

grants being cheated by unscrupulous merchants, robbed by sailors, and exploited by colonial employers, but she argues that such experiences were more than outweighed by the access to opportunity gained by the vast majority of their fellow passengers. Such conclusions surely testify to the durability of America's image as an "asylum for mankind."

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EDWIN G. BURROWS and MIKE WALLACE. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* New York: Oxford University Press. 1999. Pp. xxiv, 1383. \$49.95.

Those who would write a comprehensive narrative history of New York City—or any large city—face a multitude of challenges. How can such a work reconcile the storyteller's need for an authoritative, compelling, and entertaining voice with the contemporary historian's respect for the dignity and the distinctive perspectives of all the city's residents, past and present? Can the narrative provide a sustained interpretation of the city's place in its larger political, economic, environmental, cultural contexts? What are its responsibilities to race, class, gender, the environment? What are the synthesizers' responsibilities to the sources and to the many earlier historians on whom they draw?

This book by Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace represents a heroic effort to respond to these challenges. Its vast quantity of material, chronological order, respect for current and received wisdom, detailed table of contents (including well over 200 carefully phrased sub-chapter titles), well-chosen illustrations and well-designed maps, extensive indexes, and meticulous proofreading make it an exceptionally useful companion to the recent *Encyclopedia of New York City* (1995). Its detailed discussions of European violence against Native Americans, white violence against Africans and African-Americans, male violence against women, nativist oppression of immigrants, and conflicts between workers and employers restore realism to the genteel and school-civics accounts of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s and their more recent successors. It describes efforts to enforce the moral economy of the crowd, and it vividly illustrates the shift from violent to bureaucratic enforcement of the hegemony of rulers. It dispenses moral praise and, more often, censure. Burrows and Wallace treat New York City as a theater for the performance of many historical dramas; their treasury of memorable incidents and colorful personalities will long delight writers of feature stories and historians seeking to engage or divert their audiences.

The book contains four parts that might well have been presented as four separate books about cities of vastly different sizes. These four parts employ three distinct approaches. The first 250 pages provide an excellent synthesis of the work of two generations of

historians of New Amsterdam, early New York, and the colonial and revolutionary periods in general. They place the town, whose population grew to about 20,000 in these years, in its imperial and political context, emphasizing the increasingly difficult interactions of New Yorkers and British officials. They focus on New York's relation to the slave-based sugar economies of the Caribbean and other aspects of Atlantic trade but also track population movements, slavery, efforts to establish the Church of England, crowd behavior, and other topics around New York Harbor and the Hudson Valley. This part culminates in detailed accounts of Revolutionary War leaders, political as well as military, who fought within 100 miles of the city.

Two long parts of three hundred fifty pages each bring the city's history to 1843, and then to 1879, employing an ambitious social-history emphasis on colorful individuals and events. The city grew far beyond the size of a large town in these years. Burrows and Wallace find it increasingly difficult to embed a detailed account of the rapidly growing numbers of New York people and events in a sustained, comprehensive account of the city's economic, political, and legal relations with its region, the nation, and the Atlantic world. They make a remarkable effort, discussing topics ranging from the 1790 federal bargain that moved the U.S. capital from New York to Washington, D.C., but secured an integrated national market for the city's merchants, to the chartering of canals and railroads, to the struggle for status. They provide brief introductions to the city's markets for journalism, fiction, art, money, sex, and social status. Their accounts of markets stress the moral failures of speculators and political protests against expensive bread and housing, not explanations of economic growth. They critique the "sunlight and shadow" tradition that starkly contrasts rich and poor in the city, but their extensive, decade-by-decade accounts of the rich—and of their homes and places of amusement—sometimes reinforce that old stereotype. This book's concerns are not with the small producers, the business firms, the mainstream political parties, or the varied Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and ethnic institutions staffed by so many middle-income and working New Yorkers, and so important to so many both in Greater New York and throughout the United States.

In its last 250 pages, the book offers a more narrowly conceived narrative that features mayoral (and, occasionally, presidential) politics and public works in the city during the 1880s and 1890s, a period in which the metropolitan region's population doubled from about two to four million. Conflicts between Knickerbockers and Yankees, somewhat overdrawn in the middle parts, fade in the face of the city's diversity. The protagonists here are big business, the nouveaux riches, socialists, the new immigrants, upper-middle class reformers, and Tammany Hall. Voters and markets are present but on the sidelines, as are most neighborhoods and suburban towns. Despite its tendency to fall into an old-fashioned account of robber

barons, bosses, and reformers, this section retains much of the variety, color, and comprehensiveness of the book's middle half. But with fewer pages for a much larger population, it cannot provide anything like a detailed treatment of the experiences of those who made up the great city's many social, ethnic, religious, and economic groups.

