

interested in the history of American agriculture and the Midwest. Few historians have the good fortune to look back on a book after several decades, and even fewer can do so without regret, if not an occasional wince. Bogue can do both. This book has stood the test of time.

Bogue left a Canadian farm for the study of agricultural history, and he learned his lessons well under the direction of Paul Wallace Gates and James Malin. Like a good farmer, Bogue adapted to meet changing conditions. As the field evolved, he learned statistics and plunged into the manuscript census schedules to look at farmers and agriculture in a different context. Long before historians began to talk about social history, Bogue did it. Despite the use of quantification as a methodology, he kept the personal nature of farming forefront in his work.

With this reprint, Bogue has added a delightful introduction in which he relishes the favorable treatment of this work by historians, settles old scores, and candidly reflects on the things that he would do differently if he were to write the book today. Importantly, he would change little. Bogue stressed the significance of production and economics in farm life, while incorporating individual experiences to prove his points. In 1963 he got it right. Despite the passage of time, his interpretation still stands today. This is an important book as well as a good read for anyone interested in the history of agriculture, Iowa, and the Midwest. It has been called a classic, and indeed it is.

*Hoboes: Wandering in America, 1870–1940*, by Richard Wormser. New York: Walker and Company, 1994. 136 pp. Illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. \$17.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY TODD DEPASTINO, YALE UNIVERSITY

Late nineteenth-century Americans changed residences with remarkable frequency. Many moved annually, sometimes only down the block or across town, but often to another city or region entirely in search of work and affordable housing. The most footloose among this highly transient population were called hoboes. They were predominantly young white men who pursued the demand for wage labor wherever it took them. Richard Wormser's entertaining and richly illustrated book for young adults offers a fine introduction to the work and subculture of this group that once numbered almost a million.

Drawing heavily on firsthand accounts, Wormser reconstructs a life of back-breaking labor, constant travel, frequent persecution, and

not a little adventure. Never romanticizing, the book focuses squarely on the perils of hoboing, from criminal violence to the routine hazards of "flipping freights" (21). Especially vulnerable were the numerous "road kids," poor children who chased the road's "illusion of freedom" (49, 52). In response to their marginality, hoboes developed their own language, ethical codes, and labor organizations, such as the Industrial Workers of the World. They even commanded an "unofficial capital," Chicago's sordid West Madison Street, which thrived until the 1930s, when automobiles and economic depression forever altered older patterns of travel and work.

Wormser's brief conclusion will interest readers curious about the connections between hoboes of old and contemporary homelessness. The gritty realism that informs the book's numerous anecdotes and nearly forty photographs will also appeal to those young male readers who a century ago might have found themselves "wandering in America."

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