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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

A Bride's Passage: Susan Hathorn's Year Under Sail. Edited by Catherine Petroski. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997. Pp. 283. Illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth \$42.50. Paper. \$15.95.)

In *Bride's Passage*, Catherine Petroski, a writer of children's fiction, moves away from the imagination and into the world of historical research, bringing some of her finely honed story-telling qualities with her. This contribution to the growing genre of "women at sea" histories takes a special place in a lengthening list of published personal papers. Within the last decade a spate of such books has appeared, such as *Petticoat Whalers*, *Rough Medicine*, and *She Captains*, all by Joan Druett; *She Went A-Whaling*, by Martha S. B. Brown; and *Days of Joy and Fear*, by Mary Anne Wallace. While Susan Hathorn's diary does not have the wit and exuberance of Dorothy Balano's seafaring journal, published as *The Log of the Skipper's Wife*, or the derring-do and heroism of Joan Druett's women in *Hen Frigates: Wives of Merchant Captains under Sail*, Petroski's diligent research gives us a good story line and a broadly sketched picture of Susan Hathorn's world. The newly-wed bride and her even younger captain-husband Jode set sail on a voyage of discovery—of one another and of the ports, countries, and cultures they encountered in this first year of their marriage. Petroski's title, *A Bride's Passage*, spins out the thread for the year's events. She animates the diary excerpts with her own research to provide the background material that makes a useful teaching tool out of just another diary.

The year was 1855, and the setting shifted from Richmond, Maine, to Savannah, Georgia, then Cuba, London, Cardiff, back to Savannah, and home to Richmond. Susan Hathorn wrote daily in her diary, recording the location of their vessel, the *J. J. Hathorn*, the weather, her daily sewing, and any other observations or events that caught her fancy. Entries Petroski quotes in her story are neither clever nor very observant. Nor are they particularly instructive, but she makes the most of them. She includes valuable information for better understanding the international merchant shipping business before the Civil War. Only slightly prompted by Hathorn's diary entries, Petroski explains the procedures captains followed for finding pilots, dockage, and cargo lading.

Her descriptions of the world of merchant captains as they delivered cargoes in places like London or Cuba, negotiated for other cargoes, and hired or fired crew members are fascinating to the uninitiated. Some of the diary entries suggest that Jode, a very young captain at twenty-one, had difficulty controlling his men and commanding the respect, and therefore the skills of the local pilots who guided vessels into and out of major ports. Petroski shows a partiality for Jode, calling him “dashing” rather than inexperienced, but this comment is the only instance of her romanticizing life on board a merchantman. The strength of this book lies in Petroski’s diligent research and her skill in using the diary as a foundation for understanding this woman’s daily life, with its tedium, pleasures, and challenges.

Petroski also offers illuminating background concerning Susan’s family, the Lennans. Jode’s family, from Richmond, Maine, built and sailed three merchant vessels. Petroski weaves the extended families’ stories into the book. She also manages to locate a student paper Susan wrote during her year at Mount Holyoke Seminary. Titled “A Three Years Cruise in the Ship Graduate,” the essay likened her education to life aboard a sailing ship. Little did Susan know then that she would be soon living out that theme.

Susan spent much of her shipboard time in two pursuits: reading and sewing. She carried a substantial library with her and purchased more books during her travels. Most of her time, however, was spent making garments, quilts, and hand-stitched slippers for her husband. There is a hint of desperation in the way Susan recorded her sewing accomplishments, as though she fervently believed that idle hands were sinful and that she was fulfilling her role of productive wife in the household. Of course the rules of conduct for a captain’s wife kept her from participating fully in the ship’s life. She was not allowed in the galley, where the ship’s cook reigned, nor to chat with the crew, or even clean the captain’s cabin. Petroski points out these limitations but fails to mention that the almost frantic stitching may have served as Susan’s compensation, since sewing was an essential ingredient in domestic productivity and was essential to the ideals of mid-century middle-class womanhood. In this and other ways Petroski might have contextualized Susan’s behavior more adeptly. Twelve shirts for Jode, dresses and handkerchiefs for herself, and baby clothes by the basket-load were only a few of her products. For researchers interested in the sewing skills demanded and the garments created by hand stitching, Susan’s work is carefully recorded in Petroski’s appendix.

