

Hudson somewhat slights the impact of government policies on the evolution of Corn Belt agriculture. More information on land distribution policies in the nineteenth century and the impact of subsidies in the twentieth century would further enhance this thorough study. The author does, however, reveal the ironies of Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace's role in advocating crop reductions as part of the New Deal agricultural program while simultaneously promoting seed through his own company, Pioneer Hi-Bred Corn Company, an action that actually added to the corn surplus.

Hudson's book is a valuable synthesis of recent secondary literature on the agriculture of the Middle West and his own primary research. It will serve as a standard reference on this vast subject for years to come.

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From the Other Side: Women, Gender, and Immigrant Life in the U.S., 1820–1990. By Donna Gabaccia. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. Pp. xvii, 192. Tables, notes, bibliographical essay, index. Clothbound, \$29.95; paperbound, \$12.95.)

Donna Gabaccia, a well-published historian of migration, now presents a full-scale synthesis of women migrants' history from 1820 to 1990, from Irish and German to Laotian and Latina. *From the Other Side* supplies a major need and builds, as the author says, on the bibliographies of immigrant women compiled by Francesco Cordasco (1985) and herself (1989).

Gabaccia's strategy is topical rather than chronological. The book has three parts. In the first, "Coming to the United States," Gabaccia devotes an opening chapter to a deft survey of Americans' historic migration waves and the ways they connected with "the capitalist world economy." She personalizes the discussion by summarizing the life experiences of three women who migrated: a German in 1854, a Polish Jew in 1904, and a Mexican in 1973. This device, which she follows throughout the book, enhances readability and adds much vividness. Though dealing with abstract global forces, Gabaccia reminds the reader that these migrants were flesh-and-blood women, each with her own individual story. The second chapter details the women's shift from subsistence peasant economies to the industrializing United States and the changes that resulted in their family relations, religions, occupations, and "womanly behavior" (p. 25). The third chapter treats sex ratios, marriages (both arranged and "free"), work (citing the histories of a Swede, a Croat, two Italians, two Japanese, a Chinese, a Mexican,

two Poles, an Irishwoman, and an Armenian), and the effects of federal law.

The second part, "Foreign and Female: Continuities in Immigrant Life," devotes a chapter to paid employment and unpaid work, past and present. The next chapter analyzes family life, including chain migration and power within families. Another discusses voluntary organizations, neighborhoods, church and secular groups, and labor unions. The third part of the volume shows "how class and cultural change in the twentieth century has redefined both immigrant women's adaptation to U.S. life and the identities of their female descendants" (p. xiv). Career paths, mobility, and the "domestication of ethnicity" appear here. The seven-page conclusion is studded with gems of insight comparing male and female ethnic identity and the contemporary situation of migrants.

The topical strategy—surveying an entire 170-year period and crossing a welter of ethnic lines—inevitably leads to a sense of meeting all these people several times and to some sacrifice of narrative drive and temporal context that a chronological organization would ensure. The advantage of topical chapters, however, is to sharpen the definition of problems these migrant women faced in common despite their diverse backgrounds and time contexts.

A very valuable bibliographical essay discusses references relevant to each of the eight chapters and then lists general studies on migrant women and about three dozen works on women of specific nationalities. All of this, and of course the very topic of women migrants, should make the book especially useful for classes in migration history. Serious students of international migration, past and present, should not be without it.

WALTER NUGENT is author of *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870–1914* (1995) and is working on a history of migration to the American West.

The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America. By Paul K. Conkin. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995. Pp. xvii, 326. Notes, index. Clothbound, \$39.95; paperbound, \$16.95.)

The last decade has been a delightful one for historians of American religion. Works like Jon Butler's *Awash in a Sea of Faith* (1990) and Nathan O. Hatch's *The Democratization of American Christianity* (1989) have provided wonderfully readable and provocative reinterpretations of American religious life between the Revolution and the Civil War. Paul K. Conkin's *The Uneasy Center* is a welcome addition to this distinguished company. Conkin has provided the best general overview available of the origins and development of what is now called mainline Protestantism in the United States.