**Book Reviews**

**Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630–1900.**
*By Carol Devens.*  
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. 186 p. Cloth, $30.00.)

Devens has written a slight book with a weighty thesis. From three brief but carefully researched case studies, she attempts to generalize a pattern of Indian responses to European missionary efforts, concluding that there were three patterns of response to the “civilization” that missionary efforts represented. The first was expulsion of the missionaries. The second was grudging community acceptance of Christianity, and the third was a split along gender lines, which created hostility between men and women over strategies for dealing with changes wrought by economic and religious factors. In this third situation, women generally resisted Christian influences and tried to maintain traditional cultural values, while men adopted Christianity as a way of gaining status in the non-Indian world.

The author thus tries to do for gender studies what Robert Berkofer, Jr., did for the anthropological paradigm of acculturation in the early 1970s with his study of Indian-missionary relations in the Southeast, *Salvation and the Savage.* Devens has a more difficult challenge because anthropologists have not spelled out the paradigm of gender roles in North American tribal societies so explicitly as did the 1936 manifesto “Memorandum on the Study of Acculturation.”

As a result, the author first has to establish a model for women’s cultural roles in their own cultures and then seek to place historical data on Indian-missionary relationships in the Great Lakes region within that interpretive framework. This is a formidable methodological undertaking in the space of 127 pages, especially since she offers historical case studies of three native communities. Her model for women’s cultural roles is based largely on anthropologist Eleanor Leacock’s economic model of subsistence patterns as determining relative male/female status. The three case studies are the Jesuits among the Montagnais-Naskapi in the seventeenth century, the Methodists among the Canadian Ojibway and Cree in the midnineteenth century, and, finally, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions among the Ojibway, also in the midnineteenth century.

Indian-missionary relationships is an area where some major scholarship has already been done—notably James Axtell’s *The Inversion Within* and Richard White’s *The Middle Ground.* Axtell proposed the model of group accommodation to Christianity when there are no viable alternatives for group survival, and Devens follows his lead. White appears to contradict some of her assertions that women resisted Jesuit missionizing efforts more strongly than did men.

Devens’s account of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and its efforts among the Ojibway is the most vividly drawn. The men’s initial acceptance of the missionaries contrasts with the lack of interest shown by the women, although several stations were abandoned because of general disinterest. It is from this example that Devens draws her conclusion that Christianity has caused tensions between Indian men and women. She concludes with a critique of anthropological theories that assign a lesser status to Indian women and emphasizes those that point to women as custodians of traditional cultural values.

Here the argument becomes a strained attempt to draw together her threads of history and anthropology. She defines women’s domestic roles as a “carefully nurtured female identity that provided a defense against the attacks of the outside world.” The nurturing implies an active resistance to Christian missionary activities that is not strongly supported by what she portrays elsewhere in the book as a lack of interest and/or participation in Christian churches.

Devens’s attempt to find patterns in resistance to missionary efforts is not entirely successful, but the material she presents in her case studies is important, and her research is extensive. The book is a significant addition to the growing literature on Indian-missionary relations, and it adds new case studies for a future attempt to synthesize a general framework to understand the complex and varied experiences of Indians in the face of Christianity.

Reviewed by Clara Sue Kidwell, associate professor of Native American studies at the University of California at Berkeley, who is Choctaw and Ojibway. She recently completed a book manuscript on the history of Choctaw-missionary relations in Mississippi.

**Monumental Minnesota—A Guide to Outdoor Sculpture.**
*By Moira F. Harris.*  

This book offers a delightful romp through the sometimes serious, often comic, and frequently wacky world of Minnesota public sculpture. Public, as defined by author Harris, is understood to embrace works created specifically (unabashedly) for outdoor display, as opposed to monuments
commissioned for private viewing only. The great virtue of this book is that it provides a compact synthesis of a wide range of sculptural types, from battle monuments to WPA art, from cemetery sculpture to town symbols cast in fiberglass or concrete or carved in wood. The serious reader and those interested in seeing for themselves the vast display of public sculptures available in Minnesota should consult the appendix, where Harris provides a comprehensive bibliography and catalog of outdoor sculpture, describing each work by artist, title, dimension, location, material of construction, and sponsorship. Indeed, the appendix is one of the book’s more valuable parts.

