



The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism.

Review Author[s]:
Gloria L. Main

The American Historical Review, Vol. 99, No. 1 (Feb., 1994), 293-294.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28199402%2999%3A1%3C293%3ATAOOAC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-H>

The American Historical Review is currently published by American Historical Association.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/aha.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

DAVID J. WEBER. *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. (Yale Western Americana Series.) New Haven: Yale University Press. 1992. Pp. xx, 579. \$35.00.

With the publication of this book by David J. Weber, there should not be another survey of United States history that overlooks the Spanish frontier. Weber's well-written and engaging story of the settlement by Hispanics of the lands from Florida and Louisiana to Texas, New Mexico, and California leaves no doubt of the sociocultural imprint made by Spain on the United States.

The story begins with the first encounters of two vastly different cultures and the expansion of empire shortly after Spain's arrival to the North American shores. An excellent chapter entitled "Conquistadores of the Spirit" traces the development of the role of religion as a means of incorporating the native peoples into Hispanic society. But neither the dominance over the land nor the conquest of the soul went smoothly, and Spaniards faced resistance and rebellion from the Indians.

In the political contest with France and England over control of North America, Spain fared adequately, given its relatively modest investment in the area. It did not compete as well, however, in the commercial rivalry. Thus, Spanish territories were subject to intrusions by individuals and state-sponsored parties more closely linked than Spain to world trade networks, bringing about Spain's eventual loss of Florida and, for a time, of Louisiana. Nevertheless, Spain held on to a vast territory from Texas to California, although even there foreign traders lured the Hispanic residents and Indians into stronger and more prosperous economies. On another front, independent Indians (the more numerous groups of natives not incorporated into Hispanic society) worked out their own destiny, limiting Spain's expansion and hold of the area.

Society on the edge of empire is described under the rubric of "Frontiers and Frontier Peoples Transformed." Indians recruited into the missions or attracted into the towns adapted to a capitalist environment and to European traditions while, on their part, Spaniards, mixed-bloods, and Hispanicized natives blended racially and culturally. In the end, neither a wholly Spanish nor a wholly Indian culture prevailed. Additionally, by the nineteenth century, both Hispanics and Indians were changed by the encroaching American economy; all, as Weber makes clear in this excellent chapter, altered the environment permanently.

The author's treatment of his subject is balanced. It takes neither a triumphalist tone nor a condemnatory one. It is a narrative, but not one so detailed as to exclude a grasp of the overview or to omit interpretation. The introduction and conclusion consider historiographical issues. On these, Weber carefully walks a middle ground, confessing that, "Lacking omniscience and possessing only a partial record of

the past, we humans reconstruct time and place in highly imperfect ways . . . The Spanish legacy in North America, then, is not only what we have imagined it to be, but what we will continue to make it" (pp. 359-60).

To some extent, Weber unavoidably fashions the Spanish legacy according to his own past. He is a second-generation student of Herbert Eugene Bolton and has inherited Bolton's interest in geopolitical and institutional issues. But Weber has a much broader perspective. He transcends Bolton, John F. Bannon, and other traditional Borderlands historians and incorporates the new trends in social, economic, and cultural history of both Latin America and the United States. Still, some scholars will fault Weber for concentrating too much on imperial issues and for not focusing more on the frontier communities from which Mexican-American society emerged. This is important because the nature of the field calls for a usable past.

Nevertheless, the scope of the book, the careful treatment of controversial issues, and the elegant prose should allow this book to withstand the test of time for decades to come. It will become a model for work in the Borderlands field; hopefully it will also draw the attention of U.S. historians.

GILBERTO M. HINOJOSA
Incarnate Word College

ALLAN KULIKOFF. *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. 1992. Pp. xiv, 341. Cloth \$49.50, paper \$17.50.

This stimulating book by Allan Kulikoff offers a useful synthesis of recent historiography on socioeconomic change and migration patterns in rural America, from colonial times to the Civil War. Despite occasional thickets of Marxist jargon, the argument is subtle and convincing.

Kulikoff covers the rise and demise of the yeoman classes (consisting of both men and women) from the colonial period through the American Revolution, and up to the Civil War and beyond, devoting a separate chapter to the "languages" of class in rural America. Another chapter presents the case for viewing the War for Independence as a bourgeois revolution, an interpretation that fits comfortably with Gordon Wood's recent monumental work (*The Radicalism of the American Revolution* [1992]) contending much the same thing, albeit from a Whig, rather than Marxist, perspective. Both men argue that the revolution politically enabled many things to happen that could not have happened under British imperial control. Whereas Wood regarded the Constitution as a retrogressive braking effort on the part of the same doomed class of "gentlemen" who had led the patriot cause, Kulikoff maintains that the Constitution as well as the revolution accelerated the transition from mercantile to industrial capitalism. Compared to

