

of all levels concerned with the progress of the Revolution as well as friends and acquaintances involved in more personal and private matters.

This superbly edited installment of the Nathanael Greene papers will not change the generally accepted sequence of the unfolding drama of the American Revolution. It fleshes out some details and corrects some misconceptions and misinformation. Importantly, it gives another point of view on the Revolution and a closer look at the man whose role in American history was of some consequence. It supplies a veritable cache of new material, even though the editors caution that a fresh biography and a new history of the times are still needed.

—Dwight L. Smith  
Miami University

*Two Centuries of American Agriculture*, edited by Vivian Wiser. Washington: The Agricultural History Society, 1976. pp. vi, 315. \$8.00.

American agricultural history is a curious sub-discipline. Its natural constituency continues to shrink, both relatively and absolutely, and fewer and fewer colleges offer it to their students, yet it retains the interest and devotion of a band of energetic followers. The very term agricultural history raises visions of parochialism, yet a remarkably diverse group of academic historians, social and natural scientists, bureaucrats, and laymen are interested in it. Their eager acceptance of advanced historical tools like quantification and statistical analysis counteracts the notion that agricultural historians are backward, yet they remain largely uninterested in important major fields such as social history. This volume, composed of the twenty-three papers and comments presented at the Bicentennial Symposium on Two Centuries of American Agriculture held at the Smithsonian Institution in April of 1975, reflects the idiosyncrasies of agricultural history.

It will come as no surprise to the reader that the pieces contained in this volume vary greatly in quality, just as the contributors varied greatly in profession, training, and preparation. There are several provocative articles here which stimulate the reader's interest by exploring important areas of concern and advancing tentative answers to the questions raised. Two particularly valuable articles, for example, deal with agricultural contact between different societies. In "Agriculture, Indians, and American History," Thomas R. Wessel sketches a paradoxical pattern of white adoption of specific Indian techniques in the context of a general white misunderstanding and denigration of Indian agriculture. And in "The Impact of America on English Agriculture," C. Andrew Jewell deals with the effect of American implement design and technology on British manufacturers. Hopefully, both of these authors will continue and expand the work they have started here.

This volume is also enriched by two provocative articles on the future of American agriculture. The most controversial article in the collection is

Hiram Drache's "Midwest Agriculture: Changing With Technology." Drache suggests that small farms will continue to be absorbed by ever-larger producing units, and he contends that this trend is good because it contributes to greater efficiency. Less controversial is Don Paarlbert's "Agriculture Two Hundred Years From Now," but many will disagree with his optimistic projections.

Several useful historiographical essays by recognized experts in the field are also included in this collection. Theodore Saloutos surveys immigrants in American agriculture, Harry Fornari sketches the history of grain exports, Allan Bogue discusses credit in the North, Paul Gates overviews land policy, and Gilbert Fite assesses the contribution of the pioneer farmer. In each case the author does what should be done in a useful historiographical essay by raising questions for further study while evaluating what has already been done.

Most of the articles in this volume concern the staples of agricultural history—land and credit, money, politics, marketing, and technology. But those who believe that agricultural historians should devote more attention to the social aspects of agriculture will find reasons for hope here. For example, Mary W. M. Hargreaves looks at the settlement of the Great Plains through the eyes of women who published accounts of that settlement, and she suggests some of the effects the region might have had on women. And Gladys Baker sensitively explores the difficulties women have faced in their attempts to advance in the male-dominated United States Department of Agriculture. Hopefully, this interest in an area of social history by two of our leading agricultural historians is a sign of things to come in this sub-discipline.

The remainder of the articles included in this volume are less exciting, and a few are quite disappointing. Fortunately, these lesser efforts do not alter substantially the general quality of the collection. Taken as a whole, *Two Centuries of American Agriculture* proves that agricultural history remains a vital and eclectic sub-discipline. Those interested in the field will find no major surprises here, but they will want to own this collection.

—David B. Danbom  
North Dakota State University

*Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction*, by Nell Irvin Painter. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977. pp. 288. Index, bibliography, illustrations.

*Exodusters* is a study of Southern race relations at that crucial juncture between the decline of Radical Reconstruction and the rise of Jim Crow. Given the "utterly irreconcilable assumptions about the place of black people in the South," racial conflict now seems to have been inevitable. Whites thought of blacks as stagnant "units of labor," while blacks themselves dreamed of a dynamic social and economic uplift. Convinced that life would improve for them only outside the South, about 2,000 poor freemen from

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.