The essays are mostly well written and informative. The introduction at times uses phrases and concepts beyond the comprehension of many college students, and some of the essays are less well researched than others. Still, by bringing together antiwar opponents from the twentieth century and recounting their stories, the book’s strengths outweigh its rather slight weaknesses.

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The intent of this book is to show the mutual utility of genealogy and social history. The editors, Robert M. Taylor of the Indiana Historical Society and Ralph J. Crandall of the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston, are both experienced public historians and are well versed in this subject. Their cogent introduction states, accurately, that “the volume familiarizes the reader with highlights of past and present genealogical activity, gauges genealogy’s strengths and weaknesses as a reservoir of personal data, and provides examples of genealogies [and genealogical methods] employed in serious historical inquiry” (p. xiii). They also provide a first chapter that includes a brief history of genealogical practice in the United States, as well as a very helpful bibliography embedded in the footnotes.

Besides Taylor’s and Crandall’s opening chapter, the book includes fifteen others, some of which have appeared previously in
print or as papers. A clearer indication of their provenance would have been useful, but this is a minor flaw.

Samuel P. Hays's "History and Genealogy: Patterns of Change and Prospects for Cooperation" deservedly appears as chapter two although it first appeared in Prologue in 1975; in various ways Hays defends his statement that "the new social history is simply the new genealogy writ large" (p. 47). John W. Adams and Alice Bee Kasakoff, anthropologists, usefully compare genealogies from primitive societies with those of the present day. Robert Charles Anderson pleads for the acceptance of genealogy as a true auxiliary discipline and for more formal graduate courses. Elizabeth Shown Mills debunks several myths about southern genealogy, most of which ignore the substantial black-Indian-white mixing that existed.

Chapters six through sixteen are case studies. James M. O'Toole gives a well-informed survey of Catholic records available in the United States, including underused ones such as orphanage and social service records as well as the better-known parish and diocesan records. Andrejs Plakans evaluates German local records and includes a good description of the village genealogies called Orts-sippenbuecher. In chapter eight Dean L. May and co-workers verify the unusually high level of persistence in certain Mormon towns in Utah. John A. Schutz provides specific information on many members of the Massachusetts legislature from 1691 to 1776. Patricia Trainor O'Malley, in a tight, thoughtful essay, uses genealogy to study marriage patterns in the first three generations of Rowley, Massachusetts; this chapter is one of the best in the book. Lawrence J. Kilbourne helps establish, from genealogies of Hampton, New Hampshire, that the downturn in American fertility preceded industrialization and urbanization. In a sprightly essay David Hackett Fischer finds three patterns of first-naming in New England from 1620 to 1980, the Puritan, the Victorian, "and another that is emerging today" (p. 240), and in so doing shows how genealogy can be brought to bear on key patterns in social history. Darrett and Anita Rutman contribute an essay on child-naming from their recent and monumental study of Middlesex County, Virginia.

The final three chapters relate genealogy to migration research. Virginia DeJohn Anderson, studying the Danforth family in colonial New England, establishes how migrations of family members integrated the towns of colonial New England. Claudia L. Bushman traces the spatial and vertical mobility (some decidedly downward) of the Wilson family of Delaware and Indiana. Finally, Walter Kamphoefner describes his tracing of Westphalians to Missouri, the problems presented by German and American sources, and possibilities for future transatlantic research.

This book will certainly be useful, even inspirational, to those (young and old) striving to become better social historians.

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