

New Jersey: A History of the Garden State**Maxine N. Lurie and Richard Veit, editors****Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2012. 319 pp., images and index, \$27.95 cloth.****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v1i1.4>**

With *New Jersey: A History of the Garden State*, editors Maxine N. Lurie and Richard Veit have produced an invaluable synthesis of New Jersey's history from pre-contact through the end of the twentieth century. From start to finish, the volume's contributors are the leading scholars of the state's history in each time period. The result is ten chapters plus an introduction that provides a clear and comprehensive survey of New Jersey history.

While the editors did not seek to present a single or group of themes throughout the volume, what becomes clear from the beginning is that the history of New Jersey is in many ways the history of America on a micro-scale. Whether it is the era of contact and settlement, ably analyzed by the volume's editors in the first two chapters; or the post 1945 era of suburbanization, racial integration, and the resulting tensions and conflicts over environmental and other issues described by Howard Gillette, Jr. in the book's final chapter, the problems, triumphs and challenges in New Jersey are quite often the same as those across the country. And in most instances, New Jersey met those challenges first.

John Fea's essay on the era of the American Revolution balances the central role New Jersey played in the war for independence with some of the excellent local histories that have been produced on the revolutionary era in New Jersey over the past twenty years. Fea is also responsible for covering the Constitution in his chapter and here the reader could wish for more detail; on the New Jersey Plan, for example. William Paterson's proposal, in contrast to that of James Madison, was eventually incorporated into the "Great Compromise" and led to the successful completion of the Constitutional Convention.

Four chapters are devoted to the nineteenth century (Early Republic, Jacksonian Era, Civil War and Reconstruction, and the era of Edison at the end of the century), the most for any century in the volume. Here again, the theme of New Jersey as the leading edge of historical change in America is apparent throughout. As Larry Greene notes, while the state did not leave a legacy of supporting civil rights for African-Americans, New Jersey regiments contributed mightily to the Union war effort. Greene is also careful to note that while there were strongholds of pro-Confederate sentiment it is inaccurate to declare New Jersey a southern state for its failure to vote for Lincoln in either the election of 1860 or 1864. This trend is followed by Paul Israel as well. He carefully balances New Jersey's ascension as an industrial power and a center for innovation and invention with the challenges that accompanied urbanization and immigration.

Political concerns are given attention throughout the volume but appear front and center in the twentieth century chapters. The dominance of the Hague Machine during the Progressive Era and the challenges of Depression and World War II, which lead to a dramatic new State Constitution in 1947, highlight these narratives.

As Marc Mappen writes in the introductory essay, New Jersey has produced the fewest number of history titles relative to population in the United States. That absence of detailed scholarship is felt at times throughout this volume. Still, the understanding of the past on display here is impressive and this book more than fills a longstanding need for a comprehensive survey. This collection of excellent essays will certainly find its way into college level courses on New Jersey History, be used by scholars as they pursue a wide variety of avenues, as well as provide an accessible history for general readers interested in better understanding the state's history.

The volume is, in many ways, a traditional history with much of the focus on political and economic issues. While women and especially African-Americans receive coverage

throughout, they are not always fully integrated into each narrative. Moreover, cultural history receives less attention than it might, given its current historiographical ascendancy and the recent attention the state has garnered for a variety of cultural phenomenon. The blame for these shortcomings does not lay solely with the authors of these chapters. One of the purposes of this volume is to highlight the need for more historical study of New Jersey. It is to be hoped that this volume marks the beginning of a new era of scholarship on the Garden State rather than the end.

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