Laced throughout with black-and-white photographs (most taken by the author), the text moves swiftly from a discussion of one monument to the next, often leaving the reader hungry to know more. Occasionally the reader is frustrated to encounter a paragraph discussing a sculpture at length, only to discover there is no corresponding photo. At other times photos are included when a work receives only cursory discussion. In some photos, important details discussed in the text are missing or not readily apparent. One is left wondering at the criteria used in selecting illustrations. While mindful of publication costs, this reviewer wished that some sculptures had been pictured in color.

The text is arranged into nine chapters, and, by and large, Harris does an admirable job of organizing and synthesizing a vast body of diverse material. Starting at the beginning is always a wise, if conservative, strategy; the book begins with a look at early heroes monumentalized by the state. Particularly delightful is the discussion of the Indian Scout and the controversy surrounding the commission to honor Governor John Albert Johnson. One is disappointed, however, that James Earle Fraser, perhaps Minnesota’s premier beaux-arts classical realist sculptor and a figure of national renown, is relegated to a single paragraph.

Chapter four, with its focus on public-art programs from the 1930s to the present day should, for logic and flow, precede chapters two and three. Harris does a fine job clarifying for the reader the jumble of alphabet-soup programs available to artists in the 1930s. As for the later years, one does not often read much about St. Paul’s COMPAS program or the equally ambitious Art Commission of Minneapolis, and Harris offers insights into the workings of both organizations. But the Percent for Art projects deserve a more careful discussion than they receive.

By far the most enjoyable—some would argue uniquely Minnesotan—sculptural monuments are treated in chapters five through seven. Town symbols, ranging from Alexandria’s Big Ole the Viking to Bemidji’s Babe the Blue Ox and from International Falls’s Smokey the Bear to Cambridge’s Battvik Horse, testify to Minnesotans’ need to celebrate in highly visible ways the uniqueness of their home towns and their insatiable sense of community and ethnic pride mixed with a hefty dose of boosterism. Often fabricated of fiberglass (earlier of concrete), these colossi are only rivaled by chainsaw art and such home-grown follies as John Cristensen’s Itasca rock garden. Equally Minnesotan are the “temporary” sculptures treated in chapter eight, be they crafted of butter, molded from snow and ice, or of papier-mâché.

Chapter nine, dealing with corporate art and sculpture gardens, presents a much-too-abbreviated look at the traditionally strong role the Minnesota business community has played in sponsoring public art. Perhaps it would have been a more effective strategy to exclude such a vast topic from the scope of this book.

On balance, Monumental Minnesota is a wonderfully compact and timely work. It is well worth reading for either the casually curious or the serious art enthusiast with an interest in learning more about these unique monuments that Minnesotans of all times and classes select, erect, and point to with a mixture of embarrassment and civic pride.

Reviewed by ROBERT L. GAMBONE, chair of the department of art and art history at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. His publications include Art and Popular Religion in Evangelical America, 1915–1940.

The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, June 10—September 26, 1806 (volume 8).

Edited by Gary E. Moulton.

(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993. 456 p. Cloth, $55.00.)

VOLUME 8 presents the Lewis and Clark expedition in a new perspective: the book is dominated by reports on separate routes followed by the two leaders, each with his own contingent and entirely independent of the other. Thus they traveled for more than a month, from near present-day Missoula, Montana, to the Missouri River near its juncture with the Little Missouri River in North Dakota.

Departing Camp Chopunnish in present eastern Idaho on June 10, 1806, the expedition, considering itself “perfectly equipped for the mountains,” progressed with some difficulty due to deep snow but lost no opportunity to botanize and otherwise observe natural phenomena as it moved toward Travelers’ Rest Camp in western Montana. Here the group divided. Departing July 3, Lewis was to lead his party east and north toward the Marias River, seeking to determine if its watershed was close to the Saskatchewan River’s (it was not), and then to follow the Missouri eastward to its confluence with the Yellowstone River. Clark in the meantime was to go southeastward to the Yellowstone and follow it to the Missouri River, where the two parties would meet.

Lewis’s party had the more eventful journey: a gun broken over the head of a grizzly bear, the disappointment of discovering no geographical relationship between the Marias and Saskatchewan rivers, an encounter with Blackfoot Indians that began in idyllic fashion and ended in a fight over stolen guns and horses that left one Indian dead, arrival at the Yellowstone to find Clark’s party had already departed, and Lewis’s serious wounding in a hunting accident. But through it all his journal reflects his steady interest in the natural history of the region he traversed, all the while collecting animal skins and skulls.
Clark’s party, thirteen in number including guide Sacagawea and her son, headed for the Yellowstone over what Clark described as 164 miles of terrain that “would be an excellent wagon road.” Less of a biologist than Lewis, Clark had a keen eye for the land and its potential uses, for distances, and for beauty. He, too, reported problems. The gravel wore down the horses’ hooves—he had mocassins made of animal skins for them. Charbonneau injured himself falling from his horse. Gibson hurt his thigh on a snag and required river skins for them. Charbonneau injured himself falling from his horse. Gibson hurt his thigh on a snag and required river skins for them. Charbonneau injured himself falling from his horse. Gibson hurt his thigh on a snag and required river skins for them.

