

## Book Reviews

ture had fewer employment opportunities. Farm output per worker and output per unit of input changed in this era which brought in new science-based agriculture. Tentatively, Cochrane feels that agriculture is in the midst of another major watershed crossing. Farm technological advances are slowing down, key inputs are becoming more scarce and costly, and real prices for farm products are rising to new levels.

The conceptual models shown here are keyed to the student of economics but can be understood by the general reader. For instance, Cochrane shows that production controls using acreage limitations, employed through government intervention since the 1930s, have been "a slippery, inefficient way of reducing production" (p. 379). The farmer merely increased capital inputs to produce more on less land. Similarly, he shows how the "'early-bird' farmer, who adopts a new and improved technology" (p. 387) reduces his costs of production and gains profits that enable him to expand his land holdings. Late adopters of these same new technologies receive far less benefits and the laggards are forced out of agriculture altogether. Cochrane's thought-provoking analysis of American agriculture is thoroughly documented and worth reading for any student of American agriculture.

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*Pure Nostalgia: Memories of Early Iowa*, edited by Carl Hamilton.  
Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1979. pp. viii, 212.  
Photographs. \$8.95.

Carl Hamilton has brought together eight accounts of life in Iowa, roughly from 1850 to 1940. They are for the most part excerpts from privately printed books and articles. The first-person recollections that these Iowans have recorded reflect the hardships as well as the joyous moments each experienced. Anyone who reads the book will soon learn that the "good old days" were not always so good and certainly not something to which many of us would want to return. The stories do have, however, great appeal. The book cannot be easily laid aside until one completes the story being read. And one is likely to want to hurry on to the next. The older reader will relive events similar to those he may have personally experienced while the

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younger readers will have a broader understanding of events about which they may have heard from parents and grandparents.

The journey through nostalgia starts with the memoir of a young woman of fifteen who traveled from Ohio to Iowa in a covered wagon. Her story continues with her courtship and marriage, the raising of eleven children, deprivations almost beyond relief, the lack of medical care, and the loneliness of life in a new land where the threat of Indians existed.

T. I. (Timmie) Stoner was orphaned at an early age in Prairie City. His account reveals the way in which an industrious and energetic youth could overcome a lack of education and become a successful and well-known businessman in Des Moines when that city was young and gay. C. V. Findlay was four years old when his family came to Clay County in northwest Iowa. Among the memories he recorded after he retired were grasshopper plagues, the problem of finding enough fuel to keep warm during long, cold winters, home remedies which were compounded from herbs that grew wild, and prairie fires. He also left an account of his impressions of the beauty of prairie grass and wildflowers in the spring.

The county editor relished trading barbs with other editors and being in the midst of every local fight—political or otherwise. His recollections of a pioneer livery barn and life at Iowa State College in 1886 provide the reader with additional slices of early life in Iowa. The life of the family or “country” doctor was not an easy one. Trips to the homes of the sick were made by horse and buggy through rain and snow and mud. Emergency operations were made without the aid of antibiotics or modern hospital equipment. Pay was often in the form of farm produce or not at all. A retired railroadman’s experiences ranged over a period of forty years, much of it on the interurban. During his long career he started with the days of the steam locomotive, saw a shift to electric means of locomotion, and then saw both replaced by the diesel. Throughout he came into contact with various types of individuals who traveled by rail: peddlers, “boomers,” politicians, and gamblers. Imogene Hamilton corresponded regularly with her daughter during depression years. Of particular interest are her letters written in the winter of 1936 during the month-long storm, perhaps the worst in Iowa’s history, when temperatures remained below zero for days.

In a review of this many-faceted book it is only possible to give a few tantalizing peeks at some of the events which provided these writers with pleasures and harshness in those bygone days. I strongly recom-

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mend that every Iowan interested in the past history of the state and of its people seek to learn more from the memories of these eight people. One can only hope that Iowans of the last half of the twentieth century are also recording their impressions of the things that have given them both happiness and sorrow so that future generations may experience the nostalgia of this later period.

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*Saloons of the Old West*, by Richard Erdoes. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979. pp. 277. Illustrations, photographs, notes, bibliography, acknowledgments, index. \$13.95.

Lavishly illustrated with photographs, old prints, cartoons, and line cuts—many of which are in the author's private collection—*Saloons of the Old West* by Richard Erdoes is a western history buff's miscellany. It contains every cliché ever uttered about western saloons, every anecdote, all the folklore, and most of the analytic and narrative discourse as well. It is, in short, the ultimate coffee-table book about western saloons.

The author, Richard Erdoes, is an artist and photographer who has written four books about American Indians. His approach to western saloons is that of a romantic pursuing an authentic "American" institution. The result is a mixture of quotations, old stories retold, and illustrations on every other page. Erdoes traces the evolution of saloons, their westward expansion, the bartender, "the stuff" they drank, western lodgings (some of which were associated with saloons), religion in the West, courts in saloons, gambling, women in the West, famous barroom fights, and prohibition.

The result is difficult to categorize. *Saloons of the Old West* is not a monograph (but no one intended that), or a scholarly synthesis. It is not a narrative account nor an edited anthology, but it has elements of all these forms. There are eleven pages of notes and five pages of bibliography; readers can track Erdoes' sources. The book does not merit serious scholarly consideration, but history teachers might pull an anecdote or two to enliven their lectures. Very few "general" readers will read the work from cover to cover, and Iowa readers will find no

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