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## Review Of "The History Of Childhood" Edited By L. DeMause

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Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The History of Childhood* by Lloyd de Mause

Review by: J. William Frost

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fits of his own female parishioners at Sunday services. Probably he felt vulnerable, for his sermons were just of the type most deprecated by the revivalists: cold, emotionless, read verbatim, and often rehashed from earlier efforts. Indeed, church members accused him of delivering "old sermons," a sin frequently on his own conscience, but excused on the grounds of pressures of parish and family duties. Regardless of his preaching style, he reaped a steady harvest of new church members during the years of the Great Awakening, meanwhile lamenting the loss of others to the Separates and even the Anglicans.

Francis G. Walett, Parkman's editor, has produced a diary of incredible richness and variety, well calculated to appeal to the student of colonial New England. His main task, as he explains in his introduction, was to identify the hundreds of individuals included within the pages of the work. Even with such a large cast to consider, however, it seems unnecessary to identify the same obscure persons repeatedly. One wishes also that more of the footnotes went beyond mere identification. Nevertheless, the editor's comprehensive introduction furnishes a useful overview of a long, varied, and complex life. The reader will doubtlessly be inconvenienced by the minute type in the text and miniscule footnotes, but one feels certain that this format was imposed by the budgetary necessities of such a massive work, and not by design of the editor.

Some people may have been fortunate enough to have read the *Diary* as it was serialized earlier in the *Proceedings* of the American Antiquarian Society and elsewhere. For the unlucky ones, there may be a sense of loss upon completing the first installment. So many questions remain unanswered. Will Parkman ever receive a liveable salary? Will his son, Ebenezer, Jr., finally obtain a farm of his own? Will the Parkmans, unlike their neighbors, continue to escape the ravages of smallpox and the throat distemper? Perhaps we shall learn in time, but as Ebenezer Parkman observed, "We must now wait the Will of God in what is to follow."

*Frostburg State College*

GORDON E. KERSHAW

*The History of Childhood*. Edited by LLOYD DE MAUSE. (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974. iv, 450 p. Index. Hardcover, \$12.50; paperback by Harper & Row, \$3.95.)

This important book is both provocative and disquieting. It should prove useful because of the quantity of information and for providing examples which can be used to test the validity of psychoanalytic history. These essays will force historians to reconsider traditional methods of study and should stimulate further research. Lloyd de Mause deserves our commendation for creating this project and for finding scholars willing to cull through extensive amounts of materials to extract information on

childhood from Rome until the nineteenth century. The book establishes that children have a history susceptible to investigation.

In the introductory essay, de Mause provides a conceptual framework in which the treatment of children appears as a "nightmare" from which we are only beginning to emerge. There is a comforting fillip in his thesis, for he finds progress from barbarism until the present and believes that modern man has the emotional maturity to treat an infant in terms of its own needs rather than those of adults. de Mause argues that historians have focused on the superstructure of economics, politics, or war, but have ignored the key to understanding the development of western civilization found in child-rearing practices. Not all the other contributors to this book share the editor's views, or—at least—some are extremely cautious about using psychoanalytic techniques to interpret their data. A reader gains a sense of perspective on customs in different periods because all authors focus on infanticide, nursing, health, discipline and views of innocence or depravity of children. The danger in the psychoanalytic approach to the history of childhood is that the evidence is elusive and the parents not alive to discuss or put into context their beliefs. Even if they could speak, the circular nature of psychoanalytic theory would preclude an effective rebuttal.

The essays by Joseph Illick on seventeenth-century England and America and John Walzer on eighteenth-century America are the contributions dealing with the United States. There are faults in both which make their primary value factual information rather than interpretation. Illick's essay contains thought provoking but unsupported generalizations. On page 308 putting the child out to a wet nurse "was a practice engaged in by most of those who could afford it," but two pages later only the "upper class" employ wet nurses; yet the documentary evidence for either statement is scanty. Illick asserts but does not prove that seventeenth-century Englishmen tended to be secularists while their wives were devout. He assumes that because they migrated the settlers of colonial America were engaged in adolescent dreams of escape and were less mature individuals than the Englishmen who stayed at home. In Illick's hands psychoanalysis becomes a way of simplification. The doctrine of "calling" is related to the sublimation of sex; Puritans wrote death narratives of their children because they subconsciously wanted them dead. The same careless use of material mars the Walzer article. For example, that Americans sent their children to school at an early age and apprenticed youth is used to show a parental desire to be rid of them. Yet, since New Englanders built schools in most towns and most American youth were not apprenticed, these phenomena could equally show that Americans were possessive of children. Since Walzer sees the eighteenth century as a period of ambivalence in which parents projected away and held onto the youth, he can find evidence to support his thesis. After all, it is hard to think of an action by a parent which could not fit into these categories. The central difficulty

with these two essays is the subjective use of evidence to fit the canons of psychoanalytic theory. A distorting ray sometimes provides an illuminating perspective, but here it serves too often to blind. This is a pity because Illick makes good use of midwife books, John Locke's writings, and a variety of sources in England and America, and Walzer correctly charts the many changes in the treatment of children which occurred in the eighteenth century. Fortunately, the essays of Mary McLaughlin, J. B. Ross, and Elizabeth Marwick are excellent and provide examples of how insights derived from psychology can aid history.

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J. WILLIAM FROST

*The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776.* By THOMAS ELLIOT NORTON. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974. x, 243 p. Bibliographical note, index. \$12.50.)

The fur trade was the economic base for the Dutch colony of New Netherland, with a trading company as its colonizing agent. Fort Orange (Albany), up the Hudson River, was ideally situated to tap the resources of the interior and to carry on trade with the adjacent Iroquois. Hence the Dutch settlers there had a single purpose which they carried over into the period of English rule. For the locality it was a monopoly, and these factors gave New York a distinct advantage over other colonies in this lucrative trade. The fur trade, however, depended upon relations with the Indians who trapped and hunted and then traded their peltry. *The Wars of the Iroquois* by George T. Hunt pointed out how these Indians fought for the areas producing beaver, and by their conquests over other tribes controlled the trade, while the supply of beaver declined in the East. The Albany Dutch traders not only profited by the trade from the lakes and the West and from the Mohawk; they also reached out for some of the French furs coming down from the North via Lake Champlain. No other colony could match these advantages, and the fur trade of New York was the largest part of that of the English colonies.

Since the Dutch traders in New York had this monopoly, they became the people chiefly concerned with Indian relations and were named New York's Indian commissioners. Things went smoothly until the colonial wars and hostilities with the French produced a conflict of interest. The Dutch traders still pursued an active trade with Montreal, receiving furs from the northward and supplying the Canadians with Indian trade goods. Others conceived this as trading with the enemy and gave the Albany Dutch a bad name. Subsequently laws were passed prohibiting the traffic, but it was too well established to be given up, and continued as smuggling.

The author of this excellent study of the New York fur trade believes