century women's sexuality was generally denied or effectively suppressed" (p. 269). Attitudes regarding female sexuality derived in large part, Degler concludes, from the attempt to control male sexuality and to enhance women's position within marriage. Men who "overindulged" endangered their wives' health; thus, underlying the emphasis on sexual restraint was the premise that "mutuality was at the heart of sexual pleasure and therefore a happy and fulfilling marriage" (p. 273).

Most of Degler's book deals with the middle-class experience, but his discussion of the lives of black women is very perceptive. Although he draws extensively on Herbert G. Gutman's *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* (1976), he differs from Gutman on the extent to which whites influenced black family behavior. His treatment of immigrant families, however, is less satisfying than the literature on this subject merits. Degler is content to summarize a few of the recent studies and thus fails to convey the diversity of experience within immigrant groups depending on the occupational structure they encountered.

Finally, this excellent and important book is occasionally marred by an insensitivity to the sex-specific dilemmas faced by American women. Degler asserts, for example, that women have chosen to put family before career. "Confronted with the social, psychological, or emotional costs of being unable to have children and family if she chose a career, the wife chose to opt for family and a secondary job, rather than a career. That was a constrained choice, to be sure, but a choice nonetheless" (p.

434). One must question if Degler really understands the meaning of those constraints.

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*The History of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.* By J. Bruce Behney and Paul H. Eller. Edited by Kenneth W. Krueger (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979. Pp. 423. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$17.95.)

This is the faithfully recorded story of two Protestant religious bodies that came into being as the eighteenth century yielded to the nineteenth. It is the history of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association. The book captures the drama of Philip William Otterbein, a Reformed preacher in his German homeland, and Martin Boehm, a Mennonite, who at a Boehm revival on a Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, farm in 1767 joined hands and declared: "Wir Sind Brüder!" ("We are Brethren!"). It brings to life the struggle of Jacob Albright, an "honest tilemaker," who was licensed to preach by the Methodists. The need for a German-language ministry led him to bring together in 1803 five of his congregations to form the Evangelical Association. After holding conferences from 1789 on, the United Brethren had been formally organized as a church in 1800.

Through a century and a half these two fellowships with their common Pennsylvania origin and their initial commitment to the German-speaking people—mostly distressed and poor—developed side by side and moved westward concurrently. Their leaders proclaimed Christian assurance. Their golden text might well have been: "It is the Spirit himself bearing witness to our spirit that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). This assurance brought joy, optimism, and confidence. In addition, sanctification, a John Wesley doctrine, was espoused as a summons to Christian growth in personal and ethical living.

On their pilgrimage the two denominations prospered moderately, recording their share of triumphs and reverses. The Evangelical Association merged with the United Evangelical church and in the process lost a number of congregations, which continued their more conservative way in the Evangelical Congregational church. The United Brethren, as they grew and mingled with other churches, were abandoned by a section of their fellowship which became the United Brethren (Old