Truly *A Bride's Passage* is an apt title. Married only a few months, Susan and Jode conceived a child, thus adding to Susan's on-board duties and travails. Her condition altered the *J. J. Hathorn's* course, causing a short hiatus in the ship's travels when they returned from Cardiff to Savannah. Jode accompanied Susan to his family's home for her lying-in, then sailed away with the knowledge that his mother and sisters, and Susan's family as well, would take good care of her when her time came. Susan's diary included the birth of the child, the living arrangements the Hathorns made for her, and her understanding that indeed the year 1855 had been full of those rites of passage that women undergo.

Petroski's research is meticulous. She provides maps of the *Hathorn's* journeys, explains family histories, traces relationships, reproduces family photographs, includes graphics and documents that describe the towns Susan and Jode visited, and quotes from maritime literature about various facets of the merchant sailing tradition. In an appendix, she reproduces an account book Susan maintained, with all her expenditures carefully described and recorded. The list of Susan's work—sewing, quilting, knitting and a few cooking entries, is truly impressive. Petroski does not offer much on the social expectations for women of Susan's social class, and this would have been helpful in illuminating the broader tradition of seafaring women. Susan seems to have been a young woman moving through life without great introspection or observation. She did what was expected of her, but we don't know who expected this behavior or why. In a brief synopsis of Susan's life after 1855, Petroski hints at a much wiser and more capable woman than the young bride in this diary, again pulling the thread that bastes this book together—a woman's passage in time. Petroski has refashioned an ordinary diary into a lively history through her own careful research

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Inventing Acadia: Artists and Tourists at Mount Desert. By Pamela J. Belanger. (Rockland, Maine: Farnsworth Art Museum, 1999. Pp. 174. Illustrations [some color]. Cloth. \$39.95.)

In the course of Maine's summer season tens of thousands of tourists visit Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park, which now com-

prises much of the island's geography. The park was created in 1929, but nearly a hundred years before, this island had been "discovered" by artists of the Hudson River School and used as the subject of landscape paintings. Thus Mount Desert was imprinted in the minds of critics and patrons of the arts and ultimately with the American public as well. It is through the works of these artists, particularly Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, that Pamela Belanger identifies the process of cultural interpretation these painters brought to the island and its environment. Belanger shows that appreciation of art encouraged an appreciation of the landscape. This in turn encouraged a booming tourist trade and finally led to creation of the national park.

Art, Belanger argues, functioned as a commodity created for a luxury market driven by rapid industrial growth. But it was also a means for creating a sense of national place out of local geography. In order to make their art desirable, artists interpreted the "wilderness" environment using powerful cultural, religious, and nationalist symbols familiar to a mid-nineteenth century audience; the artists created a demand not only for their paintings, but for the actual landscape. Wealthy tourists traveled to Mount Desert to rediscover what Cole, Church, and others told them to look for: a wild landscape pregnant with cultural meaning. In the end, when the island was threatened by overuse, people fought to preserve the land and its cultural meaning; the result was Acadia National Park.

Belanger begins with the artists and their paintings. Cole and Church are each given a chapter apiece in which individual paintings, as well as personal writings relating to the island and its scenery, are discussed. Belanger explains these paintings, allowing the reader to see these works as they were seen by their nineteenth-century audience. Even the vagaries of the New York art market and the petty tyrannies of the critics come to bear on creating cultural symbols out of natural landscapes.

The connections between high culture, popular mood, and government policy are sometimes tenuous, but Belanger's arguments are clear and convincing. The public valued Acadia because artists enriched these lands with value and meaning. If the argument suffers at all in this book it is from the standpoint of organization rather than content. Because Belanger holds her history of Mount Desert until her final chapter, the reader must take some of her conclusions about individual works and artists on faith until the end of the book. It would have been helpful to have that information beforehand or to have had it woven more completely into the discussion of individual paintings. J. Gray Sweeney's

concluding essay on the Hudson River painters and American expansionism might have been integrated into Belanger's work as well.

