

on planting “seeds from the steppes” in the West Reserve, from works of standard-bearer historians like Cornelius Krahn to that of lay historians like Delbert Plett, and from one GAMEO article to another. For Mennonite scholars more broadly, old legends are given scientific grounding: consider the lore of the Molotschna colony’s tree planting schemes under the supervision of Johann Cornies, already historicized by John Staples’s environmental history of the Mennonite colonies, but here given scientific depth, provided with multilayered explanation for the forestation of the steppes and prairies. Tree planting apparently was more than a way to counter wind erosion but nothing less than a tool for altering climate, increasing precipitation, and introducing a rural aesthetic.

Beyond the surprises in this book, the work is a masterpiece. There is the intrigue, as Moon cleverly, and relentlessly, weaves the theme of myopic American scientists shaken by innovative Russian counterparts. And Moon’s research program is impressive, taking him over wide regions in two vast countries. The range of scientific analysis behind well-known Mennonite stories is equally impressive. And at every turn Moon also clearly and lucidly tells a story of science without losing the layperson in agronomical jargon. The scientists and wheat producers in this book are flesh and blood humans, given to a range of emotion, including jealousies, paranoia, and pride. Another “transfer” in this book is one between science and the humanities. Environmental history at its best brings out the dialectic between nature and culture. *The American Steppes* meets this bar.

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Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, *Landscape of Migration: Mobility and Environmental Change on Bolivia's Tropical Frontier, 1952 to the Present*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2020. Pp. 342. Softcover, \$37.50 USD.

Landscape of Migration compares three groups of people who migrated to eastern Bolivia’s tropical and semitropical lowlands: internal migrants from western Bolivia, Okinawans from what was at that time a US protectorate, and Mennonites from Mexico, accompanied by smaller numbers of Mennonites from Paraguay and Canada. In brief, these groups were pushed by the desire to improve their own economic situations and were pulled by the Bolivian

national government's plans to modernize the eastern part of that country.

Nobbs-Thiessen's comprehensive study begins by examining portrayals of the lowlands in film, newspaper articles, posters, and other media. By analyzing these sources—and the governments that funded them—Nobbs-Thiessen explores the ways that the Bolivian government showed prospective migrants that this region was ready for migration, and that it needed to be transformed through modern technology.

The second chapter compares Okinawan and Mennonite immigrants. The Mennonites—first a small group from the Fernheim colony in Paraguay, later followed by more conservative Old Colony Mennonites from Mexico—wanted to continue with a separate way of life and felt that in Mexico this was no longer possible. The Bolivian government saw them as farmers who could modernize part of the country even though they eschewed modern technology. The Mennonite community's desire to live in a way that is set apart from its surroundings differs somewhat from the situation of the Okinawans. This group of people came from a group of islands in the Pacific which were occupied and controlled by the United States until 1970. This occupation created a difficult economic situation and meant that many were interested in migrating elsewhere.

Nobbs-Thiessen then compares these two groups of immigrants with the people from western Bolivia who opted to migrate within their own country. This chapter examines sources that echo those in the first chapter, which portray eastern Bolivia as a land without people, and that through the "March to the East," Indigenous people in Bolivia would become less sick, less poor, and less alcoholic. This chapter also shows the paradoxical situation in which Indigenous people from western Bolivia migrated to eastern Bolivia and effectively colonized other Indigenous groups.

The later chapters turn to the immigrant communities' establishment in the Bolivian lowlands. Nobbs-Thiessen argues that as the Mennonite communities established themselves, MCC workers and Methodist missionaries filled in for what Nobbs-Thiessen calls an absent state. The Bolivian state, in turn, accepted their intervention because in their view, Protestantism was aligned with their understanding of modernity and because these church groups offered services such as education and healthcare that should be provided by a government.

The final chapter deals with agriculture. This chapter, as well as the chapter about missionary and development work, focus on Mennonites at the expense of other groups. *Landscape of Migration* would have done well to review their experiences in the interim

years when it includes all three groups in its discussion of the devastating effects of changing crop prices.

This groundbreaking work will interest readers familiar with the experiences of Mennonites in Mexico, as they will see parallels in the experiences of Low German Mennonites in both countries. *Landscape of Migration* reminds historians and scholars in Mennonite studies and Latin American studies that while some parts of the Mennonite experience of immigration in Bolivia were unique, their experience aligns with the experiences of other groups in the surrounding context.

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James A. Cates, *Serpent in the Garden: Amish Sexuality in a Changing World*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020. Pp. 224. Hardcover, \$39.95 USD.

In *Serpent in the Garden: Amish Sexuality in a Changing World*, James A. Cates draws on his expertise as a clinical psychologist and his long history of work, and friendship, with the Amish to explore the challenging topic of sexuality in Amish culture. Cates approaches the Amish as both a cultural and a sexual minority, using queer theory to explore how Amish culture reinforces heteronormative behaviour. As Cates demonstrates, Amish sexual identity is subsumed by a cultural identity that reinforces particular behaviours, including an understanding that sexuality is given by God for the purpose of procreation. As do other aspects of Amish faith and tradition, Cates argues, Amish perceptions of sex, gender, and sexuality increasingly separate them from the mainstream world and reinforce church-community boundaries. *Serpent in the Garden* is an excellent addition to the growing body of work on the Amish.

Cates's work is comprehensive. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the Amish, providing a general overview of the history, faith, and values that define today's Amish church-communities, while chapter 2 presents queer theory and explores its application to the study of Amish sexuality. Chapter 3 discusses the Amish understanding of sexuality, exploring the distinction the Amish make between sex for procreation and other sex behaviours, and how they minimize the knowledge of non-procreative sex behaviours to encourage heteronormative behaviour. Chapter 4 offers a closer look at Amish