

fects of this placing out system thought they were taking children from bad environments and putting them in Christian (that is, Protestant) homes. Crenson nicely shows how both Catholic and Protestant managers of urban orphanages opposed the practice because they preferred to keep siblings together in an orphanage than separate them forever. Crenson cites a few moving examples of children indentured on Iowa farms whose overriding memory was of the cold, demanding, and sexually abusive households they lived in.

At times Crenson conflates the attack on the orphanage with its downfall. Yet most orphanages existed until after World War II. Crenson does not see that progressive reformers did not control urban welfare networks in the years before the First World War. Nor does he acknowledge the détente between reformers and orphanage managers during the 1920s. Reformers who advocated modern foster care generally preferred to expand the whole child welfare system rather than simply replace the orphanage with foster care. This changed only in the late forties. Despite these reservations, this is an excellent piece of scholarship. It stands with Timothy Hasci's *Second Home* as the most synthetic of the recent work on orphanages.

*Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877–1917*, by Elizabeth Sanders. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. xi, 532 pp. Tables, maps, notes, index. \$48.00 cloth, \$16.00 paper.

REVIEWED BY JEFFREY KOLNICK, SOUTHWEST STATE UNIVERSITY

Elizabeth Sanders has written a useful book that provides new insights on the reforms of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. She contends that "agrarian movements constituted the most important political force driving the development of the American national state in the half century before World War I" (1). Agrarian movements, as set out by Sanders, maintained a complex set of beliefs and policy goals, whereby farmers and workers sought to have the state restrain corporations, prevent the excessive concentration of wealth and market power, and provide public services either not made available by private industry or provided only through monopolies. Through such a "Jeffersonian and republican" vision of a producer/entrepreneurial economy, agrarians hoped to create a genuinely free commerce that would lead to a more just and broadly prosperous society (4).

Sanders sees the core agrarian political agenda as a series of policy goals widely debated during the Populist and Progressive Eras. Those goals included improved public education, reformed tax and mone-

tary policies, and federal regulation of trade, transportation, communication, and agricultural marketing (7-8). In the end, Sanders argues, the most consistent supporters of the reform agenda were people who lived on the periphery of the American economy—in the South and West—and voted with the Democratic Party.

Although such a position on the nature of agrarian movements is not particularly novel, Sanders sets out to test the idea with the methods of a trained political scientist. The essence of her argument is based on a regional analysis of the American economy in which the United States is divided into an "Industrial Belt," which includes the Northeast and Great Lakes states, a "Diverse Region" made up largely of the Corn Belt and Pacific Coast, and the "Periphery," composed of the cotton, wheat, wool, and mining areas mainly of the South and West. For this analysis, she draws heavily on Harold Hull McCarty's two-volume book, *The Geographic Basis of American Economic Life* (1940). Based largely on aggregate data such as value added by manufacturing by state, industrialization by congressional district, and farmers and workers as a percentage of the employed population by state, Sanders establishes economic interests by region and then correlates this to political behavior. Upon this data her argument about the nature of farmer-labor reform rests. Although she admits that not all voters were moved solely by the economics of their region, she presents an analysis of American politics that is largely one-dimensional. On one critically important point she is convincing: congressional support for reform came largely from Democrats out on the periphery.

The book is set out in two parts that seem largely unrelated. After establishing her regional analysis of economic development and voting patterns, Sanders devotes the first part to charting the history of the labor and farmer movements from 1877 to 1917. Here Sanders summarizes historical scholarship, some of it quite dated, in a single story of a producer movement that harnessed farmers and workers to the same plow of agrarian reform. She makes it clear that farmers led this movement, and the book contains insightful analysis on why farmer-laborism failed in the United States. In part two, Sanders focuses on federal legislation in the agrarian tradition. This is the essence of the book, and it rests largely on detailed legislative history and an analysis of votes by region and party. In this part she does a particularly nice job of explaining why farmers accepted an administrative state in light of their professed objection to bureaucracy. The requirements of political compromise with conservative representatives of the industrial core (mainly Republicans) dictated a series of statist regulatory solutions to the problems of producers on the periphery.

The difficulty with the book is that in aggregating the data, the farmers and workers, the purported heroes of her book, disappear. Moreover, the complexities of U.S. politics also disappear under a regional analysis that mixes the South and West during a period when each region had significantly different experiences on a number of levels. Very few farmers or workers who did not lead national organizations find voice in these pages. Thus Sanders ignores the contributions of social history to our understanding of political activity. This is particularly true of her analysis of the labor movement. Her lumping together of the West and South to create a single voting block during a period when the South was adjusting to emancipation and military defeat, and the West to recent victories in Indian wars, waves of immigrants, and recent settlement, creates a greater sense of coherence between the regions than existed in the minds of many voters.

In the end, Sanders has written a book that many students of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era will benefit by reading. Her method will certainly provoke historians to think more broadly, and her insistence that the reforms of this period were driven by an agrarian coalition of farmers and workers is a fresh restatement of the progressive tradition of American historiography.

*Little Germany on the Missouri: The Photographs of Edward J. Kemper, 1895-1920*, edited by Anna Kemper Hesse. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998. xvi, 166 pp. Black-and-white photographs, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY SHIRLEY TERESA WAJDA, KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

From 1938 to 1941, Charles van Ravenswaay, the director of the Federal Writers' Project in Missouri, toured the state to gather information for what would become *Missouri: The WPA Guide to the "Show Me" State* (1941). His unquenchable interest in the arts and culture, as well as his undeniable love for his home state, may be read on every page of that guidebook. When it came to describing Hermann, a Missouri River town, Ravenswaay employed language that suggested that time had stood still: traveling from the plateau to the river, the unsuspecting sojourner "slips with breath-taking suddenness into the picture-book valley of Hermann" (38).

In *Little Germany on the Missouri*, we have such a picture book. More than one hundred glass-plate negatives and photographic prints taken between 1895 and 1920 by Hermann horticulturist, viticulturist, and amateur photographer Edward J. Kemper constitute the basis of

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