

Book Reviews

Beyond the Furrow: Some Keys to Successful Farming in the Twentieth Century, by Hiram M. Drache. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Printers and Publishers Inc., 1976. pp. xiv, 560. Photographs, bibliography, glossary, index. \$9.95.

Agriculture has undergone considerable change in method and motivation during the twentieth century. A revolution in farm power sources, from animal power to mechanical power, was one important aspect of the general transition. Similarly the new uses and sources of agricultural capital were critical to the development of the large, efficient, and productive farms of the modern age. Equally important to the evolution of modern agriculture was the adoption of improved business administrative techniques by farmers. Careful accounting and production analysis replaced inadequate or non-existent methods of bookkeeping and budget management. These components of the twentieth-century agricultural revolution—pioneered, demonstrated, and advocated by a few “progressive” individuals—brought about a new and rational philosophy of agriculture. Similarly, ideas about the social role and function of the family farm were modified. During the present century the farm changed from a small and static family living into a capitalistic enterprise similar to other businesses.

This change in the place of the farm in society is described by Hiram Drache in *Beyond the Furrow: Some Keys to Successful Farming in the Twentieth Century*. Drache, as in his previous book, *The Day of the Bonanza*, uses the north central Red River Valley as the setting for this case study. Drache's work, while interesting and useful as a collection of oral history sources, does have several weaknesses. The work consists of almost 500 pages of text which are frequently repetitive. A judicious editor could have improved the book greatly by simply cutting it down to a more reasonable length.

The work is composed largely of the biographies of successful and dynamic farmers. After reading several of the many stories of success, one begins to feel that a collection of Horatio Alger novels is being read. The philosophy of the rugged individualist, who cannot be stopped by either adversity or tragedy, is flagrant throughout the work. Drache is essentially advancing a social Darwinist interpretation of agricultural history. Thus Drache's interpretation lacks the depth and the intensity of analysis which is seen in other works by the author.

Drache has produced a book which is more worshipful of successful

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agriculturalists than analytical of their rise to prominence. Because the author relied heavily upon personal interviews with the preeminent farmers of the Red River Valley, his uncritical treatment of sources is especially harmful to the balance of the book. While Drache's book has limitations, it still provides a foundation for further detailed studies of the development of twentieth-century plains agriculture.

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Farm Workers and Agri-business in California, 1947-1960, by Ernesto Galarza. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977. pp. xvii, 405. \$11.95.

In the last pages of this book, Ernesto Galarza comments that ". . . the best history is that in which one had an effective part." (p. 350) *Farm Workers and Agri-business in California, 1947-1960* is Galarza's account of his thirteen years of work in attempting to organize harvesters in California into effective labor unions. He represented the National Farm Labor Union, later the National Agricultural Workers Union, an offshoot of the older Southern Tenant Farmers Union. Because of their very strong feelings about how the work should be done, Galarza and his associates were often at odds with farmers and growers, with state and federal bureaucracy, and even with other labor unions.

Galarza maintains that his primary interest throughout his years in California were the welfare and increased bargaining power of the domestic laborers or *locales*. He felt that these people, given adequate opportunity, could provide a competent, dependable labor supply and would work their way up to decent living conditions. The major struggle of Galarza and the NAWU was for the repeal of Public Law 78, an act which enabled the United States government to import workers from Mexico on a temporary basis whenever agri-business leaders in California and other parts of the Southwest could prove a need for such a labor force. Galarza argues that these *braceros* were imported in large numbers under false pretenses because they would work for low wages and under conditions that the domestics would not accept. Therefore, he contends, the members of growers' associations used the law to benefit themselves, meanwhile depriving Ameri-

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