

For students of Iowa history, the book is relevant chiefly for its findings about a national policy that strongly influenced the pace and shape of labor organization in the state's major industries. It does not deal specifically with labor policy in Iowa, and the only Iowans having some role in its history of "responsible unionism" are Albert Cummins and Herbert Hoover. In addition, students of the changing agricultural system, clearly of great relevance to Iowa history, may find O'Brien's "paradox" intriguing and perhaps adaptable to other policy areas. Indeed, agriculture would appear to be an area in which the phenomenon of continued individualism breeding expanded statism was even more pronounced than in labor.

The Bootlegger: A Story of Small-Town America, by John E. Hallwas. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998. xi, 274 pp. Illustrations, maps. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY KATHLEEN M. GREEN, MORNINGSIDE COLLEGE

Who in the world was Henry "Kelly" Wagle and why did 1,000 people turn out for his funeral in 1929? From the first paragraph until the last, Professor John E. Hallwas of Western Illinois University will hold your interest in answering this question. In *The Bootlegger* he effectively weaves the biography of bootlegger, wife beater, inveterate gambler, and good neighbor Wagle with the history of Colchester, Illinois, to produce an exciting and engaging piece of local history. Imagine writing a town history around the true crime mystery of the unsolved murder of "the most notorious bootlegger in western Illinois" (15) and the meaning of success in a small town.

Hallwas carefully chronicles the rise of Colchester, a small town in western Illinois, from a frontier settlement of mostly British immigrants to a booming mining town in the late nineteenth century and its rapid decline in the early years of the twentieth century. Local characters and the relatives of the bootlegger come to life in the raw and dangerous environment of a coal-mining town where the constant fear of death produces local sightings of a mysterious "Woman in Black." Kelly Wagle came of age in this time of diminishing opportunities for local residents.

This work will be of particular interest to readers of the *Annals of Iowa* because Hallwas understands the cultural context and the close personal bonds of the midwestern small town. He relates local happenings and reactions to broader historical patterns and main historical themes. For example, he shows clearly the divisive nature of the

temperance crusade and how the town was nearly evenly divided on the issue of licensing saloons. This local ambivalence toward liquor made Kelly's bootlegging career both profitable and popular. Here is another example of how prohibition led otherwise law-abiding small-town residents to "contempt for the law on an unprecedented scale" (176).

Hallwas explains the national social and economic "forces beyond the control of local people" (89) that changed their lives. The decline of population and prosperity in rural America, the demise of mining, the advent of the automobile, and the impact of motion pictures are national trends that influenced midwesterners in the twenties. The community responded in a variety of ways to these demographic changes. The Ku Klux Klan arrived in the county around 1922 "to bring back a more rigid moral code and reestablish the highly unified community of the past" (194). To the Klan and newly elected mayor Hattie Polk, Kelly Wagle symbolized the moral breakdown that threatened their community" (196). To local editor Henry Todd, however, "no bigger hearted man ever lived than Henry Wagle, and we are proud to class him, not as a pleasing acquaintance, but as a friend" (14).

Hallwas has unearthed a great story by doing a thorough job of research in local newspapers, legal records, and personal interviews. He offers a well-synthesized narrative written in a clear, descriptive, and fluent style. *The Bootlegger* is biography and social history at its best.

Farming the Cutover: A Social History of Northern Wisconsin, 1900-1940, by Robert Gough. Topeka: University Press of Kansas, 1997. vii, 295 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$40.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PAULA M. NELSON, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-PLATTEVILLE

The farms of northern Wisconsin have mostly disappeared. Trees again stand where fields, fences, and livestock once marked the landscape. In the summer, weekenders pulling boats fill the roads; hunters, snowmobilers, and cross-country skiers take their place during the fall and winter months. These recreational visitors are the lifeblood of northern Wisconsin today. They do not know and probably do not care that two generations of farm families built homes and a way of life on this land before state and federal policymakers declared them "marginal" and convinced them to move on to the proverbial greener pastures. In *Farming the Cutover* Robert Gough tells the story of these farm families, the society they built, and the attitudes and policies that undermined their world.

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