

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.

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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.

The story began with cutover forest lands in the 18 farthest north counties of Wisconsin. The trashed and denuded lands found a new purpose: the private owners—timber, railroad, and mining companies—sold it as farmland to settlers looking for homes. As Gough points out, “newcomers were entering a region in which the physical environment recently had been radically altered, and consequently was still poorly understood” (46). Promoters now urged agricultural settlement, and the settlers who gambled on northern Wisconsin farms believed the land could be productive. Between 1900 and 1920, the cutover district became one of the fastest-growing regions of the United States, attracting more than 100,000 new residents, who established more than 12,000 new farms. The farm families of the cutover tended to arrive poor and stay poor as they worked together to clear the land of stumps, brush, and second-growth trees. Ultimately, many of these families adopted dairy farming as a labor-intensive, rather than capital-intensive, style of agriculture, one that best suited their family-based enterprise and income level. Although the population of northern Wisconsin remained relatively sparse, community mattered. Neighbors shared work and leisure, helped each other through illnesses, births, and deaths, and celebrated weddings and baptisms—all within a larger context of hard work, poverty, and struggle.

What ultimately displaced the farm families of northern Wisconsin, however, was not a natural calamity, like the Dust Bowl droughts of the Great Plains, but a change in attitude and policy in numerous government agencies beginning in the 1920s and accelerating with the New Deal. The modernization and urbanization of the United States in the 1920s made the cutover district appear socially and culturally backward—even pathological—to outside observers. The intensifying poverty of the depression years reinforced the idea that cutover residents needed uplifting. New Deal attitudes about land use emphasized a return of marginal farmlands nationwide to their “natural” states, which, in the cutover district, was forests. By 1940, farm families were on the way out, tourists on the way in.

Gough tells a fascinating story of the people who inhabited the farms of the cutover and the social and economic world they built. Because it also focuses on government policy changes and complete reversals, *Farming the Cutover* also helps explain some of the deep antipathy many rural Americans feel for the state and federal governments. Gough’s book will be especially useful for readers interested in twentieth-century agricultural change, farming in marginal areas, and land use policies in the United States.

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