

vides for consideration throughout the text are not ones of particular woe, but rather of advocacy, legislation, education, and cooperation, ultimately proactive stances against the foe.

Based on extensive archival research in the SDFU's collections, as well as numerous oral interviews and a detailed reading of the *Union Farmer*, Oyos's labors will be most interesting and valuable to those already familiar with the organization he chronicles. His text, rife with photographs, will serve as a trip down memory lane for South Dakotans. Names such as John W. Batcheller, Ben Radcliffe, Minnie Lovenger, and Teresa Schlenker ("the singing cowgirl" of station KWAT-Watertown) will undoubtedly strike a chord and bring a smile. More useful to such readers are the appendixes detailing leaders and members over the previous eight decades, albeit with significant curious omissions for more recent years.

Unfortunately, Oyos's text suffers from a degree of polemic in his discussions of such organizations and institutions as the Farm Bureau, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and corporate agriculture. It also bears the burden of rather poor editing. In light of the polemic, as well as the tight focus, general readers of agricultural and regional history will undoubtedly find the book somewhat unsatisfactory. However, scholars of farm organizations, students of South Dakota history, and members of the SDFU will find considerable food for thought.

Changing Works: Visions of a Lost Agriculture, by Douglas Harper. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. xii, 302 pp. Photographs, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth.

Reviewer Douglas Hurt is professor and director of the graduate program in agricultural history and rural studies at Iowa State University. He is the author of many books and articles on agricultural history.

Farming is no longer a way of life; it is a business. The agricultural population has dropped below 2 percent of the national population and, during most of the twentieth century, the number of farms has decreased while their size has increased. Agriculture is a capital-intensive, specialty business for most farmers (excluding specific groups such as hobby farmers and the Amish). By the late twentieth century, some scholars, particularly sociologists and historians, bemoaned change in American agriculture, particularly in rural values, which they usually asserted rather than defined. Now, in the early twenty-first century, these scholars continue to speak about the loss of community, neighborliness, and cooperation in the countryside due to technological and scientific change and the demands of a market

economy. In doing so, they look wistfully to the past when agricultural life, they believe, had more meaning and greater personal satisfaction. Douglas Harper, a sociologist at Duquesne University, follows that analytical approach, but his study is far better than most in this vein because it contributes to knowledge by cogently evaluating agricultural change on dairy farms in upstate New York during the 1940s.

In 1943 Standard Oil of New Jersey (SONJ) hired Roy Stryker of Farm Security Administration fame to photograph the company's work in relation to people. Although the project was designed to provide the public with favorable information about SONJ, the unforeseen consequences were the creation of an extensive historical record that included agriculture. SONJ discontinued the project in 1953, and the photographs eventually were deposited in the Standard Oil archives at the University of Louisville. Harper used a selection of the SONJ photographs and a technique called "photo elicitation," in which people familiar with the context of an image discuss its details to recreate life on dairy farms more than a half century ago. Harper interviewed 48 farm families, recorded their observations, and crafted an important book based on their memories and SONJ photographs. Harper supplements those reflections with his own photographs that show important features of dairying today, and he provides a text that helps readers understand the specifics of dairy farming. Simply put, Harper knows how to shovel manure as well as link his subject to sociological theory, and he presents it all in a manner that deserves a readership beyond academia.

Harper and his subjects trace the transition of dairy farming from the age of horses to tractor power, which altered the social process of "changing works," that is, exchange of labor with neighbors, as well as caused the end of dairying as a craft. The reflections of the men and women he interviewed provide priceless information about dairy farming on a daily basis throughout the year. Harper recognizes the profit-minded nature of farmers and the demands of a market economy, and he acknowledges that technological change lessened a farmer's daily burdens and that farmers themselves welcomed labor-saving changes. But he longs for an agriculture governed less by efficiency and an eye on the bottom line, for more cooperative ownership of equipment and community relationships that come from personal contacts. He also favors the abandonment of government policy that fosters large-scale dairy farming on an industrial scale in contrast to the small-scale operations of the past. He does not, however, account for a belief in the sanctity of private property that, in part, keeps farmers from sharing equipment or their independent nature and desire to

have the same standard of living as urbanites. Moreover, while more calories are often expended than returned from food production, farmers tally money, not calories, as a sign of success. The problems of dairy farmers today, of course, are complex, just as they were in the past, despite romantic notions about it. This study will be valuable for historians, sociologists, and museum curators. Anyone familiar with dairy farming in Iowa will find this book a good read.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.