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Book Review

A Review of: “Tammy Horn. ***Bees in America: How the Honey Bee Shaped a Nation***. Lexington: The U of Kentucky P, 2005”

CATHY CORDER

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BOOK REVIEW

Tammy Horn. *Bees in America: How the Honey Bee Shaped a Nation.* Lexington: The U of Kentucky P, 2005.

BY CATHY CORDER

Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, California

In her wide-ranging examination of the role of the honey bee (together with beekeeping and honey hunting) in American society, Tammy Horn looks at American history from initial colonization and western migration to modern bee genetics. Her stated goal is to look at the honey bee, which represents not only the "American" values of industry and thrift, but also the well-structured, efficient American society. She sees the image of the honey bee as being historically pervasive throughout America's diverse ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic groups, who would all recognize the moral behind the child's verse: "Bee was a Bee that looked well to his hive, /And only by industry labored to thrive, /A wholesome example for you and to me/May even be found in the neat busy bee."

Horn covers the role of the honey bee in American history from early colonization, through western migration, wars, and economic depressions; in the folkways of English, Irish, German, Dutch, and Swedish settlers; in the religious tenets of such groups as the Mormons, Moravians, and Shakers; and in the utopian beliefs of the Icarians and the Harmonists. She begins her study in England at the time of the Virginia and Massachusetts settlements. The earliest printed book on bees in English, Charles Butler's *The Feminine Monarchie* (1609), represented bees as a proper model for statecraft and noted the role of the queen as the ruler of the hive. Importantly, Butler described the drones of the hive as idle, noncontributing members of bee society. Much of the propaganda for colonization borrowed that language, urging the

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