

growing national and international reputation as a writer, teacher, and dedicated public spokesman for ecological conservation and resource management.

Lorbiecki humanizes Leopold. Her biography does not provide new insights on the development of his ideas, or the succession of public causes that made him famous. We see another side of Leopold in this book: the devoted family man, beloved "Professor," and all-too-human figure who struggled with illness, professional uncertainty, and fatigue his entire life. These dimensions of Leopold's character enrich the reader's understanding of, and admiration for, this exemplary figure. Aldo Leopold's dedication to his family and his work, his ability to be rigorous without becoming solemn, and passionate without falling into self-righteousness, all make him a model for committed public figures. Lorbiecki's volume highlights the multiple dimensions of his character, and, as such, merits a prominent place on the crowded shelf of Leopold books.

American Farms: Exploring Their History, by R. Douglas Hurt. Exploring Community History Series, edited by David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 1996. xiii, 165 pp. Illustrations, appendix, bibliographical essay, index. \$24.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY THOMAS K. WOODS, OLD WORLD WISCONSIN

American Farms: Exploring Their History is the second book in Krieger's Exploring Community History series, the successor to the acclaimed Nearby History series, published by the American Association for State and Local History. The series is designed to guide local historians and students in researching and writing the histories of their communities. Series editors David Kyvig and Myron Marty are experienced hands at preparing helpful guides for local historians and students; together they authored *Your Family History: A Handbook for Research and Writing* and *Nearby History: Exploring the Past around You*.

R. Douglas Hurt is an excellent choice to author a how-to book on researching the history of farms. Currently director of the graduate program in agricultural history and rural studies at Iowa State University, Hurt has worked as an administrator at both the Ohio and Missouri historical societies. He is also a prolific author of both scholarly and popular books on agricultural history. As a scholarly researcher, Hurt knows his subject well; as a writer, he is sensitive to the needs of particular audiences. He is right on target with *American*

Farms, which he wrote for a popular audience of amateur historians or students who are unfamiliar, or only somewhat familiar, with the resources and techniques of writing agricultural history.

American Farms is a reliable, well-organized, unpretentious guide. Chapters are organized around the research and writing process and the major sources important to anyone seeking to discover the history of a farm. The first chapter, on getting started with the research project, offers an outline of potential research questions arranged by major categories such as land acquisition, land use, daily life, economic affairs, technological and scientific change, farm ownership and labor, buildings and gardens, education, and politics and organization. Hurt describes how historians use questions to provide a framework for their research. For instance, when investigating daily life on a farm, a researcher might ask questions such as "What was expected of the women who lived on this farm from generation to generation?" "What were the responsibilities of the men?" "What was expected of the children?" (6) Then a researcher would investigate what each member of the farm family did to meet those expectations. Similarly, when investigating buildings and gardens, a researcher would ask what architectural styles could be found on the farm, what the styles said about culture and local resources, and how the styles changed over time.

In the succeeding chapters, Hurt describes various kinds of historical sources: what they are, where they can be found, how to use them, and what they can reveal about a farm's history. In the chapter on written records, Hurt calls attention to both population census records, which can tell researchers about family members through the years, and the agricultural census, which enumerates animals raised and crops grown by farmers. Just as significant, but less well known, are county records, such as wills and real estate and property tax records. Other significant sources include oral histories; photos, maps, and artifacts; and the farmstead itself—each of which receives a separate chapter.

Hurt devotes another chapter to showing how to use all of these sources, as well as living history farms and fiction, not just to tell "the story of technological change, architectural styles, and crop and livestock production," but also to reconstruct daily life in its social context. He encourages researchers to consider the organizations farm families joined, the churches and schools they attended, the material possessions they owned, the modes of transportation and communication they used, and the forms of entertainment they en-

joyed. He also admonishes researchers not to overlook how the work load was distributed among family members.

The final chapter of the book reviews the major sources of information any researcher should consult, a checklist of sorts to ensure thoroughness. It also includes some suggestions about research techniques, such as what kind of note cards to use and how to use them. Hurt also makes a few recommendations about writing style. An appendix of historical societies and agencies makes it easy for researchers to go beyond their state boundaries. A bibliographical essay suggests what to read to learn more about agricultural history in a few major topical areas.

There is little to criticize in this well-crafted introduction to farm research. I was disappointed, though, that the book did not contain recommendations for using computers in the research and writing process; even many beginning researchers today use computers in many ways. Suggestions concerning computer research methods—software suggestions, computer note-taking techniques, and researching on-line—would have made the book more forward-looking and even more broadly useful today. In spite of this omission, though, the book is valuable for students and lay people interested in the history of individual farms or locales.

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