Horses were steadily lost or stolen. Mosquitoes abounded. But the country was good—837 miles to the Missouri, 636 of them by water. St. Charles, on September 24, St. Louis.

Through Nebraska and Iowa the number of westbound traders steadily increases, and Clark’s journal reflects the party’s anticipation and joy as it nears St. Louis. The men row faster, relish news, and celebrate with whiskey supplied by the traders. On September 14: “Our party received a dram and Sung Songs until 11 o clock at night in the greatest harmony.” On September 20 they reached the village of St. Charles, on September 24, St. Louis.

The volume closes with a “postexpeditionary miscellany”—a group of documents undated or otherwise not fitting the chronology of the expedition. The editorial work in this final volume of the series continues at a very high standard. One might have hoped for more maps with more detail, but that is a minor criticism.

Reviewed by John Parker, Minneapolis, editor of Jonathan Carver’s journals, who has reviewed the earlier volumes of Lewis and Clark journals for this quarterly.

The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America.
By Marilyn Irvin Holt.
(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992. 248 p. Cloth, $27.50.)

THE IMAGE of orphan children alighting from eastern trains to take up residence with midwestern families has left a vivid impression on the contemporary American imagination. Articles, television specials, and even a series of children’s books have dramatized this aspect of child-welfare history. For more than thirty years a series of Minnesota towns have hosted an annual reunion of men and women who first arrived in the state decades ago as minors under the auspices of a private agency. Marilyn Irvin Holt’s book examines this practice with attention to the social and economic forces that supported it and to variations that characterized its implementation from 1854 to 1929.

Holt does a fine job of framing her subject by conveying how fears, logic, and idealism led late nineteenth-century East Coast social-welfare professionals to define poor children as a growing urban threat—but a threat that could be controlled in the wholesome environment of the developing rural West. She emphasizes how social and economic ends were to be mutually satisfied: the same children who appeared neglected victims of urban decay or were judged a nuisance—even a danger—on city streets gained value as a remedy for labor shortages in the emerging western economy. Existing theories of child development emphasized that a Christian environment, hard work, and fresh air were the ingredients for sound character in adulthood. Railroads reaching into small towns brought youngsters first to states in the Old Northwest and then beyond.

Orphan trains are usually associated with Charles Loring Brace, who helped found the New York City Children’s Aid Society in 1853, directing it for three decades. The book outlines how society agents traveled with children, distributed them in rural areas, and attempted to maintain contact with them. Yet practice varied greatly from these principles.

In the late nineteenth century the term orphan was used more broadly than it is today. It included youngsters who had both parents, one parent, or none. Some families sent their own offspring into the program; some children volunteered themselves; others were taken from institutions or orphanages. The legal status of children in their new homes was likewise diverse. Holt observes that placing out was not legally synonymous with adoption as a family member or with indenture for labor. The child’s role in a household was likely to depend more on the inclination of the new family than on the minimal agreements made with children’s society representatives.

The agency tried to monitor the outcome of its placements, but insufficient record keeping and staff resources resulted in haphazard follow-up. From the viewpoint of the Children’s Aid Society, a measure of success was simply the number of placements, but Holt suggests consideration of other issues. To what degree did children find themselves in an environment more hospitable to their development? To what degree were communities’ labor needs met? The author comments on these important issues but seems to equivocate, leaving the reader uncertain as to her final judgments.

Placing children via orphan trains was an idea that other private social agencies, in and outside of New York City, initially replicated. Because analysis of activity in the largest cities dominates the literature of social-welfare history, Holt’s book does a service in describing various of these programs in many locations, bringing the reader into the railroad stations and town halls where approximately 200,000 children were eventually transferred into the hands of others. At times, however, the variations presented in geography, policy, and
program result in a pile-up of information rather than clarity about youngsters and placements.