Still, this is an interesting work that offers insight into midcentury American attitudes toward wild places. Belanger's commentary and the quality of the many color plates demonstrate the mediating role artists played in the cultural and recreational development of the rocky coast of Maine. It is interesting to note that the rapid rise of environmental awareness in the last thirty years has inspired a new appreciation for the Hudson River painters, who were out of fashion by the 1890s. For the most part, the artists' original intent and symbolism are lost on this new audience, but today's viewers have rediscovered the paintings using a new set of values, and they seem to fit. Perhaps the process Belanger describes works both ways.

HANS M. CARLSON
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Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World. By Alison Games. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999. Pp. xiii, 322. \$45.)

It is no easy matter for a new author to carve out a niche in the field of seventeenth-century transatlantic migration studies. The subject has been thoroughly researched, and much of this literature was produced relatively recently in ways that challenged old, jealously guarded assumptions and myths. Migration, all historians would now recognize, was a persistent feature of early modern English society that preconditioned so many individuals to take the additional leap to mainland Europe and across the Atlantic. David Cressy's admirable *Coming Over* appeared as recently as 1987. Virginia DeJohn Anderson's *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* followed in 1991. A vast, ongoing project on the Great Migration, fostered by the New England Genealogical Society in Boston, has produced its first substantial publications. On a smaller scale important case studies such as David Grayson Allen's *In English Ways. The Movement of Societies and the Transferral of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century* (1981) have argued provocatively that 'New' England in so many respects replicated the old country which the migrants—not always set-

tlers in a number of cases—had left behind. How can another book find a new point of entry into such a familiar field?

Alison Games's lively and probing book justifies its existence in any number of ways. Unlike a number of other studies in this field, it does not restrict itself to New England but embraces the different societies and economies of Virginia, Barbados, St Kitts, Bermuda, and Providence as well. It is both quantitative and qualitative in approach. Those readers demanding lots of statistics will hardly be disappointed; thirty-eight detailed tables neatly packaging raw numbers and percentages relating to migrants' places of origin, chronological and geographical spread, age, gender, and religious inclination form an immensely valuable feature of this book. But number-crunching that loses sight of the humanity of the past easily leads to aridity. No less valuable, therefore, are the individual cases and vignettes, which leave the reader in no doubt that her subject is indeed the *peopling* of the American colonies. For example, Games exploits the rare surviving correspondence between two brothers, William and John Booth, to good effect, as she does the documentation relating to the twenty-year-old termagant Barbara Rolfe, packed off to New England in 1635 by parents who found her impossible to control. Rolfe, like so many who crossed the Atlantic at this time, became a servant. Games's book has much to offer on this class of people; her calculations show them in a majority among the migrants, and in the plantation colonies she reckons they constituted as many as 90 percent of those between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. Without servants, indentured or otherwise, the new colonies simply could not have functioned. Convicts, vagrants, and defenseless orphans were kidnapped or 'barbadosed'; exploitation was common in all the colonies. Such humble but indispensable people take their place in this study alongside the more famous—Roger Harlakenden, Hugh Peters, Henry Vane, John Winthrop Junior—upon whom previous historians have lavished their attention.

The colonies Games explores had unstable, hybrid populations, mixed in nationality, ethnicity, age, wealth, and religion. Their first destination was often the preliminary to further migrations, spurred on by pressure on available resources and by religious intolerance; re-migration to England—a 'New Jerusalem' in its own right during the Civil Wars and Republic of the 1640s and 1650s—was not inconsiderable. In New England, as others have long since recognized, family units figured prominently in the migration; twenty seven members of the Tuttle clan moved *en masse* to New England in 1635. In the tobacco and sugar colonies, planters, in the absence of large "ready-made" families, drew

indentured servants and slaves into their substitute familial units. It will not always do, Games argues, to assume that David Grayson Allen's model of transfer and replication in a new colonial setting fits all cases. In Barbados and Bermuda it most certainly does not.

