

10 as part of a school assignment, but continued to write throughout her life. This volume concludes in 1929, when Lynn was in her mid-teens, though the last page promises a second volume full of Lynn's teenage and young adult journals.

Once you figure out how to work the book, the text is pretty interesting. Lillie's journals and her courtship letters provide an intimate portrait of her life, and Lynn's own journal offers a rare glimpse of childhood. The challenge comes in finding the parts you want to read. With no page numbers in the table of contents, without even bolded section headings to separate Lynn's journals from her mother's, it becomes easy to get lost in the pages. The book would also benefit immensely from a family relationship chart. The good news is that when you accidentally drop this box of family papers, they stay in order.

*The Farmer's Benevolent Trust: Law and Agricultural Cooperation in Industrial America, 1865-1945*, by Victoria Saker Woeste. Studies in Legal History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. xviii, 369 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PHILIP J. NELSON, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

In the late nineteenth century, farmers often viewed the cooperative movement as a panacea. True believers in cooperation included agriculturalists as diverse as grain and livestock raisers in the Midwest and raisin producers in California, and they all trusted coops to solve their marketing problems. They usually attributed their problems to the "money power"—a supposed conspiracy of bankers, corporate grain dealers, railroads, middlemen, and commodity brokers. Historians, in turn, have tended to characterize cooperators as saintly underdogs battling villainous agribusinesses. In a welcome addition to the field, Victoria Saker Woeste challenges this one-dimensional interpretation. *The Farmer's Benevolent Trust* is based largely on a case study of what came to be known as Sun-Maid Raisin Growers, but its implications are much broader. It provides a multifaceted, richly nuanced, interdisciplinary view of the formative period of American agricultural cooperatives; a fascinating look at the interaction of agriculture, law, and the modern state; and a story of one way farmers came to terms with industrialization.

Despite achieving record profits in the case of the California raisin industry, farmers everywhere found that cooperation contained its own pitfalls, especially when played out against the background of the

American cultural tradition, with its enduring strains of individualism, freedom of contract, and the Jeffersonian myth of a republic populated by numerous independent producers. Woeste shows how "cooperation embodied a series of puzzling incongruities" (4), and demonstrates how farmers dealt with the ambiguities arising from the cooperative method. For example, cooperatives seemed to offer farmers an answer to the problems of supply and demand. Agriculture had too many producers to duplicate the strategy of other mature industries, which could reduce supply if demand fell. To develop bargaining power, farmers began to seek greater control over marketing and prices. In order to realize that goal, however, cooperatives began to employ the methods of corporate oligopolies, which undercut the idealistic principles of the cooperative movement and sometimes incurred the wrath of the courts.

Of course, problems with the legal structure of cooperatives did not stop farmers from establishing them all across the country in the last half of the nineteenth century. More often than not, they were unsuccessful; usually they tried to do too much, as did the Grange coops that manufactured their own line of farm machinery. Such ventures required large amounts of capital. But many states, including California, refused to allow stock-based cooperatives, ostensibly because wealthy owners could dominate the cooperatives and erode the egalitarian founding principles for which they were known and respected.

At least half of *The Farmer's Benevolent Trust* recounts the rise of the California Associated Raisin Company (CARC) and its struggle with non-stock laws, its efforts to enter raisin packing and marketing, and its quest to sign up every raisin grower in the San Joaquin Valley. The author could have chosen other cooperatives with other crops for her case study, but the CARC, besides better illuminating the legal and economic issues of cooperative history, simply offers a more interesting story, one that makes readers want to know how and why the CARC so quickly grew to dominate the California raisin industry and then just as quickly lost much of its power and market control.

Yet it is not the details of CARC's (and later Sun-Maid's) history that constitute the real strength of this book, but the intricate finessing of the dynamic relationship between cooperatives and American society. Woeste methodically investigates the interaction of the cooperative movement with just about every major social, economic, and political phenomenon of American culture, including the "politics of anti-trust law, the reform currents of the Progressive Era, the intellectual debate over farming's place in the new economy, the . . . post-World War I 'farm crisis,' and the comprehensive alterations the Great Depression

imposed on state and society alike" (13). The modern American state, agriculture, and cooperatives all grew up together and faced the vicissitudes of the industrial marketplace simultaneously. In the case of Sun-Maid, a federal antitrust suit and a disastrous bankruptcy combined to break its dominance in the raisin industry and reduce its market share from nearly 90 percent to 30 percent in the 1920s. By the 1930s, however, cooperatives had become an accepted part of the agricultural scene. They had won the right to use corporate financial and legal methods, but ended up conveying their monopoly power to the state, which intervened in the raisin industry through regulation and marketing agreements. In that way, they not only survived, but, the author argues, won a "far-reaching, if not radical, legal revolution" (235).

It is the legal issues and multitude of court cases that constitute both the core of the author's evidence and analysis and the only real drawback of the book. For legal scholars, this is probably a treasure trove of rulings. Others, however, might find the going very slow at times and the legal discourse tedious and esoteric. I also wished the author had addressed how modern coops, such as Farmland Industries and CENEX, have become much like modern giant corporations. Nonetheless, *The Farmer's Benevolent Trust* is a solid, superbly researched, important work that adds much to our understanding of the centrality of both the marketplace and liberal democracy in modern American culture.

*Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity*, by Amy Bentley. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998. xi, 238 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$44.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY LISA L. OSSIAN, SIMPSON COLLEGE AND DES MOINES AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

*Eating for Victory* examines the national policies surrounding the concept of food rationing during World War II. The voluntary programs of meatless and wheatless days during World War I were not sufficient to meet the greater needs during World War II.

Amy Bentley divides her work into six chapters. In the first she examines the concept of rationing as good democracy—a way to keep all food available to all citizens during the war. In the second chapter she examines women's role as "Wartime Homemaker." The war years actually intensified traditional homemaking roles for women (despite the alternate "Rosie the Riveter" image) as symbols of security and

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