

## ***Explorations in Sights and Sounds***

assessment of this collection, for Merriam has provided valuable information regarding the Miwok Indians and how they regard their place in the world.

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**Allen G. Noble, ed. *To Build in a New Land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) x, 445pp., \$29.95 paper, \$56.00 cloth.**

Like so many works with sections on various subdivisions of a general topic overseen by a general editor, this volume has its ups and downs. The thesis—that various ethnic groups have provided America with various sorts of architectural styles and modifications of native structures—is new and fascinating.

Sandwiched between an introduction and a conclusion by the editor are twenty chapters about particular ethnic groups including people of color such as Native Americans, African Americans, and Spanish Americans as well as European groups such as the Germans, the Scotch-Irish, Danes, Czechs, and Basques. The pattern is that a particular area—large or small (Finns in the Lake Superior Region or Basques in the American West, for example)—is focused on and the ethnic architecture of the place is described in words and with large numbers of pictures. Notes are arranged by chapter, and there is a very extensive bibliography.

As the editor admits, “No one would pretend that one book could present every ethnic community in every part of Canada and the United States. For example, more than forty different ethnic groups settled in the state of Wisconsin alone! But the ethnic groups in this volume do represent a comprehensive cross-section of the immigrant groups who chose to make North America their home.” (p Nevertheless, there is a broad spectrum of groups, each restricted to a single chapter except for the Germans, who are discussed in both Texas and Ohio.

As to the characteristic structures, some readers probably will be familiar with the hogan (in many varied forms) associated with the Navajo and the shotgun house of African Americans in the American South. Others are much more esoteric, for instance the ty house, a small motel unit-like structure meant to house an itinerant minister for a night, which is found only in southern Ohio Welsh settlements.

Some of the chapters adhere to the thesis more than others. Some writers have provided almost exclusively architectural mate-

rial; others, on the other hand, seem to be more interested in the general emigration and migration patterns of the group they have chosen to write about. This is particularly true of the introduction and conclusion sections which tend to parrot the obvious. They state that people came to America for economic, religious, and/or social reasons in search of some of the vast amount of easily available inexpensive land. They also state that some did not stay long and that there have been various degrees of assimilation. In my opinion, these are judgements that are so obvious as to be banal.

Another slightly annoying matter is that—in opposition to most technical writing practice—new information appears in the Conclusion section in some of the chapters.

On the other hand, it is pleasant in these days of abstractness to find a book with a clear-cut and visual thesis. Most of those peoples who came to America brought with them some ideas of what housing should be. Throughout their various degrees of separateness and assimilation to the dominant culture, they tended to recreate dwellings both for people and for business purposes with various degrees of similarity to those of their former homeland.

This concreteness should be refreshing in courses that deal with a broad spectrum of ethnicities and, of course, it would be interesting for individual ethnic scholars to see what, if anything, the book has to say about their own group.

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**Susan Olzak. *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992) 271 pp., \$32.50.**

Susan Olzak's work, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict*, is informative and contributes to an understanding of ethnic violence from an historical perspective. The central finding is that ethnic/racial conflict arises from an increase in intergroup competition for social resources. Exploring economic and political competition in the United States from 1877 to 1914, Olzak concludes that violence is most apt to occur when members of a disadvantaged ethnic/racial group experience greater equality of opportunity. This new environment creates a situation whereby members of a formerly segregated group become rivals for social awards. An environment which contains several disadvantaged groups competing for rewards—a situation which existed in the period under investigation through a combination of racial migration from the south and