

While emphasizing the similarities in the promotion and development of black towns and white towns, the author minimizes the role of race in this history. Hamilton states, "America's racial ideology produced few notable differences in the early evolution of black towns and their white and biracial counterparts" (p. 152). Yet information contained in his book indicates that race was clearly an important factor in black town history. Black nationalist philosophy was featured in promotional literature, and it appealed directly to persons having a black separatist ideology. The fortunes of black towns were affected by the disinclination of white railroad magnates, industrialists, bankers, government officials, and farmers to do business with blacks in the years before 1915.

Nevertheless, students of black business history will find *Black Towns and Profit* to be a valuable scholarly work using a variety of primary sources including railroad company records. The considerable secondary literature on the topic is discussed at length in a bibliographic essay (Appendix Two). This unusual volume also contains much of interest to the general reader. Hoosier readers will note that no Indiana sites are listed in Appendix One, "Black Towns in the Trans-Appalachian West," thereby ignoring places like the Roberts settlement and Lyles Station.

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*Promise to the Land: Essays on Rural Women.* By Joan M. Jensen. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. Pp. xii, 319. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, index. \$27.50.)

*Promise to the Land* is a collection of essays, first started in 1977, by Joan M. Jensen. Half of the essays have been previously published; one essay is co-authored with Susan Armitage. The book is divided into five sections, which include traditional subjects such as rural history but also new topics such as rural social welfare. The essays cover the activities of farm women in a wide geographical area including New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Maryland, Washington, and New Mexico. They also touch a wide variety of ethnic groups including the Seneca Indians, Hispanics, African-American slaves, and even the life of a Lithuanian immigrant farm woman. They further cover a wide array of work areas such as picking hops, making butter, and keeping boarders. In the introduction Jensen writes, "The study of women in agricultural development begins with the inescapable reality that women have seldom had control over the land they have labored on" (p. 1). Jensen returns to this observation again and again as she deals with women in different regions and in different areas of agricultural production.

While not all essays are equally well developed, Jensen's work demonstrates a remarkable diversity of scholarship and writing. Several of the essays are personal, relating the lives of the author's mother and grandmother and the author's life in a commune. Several essays discuss research methods such as oral history and the use of iconography and material culture; these essays are intended as models for other scholars who work in this field. Throughout, the essays present significant findings on rural women across the entire nation. Jensen frequently reiterates the fact that much more work needs to be done in this area and that nontraditional methods of research will have to be used since rural women often did not leave written records.

Jensen's essays represent a treasure trove of material on American rural women. A pioneer in this field, Jensen writes with authority and understanding. Her book will now be the starting point for anyone interested in the subject. The reader will find not only a rich source of information but also suggestions of ways to continue research in the field.

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*Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885–1930.* By Mina Carson. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. Pp. xiii, 280. Notes, index. \$29.95.)

*Pluralism & Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890–1919.* By Rivka Shpak Lissak. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. Pp. xi, 252. Tables, notes, select bibliography, index. \$35.00.)

Though both of these books focus on the ideas that motivated and sustained the American settlement house movement, Rivka Shpak Lissak and Mina Carson have very different stories to tell. Lissak's, the more controversial, claims that the most influential settlement in the United States, Hull House, was "designed to perpetuate the existing social order" (p. 22), that Jane Addams and Chicago's "Liberal Progressives" tried and failed to "force their leadership . . . upon both 'new immigrants' and their leaders" (p. 76), and that they had as their "ultimate objective . . . the dissolution of the ethnic group" (p. 131). Carson, by contrast, while acknowledging conflicts between settlement leaders' motives of social control and their ideals for "social democracy," concludes that Addams and some other leaders "made imaginative and influential contributions to new conceptions of cultural pluralism that recognized . . . 'immigrant gifts' to American society" (p. 197). Carson sees settlements as the embodiment of a religious conviction of