Even while the practice was expanding, it had its critics. In Minnesota in 1884, for example, the Board of Corrections and Charities urged publicly that youngsters over the age of twelve not be brought in, as they represented the importation of undesirable social elements. Reformers raised other questions about the exploitation of child labor, the failure to seek approval from birth parents, and the mismatch between children's religious orientation and that in their new homes. The author points to the Protestant bias and nativism that dominated the selection of both children and households. Ultimately, the professionalism of social work, with its increasing emphasis on family casework in the early twentieth century, was responsible for ending support to out-of-state placement.

Fictional accounts of youth from orphan trains have focused primarily on youngsters' adjustment to new homes, neglecting the larger context that Holt develops. In the epilogue she measures one such story against the historical record. However, *The Orphan Trains* would have been more satisfying as social history if the author had provided more information from the multiple archival records about the children and their parents—either of birth or placement. For example, Holt touches on the different demands for boys and girls and differences in their placement and reception. Elaboration of gender as an issue would have made a valuable addition to family-history studies. Throughout the book the author also comments on the demand for female domestic labor in rural areas; this, too, is a subject deserving more concentrated attention. And while Holt excluded from her study the removal of Native American children from reservations and their placement in boarding schools, a comparative analysis of the philosophies behind both manners of placement would have been useful.

This volume's strength lies in the author's exploration of how social and economic forces came together to encourage child placement and how widespread the practice was among private agencies. The book is important, too, as it reminds the reader of those questions still unanswered in debates over contemporary child-welfare policy: What rights do children have? When is investment in foster care for youngsters a sounder alternative than investment in efforts to strengthen family life?

**Reviewed by Beverly A. Stadum, author of Poor Women and Their Families: Hard Working Charity Cases. 1900-1930. who teaches in the department of social work at St. Cloud State University.**

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**News & Notes**

**THE SOLON J. BUCK award for the best article published in this journal during 1992 goes to Bruce M. White for his study, "Indian Visits: Stereotypes of Minnesota's Native People," which appeared in the Summer issue.** The award, named for the first professional historian to head MHS and this journal's first editor, includes a prize of six hundred dollars.

This year's judges were Dr. Annette Atkins, professor of history at St. John's University in Collegeville; Dr. Steven J. Keillor, author of *Hjalmar Petersen of Minnesota: The Politics of Provincial Independence*; and Anne Kaplan, editor of *Minnesota History*.

**GRAND RAPIDS companion, 1891-1991** is a stellar addition to the growing roster of Minnesota twocentennial histories. The two-part book consists primarily of selected readings. Donald L. Boese introduces the section on early logging days and the first seventy-five years of the town's incorporated history, drawing from books, pamphlets, yearbooks, newspapers, and other primary and secondary sources. The variety of the selections—on topics ranging from lumberjacks, a summer camp, and World War II to a murder the Civilian Conservation Corps, and, of course, Grand Rapids' most famous citizen—Judy Garland—makes pleasurable browsing or perusing. Lively sidebars present additional information, perspectives, and personalities.

The second section of readings, selected and introduced by Richard R. Cain, examines Grand Rapids' recent past and looks at topics including industry (especially the role played by the Blandin Paper Company), education, the arts, and sports.

A wealth of historic photographs, many from the Itasca County Historical Society, illustrate the 351-page book, which is available in hard ($39.95) or soft ($24.95) cover from the society at: P.O. Box 664, Grand Rapids 55744 (218-326-6431).

**THE LURE OF THE LAND** is the subject of an evocative anthology, North Writers: A Strong Woods Collection (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, 292 p., cloth, $14.94). Nearly three dozen well-and little-known authors "celebrate, curse, glorify, and explore" the boreal forest region north and west of Lake Superior that French explorers called the bois forts or "Strong Woods." According to editor John Henriksson, the writings represent a progression in the genre of nature writing from solitary exploration of the land to historical documentation of its
cultural complexity. Writers in the first section (Helen Hoover Sigurd, Sigurd Olson, Jim dale Vickery, Peter Leschak, Les Blacklock, Lynn Rogers, Florence P. Jacques, William O. Douglas, and others) communicate their personal sensations of nature, while those that follow (including Heart Warrior Chosa, Grace Lee Nute, Justine Kerfoot, Carl Gawboy, Judith Niemi, and Michael Furtman) investigate the cultural and ecological interactions between the area's original inhabitants and its more recent settlers. An enjoyable volume for armchair travelers and lovers of the northland.

