

al Era to the Present.
k: Rutgers University
-8135-5287-3.

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as possible. Stiff opposition came from among Cranbury’s farmers, who pointed out that their farms were their greatest assets and that they had every right to make as much from them as they could. Chambers relates the painstaking process of hammering out agreements that saw Cranbury named to the federal and state Registers of Historic Places, with its essential character intact. From a preservationist perspective, the Cranbury experience was a success story, but one born of a hard-fought campaign (towns facing similar threats should bear this in mind).

Thus Chambers has given us a satisfying local history. Well-written throughout, and derived from solid research, the use of oral histories in the later chapters makes *Cranbury* particularly appealing as a case study in community preservation. It was former Speaker of the House Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill who famously said that, “all politics is local”; books like *Cranbury* remind us that the same might be said of history.

Mark Edward Lender
Kean University

Poultry Science, Chicken Culture: A Partial Alphabet. By Susan Merrill Squier. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011. 296 pp., \$39.95, hardback, ISBN 978-0-8135-4924-8.

In the first few pages of *Poultry Science, Chicken Culture*, Susan Merrill Squier declares, “chickens are good to think with” (4). Her appropriation of Claude Levi-Strauss’s famous comment (that animals are good to think with) sets the stage for an impressive exploration of the myriad ways humans have represented, analyzed, and manipulated the *Gallus* species. Squier is not against the farming of chickens per se, but she is keen to critique the ways in which agriculture has become “post-pastoral”—a term she uses to refer to farming’s conversion in the twentieth century from a way of life to a business “subject to the same strategies of rationalization, management practices, and control of technologies as other industrialized businesses” (8). In addition, she asserts it is now crucial to redress the neglect of agriculture as a worthy domain of critical cultural inquiry.

It is Squier’s personal experience of rehomeing two Cobb 700 hens (hybrid chickens purposely bred by the chicken meat industry to grow fatter faster and on less food) that led her to contemplate the ethics of designing life and intensively farming birds for eggs and meat. She argues

that industrialization and intensive farming have successfully concealed modern-day (highly technologized and mechanized) farming practices and effectively removed the actual lives and deaths of so-called food animals from everyday consideration. Consequently we have become distanced from our food and where/who it comes from. For Squier, intensive farming is problematic not only for those who consume meat or other products derived from factory-farmed animals, but also for those who “manufacture” this food: industrialization, as she explains, has separated today’s farmers from traditional orally transmitted, often craft-based knowledges and practices. Farming is no longer a vocation involving regular contact with or deep knowledge about animals; it is now a business firmly entrenched in the powerful discourses of capitalism and managerialism (as one advertisement for a career in the poultry industry puts it: if you choose to work as a broiler farmer you need only see chickens at night—on your dinner plate).

Squier’s eloquent examination of our cultural history with chickens also covers such diverse topics as the representation of chickens in literature, film, and visual culture; the ways in which contemporary discourses of fear, risk, and safety impact responses to avian influenza; and the special relationship between African-American women and chickens. Ultimately, the various essays comprising *Poultry Science, Chicken Culture* demonstrate that while chickens may be good to think with, our thoughts about them—at least in the twenty-first century—never stray very far from objectification, commodification, and consumption. There is no doubt about it: poultry science has profoundly impacted chicken culture in the most regrettable ways.

Annie Potts

University of Canterbury—New Zealand

Latin America

The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Race, and US Expansion in Central America. By Jason M. Colby. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011. 288 pp., \$45.00, hardback, ISBN 978-0-8014-4915-4.

Since colonial times, Central America’s rural history has been characterized by the *latifundial/minifundia* dichotomy: large plantations and tiny

plots. In the late nineteenth century, the large plantation system established vast banana plantations, becoming the principal

Jason Colby’s study with public—political US racial ideologies and their impact on United Fruit’s Indian migrant worker in isolated regions where indigenous expectations clashed: “These companies’ racial impact . . . on the social offers unexpected and wide range of historical difficult to do it justice

While some analysts Southerners shaped “the general consensus and nonwhite deference transcended North/South were “less accustomed American blacks (8) island colonies, along meant that at home, “confronted African Central Americans, “sovereignty” (9). The control of their Caribbean sovereignty were inte

Black workers on the plantations, which part of North America Central American the popularity of race-baiting workers. Garveyism ties in Central America