

Tucker, Barbara M. *Samuel Slater and the Origins of the American Textile Industry*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984. Pp. 268. Illustrations, notes and index. \$29.95

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the behaviour and attitudes of the town's residents. Here Garner provides an optimistic prediction for city and town planners in that they can make a significant social contribution to urban life by proper site development. Yet he also demonstrates that the ability to influence has not always elicited social attributes and values which have been totally beneficial to city and town dwellers. But in the end, Garner does demonstrate how the model company town has contributed to a greater understanding of how humane town planning and environmental management can be achieved.

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For the years between 1790 and 1860, New England has come to be a laboratory for case studies investigating antebellum industrialism. In her study, *Samuel Slater and the Origins of the American Textile Industry, 1790-1860*, Barbara Tucker has joined Jonathan Prude and others in analyzing the transition of the region from rural and agricultural to urban and industrial. Both Prude and Tucker focus on the influence of Samuel Slater and the impact of the factory system upon the older farm oriented lifestyle. While Prude argues that the first factory workers were hostile to the workplace demands of the factory system, resisting innovation and imposing rural attitudes whenever possible upon reluctant managers, Tucker depicts Slater's successful efforts to retain the practices and values of pre-factory culture amid rapid technological and economic changes.

In Part I Tucker examines early British textile manufacturing and Slater's attempt to introduce aspects of it into Rhode Island and Massachusetts, his troubled partnership with William Almy and Moses Brown as well as his later independent entrepreneurial efforts. This examination contains some enlightening observations on the dominance of family and religious connections of the general merchant, the nature of mercantile business practices and internal management arrangements, the importance of the putting-out system and of the Brown family's widespread commercial connections, the emergence of the factory system during the War of 1812 and English efforts to regain their American markets at the war's end, the system of pauper apprenticeship, and the shift to child contract workers. Tucker concludes in Part I that

What emerged by 1800 was a factory system uniquely American, an extension of the values, institutions, and ideas present in New England society. And a chief char-

acteristic of this system was patriarchy. It could be observed in the family firm, where kin both owned and managed the business, and in the family system of labor that emerged in the factories. All rested firmly upon traditional, eighteenth-century familial values. Slater realized the strength of patriarchy in America and organized his factory system to accommodate it. (p. 86)

In Part II Tucker delineates a whole sequence of developments which contradicts our picture of the traditional mill village and its "dark satanic mills." Most important, Slater involved the entire family in his factory operations by duplicating the old household production unit. The wife still laboured in the home, the children, placed there by the head of the household, tended mill machinery, and the father continued to allocate jobs and dispense discipline even if he laboured outside the mill in nearby fields or as a construction worker or teamster. The Slater mills duplicated the pre-factory family hierarchy thus maintaining and even strengthening patriarchy. Also effecting the peaceful transition from agricultural to industrial life were Slater's factory villages, with Webster, Massachusetts, in particular, being a showcase. These communities preserved such links with New England's colonial past as the open-field village pattern, single-family dwellings, the church, and the town meeting, thus easing even more the transition to industrialism.

In Part III, Tucker explains that "In the long run the benign, paternalistic structure of New England society was unable effectively to assimilate massive economic change." Even before Slater's sons assumed power, he began to assume parental responsibilities, assign children to certain work, discipline them, and take charge of their moral and educational training in his Sunday School which inculcated order and authority. "Increased competition, the growth of the market economy, the ready availability of new and inexpensive sources of labor, and the ascension of Slater's sons to power in the family firm caused this fragile social structure to disintegrate," Tucker concludes. Slater's practices may be seen as bridging the pre-factory and factory society, even though they lasted barely one generation before conflict "based on gender, family, and religion divided the residents of Slater's industrial communities."

This study of the complex social relationships and the role of traditional culture in shaping the new republic's first factories is presented in colourful detail and based on scrupulous historical scholarship. Tucker commands a wide range of manuscripts and secondary works and uses tables, maps, and drawings effectively to enlighten and enliven her work. Economic and social historians as well as students of New England will benefit from this excellent study.

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