Games's book, a re-working of her 1992 doctoral thesis, uses the 1635 London port registers as her principal source, recognizing that they frequently under-record the passenger traffic they were intended to regulate. (The *Abigail*, for instance, had a recorded passenger manifest of 180 but reached New England in 1635 with 220 people "and many cattle." She supplements these London sources with others generated in the colonies themselves to produce a book that positively abounds with independent insights into this critical phase in colonial expansion. (Boston, to cite only one example, doubled in size between 1635 and 1638.) There are a number of slips, however. London was not the largest city in Europe in the early seventeenth century (p.20); that distinction belonged to Paris. Tobacco was not "a crop foreign to English husbandmen" (p.105); Joan Thirsk's researches on new crops and their diffusion in the early seventeenth-century English provinces have made that patently clear. And the Watling *Road* through the English town of St Albans, Hertfordshire, which Games mentions on more than one occasion, was in fact the *Street* of that name dating back to Roman times. Minor quibbles apart, this is an excellent book: well researched, carefully crafted and constructed, and beautifully written. In a crowded historiographical field Alison Games has produced a book that stands out, and that is indeed a very significant achievement.

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Johnson's Kingdom: The Story of a Nineteenth-Century Industrial Kingdom in the Town of Wayne, Maine. By Edward Kallop. (Wayne, Maine: Wayne Historical Society, 2000. Pp. xiii + 242. Illustrations, maps, portraits, index, bibliography.)

In *Johnson's Kingdom* Edward Kallop examines Maine entrepreneur Holman Johnson and his business enterprises from the 1830s to the 1880s. While we normally associate these decades in Maine's industrial history with the emergence of large cotton mills, this book reminds us

that the state's nineteenth-century economy also featured hundreds of small factories located in rural towns. As the title indicates, Johnson's "industrial kingdom" was based in Wayne, but he owned factories in many Maine towns, including St. Albans, North Belgrade, Wayne, Orono, Brownville, and Industry, as well as Union Village in Vermont. From the 1830s until his death in 1879, Johnson owned grist and saw mills, shovel-handle factories, and a woolen mill. Of all his business efforts, he was best known for his wooden shovel handles, which he sold primarily to Oliver Ames and Sons of Easton, Massachusetts, at the time the country's premier shovel-maker.

Edward Kallop presents Holman Johnson as a self-made man. "Johnson was the sole mover behind his own success; he relied on no one and fully mirrored the tradition of the self-made, successful industrial figure of the nineteenth century." (p. 4) No doubt Johnson was hard-working and intelligent, but we should be somewhat skeptical of this thesis. If we look through the book for hints of additional reasons for his financial success, we find brief mention of several people and events that deserve greater credit for their contributions to Johnson's success. For example, Russell D. Bartlett, the Bangor inventor who mechanized handle-making, certainly contributed to the growth of Johnson's shovel-handle factories. Likewise, the Gold Rush, the Civil War, and the building of railroads, all shovel-intensive events, increased demand for Johnson's shovel handles. Like other entrepreneurs in this era, Johnson also benefitted from public funding. In his case, the town of Wayne voted to give a tax break (ten years exemption from taxes on the building and machinery) to anyone willing to build a woolen factory. Finally, what about his family? Johnson married twice and had fifteen children. According to the census, some of his children were working in the factories as young as age fifteen, and five of his sons made significant contributions as managers. Yet the family remains invisible in the concept of the self-made man. None of these considerations detracts from Holman Johnson's efforts, but taken together they temper the argument that Johnson was a self-made man.

Still, there is much to admire in this book. Kallop's research is thorough, exploiting a rich collection of business papers, the U.S. nominal and industrial census, the *Maine Register*, and court, tax, and probate records. He quotes extensively from an 1898 town history of Wayne, giving the reader a taste of the Romantic style popular in town histories at that time. The book also contains approximately two dozen photographs, maps, and advertisements that illustrate the people, places, and

products in Johnson's life. The author also includes two appendices, the first being Johnson's will and various probate records, and the second being an interesting and useful discussion of monetary values of Johnson's time and in 1997. While these additions are all quite useful, the book lacks footnotes, which diminishes the value of Kallop's extensive research.

This book leaves me thinking about Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden*, a classic study that raises questions about the clash between technology and the rural ideal. I would like to know more about how the people of Wayne responded to Johnson's machinery in their garden, and how they coped when Johnson's factories shut down after his death. Kallop chooses various passages from the 1898 history that hint at the complexity of local attitudes toward industrialization. Written when Johnson had been dead for nearly twenty years and both his shovel handle factory and his woolen mill were gone, the history includes some boasting about Wayne's "world wide reputation" in manufacturing, but also some nostalgic descriptions of Wayne's pastoral landscape, along with concern that "the age of machinery" would be the end of life in Wayne as they knew it. In our own era of deindustrialization, Kallop's book offers us historical perspective on the rise and decline of rural industry.