IN Red Lake Nation: Portraits of Ojibway Life (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992, 176 p., cloth, $24.95) photographer Charles Brill updates his 1974 book, Indian and Free, with more text and twenty-five new photographs. The twenty years between editions witnessed Red Lake's transition from closed reservation to sovereign nation and the rise of a new generation balancing respect for traditions with a commitment to placing the reservation on sound financial footing. The original 160 images are still powerful, and they gain documentary interest when paired with the newer photographs, themselves striking documents of individuals, groups, and the environment of this "one small dot on the map of the U.S. that has never been owned by the white government or settlers."

FANS of polka, ethnic music in general, and/or the dance-hall era will want to read Viking Accordion Band Reflects Colorful History, a warm reminiscence by bandleader Leighton "Skipper" Berg and his wife, Valborg Berg. The subtitle says it all: "A Documentary Review of the 45-Year Span of a Polka Band, including the early start, hardships in troupin, changes in demand for troupin polka bands, and the demise of dance halls."

The 142-page volume is copiously illustrated with photocopies of snapshots, programs, posters, correspondence, advertising, and newspaper articles about the band. The result is a detailed, personal, and highly enjoyable account of what ethnic-music scholar Victor Greene has called "the most multi-ethnic of all the Minnesota bands and perhaps...the model crossover ethnic group."

The Bergs produced this volume for limited distribution to friends and associates. Those wishing to purchase a copy should contact L. A. Berg at 214 N. Second Ave., West, Albert Lea 56007. A reference copy is available at the Minnesota Historical Society's Research Center.

GROWING UP Finnish in America is the theme of In Two Cultures: The Stories of Second Generation Finnish-Americans, a 1992 publication from North Star Press of St. Cloud edited by Ali Jarvenpa (154 p., paper $12.95). Some three dozen authors, most from northern Minnesota, contribute short prose accounts and poems about the experience of growing up in tight-knit, liberal-thinking, education-oriented Finnish-American communities in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Common threads include learning to speak English after speaking Finnish at home, being poor, growing up with a strong cultural heritage, and renewed interest in Finnish roots. This readable collection of writings from the sons and daughters of immigrants helps illuminate the experiences of children who literally and figuratively translated American language and culture for their parents.

Another recent North Star Press publication is Chronicles of Aunt Hilma and other East Hillside Swedes (116 p., paper $9.95). Author Michael Fedo's thirteen humorous stories are remembrances of life with Aunt Hilma, his grandmother, Uncle Howard, and the neighbors on Tenth Street in Duluth. His accounts, some of which have been published in Lake Superior Magazine, capture the mood and spirit of Duluth's East Hillside community of Swedish Americans in the 1940s and 1950s. Fedo's rendering of dialect will ring bells for some readers.

HISTORIANS who study country newspapers actually work with two genres: local material, conceived, composed, and printed locally; and preprinted material, composed by large publishers. The latter practice is the subject of Eugene C. Harter's Boilerplating America: The Hidden Newspaper (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991, 246 p., cloth, $48.00, paper, $28.50).

Many country newspaper publishers after the Civil War offered their local news on the outside of sheets preprinted on the inside with national and international news. Others used boilerplate, material printed locally from plates obtained from central suppliers. According to Harter, about 60 percent of the United States population was reading such ready-print by 1916, when its production became the monopoly of George A. Joslyn's Western Newspaper Union.

The author, himself a newspaperman, raises the question of whether these preprinted newspapers served some political or social agenda. He concludes that ready-print publishers strove for impartial reporting but produced "a poor role model for a journalist seeking to operate a government watchdog." Supported in part by advertising from patent-medicine manufacturers, for example, publishers were unresponsive to health- and press-association attacks on the sale of questionable drugs.

Harter's work is diffused in places by tangential discussions of the daily life of the country newspaper editor and the evolution of the modern printing techniques that brought the end of ready-print. And, while he gathers material from diverse sources, his thesis relies too much on narrowly supported conjecture. Yet, because American publishers used ready-print and boilerplate secretly, the practice is easily misunderstood. Harter places preprint in its rightful industrial context.

Paul Maravelas

TWO RECENT books from Canadian publishers treat topics of interest south of the international border. Conran Laviolette's The Dakota Sioux in Canada (Winnipeg: DLM Publishing, 1991, 305 p., paper, $20.00) is based on the author's archival research, interviews with elders. The book is available from the publisher, 235 Paddington Rd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R2N 1H2; please include $4.00 postage and handling.

