

mained secondary. Opinion was so diffuse and contradictory within the organization that it was impossible to establish a consistent stand on most political issues, anyway. Here the contrast between Nordin and Buck is most obvious. Only three of Nordin's ten chapters dwell on political subjects, and then only to destroy the concept of the Patrons as a political organization. On the other hand, Buck devoted only one chapter to the "Social and Educational Features." Nordin's emphasis supplies needed balance to a distorted picture.

This is not, however, a precedent-breaking study; nor is the author the lonely crusader that he would have us believe. Theodore Saloutos, Robert A. Calvert, and M. Thomas More Bertels, among others, have offered new perspectives on the Patrons of Husbandry before Nordin, and Solon Buck's interpretation of the state "granger" railroad regulatory laws has been supplied the descriptive detail of the social-educational functions of grangerism and so thoroughly attacked the idea of a political-economic movement as D. Sven Nordin. Although generally successful in this revisionist approach, he has not convinced this reviewer that Grange economic activities were unimportant in recruiting members and insignificant as financial endeavors. This reservation aside, Professor Nordin's careful definitions, considered re-evaluations, and aggressively argued judgments provide a refreshing new view of the Patrons of Husbandry, and one that every student of nineteenth century agrarian movements should read.

—David Crosson  
The University of Wyoming

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*Whereby We Thrive: A History of American Farming, 1607-1972*, by John T. Schlebecker. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1975. pp. xi, 342.

This is the first narrative history of American farming that covers the entire span of years from the earliest colonial settlements to the present. Here the general reader can, with only a few hours of effort, gain a broad overview of the development of commercial agriculture over 365 years. And the effort is quite pain-

less. The author, former professor (1956-1965) of history at the Iowa State University and currently Curator of the Agriculture and Mining Division in the Smithsonian Institution, has clearly designed this book for nonspecialists. Numerous subheadings guide readers through the various chapters and there are no footnotes or documentation, apart from a short bibliography of the major secondary works on which Schlebecker largely relied. Statistics and tabular data are minimal and unobtrusive, and the text is supplemented by some fifty illustrations and photographs which mainly are drawn from the rich Smithsonian collection.

The organization of the book will also aid the untutored reader. Three main topics—land settlement, marketing changes, and technology and scientific developments—are traced in each of five major time blocs, 1607-1783, 1783-1861, 1861-1914, 1914-1945, and 1945-1972. The periodization is obviously based upon American wars because, as Schlebecker explains, wars more than other factors affected farm production, scientific agricultural research, and marketing arrangements (pp. 206-07).

Of the three main topics, the author is strongest in his discussion of new technology and scientific breakthroughs, especially the numerous "firsts," such as the first silo (1873), first butterfat milk testor (1890), first refrigerated railroad car (1865), and first gasoline tractor in South Dakota (1892). The book's lucid sections on dairying and cattle raising reflect the author's familiarity with the primary sources and his previous publications in these areas. Conversely, the discussions of nineteenth century land laws and settlement patterns are quite weak (especially chapter 6) and these sections would have benefitted from a closer reading of Paul Gates, Allan Bogue, and other land specialists.

Given the monumental task of assimilating this wealth of information from numerous monographs on American agriculture, Schlebecker has produced a book that will long be the standard survey of the story of farming in North America. No library should be without this book and many Iowa farm families will no doubt find that this book provides a pleasant pastime for the proverbial "long winter's night."

—Robert P. Swierenga  
Kent State University

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