

Readers embraced this evangelical canon, evidenced by the number of books they bought, and this market success led to a second important tension within the evangelical world. Some publishers eschewed the “commercialization” of evangelical literature, fearing that financial success undermined their ability to influence the world. Most, however, saw that bigger sales meant a wider exposure for evangelical ideas, and they adopted secular business principles as a way to help them spread their message.

Brown’s research is thorough, and her conclusions are an important corrective to the stereotypical portrayal of evangelicals as anti-intellectual and otherworldly. Indeed, evangelicals were not afraid to engage popular culture to reach the “masses” and puri-

fy society. They maintained a holistic approach to life in which every action—including reading, writing, and publishing—served a godly purpose. Thus, concludes Brown, evangelicals’ experience of religion went beyond altar calls and tent revivals to a lifelong commitment to changing the world through the power of words.

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Constantine Samuel Rafinesque
A Voice in the American Wilderness
 By Leonard Warren

(Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004. Pp. xiv, 252. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00.)

Constantine Samuel Rafinesque was arguably the oddest naturalist of his time. In the early nineteenth century he knew as much botany, zoology, and history as most men in those fields, and he published works on archaeology, linguistics, medicine, and banking as well. So how did this gifted man, a kind of walking curiosity museum, manage to outrage so many of his scientific contemporaries? Leonard Warren’s biography

of Rafinesque seeks to answer this question, and to further rehabilitate his scientific reputation. Warren does a fine job of illuminating Rafinesque and his obsessive drive to find and catalogue new species; what is more, the author examines in depth the troubling aspects of Rafinesque’s character and work.

A great part of the book re-creates Rafinesque’s world in the early nineteenth century, particularly the world

of science. Rafinesque, a European immigrant to the United States, trekked through the eastern portion of his adopted country hoping to make scientific discoveries, build a reputation, and gain a professorship. In botany and zoology, as Warren shows, Rafinesque did much sound work (acknowledged later by both Louis Agassiz and Charles Darwin). Yet as a collector in the field, his tendency was to create new species rather than lump them together under existing ones, thus often bringing taxonomic chaos to these sciences. A certain amount of controversy is to be expected in any field flooded with new specimens, and Warren argues that Rafinesque often behaved no worse than other investigators of his time, but what infuriated many powerful scientists of the day was his harsh criticism of anyone who disagreed with him. Rafinesque made enemies, then seemed completely baffled when so many scientists disparaged him or refused to publish his work. He thus often sabotaged his own efforts, and Warren, an M.D., offers a modern-day medical opinion of why this might have been so: Rafinesque probably suffered from chronic hypomania. As a result, he took criticism poorly, and often let his imagination outstrip the evidence of his observations, in one case even producing fraudulent work. Thus for his contemporaries, Rafinesque was troublesome, wrong-headed, infuriating, unreliable, and a nuisance to science. He particularly irked Thomas

Say, who several times had to retract some of the “new” species found on the Long Expedition because Rafinesque previously, if hastily, had described them. No doubt this animosity was one reason Rafinesque refused to join Say and other scientists at New Harmony, Indiana, when William Maclure invited him to live in that utopian community in the late 1820s.

Despite his failings, Rafinesque was in some ways ahead of his time. He invented and promoted an enlightened banking system aimed at helping the working man. He opposed slavery in all its forms, and he championed Native Americans. And although not a trained physician, he dispensed reasonable medical advice and sold botanical cures that certainly were safer (if not more effective) than most of the harsh chemical medicines then in standard use. When Rafinesque taught for seven years at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, one of his few safe havens, he impressed many students with his knowledge and lively lecturing. Little wonder that over the last century some scientists have re-evaluated his work in their specialties and have come to appreciate its merit.

This biography’s greatest strength, however, lies in Warren’s reappraisal of not just some specialties but *all* of Rafinesque’s endeavors, as wide and varied as they were. Warren writes crisp, clear prose, which serves him well in tackling many unconnected,

diverse topics. Indeed, this diversity leads to one of the few drawbacks in the work—by covering so much background for so many subjects Warren often disrupts the narrative flow, leaving one hungrier for more of Rafinesque and less of his times. Still, the reader comes away from this work satisfied that Rafinesque at last has found the biographer he deserves, one with sympathy for his subject, yet able to evaluate his shortcomings fairly and judiciously. Warren's biogra-

phy will interest all those curious about science in early America—especially about one brilliant, quirky character who helped create that science.

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Women at the Front
Hospital Workers in Civil War America
 By Jane E. Schultz

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. Pp. xiv, 360. Illustrations, charts, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

In *Women at the Front* Jane E. Schultz significantly enriches the scholarship surrounding women nurses of the Civil War. Her ambitious study of Union and Confederate caregivers dispels traditional myths that portray these women as superhuman, self-sacrificing embodiments of white middle-class morality. In the first part of her work, Schultz establishes the broad panorama of women's experiences as hospital workers. In the second, she examines how wartime experiences affected women in the aftermath of the conflict. Schultz traces women's adjustments to peacetime society, their struggles for pensions, and finally, the vast array of their narratives.

The author's investigation of the implications of social class, race, and region sheds new light on these women who have largely escaped historians' notice. Analyzing Union hospital records collected in 1890 for some 21,000 female workers, Schultz develops a general nursing profile: assignments as nurses and matrons were given primarily to white middle-class women, while working-class, immigrant, and black women (both free and slave) often performed duties more like those of domestic service workers. Social class thus helped to exclude all but about 6,000 out of 21,000 women workers in Union hospitals from eligibility for the 1892 Army Nurses Pension Act.