

needs to know on the matter. But if at that point the reader's senses fail, Hutton conveniently includes a list of the ten best books for those who want or need more (it really is only nine because *The Custer Reader* is included as one of the ten). Those who read all the books and articles mentioned in that essay are truly fit to ride with Custer.

ROBERT T. SMITH lives in Billings, Montana, not far from the Little Big Horn National Battlefield and would have preferred to ride with Crook.

The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers. By Stephen J. Stein. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992. Pp. xx, 554. Maps, illustrations, tables, notes, suggestions for further reading, index. \$40.00.)

This big, gracefully written book comes close to being a definitive history of Shakerism, without entirely supplanting earlier books on the subject like Edward Deming Andrews's classic, *The People Called Shakers* (1953). Stephen J. Stein presents a carefully detailed portrait to demonstrate that the popular image of the Shakers as quaintly innocent chair makers is simplistic: a photograph features a group of twentieth-century Shakers seated in their new possession, a large automobile. He depicts a people who, while creating their own distinctive communal world, also related to American society in general.

A scrupulous scholar, Stein bases his discussion of the formative years of Shakerism exclusively on the relatively small number of available contemporary sources in order to separate the truth from the myths established by later accounts. One result is to diminish Ann Lee's importance as a founder and to enhance that of James Whittaker. This is the shortest of the book's five parts, the others benefitting from the fact that the Shakers, initially suspicious of the written word, eventually created an extensive documentary record.

Part II gives special emphasis to the development of Shaker communitarianism and theology and to the westward expansion of the evolving order, the central figure being Lucy Wright who consolidated the influence of women within the movement. A notable exception to this success was the closing in 1826 of the West Union community in Indiana as a result of poor health conditions and the desertion of many of its young members. Part III presents Shakerism at its apogee between 1827 and 1875, a time of prosperity agitated both by spiritualism and conflict within the order. The next part, relating to the years after 1875, is chiefly a story of decline marked by the feminization of the society as male membership dwindled. This period also contained elements of dynamic change as Shakers responded to a modernizing world. Part V features the

revival of interest in Shakerism after the 1960s that temporarily saved the last two communities at Canterbury, New Hampshire, and Sabbathday Lake, Maine.

In this rich offering of insights, there are a few flaws: Stein sometimes makes assertions which he does not adequately document, and he is rather weak in his picture of social and economic life within the society. On the whole, however, he has written an interesting work which establishes a new standard of truth and completeness in Shaker scholarship. Yale University Press should be commended for producing a book as handsome as it is scholarly.

EDWARD K. SPANN is professor of history at Indiana State University, Terre Haute. His most recent books, *Brotherly Tomorrows* (1989) and *Hopedale: From Commune to Company Town* (1992), deal with secular and religious efforts to establish cooperative communities. He is currently at work on a history of the Regional Planning Association of America.

The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s. Edited by Shawn Lay. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992. Pp. 230. Notes, tables, figures, index. \$32.50.)

The thesis of Shawn Lay and the contributors to *The Invisible Empire in the West* is that the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s has been misunderstood. Using the case study method, the authors examine the Klan in Denver, El Paso, Anaheim, Salt Lake City, and Eugene, Oregon. It makes sense to study the Klan in a decentralized manner because the organization was decentralized and fragmented, changing color like a chameleon to meld with the local environment.

Lay believes previous writers have exaggerated the violence of the Klan and that sensationalized accounts are simplistic. The Klan was not composed of marginal men animated by status anxiety and was not dominated by fundamentalists, and there was surprising diversity within its ranks. Never a monolithic movement, it attracted idealists and reformers as well as bigots. Indeed, Klansmen were no more bigoted than non-Klansmen; they were simply activists. Puncturing stereotypes, the authors point out that the Klan was populist and advocated improved law enforcement, better education, and municipal reform. Its objective was to enforce prohibition and uphold the moral status quo. Klansmen disliked chaos, relished order, and considered themselves patriotic. They were average citizens, not social deviants.

The Invisible Empire in the West applies a higher level of sophistication to the Klan than previous studies. In an illuminating introduction followed by a historiographical essay, the editor argues that older interpretations of the 1920s Klan were flawed by prejudice, overgeneralizations, and a paucity of primary research.