

REVIEWS

Edited by James J. Rawls

IMAGES OF THE PACIFIC RIM: AUSTRALIA & CALIFORNIA 1850–1935

By Erika Esau (Sydney, Australia: Power Publications, 2010, 368 pp., \$59.95 paper)

REVIEWED BY GARY F. KURUTZ, COAUTHOR OF CALIFORNIA CALLS YOU: THE ART OF PROMOTING THE GOLDEN STATE, 1870–1949 AND PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN EMERITUS, CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

ERIKA ESAU, with her magisterial *Images of the Pacific Rim: Australia & California 1850–1935*, has created an extraordinary comparative cultural history of the Golden State and the “land Down Under.” The story of how this wonderful book came to be is a delight. Born and raised in California, Dr. Esau lived for a short period in the frigid upper Midwest and happily accepted a position at the Australian National University in Canberra teaching the history of Australian art. While developing her curriculum, she noticed a strong affinity with her California roots and the image-making of both Pacific Rim regions. The genesis of her book occurred when she saw an exhibition of Australian tourist posters that included James Northfield’s striking *Canberra, Federal Capital & Garden City, Australia*. The arches, red-roofed buildings, and enchanting sylvan landscape in the background reminded her not only of home but also of an earlier California citrus box label that incorporated many of the same visual themes. Both Australian poster and California label projected a semitropical paradise.

Ten years in the making, this well-researched and engagingly written large-format volume traces the cultural similarities of these Pacific Rim neighbors from the helter-skelter days of the two gold rushes of the 1850s to the Great Depression and the globalization of cultures and economies in the 1930s. As a native Californian, it was truly illuminating to learn of the profound influence our state had on Australia’s art, architecture, and publishing history.

California has long been recognized for her worldwide influence, but her unique impact on her Pacific neighbor has never been so well articulated. As Esau explains, “My own iconography of place—my sense of what is familiar and comfortable in the landscape as rendered through images—has been determined by my experience in these two cultures of the Pacific Rim. The images and the examples presented in this book suggest that this shared visual template is not simply serendipitous, but is the result of prolonged interaction between two peoples whose societies came of age at the same time, and in an environment that had much in common.”

This binational scholar neatly divides her book into seven robust chapters arranged in chronological order. Topically, she covers such important visual subjects as the daguerreotype in both gold regions; Francis Brett Harte’s famous illustrated poem, *The Heathen Chinese*, and its inspiration of Joseph C. Johnson’s ethnically diverse Austra-

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lian painting, *The Game of Euchre*; the influence of sheet music cover art; the making of the monumental large folio publications of the late 1880s, *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia and Picturesque California*; and magazines such as *Sunset*, the *Pacific Monthly*, and the Automobile Club of Southern California’s *Touring Topics*. Through all of this, she traces the rapid technological changes in publishing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that made possible the easy exchange of imagery and ideas and the “Californianising” of Australia. In addition to her cogent analysis of this aesthetic relationship, Esau has made a singular contribution to the publication history of the Pacific Rim by documenting the migration of California artists, engravers, photographers, and craftsmen to this antipodean land.

California’s influence extended dramatically to another art form: architecture. The California bungalow, for instance, became the “bush bungalow” in Australia. In 1915, San Francisco and

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San Diego celebrated the completion of the Panama Canal, one with a world's fair and the other with a regional fair. Both, however, produced architectural models studied and emulated by Australian designers. Hollywood, with its creation of fantasy *Ramona*-inspired settings, likewise found its way to this Pacific commonwealth. Though lacking an Iberian or Latin American past, red-roofed and whitewashed Spanish and Mission revival buildings became fashionable, as exemplified by the governmental buildings erected in the new capital city of Canberra and the UCLA-like campus of the University of Western Australia.

Australia, as any Californian knows, sent the eucalyptus. The stately tree remains the most enduring reminder of Australia's affect on the California landscape. The climatic similarities of both regions made the tree a perfect fit. Side-by-side orange and eucalyptus groves became universal symbols of the Golden State. This botanical immigrant, however, has its detractors precisely because it is not native to the region. Esau traces how the ubiquitous eucalyptus was enthusiastically imported by California nurserymen in the 1870s, only to be denigrated by the modernist movement of the late 1920s.

Each chapter is supported by scores of endnotes, many of them loaded with additional commentary. The book's acknowledgments and bibliography attest to Esau's prodigious research in libraries, archives, and museums on both sides of the Pacific. As a librarian, it is rewarding to see how Esau incorporated ephemera into her book in the form of pictorial letter sheets,

playing cards, sheet music, citrus labels, posters, promotional brochures, and trade catalogs. This thick volume is embellished with fabulous illustrations that in themselves are an important primary source and not merely page decorations. As a final fitting touch, the book has dual forewords by Sam Watters of California and Ian Tyrell of Australia. There is one gentle point of criticism: this handsome yet fragile book deserved to be published as a hardbound volume with a dust jacket.

WOMAN LAWYER: THE TRIALS OF CLARA FOLTZ

By *Barbara Babcock* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010, 392 pp., \$45.00 cloth and eBook)

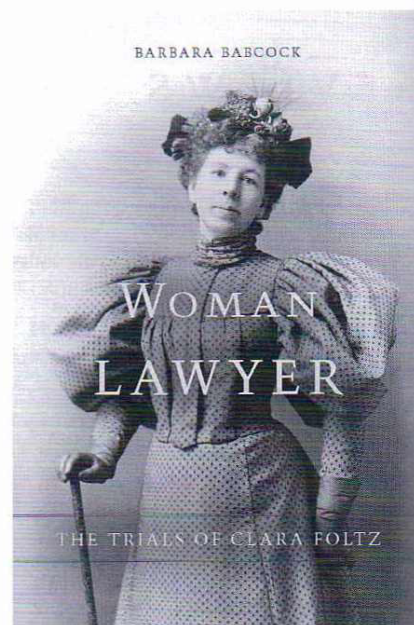
FRONTIER FEMINIST: CLARINA HOWARD NICHOLS AND THE POLITICS OF MOTHERHOOD

By *Marilyn S. Blackwell and Kristen T. Oertel* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010, 344 pp., \$39.95 cloth)

WILD UNREST: CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN AND THE MAKING OF "THE YELLOW WALL-PAPER"

By *Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 272 pp., \$24.95 cloth)

REVIEWED BY MARY JO IGNOFFO, DE ANZA COLLEGE, AUTHOR OF *CAPTIVE OF THE LABYRINTH: SARAH L. WINCHESTER, HEIRESS TO THE RIFLE FORTUNE*



THE THREE SINGULAR WOMEN with whom we are presented in these publications successfully navigated the social and political turbulence of nineteenth-century America. They shared only a few commonalities, namely that each married, had children, divorced, set about establishing a career with few if any role models, lived in California (at least for a time), and carefully crafted a public persona. Of the three, the most intriguing also happens to be the least known. If the central criminal court building in Los Angeles had not been renamed the Clara Shortridge Foltz Justice Center in 2002, she would have remained mostly unknown in and out of the law profession.

Barbara Babcock skillfully recounts the life of Foltz in *Woman Lawyer*, the first woman lawyer on the Pacific Coast who successfully brought suit against Hastings Law School for admission of women, the first to serve as legislative counsel, the first to hold statewide office, the first female notary public in California, the first female deputy district attorney, and her greatest legacy, founder of the public defender move-