

scribes his first camera, his years of photographing and editing for the school paper, and his first job working for a photographer on the boardwalk. This, and his later work as a newspaper photographer, provided the background and productive spirit for his professional life. His awareness of the effects of changes in the environment has led him to become a preservationist. Weaving into his story a number of adventuresome anecdotes connected with his field work—often dangerous and always exciting—he makes his profession sound idyllic.

The seventy-four photographs of twenty-two outstanding American buildings are in keeping with the high standards described by the writers. The selection is a wise one, although there is no chronological or geographic progression. I do wish the publisher had included at least twice the number of Boucher's HABS photographs.

The major purpose of this volume is to honor the long service and dedication of one exceptional photographer and his contribution to the field of architectural photography. It is left to the reader to decide if Boucher's work should be acclaimed along with other great photographers. Regardless, Boucher's photographs and the HABS collection provide a record of the surviving historical structures of the middle and late twentieth century, a record that has proved its worth and has potential to be even more valuable in the future.

Shake-Out: Iowa Farm Families in the 1980s, by Mark Friedberger. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989. xiv, 199 pp. Notes, tables, appendixes, index. \$22.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JOHN OPIE, NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

In his second book on the subject, Mark Friedberger argues that family farming is a "sheltered" sector of the economy (8). This is simultaneously its short-term salvation and its long-term tragedy if the farm family remains the poor-relation "client" of the federal government that it has been for the last fifty years.

The independent farm family is an anachronism. There are fewer than a million left across the entire nation. When Thomas Jefferson wrote glowingly of the yeoman farmer as the salvation of the new nation, 90 percent of Americans lived on the land. Two hundred years later, the farm family has lost its place in American society, now heavily urbanized, with life centered around malls and media. But farm families have not lost their power; this is clearly evident from the continued heavy taxpayer support represented in the farm bills of 1985 and 1990. Even though agribusiness may skim most of the rewards of

federal generosity, the political mythology of the past fifty years turns on saving the family farm.

The American farm family has already for many years been a dreamlike national icon that evokes Mom setting the steaming apple pie at the open kitchen window (presumably while waving the flag). According to economic rationality, the farm family belongs to the past, but Americans would find themselves profoundly confused without its powerful imagery. The farm family provides that rare element of continuity not only with the soil, but also between us and our entire national history. Not the least, it is still described as the best way of life that Americans have ever devised.

The farm family has its dedicated defenders, who argue that a sustainable long-term agriculture will ultimately depend upon the skilled, hard-working, mechanized family farmer living on-site on the good land, producing far more food per capita than in any other society in the world. This may eventually come true, but most trends point elsewhere, represented by factory-type operations as on the Great Plains and in California. According to a 1980 USDA study, American food production could be successfully sustained without the participation of a single family farm. The question is whether food production alone is a sufficient measure to understand the place of the family farm in American society.

Shake-Out follows on the heels of Mark Friedberger's important 1988 book, *Farm Families and Change in Twentieth-Century America*. *Shake-Out* focuses on the critical years 1975 through 1987. Friedberger's analysis has the clarity of the best journalism and the discipline of the best research. He offers a balanced study while also strongly advocating the values and worthiness of family farming. The book has a major advantage over most other recent discussions, which are mostly anecdotal, because it is based on in-depth statistically significant interviews of 135 active farm families as well as retired farmers, clergy, school principals, extension agents, and agribusinessmen. (Methodology for data collection is described in three appendixes.) It is equally clear that Friedberger did not see his interviewees as mere statistics, but as real human beings, dedicated to farming the land and struggling with a difficult future. He started his study in 1983, but moved from California to live in Iowa between 1985 and 1987 to be close to a worsening farm family crisis. He returned to visit many of his subjects repeatedly, and called them friends.

Friedberger finds many deep-seated problems threatening the farm family, and he acknowledges that there are few answers. The threats include rapid institutional collapse of the rural business world,

the pressures of absentee agribusiness operations (Cargill and IBP are mentioned), naive expansion and borrowing that turned farmers into "victims" of banks (that also failed) and the marketplace, the broad sweep of bankruptcies, and permanent dependency on off-farm jobs. In one of the best parts of the book, Friedberger reviews the range of recent political support from mainstream farm organizations such as the Farm Bureau and new grassroots activist groups like the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition. He carefully analyzes problems of family solidarity, the "missing generation" who left the farm, and the difficult challenges that farm women face. His powerful analysis of the role of the media in raising the intensity of the farm crisis is all too brief. Friedberger concludes that only those farmers with deep pockets whose land was already paid for are likely to survive, and that these are very few indeed. A new crisis—the unexpected drought of 1988—drove more out of farming altogether.

While *Shake-Out* focuses on Iowa farm families, there is little that cannot be applied on a national basis, the difference being that Iowa's rich soil, corn-belt agriculture, powerful family tradition, and relative farm prosperity mean more lasting strength than in many other parts of the country. *Shake-Out* is required reading, perhaps the most important recent study, for anyone interested in the current farm crisis and the future of the farm family.

The American Farm Crisis: An Annotated Bibliography, compiled by Earl M. Rogers, and Susan H. Rogers. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989. xii, 149 pp. Indexes. \$22.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MARK FRIEDBERGER, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Agricultural historians are indebted to the husband-and-wife team of Earl and Susan Rogers, who for many years have compiled yearly bibliographies published in *Agricultural History*, in addition to those of topical interest that deal with farming topics. The volume under review follows this tradition and deals with the worst downturn in rural America since the 1930s.

One of the difficulties of studying recent events is the disparate-ness of published sources. They are usually widely scattered in a host of publications, some of which, ordinarily, historians would never consult. This is reflected in the Rogers' organization of topics, which range from activism to violence, and their selection of source materials, which range from academic journals such as *Agriculture and Human Values* and the *Journal of Agricultural Taxation and Law* to *Penthouse* and *Psychology Today*.

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