

*Hoboes: Bindlestiffs, Fruit Tramps, and the Harvesting of the West*, by Mark Wyman. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010. xii, 338 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$28.00 cloth; \$16.00 paper; \$14.99 e-book.

Reviewer Lynne M. Adrian is chair of the Department of American Studies at the University of Alabama. Her research and writing have focused on American hobo subculture in the early twentieth century.

Mark Wyman's excellent book places the history of migratory labor into the context of the development of the West as a region. Most of the previous scholarship on hoboes has placed them in a national context, either as political citizens, unskilled workers in all types of labor, or "others" in the American public imagination. All of the previous works have contributed to understanding the role that the temporary hobo workforce played in American history, but the regional perspective provides an added dimension.

Wyman begins with the development of the railroad system as the lynchpin of western expansion. This is now a well-known aspect of western history, but he closely tracks how the expansion of railroad lines led to the development of new cash crops across the West and to the spread of mono-crop agriculture, as industrial farming quickly supplanted family farms by the early twentieth century in many areas. Wyman traces this phenomenon through waves of settlement and a variety of different crops, including hard wheat, fruit, hops, timber, cotton, sugar beets, nuts, and vegetables. This railroad-based system of labor began to change with the political upheaval of the Mexican Revolution and World War I, which together drastically changed labor availability, migration patterns, and political definitions of Americanism. By 1920, automobile transiency had largely replaced labor traveling by railroad. The presence of large numbers of laborers when and where they were temporarily needed was a key to western development. As Wyman accurately notes in his introduction, "A contemporary western investigator summed up the new situation bluntly: there was an 'immense reserve labor force because there must be'" (6). In the process, hobo labor shaped the West; understanding its importance is fundamental for anyone studying regional, state, or local history.

Wyman's focus on the West as a region provides a change in historical perspective. Much of the previous literature, which looked at transient labor on a national scale, has unintentionally reinforced an ethnic division in the labor force. Most hoboes traveling a large, often nationwide, circuit were either American-born whites or northern Europeans who needed fluency in English to navigate railroads, look for work, or seek handouts. In that focus, most of the more regional transient labor groups have disappeared from historical view. Wyman restores the

Pacific Coast Indian tribes' members to the hops fields, the German-Russians to sugar beet production, Mexican families to cotton farming, and Chinese and Japanese gang labor to a variety of crops. This restoration provides a more complete and nuanced picture of western labor and helps make sense of the political interactions between farmers and labor. A greater acknowledgment of the Reconstruction Era Black Codes of the South as the basis of the Tramp Laws, which had spread across the nation by the 1890s, would strengthen the argument, particularly in regard to the cotton frontier of the Southwest. By the 1920s, migrant agricultural labor was on its way to being re-racialized around an Anglo/Mexican binary; as Wyman notes, "The Rio Grande was no longer the border between the United States and Mexico — the real border was becoming racial rather than geographical" (260).

Wyman also focuses on agricultural labor as an industrial system, which highlights connections between the growth of the West in the nineteenth century and the monoculture factory farming of today. Locavores and current students of globalization may be surprised to find Washington apples in Manchester, England, and California peaches in Europe in the nineteenth century. They were, in fact, a key element in the development of the West. Finally, "because the West's new crops were now sold on both national and world markets, they were beset with sudden, sharp price swings, during growing season and between seasons. . . . In this regard fruit raising and other endeavors were no different from western mining and logging, which also had heavy start-up requirements and suffered frequent shutdowns over collapsing prices" (19). The arc of globalization is longer and more profoundly important than is often considered. Ironically, the regional nature of Wyman's study is what highlights this key element.

Hoboes were a key element of western history, and they have too often disappeared from the historical record. Wyman has helped restore to the historical record the multiethnic peoples who were key to harvesting and developing the West.

*Homer Croy: Corn Country Travel Writing, Literary Journalism, Memoir*, edited by Zachary Michael Jack. North Liberty: Tall Corn Books, 2010. 264 pp. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Katherine Harper is manager of foundation relations at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Her research and writing have focused on the Iowa short-story writer Ellis Parker Butler.

Homer Croy, favorite son of Maryville, Missouri, made his name writing warm, witty depictions of the American Midwest — the region he