

latter nineteenth century developed the frontier images, especially the cowboy heroes, that later became so well known through film and television. He suggests that the frontier experience had, as early as the 1870s, become a form of entertainment for those who could afford to hire someone like Cody to serve as their guide. He explores the notion of heroism, the development of stagecraft in service of scenes involving gunfire and the burning of the prairie, the impact of the frontier landscape, the promise of the West, the link between masculinity and violence, the challenges to traditional femininity, the economic forces behind the westward expansion of the United States, and the market for entertainment based on a subject of widespread fascination. In this in-

roduction lies the potential for an insightful study that would engage the work of scholars like Rosemarie K. Bank and Richard Slotkin, delving into the intricacies of cultural production in relation to the social and perceptual changes that accompanied the concept of frontier. Instead, Hall has chosen a different course, one that provides a different service to the field.

JEFFREY D. MASON is the author of *Melodrama and the Myth of America* (1993) and the co-editor, with J. Ellen Gainor, of *Performing America: Cultural Nationalism in American Theater* (1999). He is professor of theatre arts and the Robert F. and Evelyn Nelson Wulf Professor of the Humanities at the University of Oregon, Eugene.



### *Making Men, Making Class* *The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877–1920*

By Thomas Winter

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. Pp. xi, 208. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$40.00; paperbound, \$17.00.)

The cover of *Making Men, Making Class* features a picture of a shop meeting of rugged male factory workers, three women (clerks?), and a child, all of them listening to the message of two well-dressed evangelists. Interestingly, for a YMCA publicity photo, the image is ambiguous. Its focus is on the female evangelist who seems to be speaking at that moment. Some, including the women, sit attentively. Yet several of the male workers have already shifted their gaze from

the speakers; above them, a stern-looking man in a suit appears to be watching the crowd more than the speakers. What is the message being presented by the evangelists? Toward whom is it aimed? For whom was the gathering called?

For a half century, beginning with the railroad strikes of 1877, YMCAs held thousands of factory gatherings for industrial workers, suggesting an agenda much more central to the emergence of corporate capitalism

than is typically assumed. It is Thomas Winter's goal to examine the organization's messages and to recapture its importance in defining class and gender in modern America.

The YMCA embarked on its appeal to workingmen amid the turmoil of rapidly escalating labor strife in the 1870s. Since railroads were the most visible and despised corporations, they provided the testing ground for the YMCA vision of social harmony. At first, this program involved building character in American males by offering an alternative to the prevalent leisure habits of masculine working-class culture. Employers funded excellent facilities for the "neutral" YMCAs to encourage the self-restraint that fostered "individual acquisitiveness and entrepreneurial drive" (p. 145). But railroad executives always expected that such traits would unite workers and employers in a paternalistic formula emphasizing hard work, efficiency, and upward mobility rather than collective action and conflict. Key to YMCA success was the recruitment of aspiring and moral young men to staff the facilities and sell its ideas to the rough, masculine railroad workers. At first, the recruiting process was haphazard, but it fortunately found a seedbed in the "burned-over district" of upstate New York.

By the turn of the century, the YMCA was ready to take its railroad program into the working-class neighborhoods of the nation's cities. There, the professional staff faced new challenges complicated by differences of ethnicity and religion, as well as

by labor radicalism. Further, the organization's emphasis on character as a means to individual independence clashed with the reality of declining opportunities for upward mobility. YMCA officials added the notion of "personality" to their lexicon of ideal manhood but defined it in a way that emphasized their own ability to exert a manly dominance over others, in this case the men of the working class. This blending of personality (for the professional staff) and character (which came to mean faithful, productive work for wage earners) enabled YMCA officials to redefine manhood and think of themselves as superior in terms of both gender and class.

Although Winter's title suggests that the YMCA was "making men" of the working class, his is really much more a story about resolving the identity crisis of middle-class professionals. It thus reminds one of Richard Hofstadter's and Robert H. Wiebe's interpretations of the Progressive Era, updated by cultural history. That is not a flaw, but rather a strength. The book is deeply researched, well-written, and makes a significant contribution to understanding the creation of a modern corporate culture. However, the author missed a terrific opportunity to compare the YMCA with the YWCA, especially given the provocative picture on the cover. YWCA industrial work was subject to the same corporate pressures to emphasize programs that denied collective action and labor reform, but women rejected those demands. The YWCA's

professional staff worked closely with the Women's Trade Union League and the Consumer's League to improve the lives of working women and to usher in modern liberalism rather than corporate paternalism. Putting gender and class at the center of such a comparative organizational study might

advance even further our understanding of how the Ys helped sort out the interplay of these identities.

KENNETH FONES-WOLF is associate professor of history at West Virginia University, Morgantown.



*Every Farm a Factory*  
*The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture*

By Deborah Fitzgerald

(New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003. Pp. xi, 242. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00.)

Today the term "factory farm" conjures up images of huge, confined feeding operations (places in which hundreds of thousands of animals are prepared for market on scientifically formulated diets) and of expansive grain farms that cultivate thousands of acres of corn, wheat, and soybeans, all requiring heavy capital investment in equipment, hybrid seed, and chemicals. These trends have indeed exerted a significant impact on agriculture in Indiana. While Clinton County boasts several large hog-feeding operations and DuBois County turkey growers are among the nation's leading producers of birds for the Thanksgiving table, many Hoosier hog farmers find it increasingly difficult to compete with mega-producers in North Carolina and Missouri, and southern Indiana dairy farmers who once milked one hundred cows have ceased operation in the face of competition from western dairies that milk between 2,500 and 10,000 cows. Meanwhile,

many Hoosier corn and soybean farmers use computers, global-positioning systems, and other technological innovations to improve productivity, increase acreage, and reduce environmental degradation.

Deborah Fitzgerald's *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* says very little about the current state of American agriculture, but it is packed with insights into the origins of industrial agriculture and the consequent process that brought us to where we are today. Looking back from the 1980s, when many farmers went bankrupt after investing heavily in new machinery, land, and livestock, Fitzgerald traces the transformation of American farming to the 1920s, when many farmers, in the wake of the agricultural depression that followed World War I, adopted an "industrial ideal" based on "the five components that characterized nearly every successful factory: large-scale production, spe-