

circumstances. In doing so, they also influenced their new countrymen as the groups gradually commingled through marriage and commerce.

Standard histories too often gloss over the varied and complex processes involved in the passage from immigrant status to citizenship, despite the importance of immigration history in personal and national tradition. In mythologizing the accounts, or in emphasizing immigrants' nations of origin and abbreviating or ignoring differences within nationalities, we lose much valuable history. *From Strangers to Citizens* is a source of fascinating richness, not only in the depth these essays provide to those histories and in the riveting interpretations of the writers, but in the wealth of source materials they have consulted in European and American archives. The essays presuppose an advanced knowledge of history, but they will be enlightening reading for graduate students and academics, and this collection will be a valuable resource for university libraries.

Adrian Davies. *The Quakers in English Society 1655-1725*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2000. xvi + 262 pp. + 6 illus. £40.00. Review by KATE PETERS, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON.

This book is an impressive expansion of the author's doctoral thesis on early Essex Quakers. Adrian Davies has reworked his Essex material in order to discuss more broadly the impact of early Quakerism on English society: the book's stated aim is "to consider the social consequences of religious belief," and in particular to examine (and ultimately to question) the "extent of the fissures which opened up in society as a result of Quakerism" (4). In so doing, he has much of use to say about the transition from sect to denomination in the first seventy years of Quaker history and about the importance of local, grass-roots experience to our understanding of the development of the Quaker movement.

The book is divided into four parts. The first, “Holy Subversives,” provides a useful context on which to build, exploring the hostility which early Quakers aroused in their contemporaries. This, Davies argues, stemmed in large part from the intense Quaker experience of spiritual re-birth, which led to aggressive proselytising, rejection of clerical authority and the flouting of social hierarchies which were so fundamental to harmonious parish life. In passing, Davies makes short shrift of the model of social and economic radicalism offered by Christopher Hill and Barry Reay in their own treatment of the Quakers: it was the notion of religious equality which underpinned Quaker radicalism, and the desire for religious liberty which informed their political activities, including the resistance of tithes.

The second part, “A peculiar people,” examines the consequences for individuals of belonging to the Quaker faith. This section is rooted more deeply in the Essex material, and Davies presents us with some of the minutiae of the Quakers’ daily lives as they set about sustaining their church and its people, establishing meeting houses, burial grounds, and systems of poor relief and discipline, as well as supporting one another in trade, fostering “informal contacts between members which cut across normal kin and neighbourly relations” (84). The role of the rank and file in the development of the sect, Davies argues persuasively, is insufficiently recognized by scholars who focus on the words and actions of the Quaker leadership. Essex Quakers, we are told, were unusually tolerant of backsliding among their brethren, seeking to bring them back to the fold rather than casting them out. Thus the formidable and rigid system of Quaker discipline, which elsewhere has been pointed to as a factor in the movement’s decline, operated more flexibly among Essex members. Variation in local behaviour is important: “previous explanations for sectarian development have been insufficiently sensitive to local factors in different regions” (107). This part of the book also includes a very important and overdue assessment of literacy levels among early Quakers, which in Essex, Davies shows, were astoundingly high, particularly for women. The unusual ability to read and write is attrib-

uted, not wholly convincingly, to “the Quaker desire to escape worldly contagion” by teaching their children to read their own literature (122). Yet the literacy figures themselves are interesting and deserve further attention.

Part three, “Origins and development,” examines Quaker membership. Davies is sensibly reluctant to be drawn out on possible continuities between Quakers and Lollards in Essex parishes but is much more confident in identifying anti-Laudian protesters in the 1630s who turned Quaker in the 1650s and later. His work on the social composition of the movement in Essex reinforces what we already know from other local studies: although drawing members from both the humble and prosperous ends of the social spectrum, the bulk of early Quakers in Essex were “from the ranks of the comfortable or fairly prosperous” (147). Davies distances himself from earlier debates about the social composition of the movement, emphasising once again the importance of local variety: “the sect reflected distinctive and sometimes sharply contrasting characteristics according to the locations in which it took root and flourished” (147).

Part four, “Quakers and the world,” focuses on the transition from sect to denomination, and Davies argues cogently that the 1670s was the key decade. Records of sufferings show a clear change in Quaker political strategy (but not a withdrawal from politics): rather than steadfast refusal to co-operate with the authorities, Quakers began petitioning for the reduction of fines, allowing friends or relatives to pay fines on their behalf, and issuing legal advice to members on how to avoid punishment. Davies also shows how this desire for local accommodation and consensus was reciprocated: parish constables played an important role in protecting Quakers from government-inspired prosecution. Thus, Quakers achieved ever greater integration with the outside world; the sectarian model espoused by Richard Vann, of increasing isolation from society, is firmly rejected by Davies on the basis of his material, and he inclines, by the end of the book, for a model of consensus between Essex Quakers and their neighbours.

Like many local studies, this book is inevitably bounded by its (very rich) source material. Essex Quakers demonstrate interesting variations from the national picture, and Adrian Davies thoughtfully questions models of sectarian development on the basis of his research. Yet, as he himself concedes, his questions require further regional studies—a rather self-defeating conclusion, since Davies' book is more than adequate as it stands. Some of the local intimacy of his doctoral research has inevitably disappeared in the book, but in its place we have an authoritative account of the early Quaker movement and a strong argument for the importance of local efforts in its evolution. Quakers are notoriously well-documented, and there have been a number of impressive local studies in recent decades. It is a pleasure that this one has been published.

Trevor Cooper, ed. *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia During the English Civil War*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001. 551 pp. + 64 plates. \$90.00. Review by CHARLES W. A. PRIOR, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AT KINGSTON.

Readers who are familiar with William Dowsing will know that this is less a journal than a catalogue of the activities of an iconoclast in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire during 1643 and 1644. Those *unfamiliar* with the author, and who come to the book expecting to be introduced to a village Pepys, will encounter a sober and purposeful character. Dowsing (1596-1668), acting under the commission of the second Earl of Manchester, and flanked by a half dozen associates, conducted a thoroughly destructive tour of churches in two counties. His mission was to carry out the directive of the Parliamentary Ordinance, passed during August 1643, "that all Monuments of Superstition and Idolatry should be removed and abolished." The journal therefore recounts the dates, locations, and provides details of what was destroyed. While there