Wood, Kulikoff's narrower focus provides a clearer, better organized, and more coherent discussion, one less beset by ambiguities than Wood's. Moreover, he provides a truly brilliant analysis of the social basis of rural patriotism and of the shaping effects of the revolutionary experience on the yeoman class, or rather yeoman classes, for Kulikoff insists there were at least two, those engaged in commercial agriculture and those involved in subsistence-plus, non-market-directed farming. He concludes that for most of the period between the revolution and the Civil War, the yeomen had to struggle to retain their rights to the fruits of their labor, but they generally succeeded in preventing legal changes that would have undercut their control over family labor. Yet Kulikoff also points out that commercial agriculture and early industrialization offered farm wives and children possible escape from patriarchal control. One is not sure whom to root for here: the independent yeoman pressed hard by capitalism's advance or his dependent wife and children whom the market, like the Serpent in Eden, tempted and seduced.

The final two chapters deal with the economic and demographic forces fueling the massive internal migration of free and enslaved peoples, from the early seventeenth century to the Civil War. Kulikoff examines the social and demographic make-up of the British migration of the colonial period, arguing that many immigrants were seeking to escape the process of proletarianization in England and hoped to reinvent for themselves a "small producer society" in land-abundant America. Because the vast majority of them became farmers, they ended up creating societies "profoundly different from capitalist Britain" (p. 195). Echoing Eric Hobsbawm, Kulikoff believes that founders of new settlements invented new traditions that, once set, changed only slowly thereafter. Thus, pioneers created enduring, cohesive cultures that were often both capitalist-resistant and highly adaptive. These were the cultures carried away and transplanted by family groups of descendants emigrating to found new settlements.

Following David Fischer, Kulikoff paints strong contrasts between New England and southern culture areas, employing the rich collection of local studies available from which to project the movement of New Englanders, and New England culture, westward. Kulikoff treads murky historiographical waters here, yet most readers will benefit from the exercise.

In chapter 8, Kulikoff moves into what is for him more familiar territory, the political economy of the expanding South and the forced migrations of the slaves. He offers an exceptionally fine discussion of the recent literature, in which his own contributions and intuitions have played a considerable role. One need not accept his insistence on the "non-capitalist" nature of the South to make good use of this section.

In a far too brief epilogue, Kulikoff sums up his argument. Capitalism began in the countryside, and it created conflict among yeomen, between those willing

to exchange their independence for a better material life and those who fiercely defended that independence. Their struggles have periodically shaken American political life, even into recent times.

Native Americans play no other role than victim in this story, and this is a serious oversight. Otherwise, this is a thoughtful, balanced, intelligent book. Buy it.

GLORIA L. MAIN
University of Colorado,
Boulder

KENNETH A. LOCKRIDGE. *On the Sources of Patriarchal Rage: The Commonplace Books of William Byrd and Thomas Jefferson and the Gendering of Power in the Eighteenth Century.* (History of Emotions Series.) New York: New York University Press. 1992. Pp. xi, 133. \$35.00.

Kenneth A. Lockridge examines the commonplace books of William Byrd and Thomas Jefferson, men he aptly describes as "the two great mythmakers of the Virginia gentry" (p. 90). What he discovers in both cases is striking evidence of an unmistakably misogynistic world view. Byrd portrayed women as lustful, aggressive, and emasculating, describing gender relations as a constant, life-and-death struggle in which women—because they alone could confer immortality on men—clearly had the upper hand. Jefferson's stance was more ambivalent. Moreover, his overt attacks on women occurred only between 1756 and 1764, in the years just before he reached his majority. But he, too, characterized women as seductive and power-hungry, responsible for disorder and ultimately for death. Both men exhibited an almost pathological sense of fear and rage, as they imagined a woman-dominated nightmare world of chaos and confusion. They saw patriarchy as the only antidote to chaos. Simply put, "men must dominate or die" (p. 82).

Lockridge admits that the rage characterizing Byrd and Jefferson was rare. He is studying specific men within a specific historical context. And he makes a strong case for his reading of Byrd and Jefferson, offering plausible reasons for their views. Nevertheless, his analysis goes beyond this particular study to explore the anxieties that all male members of the colonial elite experienced in the mid-eighteenth century. Byrd and Jefferson, like all colonial leaders, were marginal men who imitated but never duplicated the social structure of the mother country. Although they had exalted expectations of their role as leaders and patriarchs, they were in fact vulnerable to challenges from above and below. They were not secure in their own colonies or even, as it turns out, in their own homes. Other historians have analyzed the paranoia of American leaders at mid-century in terms of a fear of corruption, or as an anxiety over slavery, religious radicalism, or indebtedness to English merchants. Lockridge has added gender anxiety to the