

the distance—show impoverished children. Some eight percent of his project shows African Americans, a considerably higher figure than their ratio in the national population and in the FSA collection. His indignation flashes most brightly in a picture of a circus billboard replete with performers in blackface and in a sign at a Lancaster restaurant, reading “We Cater to White Trade Only.”

Despite his recognition of modernity’s encroachment, Shahn pointed his camera away from its overt signs. Raeburn draws on supporting documents, including the WPA Federal Writers’ Project’s *The Ohio Guide* (1940), Robert and Helen Lynd’s pioneering sociological study *Middletown* (1929), and his own visits to the sites to disclose what Shahn left

out of his pictures. He focused on locally owned businesses instead of chain department and grocery stores, and he generally ignored “movies, mass media and consumer culture” (p. 179).

Raeburn lauds the multivalence of Shahn’s project, which contrasts democratic values with racism, and balances seemingly vibrant downtowns with dole lines and shanty towns. “Shahn’s reception to ambiguity—his portrayal of small-town culture as made up of a complex admixture of divergent tendencies—is his survey’s most distinguishing hallmark,” he concludes (p. 179).

CLAUDE COOKMAN is Associate Professor in the School of Journalism at Indiana University.



American Nations A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America

By Colin Woodard

(New York: Viking, 2011. Pp. xii, 371. Illustrations, notes, index. \$30.00.)

Americans pledge that they are “one nation under God, indivisible.” In reality, Colin Woodard argues, the United States is a federation of ten nations—the Deep South, Greater Appalachia, the Left Coast, the Midlands, New France, New Netherland, El Norte, Tidewater, the Far West, and Yankeedom—highly divisible, with highly varying views of God. These nations’ territories do

not correspond to U.S. state boundaries, and six of the ten cross international borders into Canada or Mexico. The eleventh nation of Woodard’s title, First Nation, is located entirely within Canada. Woodard explains his unconventional designations as the result of a study of patterns of European colonial settlement, migration within the continent, and conquest.

The first part of *American Nations* provides a conventional summary of the colonial origins of the United States's ten nations. Their founders came from different parts of Britain and continental Europe, migrated to America for different reasons, and brought with them different cultural values and religious traditions. In the second part, Woodard points out the varying attitudes found within these regions towards the Revolution and the desirability of an independent United States. Far from unifying the nations, Woodard describes the Constitution as an "uneasy alliance" and "messy compromise" among the rival nations (pp. 148-49).

A third section, Woodard's most innovative, covers most of the nineteenth century. Rather than a battle between "North" and "South," Woodard sees the Civil War as a conflict between two coalitions of nations (p. 224). Woodard calls the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861 "one of the worst miscalculations in North American history" (p. 231). Until the attack, Woodard argues, a majority of the nations, for a variety of reasons, were inclined to let the Deep South secede peacefully. After the Battle of Fort Sumter, most of the other nations were provoked to defend the Union from a military attack.

The fourth part is the book's weakest. In it, Woodard tries to tie contemporary American conflicts over cultural change and overseas military engagements to historical dif-

ferences among the nations. Woodard believes it significant, for example, that the country's two most controversial wars—Vietnam and Iraq—were waged by presidents from the "warrior" nation of Greater Appalachia.

Woodard paints the eleven nations with a broad brush. Although heavily footnoted, his generalizations cross the line into unflattering stereotypes. Yankees settled a "moralistic nation of churches and schoolhouses...[where] there was no such thing as minding one's own business" (p. 57). Deep Southerners were "militarized, caste-structured, and deferential to authority" (p. 90). Midlanders "quarreled with one another over doctrinal questions while government fell into disarray" (p. 97), while Appalachians built a "clan-based warrior culture" (p. 101).

The author's treatment of Indiana is typical. Woodard classifies the southern three-fourths of Indiana as part of Greater Appalachia. He states flatly that "Hoosier" was a slang term for "frontier hick," adopted by Indiana's Appalachians as a badge of honor (pp. 184, 190). So much for two centuries of debate over the etymology of "Hoosier." Woodard allocates Indiana's four northern tiers of counties mostly to the Midlands, though his sole discussion of Midland Indiana concerns the large Quaker population of Richmond, which his maps place well into Greater Appalachia. Yankees are confined to northwestern Indiana's four counties

because as they migrated west they “skipped over the marshlands of Indiana” (p. 178).

Woodard concludes that the balance of power in future cultural and political struggles among nations will be held by the two regions receiving the least attention in the book—El Norte (in the United States) and First Nation (in Canada). Setting aside the amusement or outrage over Woodard’s stereotypes of nations, his fundamental point is sound. The American continent has always been dominated by tensions between local values and national purpose. Nation-

al politics and global culture may tamp down the distinctiveness of nations but cannot and will not destroy them.

JAMES M. RUBENSTEIN is Professor of Geography at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He is the author or co-author of eight books on human geography, the auto industry, and city planning. He received his AB from the University of Chicago, MSc from the London School of Economics, and PhD from the Johns Hopkins University.