In Métis Lands in Manitoba (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991, 245 p., cloth, $84.95, paper, $17.95, plus $2.00 postage), Thomas Flanagan argues that, contrary to popular belief, the government of Canada "overfulfilled" its legal
obligations to the métis people. Using his research in government archives, including land and title records, he maintains that the métis sold the more than one million acres of dominion land they were granted and realized good profits from the sales.

TRACTORS, cotton pickers, combines, sugar-beet and tomato harvesters, and irrigation systems are the focus of R. Douglas Hart’s “hardware history,” Agricultural Technology in the Twentieth Century (Manhattan, Kans.: Sunflower University Press, 1991, 106 p., $15.00). This expanded version of a special issue of the Journal of the West is geared for general readers. The numerous illustrations and meaty captions are a substantial addition to this volume, which also includes a list of suggested readings and an index.

TO HELP the town celebrate its first 150 years, Valley History Press has published Stillwater: A Photographic History, 1843-1993 by Brent T. Peterson and Dean R. Thilgen. The 118-page book includes seven short chapters on topics such as industry and commerce, churches and schools, disasters, and amusements. In addition, there is a section containing biographies of local citizens. The authors have provided fresh views of the town, choosing not to reproduce images from the well-known John Runk collection. Most of the photos are from the Washington County Historical Society, although work in other repositories is represented as well. Stillwater is available for $16.95 (paper) in local bookstores.

WITH PAINTINGS and “companion stories,” Howard Swenson’s Once Upon An Isle: The Story of Fishing Families on Isle Royale (Mt. Horeb, Wis.: Wisconsin Folk Museum, 1992, 111 p., cloth, $20.95) chronicles a vanished way of life. Forty full-color paintings by the Grand Marais artist illuminate the lives of commercial fishermen and their families during the 1930s and 1940s. Included are scenes of wash day, gardens, and hunting, as well as the numerous tasks of a fisherman’s daily and seasonal routine. The book also includes an introduction by the author and an afterword by folklorist Timothy Cochrane discussing the history of fishing from the island and the demise of family and community traditions when Isle Royale became a national park. It is available from the publisher, 100 South Second St., Mt. Horeb, Wis. 53572.

HMONG At the Turning Point, by Yang Dao and edited by Jeanne L. Blake, analyzes traditional Hmong life in Laos from 1935 to 1972, a pivotal era in their history. This 180-page book is an insider’s view of their economic transformation tied to political and social upheaval. It includes sections on agricultural techniques, family and village life, traditional religion and medicine, festivals, and ceremonies.

Since 1975 more than 100,000 Hmong refugees have emigrated to the United States, many settling in Minnesota. This volume educates Westerners about the Hmong past and makes policy recommendations for the future of a people and a region that have become part of American and Minnesota history. The cloth-bound book is available for $29.99 plus $2.50 shipping per book from the publisher: WorldBridge Associates, 3249-55 Hennepin Ave. So., Suite 2150, Minneapolis 55408. Minnesota residents should add 6.5 percent sales tax.

TWO CENTURIES worth of information is included in American Women and the U.S. Armed Forces (1992), a guide to the records of military agencies and presidential libraries. The book, compiled by Charlotte P. Seeley and revised by Virginia C. Purdy and Robert Gruber, describes records that deal with women as wives and mothers of soldiers, suppliers of military goods and services, and participants in and victims of war. The 368-page hardcover volume, which includes a comprehensive name and subject index, is available for $29.99 plus $3.00 shipping and handling from the National Archives Trust Fund, P.O. Box 100793, Atlanta, Ga. 30384.

FUR TRADE enthusiasts will want to note a new biography, John Jacob Astor: Business and Finance in the Early Republic (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991, 365 p., cloth, $39.95). Author John D. Haeger examines the quintessential entrepreneur as a shrewd businessman who used “modern” business strategies and managerial techniques to build an empire. This is a detailed look at a complex man and the business he built in the decades after the American Revolution.

THE DESIRE of Euro-American settlers of the treeless prairies to build with lumber has been proven in numerous studies. In Great Lakes Lumber on the Great Plains: The Laird, Norton Lumber Company in South Dakota (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992, 195 p., cloth, $27.95), John N. Vogel examines the records of a Winona company in order to see precisely how lumber from one region of the Great Lakes—Wisconsin’s Chippewa Valley—made its way to consumers in one part of the plains—east central South Dakota. With the help of the railroads, Laird, Norton sold millions of board feet before the Dakota boom fizzled in 1887, transforming the prairie into an environment built on wood.