The book demonstrates the classic virtues of narrative: readability, memorable stories, attention to individual action and character; it has exceptional variety and energy as well. As employed here, however, the long city narrative also privileges origins, early arrivals, the rich, the exceptional, the colorful, the celebrated. It often asks the reader to agree that dramatic events and famous individuals reveal the most significant history. Occasionally, it relies on anachronistic language (environmentalist, p. 837), or on dubious stereotypes (wealthy Catholic trustees as "democratic," p. 752; stock market short-sellers of the moment as destructive "bears" by disposition, p. 847). And it greatly exaggerates the influence of some organizations. The evangelical Protestant Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, for example, could no more hold "the rich . . . firmly in check" in 1857, forcing them to do "less to succor the poor than ever" (p. 848) than its antislavery counterpart could force all New York merchants to join its campaign.

To their credit, Burrows and Wallace open their discussion of references with a blanket acknowledgment: "A synthesizer, looking back, sees a thief's shadow" (p. 1237). Their approach to documentation is that of journalism. Two decisions that limit the range and vitality of their account call for note here. Determined to present a series of well-told tales, they omit all discussion of the nature and quality of the evidence. This decision deprives their readers of information about the motives, perspectives, and knowledge of the people quoted. It also leaves the reader questioning their accounts of such unlikely phenomena as prices that rise when demand falls. Eschewing footnotes, Burrows and Wallace provide abbreviated lists of sources for each sub-chapter, keyed to a very good, though not comprehensive, list of approximately 2,000 articles and books. Their text provides an illuminating introduction to nineteenth-century historians and other explorers of New York City, but this decision deprives their readers, and other historians, of their assessments of the many twentieth-century historians whose work is the basis of their own. Their decisions to omit evidence and specific references are consistent with their decision to forego a sustained historical argument. They are also consistent with their very fruitful decision to present New York City's history in an extended and colorful narrative.

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LISA WILSON, *Ye Heart of a Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1999. Pp. xii, 255. \$25.00.

A generation of women's historians has made readers sensitive to the intimate details and everyday experiences of ordinary women's lives. But what of the men they lived with? The emergence of gender history has broadened our focus to men *and* women and made us aware that we know less about the private lives of ordinary men—even in largely patriarchal societies—than we thought. Lisa Wilson has made a significant contribution in analyzing the domestic lives of colonial men; the men in her book speak to us about their worlds, including their feelings about work, their perceived usefulness (or lack thereof) in their occupations, their dilemmas over courtship and marriage, and their anxieties and hopes regarding the responsibilities of adulthood.

Wilson has combed the archives searching for strands of evidence in men's diaries, personal letters, and business correspondence. She quotes extensively from a variety of sources and allows us to hear a diversity of men's voices on a range of topics. Our hearts go out to Ebenezer Baldwin and Sophia Partridge, for example, who could not find ultimately what each wanted in a relationship. Ebenezer hoped to marry Sophia but could not propose before he amassed the resources to support their life together. Sophia tired of waiting and "bagged" him, for Ebenezer, a humiliating turn of events. Even then, break-ups were never simple. Sophia preferred to end the relationship in person, rather than by letter, yet Ebenezer worried that doing so face to face would only serve to disgrace him further. We see the men in Wilson's book as intimate and affectionate, insecure and vulnerable. We learn of the deep emotion felt by colonial fathers, even before the eighteenth-century turn toward sentimentality, through Wilson's moving portrayal of fathers who had lost children at tender ages. Readers will gain a different perspective on the lives lived by white men in colonial New England, who seem more sensitive and fragile than the austere icons of Puritan Fathers.

Wilson's topical approach is both rewarding and frustrating. On the one hand, readers will be satisfied that she has examined so much of the available documentation and put it to good analytical use. On the other hand, this approach fragments stories that readers may prefer whole. When Ebenezer Baldwin, for example, later gives advice to his sister about the suitable qualities in a wife, including the ability to spin shirts, I remembered his earlier failure in the marriage department and wondered what ever became of him. The book is not biographical, yet we are almost fooled into thinking that we can come to know these men by Wilson's deft handling of the material. Wilson's graceful writing and artful storytelling makes us wish we could delve even further into these rarely documented and unfortunately elliptical lives.

Wilson's introduction explains that her analytical framework follows Laurel Thatcher Ulrich in *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650–1750* (1980). It is unne-