

and Clark: *The Story of the Chouteaus and the French Dynasty that Ruled America's Frontier* (2004) for, if nothing else, its Chouteau family tree. Gitlin's omission of any citation to Christian's thoroughly researched (if not necessarily scholarly) book is representative of his somewhat problematic relation to contemporary scholarship, much of which has focused on issues of race and slavery. Gitlin's is an older type of story, one that narrates the rise of a family business and examines the nuts and bolts of economic ventures but gives scant attention to the slaves and laborers who made these ventures work.

When race does become a central issue as the Civil War approaches, internal family struggles over alliances and abolition seem sudden and under-contextualized. Dred Scott's owner was a Chouteau son-in-law, and although the case is mentioned several times, it is never linked to larger family attitudes toward slavery or any other political, economic, or social issues. As the book's title suggests, Gitlin's emphasis is on the

bourgeois French elite who retained the older cultural values of the French frontier, as the lower classes were absorbed into the American working class or simply pushed west with their Indian relatives. In that sense, Gitlin has stayed within the limits of his topic.

The Bourgeois Frontier's strengths and weaknesses are epitomized by the image of a sumptuous steamship's ballroom on its cover. While its grandeur is undeniable and the beautifully dressed Creoles sauntering about are recognizable from Gitlin's study, the well-dressed and dark-skinned slaves waiting table and the bartender in shirtsleeves remain relative strangers. This is a well-researched and well-written book about a colonial culture whose last visible remnant was its elite.

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Heartland Utopias

By Robert P. Sutton

(DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009. Pp. 224. Notes, selected bibliography, index. \$32.00.)

If a book is to be judged by the goals it sets, then Robert P. Sutton's *Heartland Utopias* is deserving of praise. As the author explains in his conclusion, the volume is "not intended to be a

new theoretical analysis of utopian communalism"; rather, its purpose is "to summarize the importance of communal societies to the history of the heartland in light of the over-

whelming evidence that the prevalence of this lifestyle is . . . past” (p. 184). Thus, Sutton’s overviews of utopian communities in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin implicitly suggest that anyone studying the history of the region known as the Old Northwest should know something of these communal experiments.

The book is organized in a loosely chronological manner, with chapters designated to specific communal groups (i.e., “Shakers’ Villages”), to specific locations (“New Harmony,” home to the followers of George Rapp and then to followers of Robert Dale Owen, and “Chicago Area Utopias,” for example), or to groups that, while perhaps undeserving of a chapter to themselves, still share meaningful links to other communities. In chapters such as “Other Separatist Communities” and “Contemporary Heartland Utopias,” the author explains the reasons for such linkage.

Discussion of each utopian group includes background information that often predates the group’s appearance in the heartland. As a result, the historical expanse of the volume includes commentary on the Hutterite Bruderhofs’ origins in Switzerland in the sixteenth century and the Shakers’ origins in England in the eighteenth century before sweeping forward to the present day, concluding with communities such as Jesus People, USA; the Stelle community; and Padanaram.

For those readers interested in Indiana history, Sutton’s references include the Shaker village founded at West Union in 1808; New Harmony; the Fourierist phalanx at La Grange; Zion City founder John Alexander Dowie, who was attacked by a mob in Hammond in 1899; House of David founder Benjamin Purnell, who married and converted in Richmond; Reba Place Fellowship founder John Miller, who taught at Goshen College; and Padanaram, which began near Williams in the late 1960s and later established flourishing wood product and composting businesses in the Bloomington area.

Scholars will quickly note Sutton’s reliance upon what might be called key secondary sources rather than primary materials. Exceptions to this methodology can be found in the chapters devoted to “Chicago Area Utopias” and “Contemporary Heartland Utopias,” both of which draw on primary material such as interviews conducted by Timothy Miller and Deborah Altus as part of “The 60s Communes Project” and newspaper accounts. These chapters exceed others in the volume for the insights they provide to readers already familiar with nineteenth and early twentieth-century communal utopias.

The most valuable contribution of *Heartland Utopias* is its compilation of this material into one volume. Numerous histories and specialized articles have been written about the utopian groups discussed here, as the

citations suggest. Yet those teaching classes on either the region or American communal utopias should find this summation a good starting guide for students to learn the basics, and to locate possible points of entry to further study of any one of the groups discussed.

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is the author of *Bodies of Life: Shaker Literature and Literacies* (1998) and co-editor of *Eating in Eden: Food and American Utopias* (2006). Madden serves on the editorial board of the American Communal Societies Series of the Richard W. Couper Press and is a former Board member of the Communal Studies Association.



Well-Read Lives

How Books Inspired a Generation of American Women

By Barbara Sicherman

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. Pp. 380. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00.)

With its focus on Gilded Age literary culture, Barbara Sicherman's *Well-Read Lives: How Books Inspired a Generation of American Women* beautifully evokes a world in which women read to construct identity and build community. In the process, they also found paths to meaningful civic participation in the Progressive Era. The book is organized into three sections: the first establishes the context for young women's reading during the second half of the nineteenth century, the second examines the role of reading in privileged women's lives, and the third provides insights in the reading lives of women without privilege. Portions of these elegantly written essays have appeared previously as articles or book chapters, yet when read collectively they represent a significant

contribution to the history of print culture in America.

Sicherman's careful examination of the role of books and reading in the lives of novelist Louisa May Alcott, Bryn Mawr president M. Carey Thomas, and Hull House's Jane Addams illustrates how reading propelled them beyond the gender norms of their era to lives of public achievement. Of particular interest to Hoosier readers is a chapter devoted to the Hamiltons of Fort Wayne, whose class standing gave them easy access to a wide array of books. Steeped in a print-based interpretive community, the Hamiltons read passionately, played word games, and created entertainments based on their favorite literary themes and characters. Emerging from this context, Edith subsequently became well known as