

1840 to 1848. Most of the letters were written by Rutherford to John Bowman, a Pennsylvania merchant. Rutherford's purpose in writing Bowman was to convince him to emigrate to Illinois so he could marry Bowman's sister. The second section consists of articles by Rutherford about life in early Illinois, written in 1877 for a local newspaper. The editors justly claim these articles are "notable for their sense of time and place, for their humor, for their characterizations, and for the picture they give of an educated physician observing the people and events of a newly settled area" (p. 70). While most reminiscences are notorious for their praise of a town's first settlers, Rutherford's articles are remarkably candid. These articles, as well as Rutherford's letters, appear well edited and are adequately annotated.

The final section of the book details Rutherford's involvement in the Matson slave case. Although their account is informative, the editors have ignored important primary sources in reconstructing the events of the case. Considering its brevity, inclusion of this section in the introduction would have been more appropriate.

The editors succeed in presenting interesting facets of Rutherford's early life, but they have perhaps misunderstood the significance of his writings. The introduction emphasizes Rutherford's medical training and the general practice of medicine in the period. Not only is their introduction inadequately researched, it is inappropriate to the documents presented. The major portion of Rutherford's correspondence and articles pertain to the citizens, institutions, trades, and industry of Illinois. Rutherford's account books and medical school lecture notes, while utilized, are not fully exploited. Rutherford's letters and articles are only tangentially important to the medical historian.

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Frontierswomen: The Iowa Experience. By Glenda Riley. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1981. Pp. xv, 211. Map, illustrations, tables, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$18.95.)

Unlike most political and economic historians, earlier generations of frontier historians did not ignore women. But the women they included are not the stuff of common humanity. Based on Hamlin Garland or Ole Rølvaag, these portraits showed women either crushed or sanctified by the frontier.

They tell more about the authors' conceptions of "true womanhood" than they do about women's lives on the frontier.

Glenda Riley's *Frontierswomen* looks at how women actually lived in one part of the American West. She focuses on white women who settled in Iowa from 1830, when an illegal squatter and her husband moved into Keokuk, to 1870, when Iowa no longer satisfied the census definition of a frontier. She poses essential questions: Who were frontierswomen? Why did they go West? What work did they do? How did the Civil War matter? Did the frontier foster "strong-minded" women?

Riley approaches these questions by looking at individuals and by determining the range of answers. She looks past the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant "Madonna of the Prairies" and sees also black and European women in those covered wagons. She remembers too that Native American women peopled the frontier. Riley finds unwilling migrants, but also others—married and single—who chose to move West or who at least recognized their own stake in a move decided by others.

Riley examines the range of women's chores and notes the irony of the census label for married women farmers—"not gainfully employed." She recognizes the difficulties that women faced when their husbands went to the Civil War. But, she finds, "Iowa women quickly learned to manage a frontier society and a wartime society with remarkable results" (p. 134). Like their urban sisters, Iowa frontier women carried on war relief work. Like their feminist sisters elsewhere, but not in unusually large numbers, some Iowa women lifted the banner of suffragism after the war.

Thanks to the work of Riley, Julie Roy Jeffrey, Sandra L. Myers, Lillian Schlissel, John Mack Farragher, and others, historians now understand more clearly the nature of frontier life for women. And historians may now pose additional questions. The first might be what frontier women thought about themselves and their world. What role did the church, neighbors, and women in Omaha or Boston play in defining these women's views? Did frontier women read? Did they read *Godey's Lady's Book*? Did they mail order Butterick patterns? Did they take credit for their contributions to the farm or discount themselves by saying simply that they "helped"?

As Riley correctly notes, historians of frontier women face multiple difficulties with sources—the usual problems of research on women. But with books such as *Frontierswomen* available, frontier historians no longer must accept the illusions of the forefathers.

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