despite the fact that they might also be doing factory or military work. One chapter in this section details a fascinating “cookbook-scrapbook” kept by one Maude Reid, full of witty and sometimes critical commentary about strictures and shortages imposed by the war, along with her own resistance to the idea that a woman’s “most important wartime job lay with the cooking of nourishing and satisfying home meals” (p.133).

Neuhaus explains that most cookbooks portrayed men’s cooking as “play”; the regular cook in the home was a woman. She finds that how men cooked and what they ate was depicted in particular ways, specifically around outdoor cooking, “meat, strong flavors, and coffee” (p.77); this rhetoric removed men from association with delicate or fussy dishes that were portrayed as women’s favorites and made sure that any male involvement with cooking wouldn’t be seen as “feminine” behavior. The rhetorical construction of men as “Other” naturalized women’s role in the kitchen, Neuhaus asserts, just as a “racialized ‘Other’” has been used in Western nations to define “white subjectivity” (p.76). The book also briefly touches on such topics as the co-opting of black cooks’ recipes by whites, the increase in education and work opportunities for women along with the resistance of mainstream culture to such opportunities, and how these and other social forces played their parts in the rhetoric of cookbooks. Her eleventh chapter, “‘A Necessary Bore’: Contradictions in the Cooking Mystique,” contains insightful discussion of Peg Bracken’s The I Hate to Cook Cookbook and other discourse that refuted the standard rhetorical messages of the time. The entire book is well researched and documented, helping readers to see that cookbooks have supported America’s dominant ideologies about gender.

Neuhaus has a tendency to repeat her points and to supply more than enough evidence to support them. As with a pot-luck dinner where one feels compelled to taste everyone’s contributions, the result can be that one becomes overly full, loses one’s ability to discern flavors, and eats beyond the point of need or pleasure. In my estimation the book would have benefited from judicious cutting. And although Neuhaus clearly understands that mainstream American society is deeply invested in the maintenance of particular sexual, racial, and capitalist politics, she avoids commenting on such systemic perspectives, instead presenting the gender ideology she finds in cookbooks as the result of distinct historical and socioeconomic forces (World War I, World War II, the Depression, the promotion of processed food and appliances, and antifeminist propaganda in the 1950s and 1960s, for example). Yet, from the many details she supplies, I suspect that each reader will draw her or his own conclusions about the relationship between rhetorical systems and the power structure of America.

Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking includes a number of amusing illustrations, an excellent “Essay on Sources,” and a detailed index. The book’s style is jargon free and easy to follow.

—Anne L. Bower, The Ohio State University–Marion

Selling Mrs. Consumer: Christine Frederick and the Rise of Household Efficiency
Janice Williams Rutherford
Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003
283 pp. $22.95 (paper)

Janice Williams Rutherford admits to being torn by the contradictions embodied by the subject of her engaging biography, home efficiency and advertising expert Christine Frederick. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s Frederick had a successful career advising American women to remain happily within the confines of their homes and was even known to remark publicly that “our greatest enemy is the woman with a career” (p.96). Rutherford’s expertly researched book, the first dedicated to Frederick’s life, focuses on these contradictions, engaging the reader in a worthwhile consideration of the conflicts between career and home life faced by women of both Frederick’s era and our own.

Selling Mrs. Consumer: Christine Frederick and the Rise of Household Efficiency is as much cultural history as it is biography. As told by Rutherford, the story of Frederick’s transformation from “entombed” housewife in 1910 to world-renowned expert on efficient household management by the end of the 1920s is intertwined with major currents in gender history, the emergence of consumer culture, and the intellectual and political trends of the Progressive Era. Rutherford intersperses the story of Frederick’s life, as revealed mostly by her own writing, with segments elucidating its cultural context. These sections trace the vicissitudes of twentieth-century feminism, the emergence of scientific housekeeping and establishment of home economics as both a pedagogy for homemaking and a career for women, and the steady growth in technology, industry, and urbanization along with the concurrent rise of a consumer economy. Through Frederick’s life the reader is privy to the emergence of the fields of scientific management and advertising. As an isolated young housewife Frederick was exposed to both fledgling fields through her husband, and she built a career adopting their methods for use in managing the middle-class home.
Throughout the book Rutherford reminds us that, even though education and professional opportunities opened to women in the early decades of the twentieth century, the ideology of domesticity that Catherine Beecher promoted in the nineteenth century maintained its appeal. Radical feminists such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman challenged the ideology of separate spheres that naturalized women’s domestic duties and suggested cooperative housekeeping arrangements that would do away with the private sphere altogether. As Rutherford points out, however, Frederick remained loyal to Beecher’s ideology, except—like Beecher—in the case of her own life. Frederick recognized and capitalized on the fact that Americans were not interested in giving up their private homes or the gendered division of labor that kept them running. Throughout her career she sought to stabilize and preserve the traditional American home by bringing scientific management principles to housekeeping and turning women into expert consumers.