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Saltwater Foodways: New Englanders and Their Food, at Sea and Ashore, in the Nineteenth Century. By Sandra L. Oliver. Photographs by Mary Anne Stets (Mystic, Connecticut: Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc., 1995. Pp. 429. Illustrations, cook's index, general index. Cloth. \$39.95.)

Saltwater Foodways is as rich and filling as a Christmas fruitcake made with butter, raisins, citron, almonds, spice, and brandy. It is a history of New England foods as well as a cookbook. It is chock-a-bloc full of social history, luscious colored and fascinating black-and-white illustrations, and traditional recipes adapted for modern use. Generated for and published by Mystic Seaport Museum of Mystic, Connecticut, the book examines the diet and food preparation of the nineteenth-century inhabitants of five of Mystic Seaport's historic properties—the Buckingham, Greenman, and Burrows houses; the whaleship *Charles W. Morgan*;

and the New Shoreham Life-Saving Station—and the food served aboard New England fishing schooners. The book's first fourteen chapters discuss foods prepared in these settings as well as food prepared for major holidays—Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas—and food prepared for clambakes, shore dinners, chowder parties, oyster suppers, weddings, ship launchings, and other social events. Chapter Seven is devoted to New England's deepwater seafarers and the importance of fresh food gathered at sea and in exotic ports. It describes the culinary education of a New Englander who learned to prepare and eat porpoise, turtles, seabirds, pineapple, and other unfamiliar produce. The final two chapters are devoted to fish-eating and its importance "to New England's identity and self image" and, more specifically, to identification of various types of seafood (clams, alewives, hake, mussels, salmon, pollock, etc.) and their preparation.

Sandra L. Oliver of Isleboro, Maine, compiled the book for Mystic Seaport. Her interest in food history began in 1971 when she was given the job of developing a fireplace-cooking demonstration at the Seaport's Buckingham House. In her introduction to *Saltwater Foodways* she explains the word "foodways" as the "study of food in history and culture." Noting that "all human beings consider their stomachs at least daily," she points out that studies of religion, politics, philosophy, economics, war, peace, art, and science all acknowledge the "power of the stomach." This handsomely produced and meticulously researched book supports that thesis.

The value of *Saltwater Foodways* probably lies less in its recipes (although many will find them useful if they have plenty of shelf space in their kitchens to lay out this large and heavy book) than in its detailed exploration of cooking facilities and utensils, the availability and marketing of food, the economic and cultural importance of food production and supply, and the scholarly insight into the foodways of New England. Two indexes, one general and another for cooks, will facilitate the book's use. This is a regional study, not specific to Maine, although many of the illustrations are of Maine people and places. Students of coastal New England culture will find this a rich resource, particularly those interested in life at sea. There are few secondary sources of this caliber on this subject available to maritime historians.

Students of the history of food as well as casual readers will learn that food customs are tenacious. Before reading *Saltwater Foodways*, I had never given much thought to the fact that the diet of my twentieth-century Maine childhood was typical nineteenth-century New England

fare. We ate biscuits, home-fried doughnuts, graham Gems, home-made bread, salt-fish dinners, clam chowder, beans baked with salt pork—and baked peas—mackerel, roast chicken and turkey, codfish cakes, pickled beets, cucumber pickles, corn or clam fritters, corn on the cob (in season only), and an endless supply of green beans from the garden. Dessert, a must in our house, included Snow Pudding, Cottage Pudding, berry or pumpkin pie, home-made ice cream (in winter when snow and ice were readily available), fat molasses cookies, vinegar or molasses candy that we stretched with buttered fingers, and gingerbread. Our mincemeat was made at home with venison supplied by our family hunters. Recipes for most of these dishes are in the book. I remember when our diet began to change in the 1940s—the relief of frozen peas (versus canned), the availability of bananas (which we were warned *not* to put in the refrigerator), and the delight of chocolate-chip and Toll House cookies. But that is another story for another book.

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