

An impressive variety of original sources supports this work and verifies the author's conclusions. Professor Hofsommer uses original records of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad and of the Interstate Commerce Commission as well as personal correspondence and newspaper accounts. His skillful use of interviews with employees and officials gives a vivid quality to the study. The work is of major importance as regional history and an important contribution to the study of railroads in the twentieth century.

—**Forrest D. Monahan, Jr.**
Midwestern State University
Wichita Falls, Texas

First Majority—Last Minority: The Transforming of Rural Life in America, by John L. Shover. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976. pp. xix, 338. Index, illustrations, notes. \$12.50.

In this contribution to the Minorities in America Series, the late John L. Shover examines the position of a dwindling minority in the United States—farmers, who today constitute only about 4.5 percent of the nation's population. The "traditional yeoman farmer," he notes, has been absorbed into a "vertically and horizontally integrated mass production industry" by a process which Shover labels "The Great Disjuncture" (p. xiv). The book's purpose is to explain this transformation, focusing on the years since 1945.

After tracing shifts in population from rural to urban areas and describing the agricultural regions of the country, Shover presents rural change in microcosm through several case studies. In Scioto Township, Delaware County, Ohio, he detects the loss of a rural sense of community and the development of a "blue-collar suburb;" in Bedford County, Pennsylvania, he discovers the transition from a farmers' enclave to a motorists' oasis. Two sketches of individual farms, based on Henry C. Taylor's *Tarpleywick: A Century of Iowa Farming* and Curtis K. Stadtfeld's *From the Land and Back*, illustrate the effects of technological innovation on daily life.

The scope of the book broadens in succeeding chapters, first to a survey of methods of operation in contemporary agricultural units that are more like factories than farms. Such technical sophistication facilitated the growth of agribusiness—vertically integrated production and marketing of food. Shover's wry humor only thinly covers his deep alarm at the power, not always latent, which great conglomerates hold over the nation's supply of food. Then, in an interpretive review of governmental programs for farmers, Shover observes that agriculture is the only sector of the economy that may be said to have a "policy," but that the policy has been shaped in haphazard fashion by competing interest groups.

Finally, in a discussion of the "World Food Crisis," Shover announces that American goals must no longer be to restrict agricultural output, but rather to assist the rest of the world in feeding expanding populations, not

only by increasing production in the United States, but also by promoting agrarian progress in less developed countries. This section, striving for timeliness, becomes time-bound. Writing in 1974, with prices for grain at exceptionally high levels, Shover assumes that the traditional American "farm problem" of chronic overproduction has dissipated, and that the dilemma thereafter will be to keep pace with demand. However, plummeting prices in 1976 showed that the farm problem was as devilish as ever and had been eclipsed only temporarily.

Farmers—the last minority—will find their views given little treatment in this book. Shover feels nostalgia for the rural past, but adopts a consumer's view of the agricultural present. He views sales of grain to the Soviet Union as a betrayal of national interest. Thus *First Majority—Last Minority* represents an unusual type of minority history that stands outside the group treated, refusing to plead its cause. The book has special value because of this, but risks becoming uprooted from its own protagonists.

—Thomas D. Isern
Sam Houston State University

The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest,
by Francis Jennings. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,
1975. pp. xvii, 369.

"The Cattle you raise are your own; but those which are Wild are still ours," insisted an Oneida chief in defense of the ways of his people. The quotation from Francis Jennings' book is one example of the wealth of material used to define and describe Indian culture during the "invasion of America" by European colonizers. Jennings, professor of history at Cedar Crest College in Pennsylvania and past president of the American Society of Ethnohistory, is determined in this remarkably informative volume to present the culture of the Atlantic coast Indians as co-equal to that of the European invaders. The Indian in his account is no mere pawn or foil; he is one of the central characters in a great human drama (and a tragic one as Jennings relates in Part II where he recounts white-Indian relations in colonial New England). The comment of the Oneida chief symbolizes Jennings' strategy; the Indians had their methods of managing stock just as did the Europeans. Except for the dog, Indian livestock had never been domesticated; the English, on the other hand, kept herds of domesticated animals as part of their livestock management. The Indians cleared the woods for grazing pasture as a communal effort; the English as a private one. But both were engaged in animal management; as a matter of fact, colonists during their early contacts with the Indians preferred to acquire pasture land already cleared by the Indians in order to avoid the back-breaking labor of clearing pastureland.

In some ways Jennings' history is two books. In the first part he summarizes what is known about the Atlantic Coast Indian during the colonial

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.