Frederick had two audiences for her expertise: homemakers hungry for advice and manufacturers and advertisers eager to learn from “Mrs. Consumer” herself how best to entice them. She sold modern housekeeping to women and female consumers to modern advertisers. Rutherford maintains her keen observation of contradiction as she reveals that as “a broker” between advertisers and Mrs. Consumer, Frederick simultaneously empowered and belittled American women. She sought ways of making housekeeping less of a burden but refused to allow that freed-up time might be spent pursuing a career—either by choice or by necessity. Rutherford exposes the fact that, although Frederick promoted women’s power as consumers, she assigned them power in the marketplace they did not have while belittling them to male advertisers and ignoring opportunities to acknowledge women’s unpaid labor and economic dependence. All the while she refused to acknowledge the contradiction between the domestic ideals she so vigorously promoted and the satisfying public life she led.

Rutherford is clearly both fascinated by and disappointed in Frederick, and as a historian she has turned her research and analytical skills to understanding Frederick’s choices as well as the circumstances that shaped and limited them. Rutherford considers Frederick a “barometer” of her times, but she also shows that Frederick played a part in shaping and advancing those very qualities of her culture that she reflected. This is a delicate and difficult balance to trace, and at times I wanted Rutherford to take a stronger stand on Frederick’s choices and their implications for the history of gender and domesticity. A question that hangs over the text, for example, is why Frederick refused to acknowledge the “absurd” contradictions she embodied. Rutherford’s answer, that Frederick was “deceiving herself,” is more psychological than historical; it leaves the significance of the silence unaccounted for (p.105).

In a final bit of criticism, I would have liked Rutherford to do a better job than Frederick herself in recognizing that domestic ideals do not merely “leave out” women who are not white and middle class. Rather, these exclusions are central to the construction of domestic ideals and have real effects on the lives of women who are defined outside of gender norms because of their race, class, ethnicity, or sexual preference. Readers familiar with more theoretical approaches to the history of domesticity (such as Kathleen Anne McHugh’s American Domesticity and Nicole Tonkovich’s Domesticity with a Difference), which seek to make race and class visible aspects of the gendered identity of the American housewife, will recognize that Rutherford’s approach leaves these relationships unconsidered.

Despite these criticisms, Rutherford has made a useful contribution to the history of women, domesticity, and consumer culture. She has portrayed the constraints, accomplishments, and shortcomings of Frederick’s life in a historically meaningful way that has profound and unsettling contemporary relevance.

—Charlotte Biltekoff, Brown University

The Contented Poacher: Tales and Recipes from an Epicure in the Wilderness
Elantu V. Veovode
Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2003
271 pp. $24.95 (cloth)

Although the subject of hunting has been known to inspire a wide variety of opinions, few are apt to be as bizarre or troubling as some of those espoused by Elantu Veovode in her book The Contented Poacher. If Gastronomica describes the intersection of food and culture, The Contented Poacher might be said to describe the intersection of food and a lack of culture.

Poaching is most frequently defined as hunting a protected animal without a license, but Veovode’s definition of a poacher is someone who “presumes to hunt without a gun, even if he or she is possessed of the regulation license and does not presume to exceed the number of animals listed on that license” (p.9). In other words, she sees herself as a legitimate hunter, though one who chooses not to use a gun. Yet this definition is soon called into question when